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Classical ballet lends itself to snobbery. Seduces it, even. Asks snobbery to come share a divan with it and dish about who's put on a little too much weight or didn't go to the best school. At its heart, though, it's an art form that paints every individual, from whatever circumstances, as a vessel of elegance. Sure, queens and princes are stock characters of the form, but many of the classical canon's richest roles—Swanilda, Giselle, Colas, Basilio—are farmers, peasants and barbers.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, based in New York, may be a bunch of drag queens in pointe shoes hawking sight gags and stumbling here and there, but when it comes to the spirit of ballet, it embodies it more clearly than a lot of the big-ticket companies I watch wander lost in a hall of mirrors. On a behemoth program at the Harris Theater Wednesday night (Trock was billed to play four pieces and added two more), it brought a satirical angle to Petipa, Cunningham, Bournonville and Balanchine, telling you more about who those choreographers really were than you might get in a year of freshman dance history.

In *La Vivandière Pas de Six*, for example, the central joke is the pairing of the Amazonian Katerina Bychkova (Joshua Grant) with Ketevan Iosifidi (Long Zou, an London-trained Chinese dancer who's *maybe* 5'1"). He gets tossed around and disappears behind her—hilarity ensues. (Grant, in a fiery red wig and manic grin, plays Bychkova's ballerina-as-pro-dom to a T.) But here's the thing: They're spectacular dancers, and most of what makes *Vivandière* funny isn't as much their antics as it is the fact that they're able enough with the fiendishly difficult choreography to delicately garnish it with shenanigans. *Patterns in Space*, the Trock's spoof of Cunningham and Cage, is a skewering of postmodern dance so spot-on I imagine the revered late dance maker would enjoy it as much as anyone does a sharp roast.

As *Majismas* began, it seemed strange the company would close an evening of non-stop hijinks with what is essentially a straightforward, plotless ballet—four of the Trocks's stronger dancers are featured out of drag, in fact, for a macho *pas de quatre*. Raffaele Morra's choreography for it, like the rest of the program, calls for all the stamina and technique required of "real" ballet dancers, maybe more. I and the rest of the audience sat quietly, waiting to guffaw again. What quickly became evident, though, was that this is a company that is just as much a joy to watch play it straight. Behind the false eyelashes and fake boobs, this company may actually love ballet more than those to whom it's ostensibly been entrusted.

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