



Trocks rise to zany dance occasion in return to Cleveland

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By **Donald Rosenberg, The Plain Dealer**

A lot of things go wrong during a performance by Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. But they happen at just the right moments.

With the impeccable timing, madcap sensibility and disciplined elegance that long have been their hallmarks, the male dancers known as the Trocks are frolicsome guides to the quirks that inhabit classical ballet and modern dance. They don't make fun of these genres. They have fun with them while maintaining loyalty to the source.

The Trocks brought tutus and tights to Cleveland for the first time in several decades Saturday at the Ohio Theatre under the auspices of Cuyahoga Community College and DanceCleveland. From the time an announcer with a theek Russian accent introduced the program to the final whimsical curtain call (Celtic dance a la Russe), the Trocks were masters of terpsichorean mirth.

At Saturday's performance, they shared distinctive spoofs of classic works and legendary choreographers, mixing matters of gender with assured dancing that must be the envy of more than a few "serious" ballet companies.

The corps de ballet in Act II of "Swan Lake," for instance, looked buoyant and even giddy *en pointe*, even if one member was so enthusiastic that she/he often fell out of step (or simply crashed to the floor). As Odette, Olga Supphozova (female nom de plume for the terrific Robert Carter) was a radiant, ornery presence – at turns graceful and earthbound, her technical feats precise and delightfully self-serving.

In "Patterns of Space," a work paying tribute to the late Merce Cunningham, three dancers dressed in brightly colored unitards engage in abstract configurations that have nothing to do with the music. And it is the bizarre and hilarious music that rules here, especially as played on kitchen utensils, paper bags, kazoos and other paraphernalia by the oh-so-avante-garde Lariska Dumbchenko (Raffaele Mora) and Yuri Smirnov (the versatile Carter).

Four legendary ballerinas are celebrated in "Le Grand Pas de Quatre," which the Trocks treat as a competition of fluttering eyelashes, logistical miscalculations and demented pratfalls. In their solos and ensemble duties, the dancers portraying Lucille Grahn, Carlotta Grisi, Fanny Cerrito and Marie Taglioni showed keen command of romantic style even as they contributed addled gestures that suggested their need to see the nearest shrink.

One of the Trocks' most enduring pieces is "The Dying Swan," which was performed on this occasion by Katerina Bychkova (Joshua Grant) with a blend of Amazonian poise and goofball vulnerability. This swan has a big problem, aside from imminent demise: her tutu is molting with alarming speed. Bychkova managed to fend off feathery disaster until she slid (literally) to the ground and waved a fond farewell.

For sheer, fanciful pageantry, there was "Raymonda's Wedding," a divertissement based on choreography by Marius Petipa, which found the Trocks cavorting with vivacious splendor. Carter's impressive whiplash turns were but delectable morsels in this banquet of winsome and macho dance drollery.



Sascha Vaughan

Members of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo perform "Pas de Quatre," one of the works the male troupe presented Saturday at the Ohio Theatre.

REVIEW

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

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