

# Back to the future

*Revolution* leaves **Marianka Swain** wanting more

Creating a new dance stage show is a tricky business. You can reassure the audience with familiar material, either adaptation (*Some Like It Hip Hop*) or medium transfer (*Dirty Dancing*). You can capitalise on popular music (*Strictly Gershwin*), a unique style (*Lord of the Dance*) or the popularity of your stars (*Midnight Tango*). Or you can create an avant-garde work of art that grips its audience through sheer choreographic and performance genius. *Revolution*, sadly, does none of these things.

Its premise is sound: Pussycat Doll-turned-talent show judge Kimberly Wyatt, tapper-turned-talent show judge Adam Garcia and a cast of bright young things, many familiar from TV's "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Got To Dance", showcase a range of styles in a futuristic quest for dance divinity and spiritual fulfilment. (Or to save the planet – I confess the details eluded me.) They also take turns choreographing, which should lead to an evening of diverse, engaging numbers.

Unfortunately, *Revolution* is more MTV video than theatrical event – and, for all its efforts to be cutting edge, a curiously old-fashioned one at that. The numbers all look and feel like wannabe Gaga backing dancers waiting for their star to appear, and the different styles (hip hop, contemporary, jazz, tap) become indistinguishable as they fight against a blaring soundtrack.

That could all be forgiven if there was something to connect with – story, emotion, message, even individual dancers – but *Revolution* squanders its recognisable and generally assured performers by styling them in such a way that it's hard to tell them apart and relying heavily on bland, directionless group numbers in which the synchronicity comes and goes.

Of the two stars, Adam Garcia doesn't appear until halfway

through, and his brief tap number, though well danced, suffers from the creative decision to blend everything together. Kimberly Wyatt, possibly living out a dream of some kind, plays a warrior queen who spends the evening being carried around by topless, muscled guys, which, let's face it, we'd all do if we had the chance, but borders on self-indulgence during a dance performance.

On a positive note, I took a great deal of joy from the unintentionally hilarious sci-fi framework. A screen flashes up "Stargate" mission logs and video game imagery throughout, creating much more interest than the actual live performance, but suggesting

"Kimberly Wyatt, possibly living out a dream of some kind, plays a warrior queen who spends the evening being carried around by topless, muscled guys, which, let's face it, we'd all do if we had the chance"



Kimberly Wyatt  
in *Revolution*

we're in the wrong medium.

With solemn routine titles (The Empowerment! The Temptation! The Insanity!), a proliferation of leather, LED, shoulder accoutrements and silver leggings, the show is at least halfway to *Flash Gordon: The Musical* – without embracing the camp possibilities. As a student dance/film/philosophy fusion installation, *Revolution* would be intriguing, but as a viable West End stage show – at West End prices – it's back to school. ●

*Revolution* will be at the Theatre Royal Haymarket on Sundays until June 10.