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REVIEW

ballet.*magazine**Royal Ballet**'Isadora', 'Dances at a Gathering'**March 2009**London, Covent Garden**by Diandri*[RB 'Isadora' reviews](#)[RB 'Dances at a Gathering' reviews](#)['Dances at a Gathering' reviews](#)[Choe in reviews](#)[Polunin in reviews](#)[recent RB reviews](#)[more Diandri reviews](#)[Discuss this review](#)[\(Open for at least 6 months\)](#)[Gallery of Photographs](#)*As posted on our Postings pages...*

I saw the first night of the Isadora / Dances bill last week & like many first nights I thought Isadora still looked like a work in progress so I will be returning to the final 2 performances this week. I didn't see it in 1981 although I have the book about the original creation of the ballet in 1981 which has a goldmine of information & plenty of photos. I was curious to see what would be kept & which sections / roles cut.

The overwhelming thing to strike me from the performance was how ambitious Kenneth MacMillan was when he originally created it. His love of cinema & theatre is well documented & one can see how he was trying to blend these techniques for the ballet audience. Deborah MacMillan has had a good go at honing the good bits & utilising technology that can better capture his intentions, but I think there is still room for more tweaking to fully realise its potential.

Tamara Rojo was remarkable in what must be an exhausting role, but she tackled it with ferocity in the various solos (I liked the Russian solo in the dark with the lantern & the singing) & the various duets with her men (the standout one is that following the loss of her children as its just so painful to watch). Its tricky to try & get across how ahead of her time Isadora was in her approach to sex & her men without looking like a slut. Rojo's commitment to the ballet & choreography is apparent as she gave 100%.

I liked the voiceover & film footage, but agree with one or 2 who felt it was a little too documentary-like & serious. It might have been more fun if it had a Ballet Boyz amateurism to it such as shaky camera work or a camcorder following Isadora around during her life like a modern reality show!!





Tamara Rojo in *Isadora*
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Isadora was a controversial woman in her day & I love the fact that this ballet still divides audiences & critics as it should do & Mason & Deborah MacMillan should continue to tweak it & regularly revive it as it deserves to be seen & argued about & certainly beats another run of Swan Lakes or Sleeping Beautys.

Dances at a Gathering had improved massively from last year with the dancers really excelling. Yuhui Choe was beautiful in pink & Leanne Benjamin funny in green & Laura Morera ravishing in apricot opposite a much improved Sergei Polunin. Its a lovely ballet & one that suits the dancers.

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