

JUNE 2009

REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Bale de Rua**'Bale de Rua'**May 2009**London, Barbican**by Libby Costello*

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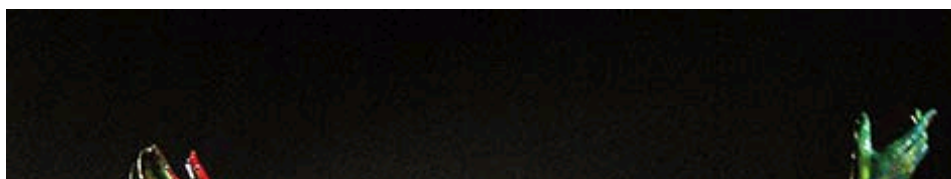
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Cultural shows are a hard type of performance to master. Whilst Balé de Rua first brought their vision of Brazil to Edinburgh in 2008 with much acclaim, it's setting in the Barbican this May was a much grander affair.

The company Balé de Rua formed as a community project, and when viewed from this angle, the work they have produced is outstanding. However on artistic merit this tracing of Brazilian slavery and religion was an unfocussed meandering littered with back flips.

With an opening reminiscent to a '40s Broadway show the predominantly male cast sang and danced in matching cream suits. This sedate opening gave no indication of the multitude of ideas what were to follow in the 75 minute show.

The performance set disappointingly to recorded music moved through genres such as samba, capoeira, hip hop and street styles. With so many styles to squeeze in coupled with the many themes no section offered a meaty sample of the dancers' abilities. Of the props and costumes the most unusual were the small tin baths, one-note trumpets and body paint but the most intriguing were the male dresses and plastic flower attire.





Bale de Rua
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The hip hop and break dance sections brought the performers pure joy, with the one-up-man-ship and flashy flaunts keeping the crowd wrapped round the guys little fingers. Darker moments, exploring Brazilian slavery and ritual, brought a more humbling atmosphere but the dancers never had long to dwell before bringing the carnival back to the stage.

Although Balé de Rua did not have the finesse of its neighboring countries cultural offerings (the Argentinean Tango Fire or the Cuban Havana Rakatan) the goofy style and bare chested antics won the crowd over by the end - a show lacking in direction but certainly overflowing with enthusiasm.

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