

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo to Kick Up Feathers at The Majestic

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[Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo](#) will once again storm the stage of [The Majestic Theater](#) for one evening only on Thursday, Nov. 13. It is hard to believe, but The Trocks, as they are fondly known around the world, are in their 40th anniversary season. My, how feathers fly when we are having fun.

The Trocks got their start in 1974, performing late shows in Off-Off Broadway lofts. It did not take long for the fledgling company to be noticed. With a glowing review from Arlene Croce, revered dance critic for The New Yorker, along with positive notices in publications including Variety, Oui, The Daily Telegraph, and a photo essay by none other than the esteemed Richard Avedon in Vogue, the ballet company performing *en travesti* was well on the way to the international renown that it enjoys to this day.

I first had the pleasure of seeing this inimitable company perform in the early 1980s in Houston, when it wasn't yet through its first decade. At the time, the idea of an all-male ballet company working all the rolls in drag was still a daring and somewhat risqué proposition in some corners of the world, like, well, Texas. Times have changed, and for the better.

The thing is, these guys are very funny. There is nothing subtle about the performances. We are talking big, burly, hairy men in tutus dancing away *en pointe* in parodies of classics including "Swan Lake," "Don Quixote," or even taking on more modern neo-classical fare like Balanchine in "Go For Barocco." However, it isn't the broad physical comedy of the work that causes a company to endure and create an international following over a period of four decades. The heart of the matter is that the troupe's technique is flawless. It must be. That is the key to its perennial success.



Members of Les Ballets Trockadero De Monte Carlo pose for a photo during rehearsal of "Swan Lake." Courtesy photo.

The company literature expresses the nuance well. "The comedy is achieved by incorporating and exaggerating the foibles, accidents, and underlying incongruities of serious dance. The fact

that men dance all the parts – heavy bodies delicately balancing on toes as swans, sylphs, water sprites, romantic princesses, angst-ridden Victorian ladies – enhances rather than mocks the spirit of dance as an art form, delighting and amusing the most knowledgeable, as well as novices, in the audiences.”

“We are in class every day.”

I am speaking with [Carlos Hopuy](#), one of the Trocks with San Antonio ties. We discuss the grueling schedule that keeps the company on the move, appearing in more than 34 countries and more than 600 cities worldwide since its founding. It is currently on home base in New York City.

“Most of the time we are out of the country – Europe, Japan, Australia. And when we travel, we usually have just one day to be ready to perform. We take care with classes every day in order not to risk injury. Sometimes the gym to do something extra ... every body is different,” he said.

Hopuy has worked with The Trocks since 2012, but his first job in the U.S. before that was with [Ballet San Antonio](#). Carlos was born and raised in Havana, Cuba. His mother was a ballerina and he began his training in ballet at the age of nine.



Corlos Hopuy

“My training in Cuba was very strong. It was really good for me,” he said. “In Cuba, ballet training doesn’t begin until the age of nine when the body and the brain are both ready. There is a lot of coordination required. Before that time you are not really ready for serious training.”

Indeed, Hopuy trained with the [National Ballet of Cuba](#) and had the privilege of working with legendary ballerina Alicia Alonso, as well as her daughter. In Cuba, ballet dancers are very highly esteemed, and well rewarded with the support of the Cuban government. Hopuy is an award-winning dancer, taking home many medals from the prestigious International Ballet Competitions in Havana (Gold medalist 1999, 2001, 2002), Nagoya (Gold medalist 2002), and Jackson, Miss. (finalist, 2010). In addition to the National Ballet of Cuba, he also worked for the National Ballet of Costa Rica.

We briefly discussed the current ballet scene here in San Antonio. The status of Ballet San Antonio has changed significantly since he was performing with it – it is now the resident ballet company for the recently-opened [Tobin Center for the Performing Arts](#).

“San Antonio is growing a lot. I saw [‘Dracula’ at The Tobin](#), and I got very excited. The dancers are a lot better now and the company is growing. It was very good,” he said.

Hopuy’s story is but one in the stars of the firmament that compose the roster of Les Ballets Trockadero De Monte Carlo. Each dancer in the program is of a professional caliber that cannot be challenged. When you attend a performance, you are seeing some of the best and the brightest in the art form, and this cannot be denied.

Our conversation finishes on a note of contentment, despite the realities of the unrelenting work that is the life of a ballet dancer.

“I have had incredible experiences. I love it. If everyone can do what they love, that’s a good thing, right?”

Yes, Carlos, that’s right.

For tickets to this performance and more information about the 2014 – 2015 season, contact [ARTS San Antonio](#).