

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Torvill and Dean,
Birmingham Royal Ballet**T&D: 'Dancing On Ice The Tour'
BRB: 'Sylvia'**April 2009**London, Wembley Arena**London, Coliseum*© *Jeffery Taylor**Former dancer, Dance Critic and an Arts feature writer for the
Sunday Express. Pub 19 04 2009*

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The pristine presentation of a television show with judiciously cut camera angles, lingering close ups and panoramic overviews, adds a miniaturised precision to even floundering beginners. What a joyous spectacle it is then to see a bunch of celebrities in the flesh, just like you and me, in an aircraft hanger of an ice rink with everything laid bare.

Vulnerable on TV, Roxanne Pallett just looks lost, Melinda Messenger is as vibrant as a waxwork dummy and Todd Carty's real life gurning is even more awful than you feared. Last year's champion, Suzanne Shaw, might take a nose dive with new partner, Lukasz Rozycki, while the strain of the passing years occasionally breaks through the legendary Torvill and Dean magic. Nevertheless, and in spite of host Andi Peters' jaw clenching public preening, it is fun to see egos struggling with space and crowds while thrilling to see the talents of Chris Fountain, Jessica Taylor and Roy Quinn still growing.

What a gorgeous and important work BRB's director David Bintley brought south last week.



Bintley choreographed his three act take on Delibe's achingly familiar score thirteen years ago. Sylvia survived just one tour and was then shelved following a luke warm public and press reaction. Luckily for us, Bintley sees every new creation as a work in progress and his recent notion of adding a strand of ordinariness with heaven-weary gods posing as gardeners, (Alexander Campbell's Eros), skittish nursemaids (Nao Sakuma's Sylvia) and lovelorn Valet Chi Cao as Amynta, works like a treat.



Nao Sakuma as Sylvia and Chi Cao as Amynta
in Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Sylvia*
© Steve Hanson



But though pretty conceits to suspend disbelief might be fun, the heart and soul of this so far overlooked piece is Bintley's effortless talent to produce steps. He hears music like no one else and his feeling for the classical technique is equally unique. From the simplest academic to the most dazzling virtuoso, Bintley's dance making is a sophisticated flow that is pure joy to watch. Nor has the

company ever looked better. Robert Parker's cultured caveman, Orion, alias Count Guiccioli, is the acceptable face of machismo and dancing as superbly as his Contessa/Diana, Goddess of the Hunt, Elisha Willis. Campbell, the depressed divine Eros disguised as gardener, nearly stopped the show in his incarnation as a peg legged pirate chief. A delight from start to finish.

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revised: 13 May 2009

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