

Reviews

Nureyev's
Don shows
his age

IN THE latter years of his life, it was a matter of sorrow to Rudolf Nureyev that the Royal Ballet — the company with which he celebrated his greatest triumphs — never took his 1966 production of *Don Quixote* into its repertoire. In opening the new season with the ballet, therefore, director Ross Stretton is acting as a bridge-builder with the past. As a gesture this is admirable, but the fact is that the piece is very much of its time: too long, too incoherent, and too cartoonishly Spanish.

The humour, in particular, is of pantomime broadness. Sancho Panza (Tom Sapsford) is a witless oaf whose pleasure lies in looking up girls' skirts, Kitri's father Lorenzo (David Drew) is a gurning yokel, and the nobleman Gamache (Luke Heydon) is a limp-wristed old queen.

There is a whole raft of business involving these dotards, and none of it comes within a mile of the funny-bone. Nor does the Don himself come to life. Christopher Saunders, usually so precise in his delineation of character, here manages little more than troubled vagueness.

Whenever these walking plot-devices are sidelined, however, we are treated to some excellent dancing. Tamara Rojo is a pert little

DON QUIXOTE/Royal
Ballet ★

Royal Opera House

Luke Jennings

madam of a Kitri, as lacquered and glossy as a conker. Technically she is very secure, whipping off her turns with flirty insouciance, although by the end of act two her jump seemed to be fading. Johan Kobborg is her likeable and accommodating swain.

His speciality is *terre-à-terre* work — all those Nureyevian *temps de cuisine* and *jetés battus* — which he performs here with switchblade fleetness.

There were also excellent cameo performances, with Mara Galeazzi and Jaimie Tapper devouring their roles as Kitri's friends, Martin Harvey showing dark panache as the gypsy boy, and Gillian Revie joyously confident and beguiling as the bridesmaid. Raciest of all was Marianela Nunez as the street dancer, all smouldering epaulement and soaring *ecarté*. While this production was not the perfect choice for the 21st century, Ross Stretton has inspired a fine spirit of attack in his dancers. Long may it last.

● Until 14 November. Box office: 020 7304 4000.



Flirty: Tamara Rojo portrays Kitri as a pert little madam

Strange
saviour

ANDREW WK ★

Garage, N1

Max Bell

THE Michigan man hailed as the saviour of rock came out to play last night. He appeared in a Garage rather than a stable, but that goes with the job description. And how much to catch the second coming? Only a fiver, which accounted for a packed show moved from Cargo due to unprecedented demand. Doh.

Andrew WK (you're not invited to fill in the missing letters) has had his trumpet blown so loudly in the media, he had to be a contender on his own terms or it was a one-way ticket to Palookaville. In the event he was very entertaining — old-fashioned description, old-fashioned entertainment.

Flapping his lovely lank hair and jiggling in tight white treads, AWK proved to be about as dangerous as Alanis Morissette. Thrashing around the audience-friendly, hooked horns and party time of his *I Get Wet* album, Andrew could have been making a metal documentary for Ardent Productions.

But even if he was invented some time ago by Frank Zappa, this fellow has his own charms, especially if you've never seen the Ramones. *I Love NYC* (yeah!) and the relentless nonsense of *Party Til You Puke* are sure-fire winners for weekend headbangers. This is Christmas party music for metal fans in much the same way that Bjorn Again are not Abba.

Apparently he means every word, but I doubt that. What was it John McEnroe said? "You cannot be serious."

Freudian fantasy fun-ride



Puff the magic panda: The Inspirator

THE dubious pleasure of a trawl through the unconscious mind of an artist is on offer here. Given the famously debauched lifestyles of some of the young British artist pack, of which Lane is a member, who knows what horrors might lie in wait?

True to YBA form, however, Lane treats a potentially serious subject with the lightest of touches. Three room-sized installations take us on a fantasy Freudian fun-ride. Much overused, the adjective "Freudian" is actually appropriate in this case. The three characters who appear in these works seem to represent Freud's tripartite division of the mind into the id, ego and super-ego.

In the first room we meet The Figment, a small, mischievous, bald-headed, imp-like creature, projected onto a wall. Muttering incomprehensibly, gyrating and gesticulating, and at one point apparently swearing at us, The Figment captures the essence of the id perfectly, that primal part of the self that craves the instant gratification of our basic desires.

Next we meet The Inclinor, a character that attempts to tame the id's desires with reason. Manifest as the artist herself kitted out in a fetching white PVC catsuit, complete with pointy feet and head-mounted torch, The Inclinor stars in a short film. A repeated

ABIGAIL LANE: TOMORROWS
WORLD, YESTERDAYS FEVER

★

Victoria Miro Gallery, N1

Nick Hackworth

sequence features Lane emerging from a sea (of chaos) and crawling onto a rocky beach (of order) lit by the unsettling combination of a pre-dawn glow and focused film lights. A piece that might have been sunk by repetitiveness is saved by a pervasive sense of mystery.

In the final room we are greeted with a projection of a life-sized human dressed in a panda suit, armed with a trumpet and standing in a leafy glade who disappears in a puff of magic smoke as soon as its grotesque performance is complete. Whether a piece of fun or a subtle and surreal critique of western civilisation's dependency on reason as an organising principle for society, *The Inspirator* will, at least, make you leave with a smile.

● At 16 Wharf Road, N1, until 10 November. Telephone: 020 7336 8109.

Ratings: ○ adequate, ★ good, ★★ very good, ★★★ outstanding, X poor

Kooky as a biscuit

GHOSTS IN THE
COTTONWOODS ★

Arcola Theatre, E8

Patrick Marmion

REDNECK is the derogatory American term for reactionary, white, sub-literate working-class inbreds and that's exactly what writer Adam Rapp is dealing with here.

Somewhere in the Midwest a big momma awaits her beloved son Jeffcat. He's broken out of jail after serving six years for killing a man with his bare hands.

Meanwhile, younger brother Pointer has impregnated the delirious, mud-spattered wench next door and intends to take on the outside world dressed as a Bee Gee. But one stormy night expectations are shattered by the arrival of a wounded bounty hunter, who stitches himself up with a sewing kit.

It's hard not to wonder where the lunacy is leading in Adam Rapp's drama, which predates his play *Blackbird*, seen at the Bush Theatre earlier this year. It becomes apparent that this might just be an *Oresteia* for North American country folk.

However, it is primarily a seedy journey into the morbid unconscious of the Midwest in the way of writers like Sam Shepard. On this journey, improper love of nature is coupled with incestuous fam-

ily attachments, producing rich, nutty pickings for budding Method actors. On top of this, Rapp's gift for dialogue with lines like "perfect as puppy piss" pulsates with wit and poetry.

Robert Gillespie's production calls for crazy Dennis Hopper-style acting. Monica Buford's matriarch *manqué* is a lumbering sack of potatoes tyrannising her disco-freak son played by David Newman. He is in love with Keely Beresford's tree-hugging neighbour, who is as deluded as any Tennessee Williams heroine.

But it's Chris Kell as the deranged son Jeffcat who steals the kooky biscuit. He enters looking as if he's risen from the dead. In jail he's written an autobiographical novel entitled *2,138 Sandwiches* and that's about how far short they all are of the proverbial picnic.

● Until Saturday 10 November. Box office: 020 7503 1646.