

DANCE

GET 8 WEEKS FREE SUBSCRIBE NOW!

▶ THE PRINT JO

▶ THE ONLINE JO

TOP STORIES IN Life & Culture



Dell's Slim, Speedy Ultrabook

1 of 12



Cracking Down on Crime on Airplanes

2 of 12



Can Female Athletes Compete Against Men?

3 of 12

# Gambling on Monte Carlo

Article

Comments

MORE IN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Email

Print

Save

Like

1

0

By ROBERT GRESKOVIC

New York

Monaco's Casino de Monte-Carlo dates from 1856. A grand theater, outfitted to present opera and ballet, has been adjacent to the gambling rooms since 1910, hosting a succession of Russian-based companies offering now-historic ballets by the likes of Michel Fokine, George Balanchine, Bronislava Nijinska and Leonide Massine. In 1985, the French-based Les Ballets de Monte Carlo made its home on the casino-and-theater grounds.

Under the direction of choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot since 1993, the 50-member troupe recently toured the U.S. Earlier this month in Orange County, Calif., it presented Mr. Maillot's nontraditional 1999 staging of Prokofiev's "Cinderella." Last week, the company offered a double-bill of Mr. Maillot's nonnarrative works at the Joyce Theater here. And given the Joyce bill, as well as the group's previous New York presentations of "Cinderella" (at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2003) and Mr. Maillot's similarly skewed, stark and pared back 1996 version of Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" (at City Center in 1999), it seems safe to say that the company's chances of presenting a winning ballet of coherent theatricality and depth are akin to a crapshoot.



Marie-Laure Briane

The odds of seeing good work from Les Ballets de Monte Carlo is always akin to a crapshoot.

Thus far, Mr. Maillot's "Opus 40," with contributions from two American artists, best showed off the troupe. Made in 2000, with its opus number marking the choreographer's 40th birthday, the seven-part dance is described in a program note as an "ode to Youth." I don't know about that, but the 25-minute work did present a picture of dancers and dancing that in its lightness, freshness and clear presentation contrasted noticeably with the concept-heavy and

arbitrarily busy moves seen elsewhere in Mr. Maillot's choreography.

"Opus 40" framed its 14 women and 13 men with a golden, neutral surround that

## Available to WSJ.com Subscribers

SEC May Ticket Speeding Traders



Romney Tax Plan Sets Stage for Fight



Investigators Probe a Rush at MF Global to Move Cash



New Push for Reform in China

shimmered with modulations of light and moirélike textures. The men were dressed casually in soft slacks and tops of creamy, light yellow or an unusual array of brown tints; the women, in short shifts in a rainbow of candied-almond colors. The open plain of the stage often seemed washed in the palest pewter hues. Painter George Condo was responsible for the marvelously simple and delicately colored setting and costumes, while recordings by dancemaker and musician Meredith Monk provided the score, dominated by her guttural and mostly wordless vocalizing. Dominique Drillot's lighting enhanced Mr. Condo's visual elements beautifully and suggested the participation of the painter's eye as much as the lighting designer's, particularly when compared with Mr. Drillot's work elsewhere on this program.

Typically, Mr. Maillot shows little interest in ballet steps of any finesse or variety. Mostly, his women work on pointe in ways that give their stances and locomotion added sharpness and elongation, but little in the way of intricate changes of direction, position or rhythm. Here, his most prominent female dancer, Bernice Coppieters, had a central role. Her initial solo section at times presented her in fleet arabesque moments that suggest a darting sandpiper; leading the ballet's closing moments, Ms. Coppieters found herself joined by three men who interacted with her in choreography that repeated many of her solo's moves.

The sections of "Opus 40" dominated by the other women in the cast had a brightness and sweetness that contrasted with most of the dances I've seen from Mr. Maillot. His "Altro Canto 1" (2006), a 10-part dance to selections of 17th-century music by Claudio Monteverdi, Biagio Marini and Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger, which opened the Joyce bill, was a case in point.

Karl Lagerfeld's costuming for the cast of 10 men and 10 women provided Mr. Maillot with an evident play on cross-dressing, what his program calls "the masculine/feminine duality." The couturier's costumes came in two sets: corset tops mated with sleek jeans and tank tops paired with short skirts over bloomers, all in warm, pale golds. The dancers wore these outfits without regard to gender, with some men sporting the skirts and some women the pants. In Mr. Drillot's relentlessly harsh lighting, Mr. Lagerfeld's dirndl-waisted skirts (think frumpy gym-class uniforms) and thin tops made both the men's and women's physiques look lumpy.

Mr. Maillot's choreography favored ropy or flamelike undulations for arms and hands, as well as randomly blown breaths—as if such exhaled air stirred equally arbitrary gestures in an adjacent dancer. His wordy note refers to working "with a musical style whose only aim would be visual resonance."

Elsewhere in that note, Mr. Maillot refers to an "arch of candles," which the company did not bring on tour for these performances. I doubt that this decorative detail, mentioned alongside a reference to "cathedral architecture," would have done much to make his "Canto" more than the belabored exercise it seemed at the Joyce.

One memorable work out of four shown in New York by Mr. Maillot's company since 1999 may not be great odds, but there's always another roll of the dice.

*Mr. Greskovic writes about dance for the Journal.*



Get your 8 week risk free trial **SUBSC**

### Most Popular Video

**Chinese Millionaires Are Heading West**  
5:00

**Opinion: The Purloined Climate Papers**  
7:52

**Is Cab Facin Extin**  
4:06

### More in Arts & Entertainment

[Who Will Win Best Score?](#)

[They Write the Songs](#)

[Waiting for Picasso](#)

[Gambling on Monte Carlo](#)

[A 'Mad' Man Stays Above the Fold](#)

### Most Popular

Read Emailed Video Commented

- [Opinion: Obama's Dividend Ass](#)
- [How Waiters Read Your Table](#)
- [Obama Tax Plan Gets Pushback](#)
- [Why We Pair Up With Our Emotional Op](#)
- [Panel Backs Weight-Loss Drug Qnexa](#)

Most Read Articles Feed

**Business Insurance Agents**  
Find Business & Commercial  
[yellowpages.com](http://yellowpages.com)

**Penny Stock of the Day**  
Penny Stock Pick of the Day Emails. Huge Gains for Traders!  
[www.PennyStockAlerts.com](http://www.PennyStockAlerts.com)

**Top 5 CD Accounts**  
Get the highest rates on CDs  
<http://www.RateCatcher.com/>

JOIN THE DISCUSSION  
**Be the first to comment**

MORE IN  
**Arts & Entertainment »**

Email Print Order Reprints

**OBJE On Verge of Breakout**

Interactive Gaming Could Make You A Ton of Money, Buy Shares Today!  
[www.TopMicroCapStock.com](http://www.TopMicroCapStock.com)

**Penny Stock Was \$0.60 in...**

December and \$1.30 now! Who knows what'll happen in a month...  
[WashingtonFinancialTimes.com](http://WashingtonFinancialTimes.com)

**Low cost Franchise**

Open a retail store. To prepare bankruptcy petition. Growing fast  
<http://www.bankruptcydiy.com>

**Corporate Travel Partners**

Take Control of Your Travel Costs with Business Travel  
[corpenploy.com](http://corpenploy.com)

**Add a Comment**

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

[Community rules](#)

To add a comment please

[Log in](#)

[Create an Account](#)

Your real name is required for commenting.

Track replies to my comment

CLEAR

POST

[Login with Facebook](#)

**OFFERS**

Advertisement



**Bin No. 220**

44% Off Wine, Antipasto and More

[VIEW OFFER »](#)



**Paul Taylor Dance Company**

VIP Tickets with Dinner and More Starting at \$150

[VIEW OFFER »](#)



**U2, Run-DMC and Beastie Boys Tribute Concerts**

Tickets to Tribute Band Concerts for \$20

[VIEW OFFER »](#)

New York

Other Cities: [Chicago](#) [LA](#) [More »](#)

WSJ Select is operated independently of The Wall Street Journal news department.

Subscribe Now for Full Access to WSJ.com and Get

8 WEEKS FREE

SUBSCRIBE NOW

WSJ Subscriber's content provides:

- **Personalized** tracking of industries
- **Heard on the Street:** up-to-the-minute news and analysis that affects the markets and industries
- **Core business news:** "What's News" and new "Management" section

Editors' Picks



Justices Take on Medal Lies



A Champion of Erotica



In Lieu of Toasters, Bank Customers Burned



Suds Made Simple



Gambling on

Customer Center:

- My Account
- My Subscriptions

Create an Account:

- Register for Limited Access
- Subscribe to WSJ.com
- Sign up for WSJ Professional
- Subscribe to WSJ Weekend - Print Edition

Help & Information Center:

- Help
- Customer Service
- Contact Us
- Global Support
- New on WSJ.com
- Print Subscriber Services

About:

- News Licensing
- Reprints
- Advertising
- Classifieds
- Advertise Locally
- Conferences
- About Dow Jones
- Privacy Policy - UPDATED 10/18/2011
- Your Ad Choices
- Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use - Updated
- Copyright Policy
- Jobs at WSJ.com

WSJ.com :

- Site Map
- Home
- World
- U.S.
- New York
- Business
- Markets
- Market Data
- Tech
- Personal Finance
- Life & Culture
- Opinion
- Autos
- Careers
- Real Estate
- Small Business
- Student Journal
- Corrections
- SafeHouse - Send Us Information

Tools & Formats:

- Today's Paper
- Video Center
- Graphics
- Columns
- Blogs
- Topics
- Guides
- Alerts
- New sletters
- Mobile
- WSJ Social
- Tablet Edition
- Podcasts
  - RSS Feeds
- Journal Community
  - WSJ on Twitter
  - WSJ on Facebook
  - WSJ on Foursquare
- My Journal
- Portfolio
- WSJ Digital Dow nloads

THE WALL STREET Digital

- WSJ.com
- Marketwatch.com
- Barrons.com
- SmartMoney.com
- AllThingsD.com
- FINS: Finance, IT
- BigCharts.com
- Virtual Stock Excl
- WSJ Radio
- Professor Journa
- WSJ U.S. Edition
- WSJ Asia Edition
- WSJ Europe Editi
- WSJ India Page
- Foreign Language
  - WSJ Chinese
  - WSJ Japanese
  - WSJ Portuguese
  - WSJ Spanish
  - WSJ Deutschlanc

Copyright ©2012 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Subscribe Now and Get 8 Weeks Free! Learn More »

Subscribe Now