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Ikuko · 5 days ago · 3 min read

Review: Ukrainian International Ballet Past | Present | Future - exploring multidisciplinary

artistry under female leadership

Ballet news

Updated: 23 hours ago

I went to see the <u>Ukrainian International Ballet</u>'s (UIB) <u>Past | Present | Future</u> on 8th June 2025 at the <u>Korzo Theater</u> in Den Haag, the Netherlands. It was the premiere of their new production. It was a sold out show.

I wrote a review about their earlier production, <u>Independent24</u>, in August last year. I described it as a storytelling ballet because it was about UIB dancers' personal life experiences - how the war in Ukraine changed their lives, how they fled the war and how they were settling in in the Netherlands. It was the past and the present in a way.

Make no mistake, however. UIB's new work, Past | Present | Future, was by no means about adding the future to the previous production. Instead, they explored their multidisciplinary artistry and their identity as Ukrainians in the Netherlands. And, I had a delightful impression that they were promoting female leadership.

Past | Present | Future was comprised of three short works created by three different choreographers in very different styles.

Act 1 was *Past*, which was choreographed by **Vladyslav Detiuchenko** and performed by two classically

trained fabulous Dmytro-s, **Dmytro Borodai** and **Dmytro Tkachenko**. Detiuchenko produced the imaginary interplay between Dutch painter <u>Piet Mondrian</u> (1872-1944) and Ukrainian artist <u>Alexandra Exter</u> (1882-1949) on stage. To be frank, I did not know what kind of dance to expect from these two artists, who shared cubism if I am not mistaken. However, the performance was dynamic, full of energy, somehow nostalgic, jazzy and fashionable. And I loved the costume.

Act 2 was *Present*. It was a contemporary work by <u>Marne van Opstal</u>, a Dutch choreographic talent

who has been in the international spotlight for the recent few years along with his sister Imre. The piece

was danced by Toon Lobach and Eve-Marie Dalcourt (cast A). The dancers wore white tops and

beige bottoms, something we wear every day. The stage was undecorated, raw and bare. Somehow icy and somehow warm. The pair danced the choreography effortlessly like a flow of fresh oxygen but it was technically demanding. The piece was so sublime and sophisticated it felt almost like a classical pas de deux albeit it was very contemporary. I felt privileged to watch Marne's work at such an intimate setting of Korzo, and I sat just behind him, given that he and Imre would create a piece for Paris Opera Ballet later this year.

Then, here came Act 3, *Future*, choreographed by **Dmytro Borodai**, who also danced in *Past*. I had

Novikova (founder and Executive Director), Vladyslava Kovalenko (Artistic Director and the creator of the Past | Present | Future project) and Iryna Khutorianska (Public Relations, ticket sales).

A dance piece featuring three female dancers already felt like a deviation from the norm. On top of that,

how often do you see three senior managements dance together on stage, as they say?

very much looked forward this piece because I knew it would feature UIB's backbone trio, **Kseniia**

I would say *Future* looked like a distant dystopian future. It was unrefined and un-futuristic. How distant? I did not know. With more and more wars popping up in the fragile world today, it might be tomorrow. But what happened to the 21st century civilisation? Nuclear? Are they the only survivors? Is it just me who was reminded of film *Cast Away*? Or are they on another planet? Do humans repeat that process from the start? It was very current. It was relevant. It was thought-provoking.

Needless to say, the choreographer and dancers did not disappoint me. Although Kseniia, Vladyslava and Iryna were strong classical ballet dancers, so was Dmytro, they ditched pointe shoes for this one. Their dance was rudimentary, primal and powerful. Probably the only reminder of humany was Vyshyvanka, shirt-like garments with the traditional Ukrainian embroidery, and they used the garment hauntingly well. *Future* was my favorite of the three. It was my cup of tea.



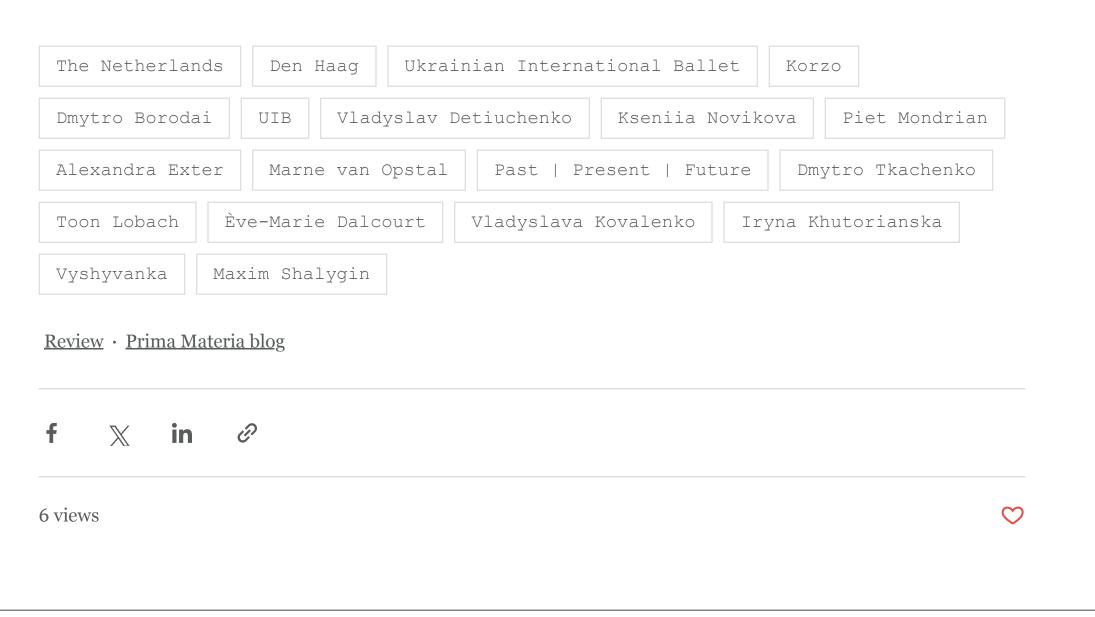
Past | Present | Future : Image taken by me with my archeological iPhone

The show transcended from around 1920s to one point in future. It was a clever way to present three distinct pieces of choreography in one programme and it made sense.

UIB is on **the national tour** with Past | Present | Future. For more details and the full credit, click <u>here</u>.

UIB's work expanded into the lobby area. There were installments about Ukrainian artists. I did not manage to read everything because the lobby was crowded. Make sure to arrive early and read them. I also spotted Ukrainian-Dutch composer Maxim Shalygin during an intermission. It was an evening filled with trans-dimensional arts.

Update on 21st June 2025 to correct typographical and grammatical errors.

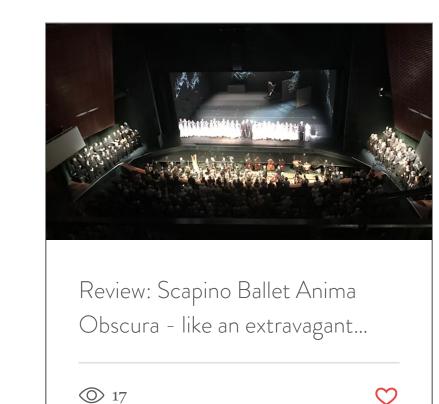


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