

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Northern Ballet Theatre**'Romeo and Juliet'**May 2009**London, Sadler's Wells*© *Jeffery Taylor**Former dancer, Dance Critic and an Arts feature writer for the Sunday Express. Pub 24 05 2009*

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One of the most approachable danced versions of the greatest love story ever told is on the road for a few more weeks thanks to Northern Ballet Theatre's UK tour.

Massimo Moricone's steps, a blend of classical and modern, shrug naturally into Prokofiev's music played passionately, apart from a maverick in the brass section, by NBT's own orchestra. The whole thing fits neatly into Lez Brotherston's flexible set of bits of ancient Verona whizzing about the stage to provide bed and ballrooms, town square and tomb. Shakespeare's star crossed lovers last Thursday, Keiko Amemori's Juliet and her Romeo, Christopher Hinton-Lewis, were heartbreakingly convincing. Amemori's painful development from girl child to woman is achieved through feeling not pantomime while

whatever Hinton-Lewis lacks technically is more than compensated by vigorous ardour and excellent partnering.

What gives a natural and satisfyingly honest feel to the evening, almost entirely cliché free, is NBT's background of dedication to dramatic truth. David Nixon, the current cultural wizard in charge of the company, has avoided a diet of underfunded classical warhorses, instead feeding his dancers story ballets that please his audiences and challenge his dancers. The whole company was there in front of us telling us the old, old story with a natural spontaneity that made it new. I call that art.



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