

DANCE

**Sylvie Guillem and
The Ballet Boyz/
The Russell
Maliphant evening**
Sadler's Wells
Sarah Frater

HUSH-LUSH is a good shorthand for Russell Maliphant's choreography. The British dance maker has an unassuming mood that lulls you into thinking you're watching something low-key. This is a mistake. Maliphant's work is serious and subtle, with a quiet richness resonant with meaning. Each capoeira-like move, each Catherine Wheel swoop of the arms and downy-soft kick of the legs, triggers an emotional echo, something lighting designer Michael Hull captures with the luminous slipstreams that trail the dancers.

Happily for us, Maliphant is working with exceptional dancers. This week at Sadler's Wells he's teamed up with Sylvie Guillem and Ballet Boyz Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, who perform a mixed bill of his work. First is *Torsion* (2002), a duet for Nunn and Trevitt; next is *Two* (2001), a solo for Guillem originally made for Maliphant's wife (and former Royal Ballet dancer) Dana Fouras; and last is *Broken Fall* for Nunn, Trevitt and Guillem, first seen at the Opera House late last year.

Anyone who has followed Guillem's career will marvel how the 39-year-old has grown from wilful ballerina to inquiring maturity. In *Two*, her fascination with movement is palpable, even when she's standing as still as a caryatid.

She starts in a square of dusky light that's picture-framed by a band of neon bright. When she leans forward you just see the tip of her nose, and, as the piece gathers pace, her jabbing limbs and kicking feet break into the bright frame giving you a fragmented view of her body, like a living Cubist painting.

The Ballet Boyz have performed *Torsion* several times in London and it hardly needs more laurels,



Teasing: Sylvie Guillem with the Ballet Boyz, William Trevitt and Michael Nunn in *Broken Fall*

An evening of rich pleasures

except to say how cleverly it probes the competitiveness of male friendship, as well as its unspoken affection. This draws on the camaraderie of battle, and Maliphant uses ideas of combat in the pair's thrilling duet.

In *Broken Fall*, he seems to

draw on Guillem's childhood training as a gymnast, and he may be teasing her about it as well. Guillem uses Nunn and Trevitt as her human pommel horse, although Maliphant soon suggests that their interdependence is far

from purely physical.

This is a stellar evening with three small caveats. First, there's nothing new on the programme, which would have been good. Second, while Guillem looked fresh, Nunn and Trevitt seemed less perky than on their last

London visit. And third, an all-Maliphant programme is serious viewing for devotees. Novices may find it heavy going.

● *Tomorrow, Friday and Saturday. Information 0870 737 7737.*

A subtle Atlantic voyage of discovery

EXHIBITION

Thomas Joshua Cooper: Point of No Return
Haunch of Venison, W1
Nick Hackworth

THE combination of complexity, depth and beauty in his work gives Thomas Joshua Cooper just claim to being one of the world's greatest living landscape photographers.

American born, and now 57, he has worked and taught in Glasgow since the Seventies and operates under bizarre, self-imposed restrictions. In 1968 he made, and has stuck to, a vow to



Shore line: South — The South Atlantic Ocean at the Indian Ocean

make art only with the particular 106-year-old camera he was using at the time, only make images outdoors and only ever make

one image in any one place.

Most of the images in this show are of similar places — shorelines observed from cliff-tops. The shore is that of

the Atlantic Ocean and the photographs part of an ambitious project, started a decade ago, to map the coast of the Atlantic basin, from the northernmost point of North America to the southernmost point of South America, and from the southernmost point of Africa to the northernmost point of Europe.

It is a subtle and oblique rumination on the process of globalisation, begun half a millennium ago, now creating a deep homogeneity in human affairs.

The sameness of the images is part of the point. Joshua Cooper's art is heavily influenced by abstract painting and so

there are only subtle differences between the works — the pattern of the waves, the formation of the rocks. This, Joshua Cooper implies, stands as a metaphor for the strange combination of uniqueness and similarity manifest in all of us.

His work is one that requires time to appreciate. Its aesthetic qualities and meanings intensify with prolonged exposure; in some small way, it stands against the oppressive, modern demand for cultural experiences to be created with instant consumption in mind.

● *Until 28 October. Information: 020 7495 5050.*

A great clamour — then it was all over

CLASSICAL

RPO/Bamert
Festival Hall
Nick Kimberley

FOR an orchestra just as for a football team, it pays to start the new season with a bang, especially if the first impact is made by a player from the home team. Gareth Wood, double bassist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) since 1972, has composed fanfares for a number of festive occasions. He wrote his latest for BBC Radio 3's Listen Up! festival, an umbrella for 250 concerts up and down the country over the coming weeks.

Wood's piece had the essential quality for such works: brevity. Lasting around 90 seconds, it rent the air with trumpets and trombones, before horns, double basses and timpani joined the throng. Soon everyone was clamouring, and then it was all over. It might have been a communal clearing of the throat for Sibelius's *Finlandia*, in which the RPO brass section was on rugged form: and rugged is not the same as ragged, although in Sibelius a little grit to coarsen the smooth surfaces does not go amiss.

Matthias Bamert is the kind of unshowy conductor one goes to see, not so much for an interpretation, but simply to get the music. Holst's *The Planets* is so familiar that it is easy to overlook its originality, but Bamert made it register. Mars was genuinely elemental (sheer volume always helps, of course), while Jupiter's big theme was boldly angular and delivered without the lingering that renders it cloying. Uranus proved limber, but in the closing moments of Neptune, the choir (the Ladies of the Philharmonia) sounded impossibly distant and somewhat off the note. Still, a performance of substance.

Earlier, Tasmin Little was the soloist in an accomplished performance of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*. Her opening phrases slightly blurred the angles, and in the second movement Bamert allowed the tension to slacken.

But throughout there was a real sense of music-making, if not quite improvised, then on the wing; and the duets with the flutes in the final movement were exhilarating. She is a player who communicates the pleasure of her virtuosity, which is surely what virtuosity is for.

The concert will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3, at 7.30pm on 11 October.