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DANCE REVIEW | LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO

Elegant Ballerinas, Complete With Frilly Dresses and Manly Biceps

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Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo was born out of the drag movement of the late 1960s and early '70s when glamour was practically taken for granted. Nowadays the real drag is that glamour is hard to come by. Mercifully, the Trocks, as they are lovingly known, are still around to make the world a more beautiful place.

Returning to the Joyce Theater on Tuesday night the company, led by the artistic director Tory Dobrin, offered the usual: classical ballet with a comic twist, performed by dancers with fabricated Russified names (each member, when joining the group, takes possession of a female and male persona). The program began with the company's impeccable twist on the second act of "Swan Lake."

At the start of the lakeside scene, Von Rothbart appears, portrayed with spindly accuracy by Velour Pilleaux (Paul Ghiselin), whose evil is hilariously rendered with mad hair and a fluttery cape. Prince Siegfried, danced by Pepe Dufka (Raffaele Morra), is a blond fop whose Odette, Sveltiana Lofatkina (Fernando Medina Gallego), has the stature — and the muscles — to crush them all. But Odette is a swan queen, and even when Mr. Gallego flashes the audience a toothy, joyous smile, he plays her as a regal creature.

The fun of this "Swan Lake" rests on Mr. Gallego's well-built shoulders and still stronger ankles (this version even features fouetté turns, which he whipped off admirably).

Yet, as with all the works on the program, these men playing women don't imagine that they are women. Generally the jokes are found in the games played on the choreography, not in the dancing itself.

In "La Trovatiara Pas de Cinq," choreographed by Peter Anastos, one of the group's founders, the setting is Tripoli, where three pirate girls are ordered to perform a divertissement by two diminutive men. During a sustained balance, Katarina Bychkova (Joshua Grant) rests her palms on their heads for balance — they are that short — before releasing and stretching into a victorious arabesque.

"La Trovatiara," set to Verdi, is a sly rendering of exotic moments in opera ballets. "Majisimas," a new addition to the repertory, features Massenet music from the opera "El Cid," with staging and additional choreography by Mr. Morra.

He holds little back in this finely spun homage to the National Ballet of Cuba. There are fewer gags than usual — the humor, less broad, is revealed in details, like a sly hip shake — but the power of this ballet is how it stands on its own in classical aptitude. In many ways that's the power of the Trocks too. All jokes aside, they can really dance.