



**The World's Foremost
All-Male
Comic
Ballet
Company**



PRESS KIT

HISTORY

Preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary season in 2024, **Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo** was founded in 1974 by a group of ballet enthusiasts for the purpose of presenting a playful, entertaining view of traditional, classical ballet in parody form and *en travesti*. The Trocks, as they are affectionately known, first performed in late shows at the loft of the West Side Discussion Group, and quickly garnered a major critical essay by Arlene Croce in *The New Yorker* which established the Company as an artistic and popular success. By mid 1975, the Trocks' inspired blend of a loving knowledge of dance with a comic approach, alongside the astounding fact that men can, indeed, dance en pointe without falling flat on their faces, was being noted beyond New York.

Since those beginnings, the Trocks have established themselves as a major dance phenomenon throughout the world - their frenzied annual schedule has included appearances in over 35 countries and over 600 cities worldwide since its founding, as well as television appearances and two recent feature documentaries, *Rebels on Pointe* and *Ballerina Boys*.

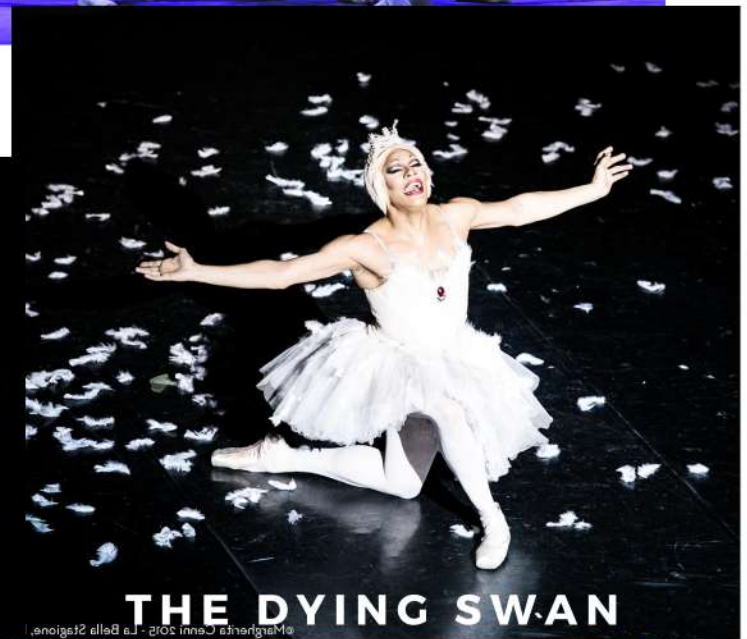
**The Trocks may show
you how to laugh at
ballet, but they also
teach you to love it.
~ New York Post**



As its 50th birthday approaches, the company remains cutting edge by boldly defying conventional gender classification and breaking down preconceptions of ballet through their unique blend of satire and spectacle. The original concept of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo has not changed over the decades. It is a Company of professional male dancers performing the full range of the classical ballet and modern dance repertoire. The comedy is achieved by incorporating and exaggerating the foibles, accidents, and underlying incongruities of serious dance. For the future, there are plans for new works; new cities, states and countries to perform in; and for the continuation of the Trocks' original purpose: to bring the pleasure of dance to the widest possible audience. They will, as they have done for fifty years, "Keep on Trockin'."



SAMPLE REPERTOIRE



MEET THE ARTISTS



HELEN HIGHWATERS



EUGENIA REPELSKII



MARIA CLUBFOOT



MINNIE VAN DRIVER



NADIA DOUMIAFEYVA



GRUNYA PROTZOVA





OLGA SUPPHOZOVA



COLETTE ADAE



ELVIRA KHABABGHALLINA



VARVARA LAPTOPOVA



LUDMILA BEAULEMOVA

**"Oh boy, that is
a ballerina."
- The Guardian**

WHAT THE REVIEWS SAY

"The amalgam of ballerina finesse and daft diva antics is brilliant, unsettling, riveting"

Alastair Macaulay, The New York Times



"One of the most unusually gifted dance companies in existence."
Neil Norman, The Stage

"They are the best kind of artful parodists, capable of illuminating the most gripping sections of academic classical ballet, albeit via a wink and smile and the occasional well-placed shtick."

Calgary Herald

"This is a company that brings its audiences pure joy,"

- The Seattle Times

"An international treasure."

- The Stage

"We came to laugh, but we stayed to worship."

Louise Levene, The Telegraph, London

BOOKING INQUIRIES

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8 August 2022

Belly laughs with Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo — review

The brilliant — and brilliantly funny — all-male troupe returns to the Peacock Theatre, London

Louise Levene

Are we having fun yet? To judge from my inbox, half the shows in production are hoping to explore domestic violence, BLM, climate change and the cost of living crisis via the expressive medium of dance. Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, who began their two-month UK tour with a two-week residency at the Peacock Theatre on Tuesday, have a far more serious, far more challenging agenda: pleasure.

Both London programmes are a tried and tested mix of old favourites and novelties crafted with the Trocks' unique blend of balletomania and belly laughs. The first mixed bill opens with Swan Lake act two led by Takaomi Yoshino in the guise of Varvara Laptopova (“awarded first prize at the Pan-Siberian Festival for artistic misinterpretation”) making her British debut.

Trocks ballerinas have consistently amazed audiences with the strength and quality of their pointework since their first teetering pas de bourrée off-off Broadway in 1974, but in the 35 years I have been watching them I've seldom seen an Odette as technically assured as the Vaganova-trained Yoshino: feathery beaten steps, freeze-frame balances and funny.

His loyal corps of swans deliver their sight gags with tireless wit. Robert Carter (aka Olga Supphozova) has been delivering the same jokes for 27 years but I still laugh out loud. His arthritic, applause-hungry Dying Swan was a triumph of physical comedy, his entire body seeming to change size and shape at will.

Swans (living and dead) are the backbone of the first mixed bill, but the Trocks' repertoire is extensive, ranging from a send-up of Leonid Lavrovsky's Walpurgisnacht (“a specimen of Soviet balletic camp”) to Nightcrawlers, a hilarious spoof of Jerome Robbins' Chopin ballet In the Night, wickedly choreographed by founding Trock Peter Anastos, a parodist of genius. Written as a companion piece to his equally hilarious Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet, Nightcrawlers features the mysterious comings and goings of three couples in evening dress, gleefully sending up Robbins' mix-and-match pairwork and half-glimpsed love tragedies.

The ballerinas inevitably hog the limelight but every Trock also has a male alter ego: Jacques D'aniels, Boris Dumbkopf and the legendary Legupski brothers. The Trocks' danseurs provide a pin-sharp pastiche of all this — think Vladimir Vasiliev with a pinch of Tsiskaridze. Mismatched couples offer an easy laugh but Jake Speakman, a fun-size porteur dwarfed by his Amazonian ballerinas (Duane Gosa and Joshua Thake) in the pitch-perfect Swan Lake pas de trois, is a painful reminder of just how hard it can be to dead-lift 100lbs (let alone 140).

As Siegfried in Swan Lake act two, Dmitri Legupski (Giovanni Goffredo) makes his way centre stage with that teasing, foot-dragging walk (© R Nureyev) as if about to dazzle us with a solo variation, only to keep right on going and exit via the opposite wing. The Nureyev gala, only a few blocks away in Drury Lane, showcases the many aspects of male classical dancing — flashy, refined, introspective — and the preening powerplay between tights and tutu. The Trocks play exactly the same game — but they play it for laughs.

★★★★☆ To September 17 then touring to October 29, trockadero.org

The Times
8 September 2022

FIRST NIGHT | DANCE

The Trocks review — high spirits and pratfalls in gleeful ballet parody

Peacock, WC2

new

[Debra Craine](#)

Thursday September 08 2022, 12.00pm, The Times



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo are the world's foremost comedy ballet troupe

MARILYN KINGWILL

Save

★★★★☆

Spirits are usually high at the beginning of a long tour. But as the Trocks (Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo) opened their latest visit to the UK — two months and 12 venues — spirits were off the chart. Perhaps it's an after-effect of the pandemic — now everyone just wants to have fun.

Fun was certainly on the agenda at the Peacock, where the enthusiasm of the audience matched that of the men in the world's foremost comedy ballet troupe as they donned tutus, tiaras and toe shoes to deliver their distinctive take on ballet

classics. Channelling the glories and excesses of old Russian ballerinas, the Trocks are as devoted to the choreography as they are to parodying it en travesti.

Sometimes the jokes are broad, as in *Swan Lake*. The Trocks give us Act II (Ivanov's choreography slightly manhandled), complete with pratfalls, duck quacks, an effeminate prince in bright-red lipstick, a silly best friend, a pantomime villain and some hilariously savage swans. On Wednesday night they also gave us an outstanding Odette in the shape of Takaomi Yoshino, as ridiculously gleeful as he was technically proficient.

More *Swan Lake* follows in *Pas de Trois* from Act I — the joke is that the two ballerinas tower over their pint-sized gentleman partner — while in *Nightcrawlers* the choreographer Peter Anastos makes merry with Jerome Robbins's *In the Night*, turning his moody nocturnal romance for three couples into a dysfunctional shambles. Elsewhere, Robert Carter moults manically in *The Dying Swan* solo but underpins the laughs with the most beautiful port de bras.

In the first of two programmes for London, the Trocks save the best for last. *Valpurgeyeva Noch* (Walpurgisnacht), inspired by Leonid Lavrovsky's 1941 production for the Bolshoi Ballet, harks back to the glory days of Soviet ballet at its most camp. We are transported to ancient Greek myth to take part in a happy sexual frolic with everyone, except for a pair of virginal nymphs, intoxicated on wine and lust.

A quartet of cavorting Fauns chase the haughty Bacchante (the elegant Ugo Cirri) while gormless Bacchus (Joshua Thake) looks lost and Pan (Yoshino, again terrific) plays his alluring pipes and dances up a storm. The music is from Gounod's *Faust*; the choreography (staged by Elena Kunikova after Lavrovsky) is a delight, as are the softly romantic sets and costumes.

To Sep 17 then touring to Oct 29, trockadero.org

A Young(ish) Perspective



REVIEW: Les Ballets Trockadero – Programme B

PUBLISHED ON [September 19, 2022](#) by [Alex Halstead](#)

The Trocks have done it again! In their second programme they deliver a delightfully comic interpretation of Les Sylphides, before exploding onto the stage – all flowing skirts, sparkling headdresses and lashes for days – in playful explorations of Spanish pastiche in Majsimas and Paquita.

This week the indomitable Trocks make their return to the Peacock Theatre stage and regale audiences with a second programme, running from the 12th – 17th September, presenting an inspired and colourful selection of works based on Fokine, Petipa and Balanchine.

The programme opens with an adaptation of *Les Sylphides*, a short abstract ballet from 1907 that was inspired by the mysterious atmospheres of earlier romantic ballets such as *La Sylphide* and *Giselle*. With choreography by Michel Fokine and set to music by Chopin, the ballet has no narrative beyond ethereal air spirits dancing by moonlight with a lone man. The Trocks are scintillating to watch in this “romantic reverie,” performing with the utmost grace and precision one minute, before tumbling into impeccably timed pratfalls the next. Some of the funniest moments in *Les Sylphides* are derived from the corps de ballet either awkwardly waddling, penguin-like, across the stage to assume new starting positions, or spending most scenes in entirely static positions on the floor, slowly losing the will to live as a result.

Following on from *Les Sylphides* is a glitzy, vivacious take on the pas de trois from *Paquita*, a notable excerpt from the 1846 romantic ballet, originally choreographed by Mazilier but then revised by Marius Petipa a year later. Set to music by Ludwig Minkus, this pas de trois serves up flirtatious silliness and offers a taste of the stylized Spanish-themed splendour that they later capitalize on in the final ballet of the evening, *Majisimas*. In *Vivaldi Suite*, the Trocks take a brief detour from the romantic era to revel in the stark elegance of Balanchine’s method, performing in shimmering leotards to a striking musical backdrop of Vivaldi. This is a breath-taking homage to neoclassical dance, at points reminding me of Christopher Wheeldon’s minimalist one-act ballet *Within the Golden Hour*. As with their first programme, Robert Carter once again gives a hilarious turn as his melodramatic alter ego Olga Supphozova in *The Dying Swan*, fluttering across the stage and clutching hopelessly at fallen feathers before folding in on himself in clumsy self-conscious defeat.

The grand finale of the evening is *Majisimas*, a vibrant love letter to a romanticised 19th century theatrical interpretation of Spain, harking back to popular works such as *Don Quixote* and *Paquita*. The music in *Majisimas* is lifted from the opera “*El Cid*” by Jules Massenet, providing a lush musical accompaniment to the fiendishly challenging choreography. The Trocks really come into their own in this piece, carrying off countless fouettes with precision and poise.

One of the most joyous aspects of seeing the Trocks on stage is the degree to which the individuality and diversity of company members informs their performances. Indeed, they take immense pride in their approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and this ethos is inseparable from their artistic practice. In many ways this sets them apart from mainstream ballet companies that still cling to outdated, exclusionary aesthetic requirements and a rigid, unquestioning approach to the gender binary. These are important battles that are still being fought both within the dance world and in the world at large, and although the tide does seem to be changing for the better the Trocks occupy a unique space in this discourse as veteran dancers and pioneers of diversity and acceptance. They are not just an exceptionally skilled ballet troupe; they are radicals and proud of it. As a young queer trans person I am in awe of them and sincerely hope they will keep on Trockin’ for years to come.

Trocks' Trove at the Joyce: Timely and Timeless, Sublime and Ridiculous

Posted on December 18, 2021 · No Comment



NOTE: Due to “break-through COVID-19 cases detected within the company,” all scheduled performances through January 2 have been cancelled. Click here for more information, including ticket holder options.

BY ELIZABETH ZIMMER | Issues of race make headlines, while issues of gender increasingly occupy the public mind. It used to be easy: Men were men and women were women and that was that.

No more, especially not in major metropolises like this one. New York—perhaps especially Chelsea—accommodates a range of gender expression, and 1974-founded Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo celebrates that range, and the battered art of ballet, in ways that delight and amuse. The program notes are hilarious, and the choreography mocks our gender expectations at every step. Artistic director Tory Dobrin often casts the smallest guys in the company in the male roles, allowing the “ballerinas” to tower over them, and sling them over their shoulders.

Opening its three-week holiday season at the Joyce with the first
of two



programs, the all-male Trocks, as they are affectionately known, mount ballet parodies ranging from the blunt to the rapier-sophisticated. Their version of the second act of *Swan Lake* features the coquette Nadia Doumiafeyva (read it out loud), a brassy blond who seems to be channeling Fran Drescher. Eight supporting swans spit and squawk, behaving more like real birds than like the scrawny dancers who usually take these parts; they range in size from petit to basketball-player, are diverse in age, color, and nationality, and can really dance. Watching them delicately *battu* their size 12 pointe shoes is absolutely mesmerizing. Most of them are flat-chested, but then so are most female ballet dancers.

New to New York this season is *Nightcrawlers*, a slightly curdled take on Jerome Robbins' *In the Night*, to Chopin. It reminded me even more of Paul Taylor's 1976 *Cloven Kingdom*, with its male characters in black tights and long morning coats, and the "females" in jewel-tone dresses with huge marcasite brooches.

Choreographed by the wonderful Peter Anastos as a sort of dark sequel to his beloved *Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet*, the piece segues from the sublime to the ridiculous in a matter of seconds, and takes us with it. The dancing is fast and furious, almost equine, and at one point Nadia Doumiafeyva, still in her Swan Queen get-up, hurries through, perhaps having finally escaped Rothbart.

Valpurgeyeva Noch, which is Russian for Walpurgisnacht, entered the troupe's rep in 2009, and has only ripened with time. Inspired by Leonid Lavrovsky's Soviet ballet to Gounod's *Faust* and staged by Elena Kunikova, it's a trove of exquisite detail, with the bigger gals in magenta peignoirs and the small guys behorned as the fauns, all at play on the eve of May Day, when witches, folklore says, ride to the mountains and frolic with the Devil.

There's more, including the classic *Dying Swan*. On opening night, the standing, screaming ovation at the two-hour program's end lasted a long time, extended when the troupe of 14 reappeared in green foam Statue of Liberty tiaras and formed a kick line, egging the audience on to further expressions of adoration.

If you have seen the Trocks in action, you don't need my urging to go see them again. If you haven't, make this the year you visit our neighborhood dance palace and partake of their delightful bounty. The refreshment stand has reopened! There is merch! It's a party! Don't forget your vax card! Two completely different programs are on display through January 2.

At the Joyce Theater (175 Eighth Ave. at W. 19th St.) through January 2. Performance content, times, and dates vary. For tickets, click here to visit joyce.org or call 212-242-0800. For artist info, click here.

THE TROCKS' STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESS

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo was founded in 1974 in the wake of the Stonewall Riots. Early performances were held on the makeshift stage of the NYC LGBTQ rights organization known as the West Side Discussion Group, an offshoot of the groundbreaking Mattachine Society, one of the first LGBTQ rights groups in the US. This historic backdrop has always underscored

the
Trocks'



commitment to providing a stage for dancers often underrepresented in classical ballet due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, size, social class, race and ethnicity.

In the nearly 50 years since its inception, the company has continued its mission of performing polished parodies of classical ballets 'en pointe' and 'en travesti', surprising and delighting audiences by boldly defying classical ballet's conventional gender classification. While being slyly subversive, the Trock' global visibility has helped move drag from counterculture to its current place in the mainstream.

As ambassadors of LGBTQ culture and acceptance, the Trocks remain committed to supporting, mentoring, and inspiring the next generation of LGBTQ performers and arts appreciators; supporting LGBTQ elderly and mentoring LGBTQ youth; and serving as an integral link to the history and traditions of LGBTQ performance. The company's education and engagement programs allow the Company to extend the work it does on stage and engage communities in reimagining their expectations of ballet performance and its intersection with gender roles and identities.

While we recognize that there is still much to be done to achieve full diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the ballet world, within our own company, and in the world at large, we strive to build and deepen this work both on and offstage. The board, staff, and company of Les Ballets Trockadero proudly stand together with those who embrace a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity and accessibility in all its forms.

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Trocks' Trove at the Joyce: Timely and Timeless, Sublime and Ridiculous is posted on December 18, 2021

DANCE

Review: The Trocks Delight With Fabulous Charm

By ALASTAIR MACAULAY DEC. 15, 2016

Ballet is a completely absurd art — and we love it to pieces: that’s what Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo proclaims with every move. The divas and cavaliers of this all-male troupe are — as they present themselves to us in performance — fabulously stupid, artificial, hammy, clichéd, superficial, dated, monstrous. But they simply adore dancing and their audiences, even more than they love makeup and costumes. So, while you laugh at their demented antics, you find yourself watching them with a special tenderness. You’re on their side.

The absurdity and the adorability are perfectly fused in the latest addition to the Trockadero repertory, the pas de six from August Bournonville’s “Napoli” (1842). This production of a dance, made for four women and two men, casts two of its tiniest members as the men, and, despite their male attire, renders them somewhat more feminine in manners and makeup than their four

ballerina companions. This is immediately funny, and some of the consequent jokes are funnier: When the men take turns lifting the women, the fourth and largest ballerina solves the imbalance by lifting him instead.

But both the women and the men love Bournonville's dances, and take wonderful trouble about detailed points of style. There are numerous passages here that aren't comic — they're simply joyous. And to watch divas and divos in bliss delights the audience. And then along comes an assortment of other jokes. When one ballerina is doing rather too well in a long solo variation, another one tries — unsuccessfully — to trip her. As yet another ballerina pauses on flat feet to prepare

for a multiple pirouette, her features show an expression of goggle-eyed terror: It lasts less than a second, the pirouette goes just fine, and she sweetly resumes the marvelously long, complex phrases of her dance.

The Trocks (as the dance world knows them) are dancing out the old year with a three-week season at the Joyce Theater; there are two programs. Program A, which opened on Tuesday, was announced as a quadruple bill, but was rendered quintuple at short notice by the addition of "The Dying Swan," a staple of Trocks repertory, in which the ballerina's tutu molts enough feathers to stuff pillows. She (Maria Paranova) finds time to wave at her audience, but, in her own Trockish way, she takes acting — her idea of acting — very seriously indeed: She executes industrial quantities of swannishness, and gorges herself on the swan's death throes.

“The Dying Swan” (Saint-Saëns music) seldom shares a program with “Le Lac des Cygnes (Swan Lake, Act II)” (Tchaikovsky music). But here both occur. It’s in “Swan Lake” that I get most bewildered about which sex these performers really are. Prince Siegfried (Vladimir Legupski) and his confidant Benno (Pepe Dufka) have such splendid maquillage. I love the prince’s hairpin, too; and cherish the long sequence when he slowly crosses the stage, pointing his legs and feet elaborately, stretching them straight from the hips like spears — to silence, while nothing else happens. The swans, meanwhile, several of whom have hairy chests visible above their tutus, throw themselves into their dances and their swan behavior with enchanting aggression.

As the Swan Queen, Yakaterina Verbosovich’s often more absurd than anyone, but no less often she’s an outstandingly good dancer. Those quivering petits battements serrés at the end of the adagio, in which the ballerina beats one foot rapidly beside her ankle, like the rapid fluttering of a wingtip, surpass those by quite a number of “real” ballerinas. The amalgam of ballerina finesse and daft diva antics is brilliant, unsettling, riveting: the epitome of Trocks style.

“Patterns in Space” (“choreography after Merce Cunningham”) — the title is a play on Cunningham’s 1986 “Points in Space” — goes straight for all that’s nuttiest about the separation of dance and music in the Cunningham ethos. Lariska Dumbchenko and Yuri Smirnov are the musicians, seated on one side of the stage, and they’re far

more solemn than any Cunningham musician ever was, gloriously intense in their percussion effects and farmyard noises.

The program ends with “Raymonda’s Wedding,” a plotless divertissement that nonetheless brilliantly evokes the inexplicable silly story of Marius Petipa’s 1898 ballet. The White Lady (Ida Nevasayneva) presiding graciously over the nuptial celebrations, which, though occurring in Provence, are danced in Hungarian style. The Trocks adopt intensely Hungarian dance behavior (every hand-clapping, head-shaking czardas mannerism) when they remember. Petipa left out fouetté turns, so they rectify that omission; and their joy is infectious.

The best-timed joke of the whole evening comes when Raymonda’s husband, Jean de Brienne (Boris Mudko), runs, mid-exit, straight into a wing and falls flat. Never fear: he’s soon up and dancing. Fire, flood, illness, trauma — nothing could stop Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo from dancing, and all for you, you, you.

Correction: December 15, 2016

An earlier version of this review misidentified the Swan Queen ballerina in the Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo program. It was Yakaterina Verbosovich, not Alla Snizova. Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo continues through Dec. 31 at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, Manhattan; joyce.org.
