

## DANCE IN LONDON: Visitors from Brazil, and a programme of new works from the Royal Ballet

*Grupo Corpo*  
Sadler's Wells  
.....  
**Donald Hutera**

BRAZIL is loaded with talented dancers and choreographers hungry to be seen by the rest of the world. Grupo Corpo is at the top of the country's kinetic heap. Founded a quarter of a century ago, this exhilarating contemporary troupe is first among a handful of dance companies imported into the UK during the next few months as part of the Brazil 500 cultural festival.

How gratifying to see a performance of such seductive and generous physicality. To judge by the audience's appreciative roar after this double-bill, I wasn't alone in my transporting pleasure.

Corpo house choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras is like a more complex, Brazilian Bob Fosse. He laces the dancers' daily classical training with a rich mix of African, street and

popular inflections. The result is a fleet, irresistibly rhythmic vocabulary all his own.

Both *Parabelo* and *Benguelê* breathe to the brilliantly varied, commissioned scores by, respectively, Tom Zé and Zé Miguel Wisnik, and João Bosco. Pederneiras deploys great lashings of steps, fast or slow but always sensual, in continually altering patterns. Surrendering bouts of repetitive movement foster greater access into the heart of the music.

Academic discipline endows Corpo's 19 extraordinarily zesty dancers with a prodigious facility. Grounded yet high-sprung, they're marvellously at ease in their own flesh.

They commence *Parabelo* in metallic red or lemon-lime unitards, propped face upwards on all fours. Pelvises are rolled in unison, phallic legs thrust boldly to heaven. It's a striking start to a stream of abstract episodes suggestive of religious ecstasy, and drawn from vibrant, mysterious energies

peculiar to northeastern Brazil.

The dance, all jangling loose limbs and snake-hipped precision, features footwork as fancy as in Irish jigs. More pensive passages include a lambently lit pas de deux for a man and the pliable woman carried on his hip.

*Benguelê* quickens the dancers' collective pace while bringing them nearer to the floor. This melting-pot dance is a spicy, simmering stew of Brazil's African, Arabic and European influences. The mood shifts between the playful and hypnotic, allowing the dancers to demonstrate their bounding physical range.

Both pieces are cleanly, vividly designed by Fernando Velloso and Paulo Pederneiras. The catwalk in *Benguelê* provides stunning effects. A seemingly endless line of bodies parades across it in measured motion. It all climaxes in an earthy bonanza of wrist-flapping, shoulder-jiggling high spirits, carnival dancing raised to the level of art.

*Royal Ballet*  
Linbury Studio  
.....  
**Debra Craine**

NO ONE said it was going to be easy. Real choreographic talent is thin on the ground and finding enough to mount two separate programmes of new works for the Royal Ballet was always going to be a challenge. As it turned out, the first programme presented in the Linbury Studio Theatre, downstairs at Covent Garden, was a drear disappointment. Now comes the second, and it's a little more promising, featuring one work which could easily enter the Covent Garden repertoire.

That work is by Christopher Wheeldon, who left the Royal Ballet in 1993 for New York where he has carved out a promising career as a choreographer with New York City Ballet. His new Royal Ballet commission, called *There Where She Loves*, is set to songs

by Chopin and Kurt Weill. The dance is delivered in a series of solos, duets and group dances that are full of unexpected graces, sweetness and lyricism, sensual pleasure and painful rejection — for it's the stuff of relationships. There is a lovely warm solo for Jane Burn (*What She Likes*), an amiable bit of fun for Bruce Sansom and four women (*Merrymaker*) and a chance for Darcey Bussell to go all fierce and break Jonathan Cope's heart in Weill's *Je ne t'aime pas*.

William Tuckett, a company member with several Covent Garden ballets under his belt, has made 3:4 for the Linbury. Set to the second movement of Schubert's String Quartet in D minor ("Death and the Maiden"), 3:4 is a hectic trio for three superb dancers — Zenaida Yanowsky, Carlos Acosta and Jonathan Cope — that becomes increasingly hysterical. The dancers work hard, but the ballet is forgettable.

Poppy Ben David is a student at the Royal Ballet School who

has been making dances since she was 13. Her *Siren Song* has music by Benjamin Marquise Gilmore (*Idyll of the Water Lilies*) who is only now 13. *Siren Song* is an ambitious quartet for three sirens and one man, an impressive Ivan Putrov fighting them off as the Ulysses figure. It's quite enchanting in a scary sort of way.

Vanessa Fenton, who joined the Royal last year, contributed *Ad Infinitum* (to Rachmaninov's *Vocalise*), a sometimes awkward trio for two men and one woman enlivened by the appearance of Alina Cojocaru, a real find for the future.

Jacopo Godani hails from the Frankfurt Ballet and it shows. His *Aeon's Run* is a depressing regurgitation of all one dislikes in the choreography of his mentor, William Forsythe. The eight dancers, sporting little grey socks, endure the attenuated squiggles of Godoni's squirming athletics. The dance is busy and boring; the music is manipulated by computer and empty.