

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Royal Ballet**'Giselle'**April 2009**London, Covent Garden**by Carmela*

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I saw the second performance of the Marquez - Soares partnership in Giselle last night. I went with high expectations of Thiago Soares' Albrecht - he was, in my opinion, by far the best Solor in terms of characterization from this season's run of La Bayadere, and I was hoping he would give such a convincing performance as Albrecht as well. He certainly did not disappoint! This Albrecht was definitely a real person, who loved Giselle without doubt, and seemed truly overcome with remorse at her death, and half crazed with guilt and grief in Act II. His acting is so subtly nuanced and yet so clear - one example was where Albrecht begins to fight with Hilarion in Act I and gives himself away by reaching for his (non-existent) sword. I have never seen any Albrecht realise this moment as well as Thiago did. And little details which he includes, just really bring the performance and character to life. In

terms of technique, Thiago was really impressive last night. Great height on his grand jete and superb landings; as usual the wonderful princely bearing and very elegant arabesque. In my eyes, it was a truly top level performance.

I haven't seen Roberta Marquez as Giselle before and I enjoyed her act I very much. Her characterization was great and she had a really nice rapport with Thiago. Marquez is not a huge favourite of mine but I was very pleasantly surprised by her Act I... maybe she is more a romantic dancer than a classical one? Unfortunately, I felt she came slightly unstuck in the mad scene - the timing didn't feel quite right to me, and her expression seemed a bit contrived. Thiago acted very well in the mad scene but maybe when Genesia Rosato (as Berthe) pushed him right over and Thiago fell down it was a bit over the top!!



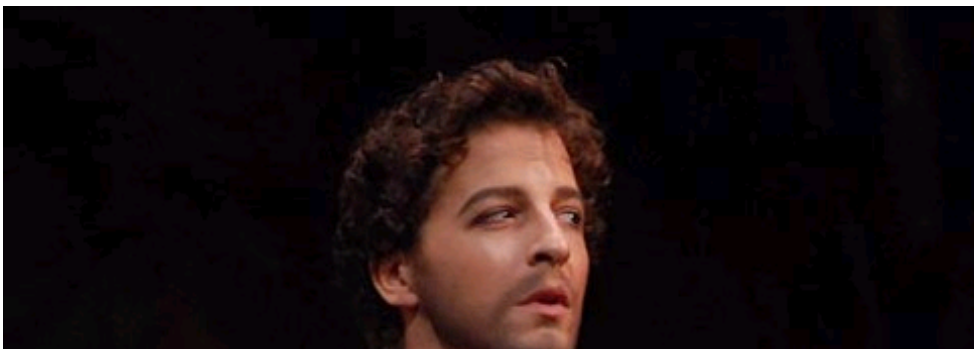


Roberta Marquez and Thiago Soares in *Giselle*

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In Act II, I also thought Marquez danced very well, and Thiago's performance was wonderful. Helen Crawford gave us a really top class Myrtha last night, absolutely steady entrance and wonderful pas de bouree in her solo. I thought her Myrtha was really promising on the opening night, and she has already progressed so much, she looks as if she'd danced the role for years. Sian Murphy and Samantha Raine as Moyna and Zulme did not impress me so well, their articulation seemed a little too staccato, but they worked in very good unison and caught the "key moments" (ie, throwing Hilarion to his death) very effectively. Stepanek as Hilarion danced very well and had a good characterization (which I feel he could actually demonstrate more) and Sergei Polunin and James Hay were stunning in the pd6, the latter especially impressive with his absolutely textbook perfect tours en l'air. It's great to see the younger members of the company (Emma Maguire, Lizzie Harrod, Leanne Cope and James Wilkie as well) so impressive in the divertissements, it really shows there is a good feeling of motivation and possibilities in the Company at the moment, I think.

Altogether it was a really great performance, amazing principals, but also great dancing from the soloists and the corps de ballet.





Johannes Stepanek as Hilarion in *Giselle*

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I have just one question about Giselles' solo in Act I: which version is most commonly danced by the Rb ballerinas today? I am almost sure that the version Nunez danced was different from the steps performed by Marquez last night, if not the whole dance, at least a significant number of steps had been amended. I'm pretty sure that Nuenz danced the Spessivtseva version (as Cojocarú also normally performs) so which version does Marquez perform (or is it an adjusted Spessivtseva version? And what is the "standard"?)

Also, if anyone saw Putrov and Galeazzi's performance or Lauren Cuthbertson's debut tonight, it would be wonderful to get some feedback!

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