

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Alejandro Ferrer

What's So Funny?

by Kat Sullivan

Luciano Rosso, one half of the Argentinean duo Un Poyo Rojo, prepares a balletic [port de bras](#), foot forward en [tendu](#), and wiggles his eyebrows at us. Knowing we expect a grand jump, he darts across the stage, arms held in position but legs akimbo, his neck bobbing forward (not unlike a rooster) with protuberant eyes. I laugh out loud, a rarity for me when viewing dance.

Nicolás Poggi, not to be outdone, mimes a series of [pirouettes](#) and proceeds to bow and curtsy with a look of smug satisfaction. The audience applauds with mirth, another first for me in Western concert dance, and Poggi pantomimes lovingly gathering bouquets of flowers and stuffs them into Rosso's on-stage locker. They smirk at one another here; I like to think this moment was off the cuff.

Rosso catwalks in a square around the stage, hips swaying and hands fanning imaginary flowing hair away from his face. Poggi hip hops downstage, hand on his crotch and upper lip curled. They both tango, keeping time with quick vocal "tuts." Poggi cricks his neck in a head-whipping [vogue](#) turn but still manages to [death drop](#). Rosso eggs Poggi like a bullfighter, wiggling a red tank top in front of a snorting Poggi.

There is a lot of movement to parse in this work; as the program description lists, they skip across a wide array of dance forms, athletic competition, acrobatics, body percussion, cockfighting, and more. I laugh, other people laugh, and I ask myself as I leave, why? What makes this performance funny?

Certainly, some of the movement is just goofy. Rosso sticks cigarettes in his mouth, nose, and ears, manipulating them around in time with a radio program's sports update. It's silly—plain and simple. Their commitment to the work heightens this: their full-bodied comedy and willingness to do anything.

Perhaps, in American culture, it might be funny to watch men “be feminine,” i.e., dance ballet, put their hands on their hips, mimic Beyoncé’s iconic “Single Ladies” [music video](#). Men dancing, period, is a source of [mockery](#). Am I laughing at Rosso and Poggi’s performance because, deep down, I still believe that being a woman is laughable? Yet, the LGBTQ community has given us performative forms that posture men imitating women in a celebratory and empowering manner: [drag](#) and vogue are just a few. Is it satirical that Rosso and Poggi’s attempts at [machismo](#) only feed the flames of their apparent sexual desire?

Un Poyo Rojo posits a different kind of [“locker room talk”](#)—asking more questions than it answers, yet nevertheless gets laughs.

[Un Poyo Rojo](#), Un Poyo Rojo, Christ Church Neighborhood House, 2019 Fringe Festival, September 19 - 21.

By Kat J. Sullivan
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