

The New Criterion

Dance

September 2008

Ratmansky, "Rabbit" & a rose

by [Laura Jacobs](#)

On Alexei Ratmansky, *Rabbit and Rogue* at American Ballet Theatre, and *Jupiter Symphony* at Pennsylvania Ballet.

When Alexei Ratmansky's *Bright Stream* was presented during the Bolshoi Ballet's 2005 engagement at the Met, it was New York's first good look at his work. A full-length ballet set on a Soviet collective farm ("tractor ballet," this genre was called), *Bright Stream* possessed a first act of charming manners and a toylike scale, which was ingratiating. The ballet lost its way in Act Two, devolving into a barnyard farce, a cross-dressed switcheroo so lumbering and unfunny it trampled the charm. And it wasn't just that. In this act as well, one saw that Ratmansky had trouble focusing his more classical pas, having a penchant for dualities that split the stage, frustrating the eye—for instance, two duets danced simultaneously. And yet, *Bright Stream* received raves, as if it had answered something quite a few critics were hungry for. What that was, though, I couldn't say at the time.

Laura Jacobs's *Landscape with Moving Figures* is available from Dance & Movement Press.

[more from this author](#)

This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 27 September 2008, on page 32

Copyright © 2009 The New Criterion | www.newcriterion.com

<http://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/Ratmansky---Rabbit----a-rose-3889>