



Birmingham Royal Ballet Principals: Nao Sakuma (图)

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Born in Fukuoka, Japan, Nao Sakuma trained at the Michiko Komori Ballet School and the Royal Ballet School, joining Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1995. She was promoted to Principal in 2002. Nao is a virtuoso classical dancer with a formidable technique and leads the Company in the classical repertory. She is particularly celebrated for her Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty* and won great acclaim dancing that role during the Company's visit to the Richmond Festival in Virginia, USA. A sure comic touch can also be seen in performances such as Lise in *La Fille mal gardée* and Swanilda in *Coppélia*, and she scored a particular success in the role of the Young Girl in Sir Frederick Ashton's *The Two Pigeons*, which the Company danced at The Met in New York during the celebrations of that choreographer's centenary. With her frequent partner Chi Cao she has represented the Company at several prestigious occasions, including the Ballet Boyz gala which re-opened the Royal Festival Hall in London in 2006.

REPERTORY INCLUDES

Frederick Ashton: *La Fille mal gardée* (Lise), *The Two Pigeons* (Gypsy Girl, Young Girl), *Scènes de ballet*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Voices of Spring*

George Balanchine: *Apollo* (Polyhymnia), *The Four Temperaments* (Theme 1 and Melancholic Variation), *Tarantella*, *Tchaikovsky pas de deux* and *Western Symphony*

David Bintley: *Arthur* (Guinevere), *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle), *Hobson's Choice* (Salvation Army), *The Nutcracker Sweeties* (Candy Kane, Arabesque Cookie), *Les Petits Riens* (lead role), *The Shakespeare Suite* (Juliet), *Choros*, *Dance House*, 'Still Life' at the Penguin Café, and David Bintley and Galina Samsova's production of *Giselle* (Giselle, Peasant pas de deux)

John Cranko: *The Lady and the Fool* (La Capricciosa)

Mikhail Fokine: *The Firebird* (title role)

Kenneth MacMillan: *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), *Elite Syncopations* ('Bethena Concert Waltz') and *Solitaire* (Girl)

Marius Petipa: *Diana and Acteon* (Ballet Boyz Ballet) Twyla Tharp: *Nine Sinatra Songs* ('One for My Baby') and *In the Upper Room*

Ninette de Valois: *Checkmate* (Black Queen)

Peter Wright's productions of *Coppélia* (Swanilda, 'Dawn'), *The Nutcracker* (Sugar Plum Fairy, Rose Fairy), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Aurora, Enchanted Princess, Fairy of Temperament, pas de quatre), and Peter Wright and Galina Samsova's production of *Swan Lake* (Odette/Odile)

Don Quixote pas de deux

CREATED ROLES

David Bintley: *Concert Fantasy* (lead role) and *The Seasons* ('Spring')

AWARDS

Special Jury Prize, Jackson Ballet Competition, 1998; Critics' Circle Award nomination, 2001.

GUEST APPEARANCES

The Royal Ballet (*Scènes de ballet*); The Star Dancers Ballet, Japan (*Coppélia*, *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker*).

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