

week

870707), East Yard,
1, Friday March 14,
lay March 15, at

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s to the impressive
venue, with Tony Law

2078), Tufnell Park
y March 15, at

s Comedy Club
stand-up legend
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up-coming talent
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Comedy Club (07932
s, Kentish Town
v March 14, at
hard Steele,
W3, Saturday March

The Critics

SWAN LAKE - MOSCOW CITY BALLET Hackney Empire, Mare Street, E8

THE two performances of Swan Lake at the Hackney Empire marked the finale of Moscow City Ballet's 17th UK tour.

Unfortunately it was all too clear that the company is getting ready to go home.

It would perhaps be asking too much to expect an orchestra to be in attendance on such a small-scale tour, but surely a PA larger than the Empire's tiny house system could have been found.

Tchaikovsky's masterful score was reduced to tinny hold music that drained all dramatic atmosphere from the production.

Overall the company performed well, with a few of the principles dancing with considerable technical skill, but a stage too small for the large corps de ballet and a sound operator who kept turning off the music before the last moments of movements made the whole appear unprofessional and decidedly underwhelming.

While the major London houses charge as much as £165 for stalls seats, the Empire's top price tickets go for £25.

Productions such as this one provide less well-off ballet lovers with the rare opportunity of getting a proper view of a performance.

In this case, however, the pay-off was first-rate seats for a second-rate production.

- JO CAIRD