

## Seeing Things

Tobi Tobias on Dance et al.

### Lubovitch Group Brings Vintage Dances, New Dancers

*This article originally appeared in the Culture section of Bloomberg News on November 7, 2008.*

Nov. 7 (Bloomberg) -- The gala opening night of the 40-year-old Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Wednesday, at New York's City Center, revealed a great deal of what we've come to expect of this choreographer: grace, lyricism, easy musicality, clear structure and sentimentality.



Members of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company perform "Concerto Six Twenty-Two," to music by Mozart in this undated handout photo released to the media on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008. The company is performing at the New York City Center, 131 W. 55th St., through Nov. 9. Photographer: Christopher Duggan/Lar Lubovitch Dance Company via Bloomberg News

Lubovitch's work is pleasing...He presents lovely, accomplished dancers who reach occasional rhapsodic moments -- a key reason for his company's worldwide popularity...

Of the three vintage works on the bill, "Concerto Six Twenty-Two" (1986, named for its Mozart score), gives you Lubovitch in a nutshell.

The first and last of its three sections are elated dances by a large group and segments of it that invariably link back to the full community. The choreography is distinctive for its ever-evolving circles, traced in turning patterns and individual swirling bodies. The effect is marred slightly by little bits of sophomoric tomfoolery, perhaps inserted purposely, as if to break up the otherwise relentless loveliness.

The mid-section, entirely disconnected from rest of the dance, is a tender, meditative male duet. It's a persuasive argument, if one is needed -- and it was, at the height of the AIDS epidemic -- to respect love between two men.

### **Dark Stunner**

“North Star” (1978, to Philip Glass) is a dark stunner that seems to be set in a night sky, with a galaxy breaking and re-forming as if inseparable for eternity. It moves on to a pulsing, witchy solo for a woman, then a calm, limb-stretching one for a man who summons the star-cluster back to surround him.

The earliest dance on the program, the 1969 “Whirligogs,” claims in its program note to have been inspired by Paul Taylor's simultaneously frightening and funny “Three Epitaphs,” a singular small masterpiece...

Of the two recent dances shown, I preferred this year's “Jangle,” to Bartok music in his Slavic mode. An impromptu response to street music, it means to portray a middle-European, working class group from a decade long past...



Kate Skarpetowska and Brian McGinnis of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company perform "Jangle" to music by Bartok in this undated handout image released to the media on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008. Photographer: Sharen Bradford/Lar Lubovitch Dance Company via Bloomberg News

[I]ts vivacity, tied to folk forms, and its varieties of mood increase as the dance progresses, and the music is irresistible. The piece has a marvelous duet for a troubled couple and cheeky bravado in Jonathan E. Alsberry's solo passages that suggest Lubovitch may be moving beyond his familiar boundaries.

## Virginal White

The 2007 “Dvorak Serenade” is essentially another pretty dance, performed in virginal white. It's remarkable, though, for its leading couple: Mucuy Bolles (she of the still center) and Scott Rink as her sympathetic cavalier, who responds to her calm reticence and delicacy.

Lubovitch uses a lot of classical scores, as well as the stellar moderns (Philip Glass, Steve Reich) and suave vintage popular music (George Gershwin, Cole Porter). He...was one of the first to use minimalist music.

When it comes to choreography, he is infinitely adaptable, working in several genres besides modern dance: among them ballet, musical theater, and ice dancing, that most self-contradictory of modes. He refuses to make sharp distinctions among dance forms or vocabularies; to him dancing is dancing and he's very competent at creating work from the sources he knows best. So what do you want? More?...

Through Nov. 9 at 131 W. 55th St. Information: +1-212-581-1212; <http://www.lubovitch.org>.  
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November 7, 2008 10:26 AM

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