



***Sleeping Beauty Wakes* as New Musical Opens in L.A. April 7**

By Ernio Hernandez
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Alexandria Wailes and Russell Harvard
in *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*.
Craig Schwartz

Following the success of *Big River*, Jeff Calhoun again teams with Deaf West Theatre for the new musical *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, which officially opens April 7 in Los Angeles.

Center Theatre Group presents the co-production with Deaf West of the new musical that features a cast of deaf and hearing actors. The show began its world-premiere run March 31 at the Kirk Douglas Theatre and will play through May 13. Calhoun (*Bells Are Ringing*, *Grease*) directs and choreographs.

A new twist on the classic Grimm Brothers' fairy tale takes audiences "on a wildly theatrical journey set in parallel worlds: a fairy tale kingdom and a contemporary sleep-disorder clinic," an announcement explains. "In both worlds, a caring father learns the difference between protecting and smothering his beloved daughter while his daughter discovers the real costs of flirting with danger, the joy of living a fully conscious and conscientious life, and the meaning of true love."

Featuring a book by Tony Award winner Rachel Sheinkin (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) and music by Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda — of the band GrooveLily (which also features Gene Lewin) — *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* reunites the trio who penned *Striking 12* (a holiday show based on "Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Andersen) and *Wheelhouse* (the autobiographical tale set on GrooveLily's touring motor home).

The cast includes Erika Amato, Deanne Bray, Clinton Derricks-Carroll, Kevin Earley, Shannon Ford, Russell Harvard, Troy Kotsur, Christia Mantzke and Alexandria Wailes with creators Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda also taking part.

The design team for *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* features Tobin Ost (scenic), Maggie Morgan (costumes) and Michael Gilliam (lighting). The production stage manager is William Coiner.

CTG and Deaf West Theatre Company previously teamed on the 2002 presentation of Deaf West's *Big River*, which incorporated hearing and deaf actors singing and signing songs of the musical, at the Mark Taper Forum. The show moved to Broadway where it earned Tony Award Honors for Excellence and returned to Los Angeles on a national tour.

Next up at the Douglas Theatre, William Inge's *Come Back, Little Sheba* will receive a revival starring S. Epatha Merkerson (June 17-July 15).

Tickets for *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* at The Kirk Douglas Theatre, 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City, CA, can be purchased by calling CTG Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or online at CenterTheatreGroup.org. For the deaf community call TDD (213) 680-4017.



Shannon Ford, Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda in the world premiere of *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*.

photo by Craig Schwartz

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