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Review: Lincoln Center at The Movies' Ballet Hispanico



Ballet Hispanico's *CARMEN.maquia*. Photo credit: Paula Lobo.

In the latest of the *Lincoln Center at the Movies* film series, Ballet Hispanico presented its signature contemporary dance with a Hispanic culture flair in *CARMEN.maquia* and *Club Havana*. For 45

years, Ballet Hispanico has demonstrated beauty and importance of Hispanic culture to dance audiences around the world. If anything was lost in the translation between stage and screen, it was the true enormity of the stage and space. However, that detracted little from the gifts given the film audience on November 12.

As the first ballet of the film, *CARMEN.maquia*, Gustavo Ramírez Sansano's visually striking take on Georges Bizet's classic opera, *Carmen*, was a powerhouse of technique, artistry, and emotion. Kimberly Van Woesik, in the title role, and Christopher Bloom, as Don José, were magnificent together, and the whole cast shone on a stark, black and white stage punctuated by Picasso-esque details. Often heartbreaking, occasionally witty, and always magnificent to watch, Sansano's intricate choreography was the perfect convergence of balletic and modern movement.

Mr. Bloom's performance was superb, as the upstanding officer turned murderer. His movement was effortless—a natural emission in the context of the conversation he was having with the audience—and his emotion deep and true. Ms. Van Woesik's performance matched, with a passion so brilliant and pure that it was a shock when her blood ran black in the denouement.

CARMEN.maquia was a masterpiece on screen, bringing a movie theater audience to the same tears and applause, just as the stage audience had been. Pedro Ruiz's *Club Havana* brought Latin dance to center stage in a fun, sexy look into a Havana nightclub. Reminiscent of a Jerome Robbins jazz-ballet, *Club Havana* saw ten dancers, all clad in 1950s-style dress and smoking electric Cuban cigars, shimmying and swirling in Ruiz's dazzling choreography. Music by Israel Lopez, Rubén Gonzales, A.K. Salim, Perez Prado and Francisco Repilado had the audience moving in their seats, and smiles on all faces. Great fun and a great representation of Latin dancing, *Club Havana* is not to be missed.

For more information on Lincoln Center at the Movies, visit <http://www.lincolncenteratthemovies.org/> And to learn about upcoming performances from Ballet Hispanico, visit <http://www.ballethispanico.org/>