



## The Fifth Musketeer

July 11, 2009 by [Christopher Jones](#)

Filed under [Our Reviews](#)

**4** Christopher rates it:

The pre-show music amped me up for a female revolution and women united. *The Fifth Musketeer* delivered heavily-handedly on that promise.

*The Fifth Musketeer* is a fun and intriguing tale of swashbuckling feminism! If the swordplay didn't have me flinching in my seat, the compelling performances of its actors transported me into the world of Dumas's 17th Century French fable.

Written and directed by Paco José Madden, this world premier from the ClassiqueNouveau company is billed as an "epic adventure," although, the adventure is one I've experienced before. We've all seen the quest of the insatiably curious and overly eager hero seeking to defend life and home against a tyrannical oppressor. Madden's take is clever, albeit a bit predictable. Aside from the building literally crumbling right before our eyes (bits of ceiling fell on the stage during performance), the audience left with smiles and high praise for this dramatic triumph in women's empowerment.

What the plot lacks in originality, the script makes up for with carefully crafted dialogue and compelling characters. The best element of the production, by a landslide, is its cast. The actors bring the staple characters of this epic quest to life. As many actors are cast in double roles, in some cases blurring the lines of gender, each character is distinct and interesting. Working with a minimalist set, the cast does an exceptional job commanding the audience's imagination while conveying emotion, compassion, and even downright evil.

Of particular note are Kelley Slagle as Treville, Rachel Holt as Rochelle, and Matthew R. Wilson as Rochefort. They mastered their roles and stole the show. Wilson is also the play's fight director. His swordplay choreography is exciting, dangerous, and cuts to the spirit of a true Musketeer.

Almost its own character in the play is the performance space itself. It challenged the audience to pay close attention, as other shows were audible in adjacent rooms. The deconstructed space looks like it's about to collapse- which is what makes it cool! I felt like I was in an underground meeting hall where the city's seedy and artistic gather to pool their creativity. It truly added to the production.

Go see the show! You will not be disappointed.

### **The Fifth Musketeer**

Written and directed by Paco José Madden

A ClassiqueNouveau Production

Reviewed by Christopher Jones