

# The New York Times

## Review: Taylor Stanley Rises in City Ballet's 'Hallelujah Junction'

By GIA KOURLAS MAY 18, 2016



Taylor Stanley of New York City Ballet dancing "Hallelujah Junction."  
Credit Paul Kolnik

Peter Martins, the ballet master in chief of New York City Ballet, loves to give his dancers happy surprises. On Tuesday evening, moments before the curtain rose on "Hallelujah Junction," Mr. Martins's brisk, galvanic work set to John Adams, he promoted [Taylor Stanley](#), one of its leads, to principal dancer. Filling in at the last minute for an injured Gonzalo Garcia, Mr. Stanley was making his New York debut in the role, at the David H. Koch Theater.

Mr. Martins's decision was spontaneous, a City Ballet publicist said. But it makes sense: The debonair Mr. Stanley has an affinity for speed and drama and has been frequently featured in the ballets of Justin Peck, the company's resident choreographer. His sharp attack was apparent in "[Hallelujah](#)"; later that night, in "Western Symphony,"

George Balanchine's 1954 homage to the Wild West, he showed some spunk, loosening up to find the cowboy within.

In that ballet, which remains a delight, Brittany Pollack made her debut in the second movement opposite Jared Angle, gamely leaping headfirst into his arms with little fear and an ever-gleaming smile. (Her perpetually happy expression can seem one-note.) In the final movement, the willowy Teresa Reichlen, though she faltered uncharacteristically in her fouetté turns, and a devilish Andrew Veyette imbued their frisky pas de deux with a spirit that showed they weren't just executing moves, but reacting to each other.

The program, which included Sterling Hyltin and [Robert Fairchild](#) in an admirable rendition of Balanchine's 1972 "Duo Concertant," led with his "Serenade." It, too, featured a debut, this time by Tiler Peck in the role that is traditionally called the Russian girl. In 2004, Ms. Peck made a glittering impression in the part at her School of American Ballet workshop performance.

This time, she brought a lilting, sleek maturity to the role, which gave breadth to her turns, at times so fast that she seemed to lift off the floor in a swirl of pale blue tulle. There was dramatic sensitivity, too, especially when she brushed the back of her hand against her forehead and fell to the floor.

Later, the Waltz girl, portrayed by the ravishing, space-gulping [Sara Mearns](#), echoed that moment when she dropped to the floor herself; in "Serenade" especially, the scope of her dancing is full of suspense, tender, electric. As the Dark Angel, Megan LeCrone took a spectacular spill herself — this time it wasn't intentional, but in that moment she held nothing back. So what if dancers fall when they dance like this? The performance was alive.

New York City Ballet's spring season continues through May 29 at the David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center; [nycballet.com](#); 212-496-0600.

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