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Estonian National Ballet – Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs – Hong Kong

By Kevin Ng on July 19, 2012 in [Reviews](#) · 0 Comments



Luana Georg and Sergel Upkin in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.
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Estonian National Ballet

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

Hong Kong, Cultural Centre

8 July 2012

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A version of this review appeared in the Hong Kong Economic Journal

Opening this summer's International Arts Carnival, the annual Hong Kong festival for children, was the Estonian National Ballet, touring China for the first time. This 56-strong troupe's director is Thomas Edur, former illustrious star of the English National Ballet. Hong Kong audiences last saw Edur in 1999 during the English National Ballet's tour of Derek Deane's arena version of *Swan Lake*. I am glad to have followed Edur's distinguished career in London as a danseur noble, and his well-known partnership with wife Agnes Oaks, from the beginning till their retirement in 2009.

The Estonian National Ballet, which seldom tours overseas, presented for this China tour *"Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs"* created in 2004 by the Hungarian choreographer, Gyula Harangozo and later staged in Estonia in 2008. The music was specially composed by fellow-Hungarian, Tibor Kocşak. This production is definitely more suitable for children than Angelin Preljocaj's violently realistic *"Snow White"*, danced in Hong Kong two years ago by his Ballet Preljocaj.

This Estonian version is also longer, lasting nearly 2½ hours including an interval. It has a lot of plus points, especially the attractive sets and colourful costumes. The house inhabited by the dwarfs has a rustic charm, and the countryside where the dwarfs work as miners is picturesque. The story is clearly narrated and easy to follow. Harangozo's choreography is proficient overall though not particularly inventive. The two pas de deux are warm though

lacking emotional depth.

Snow White is of course the focus of the ballet. However the prince's character isn't very developed; he seems to be there just to partner Snow White in duets. And the stepmother is too blatantly evil. Harangozo tries to differentiate between the seven dwarfs by giving an individual character to each of them. Dopey is pretty nimble but is always slow to catch up with the rest. However episode in the dwarfs' house at the end of Act 1 is too long and taxing on children's concentration. The dances of the different dwarfs are suitably energetic and lively but also interminable.

In the first cast Luana Georg was ravishing and vivacious in the title role, though she was slightly too mature at times. Sergei Upkin made the most of his thin choreography for the prince with some good virtuosic dancing. Anatoli

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In the first cast Luana Georg was ravishing and vivacious in the title role, though she was slightly too mature at times. Sergei Upkin made the most of the thin choreography for the prince with some good virtuosic dancing. Anatoli Arhangelski was sympathetic as the huntsman who couldn't bear killing Snow White, while Jonathan Hanks was agile as Dopey. The corps dances were performed with high spirits.

The audience warmly applauded the performance, and it's gratifying to hear the children's laughter throughout the ballet. I look forward to watching more of the Estonian National Ballet in future, for instance Ronald Hynd's excellent production of "*Coppelia*" which Edur himself had danced at the English National Ballet and which he acquired for the company not long after he became director. I was also informed of the new ballet "*Modigliani*" created by Edur for the troupe earlier this year.