



REBELS ON POINTE

Featuring LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO

A film by Bobbi Jo Hart

An Icarus Films Release

Produced by Adobe Productions International

"Laugh out loud funny! Knocks the stuffy art off its pedestal and makes it an open, inclusive, and accessible experience. This spirited doc shows how much better art—and life—can be when everyone is invited to the party."

—POV Magazine

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LOGLINE

A riotous, irreverent all-male comic ballet troupe, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo challenges gender and artistic norms in the conservative world of ballet.

SYNOPSIS

Exploring universal themes of identity, dreams and family, *Rebels on Pointe* celebrates the legendary dance troupe Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. The notorious all-male drag ballet company, commonly known as "The Trocks," was founded in 1974 in New York City on the heels of the Stonewall riots and has since developed a passionate cult following around the world. The film juxtaposes intimate behind-the-scenes access, rich archives and history, engaging character driven stories, and dance performances shot in North America, Europe and Japan. *Rebels on Pointe* is a creative blend of gender-bending artistic expression, diversity, passion and purpose which proves that a ballerina can be an act of revolution... in a tutu.

Rebels on Pointe introduces dancers that director Bobbi Jo Hart filmed for four years: Bobby Carter from Charleston, South Carolina; Raffaele Morra from Fossano, Italy; Chase Johnsey from Lakeland, Florida; and Carlos Hopuy is from Havana, Cuba. With personal histories impacted by the AIDS crisis and eventual growth of the LGBT civil rights movement, the film's main characters share powerful and inspiring anecdotes about growing up gay, their relationships with their families, and their challenges in becoming professional ballerinas. Other interviewees featured in this exuberant documentary include James Whiteside, principal dancer of American Ballet Theatre, and Gia Kourlas, dance critic for *The New York Times*, who add valuable context to the Trocks' unforgettable tale.

SELECTED FESTIVALS

Best Documentary, 2017 Miami MiFo LGBT Film Festival
Best Documentary, 2017 San Luis Obispo International Film Festival
Best Canadian Film, 2017 InsideOut Toronto LGBT Film Festival
Audience Award Runner-Up, 2017 Santa Barbara Film Festival
Official Selection, 2017 Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival
Official Selection, 2017 Montreal International Festival of Films on Art (FIFA)
Official Selection, 2017 Barcelona Documentary Film Festival
Official Selection, 2017 American Documentary Film Festival
Official Selection, 2017 QDocs Portland Film Festival
Official Selection, 2017 Frameline Film Festival San Francisco
Official Selection, 2017 OutFest Los Angeles

IN THE PRESS

"An affectionate tribute to a dance company that dares to defy convention."

—*Montreal Gazette*

"Hart's engaging documentary brings out the humour in the Trocks, an essential part of the troupe's ethos. And she does that while balancing it with the seriousness that comes with ballet." —*Inside Out*

"Real heart and soul." —*Get Reel*

"Compelling; unmissable." —*Edge Media Network*

Rebels on Pointe Review, POV Magazine

By Patrick Mullen, May 6, 2017

In *Rebels on Pointe*, Montreal filmmaker Bobbi Jo Hart profiles Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, the successful New York based company that knocks the stuffy art of ballet off its pedestal and makes it an open, inclusive, and accessible experience. The key to "the Trocks" is that it's a very funny all-male, all-gay company. The Trocks offer a positive space for people who don't fit the conventional roles of ballet. Their performances incorporate classical technique with camp, drag, and farce, and this spirited doc shows how much better art—and life—can be when everyone is invited to the party.

This backstage doc observes the Trocks as they rehearse their new season. Hart presents the usual sequences of choreography, practice, physiotherapy, and make-up application, but *Rebels on Pointe* gives them a distinctive spin as the dancers have a laissez-faire attitude that one doesn't often see behind the scenes. This attitude helps open ballet to an audience that might be uncomfortable with traditional ballet. At the same time, the "out" queer space of the company builds a relationship with the larger community. It's political by virtue of its existence without being explicitly so through its performances.

The scenes of their performances are laugh aloud funny as Hart presents ample footage of the Trocks on stage. The male bodies offer an obvious sight gag when playing female roles and the Trocks use flamboyant make-up to accentuate the ruse while exaggerated expressions and pantomime give cheery life to the show. The dancers are all professionals so the numbers from *Swan Lake* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* display the same impressive technique and strength that one enjoys in a conventional performance, but the Trocks embellish the sillier and outmoded elements of ballet with campy humor. Dancers might get carried away during a number and intentionally fall out of sync with the company to show how much more fun a ballet can be when it's more about pleasure than performance. Other gags, like elbow jabs and elongated twirls, play on the rivalries that develop in a dance company, with the

obligatory charming princes becoming objects of ridicule and envy from the ensemble. A highlight is the “dying swan” number from Swan Lake in which a Trock soloist struggles with the bird’s final wheezing breaths as feathers fly off his tutu and he draws out the death scene in one loony feat of hogging the spotlight.

The dancers dish on the inconsistencies of ballet that make their company a necessity. The high art sensibility of dance, for example, frequently demands a certain “type” (ie: petite white women) for lead roles while male dancers vie for her affection. One interviewee, the lead for a more traditional company, points out that he always plays Prince Charming going after the girl and that his success depends on repeating a role that is wildly inconsistent with his own life.

Hart makes a notable effort to highlight the cultural diversity within the company as she talks with Trocks from around the world who have flocked to join the company. Dancers from Italy and Cuba, for example, share stories about finding comfort in this surrogate family when opportunities for them to be out and on stage didn’t fly back home. At the same time, Hart highlights the relationships that form within the company as two dancers ready for marriage and become the third couple among the Trocks to wed. Artist director Tory Dobrin notes that the trio of marriages within the company is a feat he didn’t expect to see in his lifetime. They’re encouraging signs of social progress that’s developed as the Trocks continue to hit their stride with audiences.

Hart does an admirable job of approaching the company from multiple angles to create an inclusive doc portrait. Interviews with the dancers’ parents are especially touching as *Rebels on Pointe* builds to the reunion of one family that’s been separated for far too long. Hart buoys the film with a light sense of humor and charm that comes easily when the subject’s mission is to make audiences have a good time. The dancers of *Rebels on Pointe* are good company for any audience.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Photo by Topher Seguin, Edmonton Journal

Montreal filmmaker Bobbi Jo Hart has directed and produced documentaries since 1997 filming in countries including Pakistan, Russia, Great Britain, Guatemala, Zimbabwe and Romania. With films like *A Calling to Care* (1997), *Shrinkage* (2001), *She Got Game* (2003), *I Am Not a Rock Star* (2012) and *Rise* (2015), she explores a wide range of different, often misunderstood, lifestyles in a spirit of shared humanity. Hart’s last feature documentary, *I Am Not a Rock Star*, was nominated for three and won two prestigious Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Performing Arts Documentary, Best Editing and Best Direction.

FILM CREDITS

Title: *Rebels on Pointe*
Director: Bobbi Jo Hart
Producers: Bobbi Jo Hart, Robbie Hart
Cinematography: Bobbi Jo Hart, Renald Bellemare, Jenni Morello,
Stephanie Weber-Biron, Wes Doyle, Robbie Hart,
Editor: Catherine Legault
Music: Jann Arden, Corey Hart, Daniel Toussaint
Production company: Adobe Productions International

Featuring the dancers of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo:
Robert Carter, Paolo Cervellera, Loic Consalvo, Boysie Dikobe, Roberto Forleo, Jack Furlong Jr., Paul Ghiselin, Duane Gosa, Giovanni Goffredo, Carlos Hopuy, Chase Johnsey, Christopher Lam, Laszlo Major, Davide Marongiu, Philip Martin-Nielson, Trystan Merrick, Raffaele Morra, Lawrence Neuhauser, Christopher Ouellette, Matthew Poppe, Alberto Pretto, Giovanni Ravelo, Carlos Renedo, Joshua Thake, Matt Van, Long Zou

Running time: 90 minutes
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Production year: 2016
Release: 2017
Aspect ratio: 16:9
Sound: Stereo
Language: English

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More Information:
<http://icarusfilms.com/new2017/reb.html>

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