

# **Triple Bill: Nederlands Dans Theatre and English National Ballet**

Reviewed by Megs Slark

I took my seat in the Main Stage of Salisbury Playhouse to see bright red curtains staring back at me. There was a rustling behind them before a Board Member from the Salisbury Arts Centre Board stepped out to introduce the Ballet. I took out my notebook and prepared for a great show.

The first two performers entered the stage, both wearing simple black leotards. They were beautifully in sync, their bodies moving fluidly to repetitive music. The woman of the pair was often being lifted into the air by the man, as if she was as light as a feather. She appeared to be so light, she reminded me of a rag doll being thrown around. When she was being put back on the floor, there was no audible dismount. It was a brilliant opening to the evening.

After a three minute break, the second act began. Simple lighting didn't distract from the three men in purple shirts and leggings spinning and twirling on a circular path around the stage to a faster music than the last sketch. With turns so fast their limbs were a blur; this performance was fast becoming my favourite of the two we had seen. It didn't include any lifts or stretches but the fast choreography was stunning.

After another break of seven minutes, a man and a woman entered the space, the man wearing just blue leggings and the woman wearing a blue leotard. The woman did a lot of impressive leg extensions but she never pointed her toes, they were always over-flexed. This was a horrible quality of the choreography that ruined the gentle, humble feel of the performances. Aside from this, when the woman was lifted, she reminded me of a beautiful elegant swan, taking flight. Apart from one lift in which she was crumpled up in ball and the man carried her around as if carrying a carcass. There was a lovely eye contact between the performers, which I thought added to the dance a lot. This finale of the three acts would have been a nice ending if it was not for the man carrying the woman to what he thought to be into the wings but was actually off of the side of the stage. The whole audience gasped as the couple fell into a column of lights stage right, and slowly got back on their feet, seemingly not injured. They took a bow and hurried offstage. I was left shocked at what had just happened and the hubbub of the rest of the audience as they exited the seating area suggested they were too.

I would give this event a three out of five star rating. It wasn't as grand as I thought it would be but it was a nice evening. I'd recommend it to both genders, of any age that have an interest in watching ballet. I'd like to wish the performers good luck in the future, and thank them for an interesting evening.