

balt, Mercutio, the Nurse, Lord and Lady Capulet, the Prince of Verona. With ENB today, things are very different. The Danish guests who came to help when Peter Schaufuss first succeeded in reviving the production — for what was then London Festival Ballet — are not here this year and they are badly missed. In the absence of strong support, and in the weakness of the corps de ballet dancing, everything must depend on the Romeo and Juliet.

Trinidad Seviliano and Patrick Armand, who joined the Boston Ballet in 1990, have matured from youthful promise into artists of rare quality, both in acting and dancing. Seviliano has gained tremendously in strength without losing any of her girlish, almost childish vulnerability; Armand is a romantic dancer of elegant build and of real temperament. Together — they are ideally matched — they gave life, happiness and then despair and death to the lovers. Because of them, if not much else, the evening was rewarding.

● Last performance tonight.

Cottesloe

Michael Billington

The Street Of Crocodiles

MORE matter with less art, said Gertrude to Polonius; and that has often been my reaction to the slightly self-admiring virtuosity of Theatre de Complicite. But *The Street of Crocodiles* is their best work yet. Drawn from the 1930s short stories of Bruno Schulz, a Polish-Frust, it both celebrates the concrete power of memory and offers an ideal synthesis of form and content.

Schulz's stories are poetic pieces about life in the south-eastern Polish city of Drohobycz, about the magical transformations of nature and, above all, about the eccentricities of his father — the focal point of his weird, impressionistic memories. Schulz's dad was a remarkable figure: a textile merchant who retreated into a world of dreams and inventions. He imported rare birds' eggs to hatch out new specimens, ex-

perimented with mesmerism and galvanism and, believing there was no such thing as dead matter, tried to bring life to tailors' dummies.

But how to bring these stories to theatrical life? Simon McBurney, the director and adaptor with Mark Wheatley, does it by treating the show as a conscious remembrance of things past.

The hero, Joseph, leads through a dusty tome whose figures suddenly appear before us. His father, Jacob, perches bird-like on a ledge. The family gather round the dinner table for cranky, joke-filled meals. The much-grooped maid, Adela, bustles around in a vain attempt to keep order. Mundane objects acquire symbolic life: raised chairs represent a spring dusk.

What is extraordinary is both the show's visual fluidity and ability to tap our own memories both of art and life. Conscious homage is paid to Cracow's Tadeusz Kantor — whose *The Dead Class* was inspired by Schulz — in a scene where adults sit behind tilting school-room desks for a crazy wood-work session. Shrewdly and movingly, McBurney also extends the story into the future reminding us, through the sound of marching feet, that Schulz's city was occupied by the Nazis in 1941 and that he himself was shot in the street by a Gestapo officer.

But the triumph of the show is that Complicite's talent for visual effects is always put to the service of Schulz's vision. As a company-devised show, it also has the strong tang of group commitment while yielding outstanding individual performances from Matthew Scurlfield as the obsessively inventive father, Lilo Baur as the fiercely house-proud Adela and Antonio Gil Martinez as the extravagantly-coiffeured Cousin Emil who, at one point, is devastatingly asked: "Is that wig real?" But the great thing about the show is that Complicite not only open our eyes to Bruno Schulz but turn his densely impressionistic stories into a piece of vividly imaginative theatre.

In yesterday's review of Richard III at Stratford, Annabelle Apsion was mistakenly credited with three roles. In fact, the Duchess of York is played by Ellie Haddington.

Billington On Street Of Crocodiles

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