

# 25 years after starring, Wendy Weir Henry directs production of Sleeping Beauty

Wendy Weir Henry had a starring role in a classical ballet production of Sleeping Beauty 25 years ago. Now, the Dallas woman is directing a more contemporary version of the show, which young performers will present this weekend.

On Sunday, Jan. 24 and Monday, Jan. 25, 67 dancers and actors will present an original contemporary dance theatre presentation of the beautiful story "Sleeping Beauty", at the Darte Center, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre. Performances are at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24 and 10 a.m. Monday. Henry is serving as Artistic Director and Choreographer and Producer/Director is another Dallas resident, Gina Major Ackerman.

"I've enjoyed working with all ages of performers," Henry said. She was 13 when she played the Lilac Fairy with the former professional Wilkes-Barre Ballet Co./Ballet Theatre PA. Reviewer Roy Morgan cited Henry's performance as outstanding, and thus was born the start of Henry's highly successful ballet career, which she kept up until beginning to raise a family at age 27.

"There's a lot of acting in ballet," she said. Since there are no speaking parts, dancers must be very expressive on stage. Is she tempted to take on a role? "No, I've had my hands full teaching all the parts," Henry said. "But it's been nice to get back into it."

Children and adults alike will enjoy this 70 minute adaptation, filled with the beautiful music of Tchaikovsky, royal pageantry, colorful sets and costumes, and energized dance, telling the classic old tale. Tickets are now on sale for both performances, at \$10 adult and \$5 children under 12. School groups may obtain tickets at \$4 per seat for groups of 10 or more. Community group discounts are also available. Call the box office at 675-4333. Tickets will also be available at the door.

As Ballet Director and Instructor at Major Performing Arts Center of Trucksville, Henry instills ballet skills and develops her young proteges, mostly Back Mountain youth.

Amanda Meholchick of Dallas and Ainsley MacDougall of Huntsville will portray the young Aurora, Briar Rose and Princess Aurora. Two young women from Trucksville, Carrie Thimot and Vicky Tasselmyer, play the Green Fairy and the Red Fairy. Kim Celusniak of Shavertown is Queen Victoria, and her son is played by two young men. Michael Tonart of Dallas plays the young Prince Phillip and Michael Height of Wilkes-Barre performs as the grown up Prince Phillip. Megan McAndrew of Dallas covers the role of the evil Malificent and Kara Musto of Dallas as pet crow. More than 45 members of the cast reside in the Back Mountain communities.

Following the performance, children will be able to meet their favorite Sleeping Beauty characters in the lobby of the Darte Center. For further information, contact, the NE JR Players Hotline at 675-4333, or call Major Performing Arts Center at 696-4755. This is a co-sponsored production, presented by both organizations.

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A volunteer training is now being organized. If you would be interested in becoming a Hospice Care volunteer or would like more information, please contact Barbara Wilson, Volunteer Coordinator, at 819-0866.

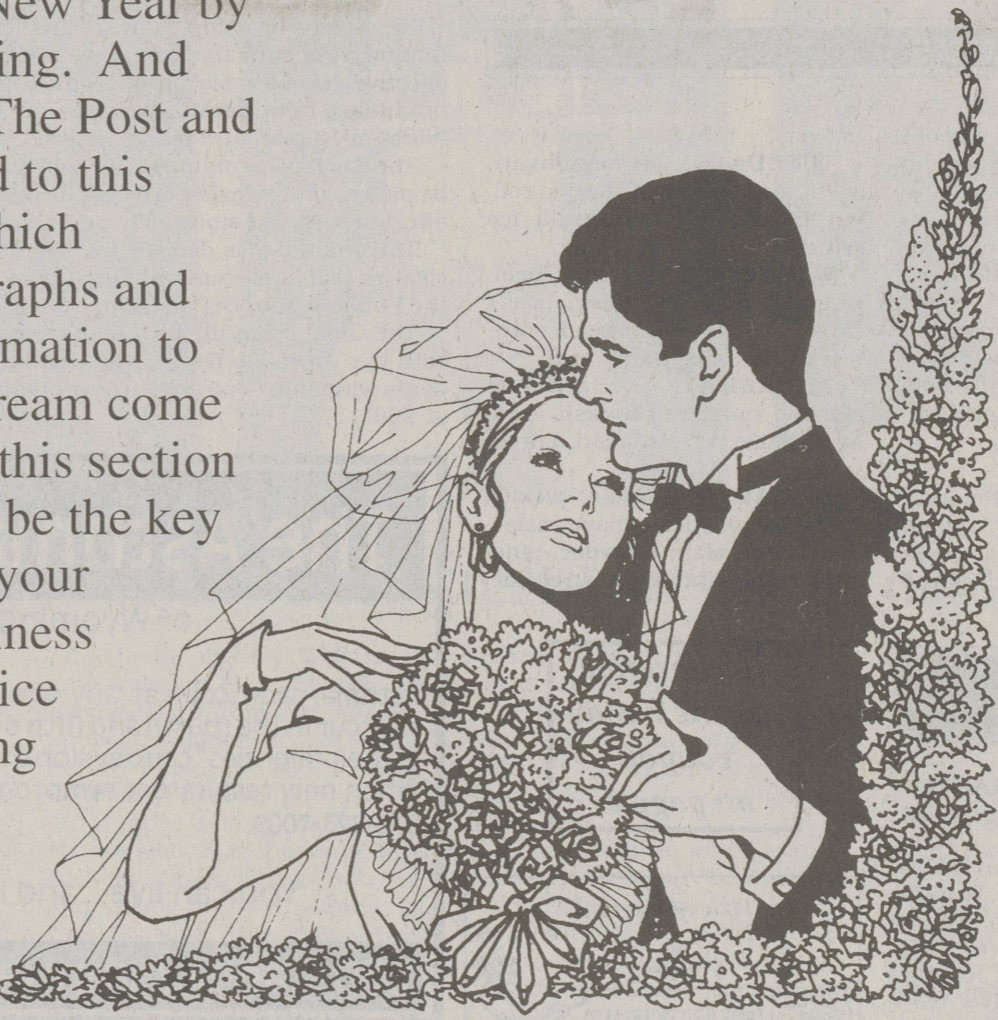


Wendy Weir Henry, seated in right photo, is artistic director for a contemporary production of Sleeping Beauty that will be presented Sunday and Monday. She is shown with some cast members - from left, Carrie Thomot, Shavertown; Vicky Tasselmyer, Trucksville, and Lauren Costanza, Wilkes-Barre. Above, Wendy Henry as the Lilac Fairy in 1974.



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