



BRECON FESTIVAL BALLET

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SWAN LAKE & TANIO'R DDRAIG REVIEW

By Daryl Griffith, Director - Maestro Music UK.

Having enjoyed the Brecon Festival Ballet performance of Nutcracker in December, I was delighted to be invited to see the Spring double bill of Swan Lake Act 2 & Tanio'r Ddraig, attending the performance on Sunday 7th April at 7.30pm.

I know only too well how difficult Act 2 is to perform, given that I have been involved with many productions and performances of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake. This production was delightfully traditional in character. Artistic Director Katy Sinnadurai allowed the original choreography by Petipa and Ivanov to speak for itself, whilst making sure that the interpretation was suited to the Theatr Brycheniog's wonderful stage.

The Brecon Festival Ballet gave a hugely commendable performance. Natasha Trigg was technically accomplished as Odette, the Swan Queen, and the Pas de Deux with Mischa Goodman was beautiful to watch. The ladies of the Corps de Ballet need to get a special mention here, as someone sitting only a few seats down from me gave them a "wow" at the conclusion of their first entrance! The cygnets were suitably chirpy, and Joshua Feist gave a commanding performance as the evil Baron von Rothbart. A wonderful start to the evening.

With Tanio'r Ddraig being a new piece, created and choreographed by Artistic Director Katy Sinnadurai, and set to Welsh folk songs arranged and performed by pianist Penny Hughes, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. However, right from the opening my eyes were glued to the stage, with a mesmerising performance from Harlan Rust as the Welsh Dragon. Some really interesting choreography, but also masterfully performed.

There were too many great moments to list individually, but the dance with the saucepans was a hoot, and the Myfanwy love Pas de Deux was very moving. For me, one of the highlights was the way that the choreography managed to include everyone. There was never an empty part of the stage; there was always something happening. I think I'd need to see this piece multiple times to get the full picture of the breadth of choreography. I really liked the inclusion of the children, who were obviously well drilled, and performed admirably throughout the performance.

As we approached the end of this all-too-short ballet, I could feel the excitement and pride of the audience members rising, obviously aware that they were witnessing something special, and their enthusiastic reaction as the curtain finally came down was something that is very rare to see.

I really hope that this fledgling company continues to grow and grow, as in my view there is a real need for these sorts of occasions. I look forward to the next opportunity.