

At the NYC Ballet and Its Ancillary Show



WASHINGTON DC – I found myself stuck between a ballet historian and a Lady Dame last night at the John F. Kennedy Center’s New York City Ballet (NYCB).

Works by choreographers George Balanchine and Alexei Ratmansky were presented in an amazing three-piece show, while I was an unwilling participant in a show of ballet knowledge.

An old geezer to my left fashioned himself a ballet historian with a barrage of unsolicited information and a remarkable display of namedropping. Lady Dame to my right, dared to compete with the ballet pundit but conceded when she discovered her mere American ballet knowledge failed to match the internationally knowledgeable ballet enthusiast.

At the end of the first piece, the Square Dance, the dancers relished in the audience applause—a mark of their approval for the spectacular performance. Then, the curtains fell. I could not wait to see the second piece (Odessa, combined with Tarantella) after the first intermission, while the Balanchine historian apparently could not wait to flex his verbal ballet muscles.

“Have you seen Odessa?” he started. Lady Dame puffed an irritable sigh and shrugged her shoulders, bumping my right arm ever so lightly in disapproval of the foretelling ballet maestro. “I saw the original in... blah, blah, blah...” *director and classical composer names*, he bragged. Admittedly, I found his knowledge admirable, despite his intrusiveness, but his ridiculing of the first piece increased my desire to escape his chitchat.

Brilliant! Simply the way I described the second piece—to which the old geezer stated no qualms. The third piece, Rodeo: Four Dance Episodes, followed the second intermission. This time, I was not having it. I pardoned myself and slipped pass the old geezer. I needed a breath of fresh air, as well as a strategy to ignore him upon my return.

My timing was impeccable. As I entered the hallway to the cavernous Opera House the lights began to flicker, a signal for the audience to return to their seats before the show resume. The old geezer was seated and peering through the pages in the program’s booklet. Lady Dame was standing, as if to avoid conversation with the old geezer during my absence.

Bravo! The third piece ended, and the Curtain Call was much to my delight as it was to the dancers. My evening of the NYCB and its ancillary show had ended.

Perhaps I will take along a Ratmansky maestro to battle future Balanchin-ists while I enjoy the artistic brilliance of choreographers George Balanchine and Alexei Ratmansky in peace.

By Denrique Preudhomme
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