

Sleeping Beauty and the Pea: British Panto at Hale's Palladium | CultureMob

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by Gemma Alexander | 12/22/12 |

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The best moment I have ever experienced in theater was watching a couple dozen little kids trying desperately to warn fairy godmother Esmeralda that there was a ghost right behind her. I laughed so hard I gasped for air while children jumped up and down, screaming hysterically and pointing to the sheeted figure behind Fremont Players founder Simon Neale, who played Esmeralda in a pink tutu and wig and willfully refused to believe that ghosts exist. ("Oh, no they don't," says Esmeralda. "Oh yes they do!" shouts the audience.)

Simon Neal founded [The Fremont Players](#) to capture the raucous fun he remembered from the Panto plays of his native England. In the decade since then, The Fremont Players have performed as part of the Seattle Fringe Festival and at the Fremont Fair – but [Hale's Palladium](#) has become their primary home.

Each year, the group develops a brand new Panto, which traditionally is based on a classic fairy tale. The Fremont Philharmonic Orchestra, which is a part of the company, writes all original songs and music for each production. In the summer, they take the Panto to the Oregon Country Fair. But Panto is primarily a holiday tradition, and The Fremont Players always bring the show home to Hale's Palladium for the holiday run.



This year's story, *Sleeping Beauty and the Pea*, is a comic mash-up of two classic fairy tales. The orchestra performs in their PJs, while cross-dressed actors play colorful, over-the-top characters; and there is a cow and a talking peapod. In the Panto tradition, the performance is equal parts slapstick humor for the kids and witty innuendo for the adults. Best of all, with Hale's as the venue, it incorporates the European attitude that a

family affair can still include a good craft beer for the adults.

If you have never been to a Panto before, expect to participate! British Pantomime is an exaggerated form of theater, something like the American melodrama, where the audience cheers the hero and boos the villain. Audience members argue with the characters and warn them when someone (or something) is behind them. Singing along is encouraged. Panto is big and boisterous with enough humor to thaw even Seattle's notoriously passive audiences.

Sleeping Beauty and the Pea runs weekends through January 13. Advance tickets are highly recommended, as the shows do sell out. Show times are perfect for dinner at Hale's pub after the matinee or before the evening performance, but you will not get a table on performance nights without a reservation.

Just the facts:

Where: Hale's Palladium, 4301 Leary Way NW, Seattle, WA 98107

When: Sunday, December 23rd – 1:00pm and 4:00pm

Saturday, December 29th – 4:00pm and 7:30pm

Sunday, December 30th – 1:00pm and 4:00pm

Saturday, January 5th – 4:00pm and 7:30pm



Sunday, January 6th – 1:00pm and 4:00pm

Saturday, January 12th – 4:00pm and 7:30pm

Sunday, January 13th – 1:00pm and 4:00pm

Tickets: \$6 Children 12 and under and seniors 65+; adults \$12.

Tickets are available through [Brown Paper Tickets](#)

