

The Critics

THE CAR MAN

Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, EC1

AFTER the critical and popular success of Matthew Bourne's original production of *The Car Man* at The Old Vic in 2000, reviving this show was never going to be a gamble.

But from what I saw and heard, this production is set to delight audiences even more now than it did seven years ago.

Bourne has taken Rodion Shchedrin's version of Bizet's *Carmen*, and blended it with music by Terry Davies, commissioned especially for the piece.

His close collaboration with Davies means that *The Car Man*'s choreography and music complement each other to assure Bourne's creative vision.

Dance has the capacity to satisfy the aesthetic and nothing more, but this is not the case with *The Car Man*.

This piece is as dramatic as any straight play and contains many very cinematic moments. The plot twists were such that on several occasions there were audible gasps from the audience.

The dancers too, far from just being vehicles for the choreography, made the narrative crystal clear through their subtle characterisation.

I think even Bourne's critics would be hard-pressed to find fault here.

- JOANNA CAIRD

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