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Giselle

Eric Quilleré after Jules Perrot & Jean Coralli

Opéra National de Bordeaux

Opera National de Bordeaux, France

19 December 2023–19 June 2024

A naïve peasant girl discovers the man she loves is a nobleman in disguise and already engaged to a lady at Court. She does what you would expect a romantic heroine would do in such circumstances. She goes raving mad and falls down dead.

Ethereal, timeless, ghostly, there have been so many versions of the story. Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli's *Giselle*, the most famous and enduring of all ballets of the Romantic era, is given an unnecessary update by French industrial designer matali crasset, who also directs and whose name is spelled entirely in lower case without any capitals.

The production opens with a big shock. There is no medieval village. The artificial setting and colourful costumes have no reality whatsoever and look like something you might see on display in a shop window. They upstage the dancers and diminish the performance. The supernatural second act has no dark forest at night to lure young men to their death. The stage is brightly lit and there is no ghostly atmosphere for the spectral brides.

Marini Da Silva Vianna as Giselle and Riku Ota as Albrecht dance and act in a vacuum. Ota is very boyish and innocent. Riccardo Zuddas has a beard which gives Hilarion, the gamekeeper who also loves Giselle, more presence and maturity.

I never felt I was watching the famous ballet. I was merely watching dancers dancing. matali crasset's *Giselle* is the least moving I have seen. The emotion and poignancy remain entirely in Adolphe Adam's wonderful score and never translate to the stage.

Reviewer: [Robert Tanitch](#)