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Dance: Lyons Troupe's 'Cinderella'

By ANNA KISSELGOFF

BECAUSE Maguy Marin's production of "Cinderella" for the Lyons Opera Ballet is performed by dancers who wear masks and are meant to look like dolls, there would seem to be little range available to performers in individual roles.

Nonetheless, when Jocelyne Mocogni appeared in the title role Sunday afternoon at the City Center, she offered a somewhat different but equally valid interpretation from Françoise Joullié's on opening night.

Miss Mocogni, who has also danced with Eliot Feld's company in New York, was a more child-like Cinderella, a waif barely able to believe that she would be loved. Since Miss Marin has functioned in this version as director as well as a choreographer, every dancer must follow her directions in

detail. But if every gesture and step is the same, the movement quality varies from performer to performer. Thus, Miss Mocogni's rage and despair in the final solo did not have the same brutal impact as Miss Joullié's. But she had an amazing sense of timing that registered Cinderella's emotional crest in every movement. Part doll, part child, the Cinderella must never be totally human but also must never be mechanical. The way Miss Mocogni swung a stiff leg in and out of the little toy car in which she rode off to the ball was a perfect illustration of how she captured the essence of her character.

On second viewing, one becomes aware of how much actual dancing there is in this production. The duet with the Prince — Stéphane Vessier repeated his role — is a gloss upon a ballet pas de deux. Miss Mocogni's plunges into arabesques and her toe work had a daring that also fit the

stylization of the entire production.

Under the surface of grotesque, flexed-footed imagery, Miss Marin has adapted the classical vocabulary to dramatic purpose. The fairy godmother's three servants have a great deal of leg beats and brisk footwork. Pierre Advokattoff, Patrick Azzopardi and Hervé Chams do an excellent job here. So does Valérie Lacognata as the senorita the Prince visits in his search for the right foot to fit Cinderella's slipper. Miss Marin has created a witty simulation of a flamenco dance, and it is cheekily rendered. Dominique Lainé is very funny as the belly dancer on another tour stop.

A word also for Anne-Sylvie Gaches as the androgynous fairy whose clean line fits the movement, and for Danièle Pater, Tanya Darbey and Chantal Réquena, who never overdid their tantrums as the stepsisters and stepmother.