



Groupe Émile Dubois: "My Ladies Rock", c. Jean-Claude Gallotta (ph. G. Cittadini)

Groupe Émile Dubois

Jean-Claude Gallotta on the rock

My Ladies Rock – chor. Jean-Claude Gallotta with the dancers of the Groupe Émile Dubois, mus. Various
Paris, Théâtre du Rond Point

We could say of 67-year-old choreographer Jean-Claude Gallotta that he is the phoenix of French contemporary dance. His is a long career, one that began booming in the 1980s and faded out for a while; however, his feel for the times we live in and ability to identify himself with his era have always allowed him to start afresh; each time it looked as if Gallotta was about to be hit and carried away by a wave, he would rise again with a new idea, a winning show that made one forget the previous, less successful, one.

After stepping down in 2016 from his thirty-year-long tenure of the Centre Chorégraphique National de Grenoble, the famous Cargo, Gallotta re-assembled the small company of his early days and he has, with them, been able to rediscover his creative vein, intact, as testified by his latest work, *My Ladies Rock*, that debuted a few months ago in Bourges, in the Loire Valley.

It had been feared that this second work of his on the same subject – the first was entitled *My Rock* – was going to be a kind of repetition in female mode. But that wasn't the case. Choreographically-speaking, *My Ladies Rock* is even richer. It is full of highly vigorous ensembles, followed by duets, trios, quartets and other combinations that are far more interesting than the simple duets of *My Rock*.

Almost all the female singers and precursors of the golden age of rock, such as Janis Joplin, Marianne Faithfull or Nina Hagen, have been brought on for the occasion. In

the hoarse voices with which they struggled to succeed in a world dominated by men, they sing lyrics that are often provocative, transgressive, a rupture with the past. And the sheer might of their voices has absolutely nothing to envy from those of men.

The 11 dancers, clearly happy to be dancing to this music, unleash a vitality that is in perfect harmony with the singers. They put the stage to sword and fire. One recognises those tiny movements so dear to Gallotta, like abrupt changes in direction and rapid steps with free-moving legs, all executed at the double. Also noteworthy is his fine work of 'decomposition', starting with classic rock and roll moves.

A video accompanies Gallotta's recorded voice: he comments on the singers and softly puts forward, with seeming lightness, his ideas on the condition of women and the world.

A very generous show that demonstrates how intelligence and fun can go hand-in-hand.

Sonia Schoonejans