

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

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*Royal Ballet**'Ondine'**May 2009
London, Covent Garden**by Diandri*

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I had the great pleasure of seeing both of these casts on wednesday & thursday night & with no hesitation I am confident that Ondine is Ansanelli's best full length role with the RB. She was utterly stunning in every respect & I would urge anyone thinking of seeing this ballet to get themselves a ticket asap as you won't be disappointed.

Her interpretation has deepened since December & her act one was blissful in the shapes & dancing, I was especially struck by the beauty of her epaulement & her quicksilver fish hand movements. Her shadow solo was quite beautiful. A triumph in all senses of the word & a performance that she can be very proud of.

Ansanelli's partner was Valeri Hristov who is a beautiful classical stylist & demonstrated attractive dancing in his own right & partnered

heroically. He looked chuffed to be partnering Ansanelli & they do make a lovely pair - I'd like to see him promoted to principal as he's ready & has delivered many other excellent roles this season.

Kenta Kura delivered a knockout Tirrenio - fast & bendy at the waist with plenty of Ashtonian detailing. Delighted to see Laura Morera doing Berta & a very good job she did too with a lovely softness to her phrasing & beautiful fingers & hands.

Yoshida was good in a role she has danced many times, but its now obviously hard work to achieve the same results & I think next season should really be her last to go while one can still be complimentary. She does have a lovely line in



arabesque though & I've always liked the soft quality that she brings to her phrasing. Genesis Rosato was her Berta & Ricardo Cervera moved to Tirrenio from the previous nights divertissement leader.



Alexandra Ansanelli in *Ondine*

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For some reason *Ondine* is looked at as a problem ballet & it's always the Henze's music that is cited. I disagree & think it's the designs which need dumping. Ashton was supposedly wanting to create a Neapolitan ballet, but the overwhelming colour in this ballet is black. I think a new set of designs & some decent lighting is urgently needed. John B. Read seems obsessed with gloom & can't light an entrance to save his life. Indeed every time *Ondine* & Palemon dance together the set lighting descends to night & a shaky spotlight follows them around the stage, but it looks & feels amateurish which is a shame as there's a decent ballet struggling to get out from under the gloom & yukky costumes. Pity poor Ashton that he still has no champion to protect his ballets.

To end on a more positive note ballet.coers will be delighted to hear that the corps have been more finely rehearsed than was the case at xmas & all performers have added depth to their roles. Despite the dated look of the ballet I would urge ballet-lovers to see it especially in the Ansanelli cast as she makes it appear a superior ballet than it might otherwise be.

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