

Grupo Corpo

Festival theatre

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Inexhaustible bodies ... Grupo Corpo. Photograph: Murdo Macleod for the Guardian

The hot ticket at the festival last weekend was Brazilian dance company Grupo Corpo. Founded 35 years ago and making their Edinburgh debut, they came and conquered with a super-sassy double bill. Grafting ballet on to myriad Latin disciplines – capoeira, rumba, tango – it was a sizzling concoction. As a salsa beat kicked in, and the first signature pelvic shimmy made its way across the stage in a skin-hugging red leotard, this band of 19 dancers didn't put a foot wrong.

Family-run since its inception, Grupo Corpo's choreography has been led by Rodrigo Pederneiras since the mid-80s, alongside his brother Paulo in the role of artistic director/designer. Together they have created a style that colourfully frames ballet as a contemporary, turbo-charged, body talk.

Parabelo, which opened the show, looks to traditional, rural Brazil for inspiration, while Onqotô explores both the paternity of the universe and the rivalry between Rio's two main football teams. But in the mix, these themes are joyously lost to the dance and the equally upbeat, eclectic (piano, guitar, song) music composed by Tom Zé, José Miguel Wisnik and Caetano Veloso.

It is the sheer physical virtuosity of the company that is so impressive – the sinuous, athletic bodies seemingly inexhaustible. At times, the group patterning feels a little thin and reliant on the moves of individual dancers, but there are some stunning, offbeat sets – one, in particular, in Onqotô, slaps and bounces bodies against each other and on the floor, as two couples get it on in contrasting gentle and then passionate embrace. In another segment, this time in Parabelo, a woman is carried under the arm of a man like a rag doll, and conjoined, they dance. In these, and the rest, Grupo Corpo's unashamed mission seems to be to tempt the rhythm of life out of us all.