

DANCER OF THE WEEK – Luke Murphy *Fri 13 May*

Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* arrives back on UK soil for a final two weeks on Tuesday 17 May at the Lyceum Theatre, in Sheffield near to where cast member Luke Murphy grew up. Nick Kyprianou, our Audience Engagement Coordinator spoke to Luke about the joys of performing with New Adventures.

Luke is excited to perform to a home crowd and is due to be playing the role of Autumnus. Luke has been with the Company since 2009, first seen performing in *Swan Lake*.



When did you start taking dance classes?

I started dancing at the age of 6, I remember fancying my older sister's friends and thinking it may be a good way to get to know them!

Where did your formal training take place?

I started my training with Louella Winsor (Richard Winsor's Mum) and then went on to De Burnay's School of Dance, both in my home town of Retford and then went on to Northern Ballet School in Manchester for my formal training.

What drew you to the Company?

New Adventures has always had a pull for me, I wasn't just focused on my dance training, I joined in local amateur dramatics societies and played parts in school plays from an early age. So the idea of dance for dance sake wasn't really interesting to me, there had to be characters with depth, comedy, tragedy and nuance. The first Artistic Director I ever followed was Christopher Gable, Northern Ballet, who brought this out of his dancers on the classical stage, and New Adventures work for me just went that step further, offering filmic characters, as well as great dancing.

My next step in my career, which resulted in me becoming a member of the Company, was essentially a dance off between Ross Fountain and I, where we learned a scene from *Edward Scissorhands*, on stage with Etta Murfitt, Scott Ambler, and Richard Winsor and Matthew sat half way up the stalls. I fell flat on my back at one point, but luckily recovered. We then learned some partner work with *Edward Scissorhands* cast members, Shelby Williams and Rachel Lancaster and that was that. I walked away and said to my Dad, (who had been so excited about my audition that he had picked me up from Manchester, driven me down to High Wycombe and was driving me back again), "ah there's no chance, the other guy was experienced and brilliant, but it was really good fun." Half an hour later I had a call from Simon Lacey, Company Manager, offering me the job. Little did we know that the Company had two contracts on offer, and I ended up working with Ross Fountain on *Swan Lake* in 2009.

Do you have any hobbies/interests outside of dance?

I'd like to say that I have one particular hobby but outside of dance I'm interested in almost everything. I read science magazines, and used to read national geographic before Rupert Murdoch got his hands on it. I also read books on the economy to better understand something I have no idea about, and any book really that's recommended outside of the norm. I play guitar and drums to some level of competency and I love to cook and eat. I'm interested in politics, but who isn't with the current state of things, and I love to travel. I'd say that basically my hobbies are trying new things, and just living!

NEW/ADVENTURES RE;BOURNE

What's it like being on tour and in a different place every week?

Touring provides many opportunities to go to new places, try new things, go to old places you've been and remember the things you found last time. What's changed? What's new? Is that place you remember as good as you remembered? Touring obviously has its hardships, you lose track of time, of friends sometimes, lug a suitcase full of winter/summer/spring wear, but then you have a break, you catch up with that lost time, catch those friends, even for a glimpse and it's all worth it.

Do you have a favourite venue to perform at?

I've had the opportunity to perform at many venues, across the UK and the world, and picking a single one as a favourite would be impossible. But here's a few: Sheffield, as it's the easiest for my family, Manchester, as it's where most of my friends are, Liverpool and Bristol for the people and the independent bars, shops and restaurants, Tokyo for being Tokyo and Athens for being one of the most surprising and fulfilling places I've been. I've missed many off the list, but we'd be here all day.

In many of Matthew Bourne's shows the dancers have to learn more than one role, performing several tracks in one show and *Sleeping Beauty* is no exception. How do you remember more than one role?

I love the challenge of remembering different tracks within a single show. I find the key is to make sure you think of your characters with different mindsets, if you're in the mindset of one character it makes it harder to fall into the other's dance steps, of course there are always those moments when you slip up. Stage left means left foot over, stage right means right foot over, right? Oh no... but that's what live theatre is about eh!?

Do you have a favourite costume you've worn during your time with New Adventures so far?

My favourite costume would have to be wearing just a towel in *The Car Man*, right after the shower scene! And of course the infamous Swan Pants from *Swan Lake*. Having your name on a freshly made pair of those is a dream and then making them your own over hundreds of shows.

What's your favourite role that you have performed as so far, in the Company, and is there another New Adventures production that you would love to take part in?

My favourite role to date would have to be the three I played in *The Car Man* - Chad, Vito and Marco - it's my favourite show through and through, you go on a full journey as your character, and the cast I performed with were just stunning, on and off stage.