

BLOG: “Dancing Perfectly Free” 11/07/08

<http://dancingperfectlyfree.com/2008/11/07/lar-lubovitch-dance-company-at-city-center/>

[Lar Lubovitch Dance Company at City Center](#)

November 7, 2008



Lar Lubovitch's *Dvorak Serenade*, photo by Steven Schreiber

I like to approach dance performances with some knowledge of the choreographer's background and the pieces on the program, as it usually enhances my viewing experience and places the program into a broader context. But once in a while, like last night when I saw [Lar Lubovitch Dance Company](#) in its 40th anniversary season at City Center, it's refreshing to enter a performance with little or no background at all, eliminating any expectations or preconceived notions. Although I saw ABT perform Mr. Lubovitch's *Meadow* a few years ago, last night was my first time seeing his choreography on his own company. It was absolutely marvelous. The balanced program included two older works and two recent ones, all united by sweeping movement, pure lines, and a spiritual quality.

Large ensemble works that were structurally similar and conveyed a sense of community opened and closed the program. *Concerto Six: Twenty-Two* (1986), set to Mozart's *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra*, began with twelve dancers moving in a circle while sweeping their arms in circular patterns overhead. Pockets of playfulness appeared as the dancers - all dressed in white - seamlessly changed formations and danced in duets, trios, and quartets. The first section was bright and airy, while a thoughtful duet for Jay Franke and George Smallwood showed the two men's independence along with their reliance on one another for support. *Dvorak Serenade* (2007) featured a principal couple (Mucuy Bolles and Scott Rink), framed by a swirling, flowing *corps* that moved around them with precision and delicacy. Under golden lighting, the two dancers circled their arms in varying patterns while fluidly moving their torsos and interweaving their legs. The piece ended blissfully as they raised their arms and faces to the ceiling at the piece's close.



Lar Lubovitch's *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*, photo by Chris Duggan

The other recent work on the program, *Little Rhapsodies* (2007), showed a series of dances for three men set to Robert Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes* for piano. Lubovitch's choreography provided ample opportunities for the dancers - Jay Franke, Attila Joey Csiki, and guest artist Rasta Thomas, all excellent - to emphasize subtleties in the music. Their artistry and solid technique made the dancing look effortless as they engaged the audience, occasionally being cheeky or quirky with character dancing. But deeper emotions were also evident, especially in a solo for Rasta Thomas where he ended by lowering his head and placing his hand - with fingers spread - over his chest. His whole body seemed to tense up as he slowly closed his fingers into a fist and crinkled his gray shirt.



Lar Lubovitch's *Little Rhapsodies*, photo by Nan Melville

North Star (1978), featuring graduating students from The Juilliard School, was the darkest piece on the program, set to a score by Philip Glass of the same title. Dressed in navy blue and lit with a silvery evening sky, a large cluster of dancers gracefully expanded and shrunk while rarely losing contact with one another. A quartet of dancers performed similar movements, but was even more effective. They seamlessly morphed into different shapes, sometimes unfolding into a straight line while at other times looking more like a human knot. This was followed by an intense solo under a spotlight, performed by Kendra Samson, where she twitched and jerked her limbs for several minutes before easing her way into flowing movement. The opera vocals in the Glass score enhanced the mysteriousness of this piece, and although the setting felt otherworldly, the movement itself was tangible.

The four pieces, spanning across nearly thirty years, show a range of musical choices while remaining consistent in movement style: lush, sweeping motion that is remarkably precise, fluent, and grounded. Lubovitch's older works look just as fresh as the ones from 2007, suggesting the timeless quality of his dances. The company deserves a full house. [There are still seats available for tonight and Saturday at 8 PM.](#)

Dancing Perfectly Free (DPF) was created in October 2007 as a way to share original criticism, ideas, reviews, previews, and commentary about dance and the arts in New York City. DPF strives to enrich dance culture by engaging the online dance community and cultivating new audiences. Reader participation is encouraged and welcomed since DPF and all blogs can serve as a mode of interactive communication.

Co-founder, Editor, Contributor:

Evan was born and raised in Ridgewood, NJ, where she started dancing when she was three. At Barnard College, Evan continued studying ballet as well as modern, movement analysis, dance history and criticism, and dance culture in NYC. She was artistic director of a student-led Israeli dance group and wrote dance critiques for Barnard's student magazine. After spending a summer studying in Costa Rica and volunteering on an organic farm there, Evan grew passionate about environmental activism. She graduated from Barnard in May 2007 with a major in Spanish and Latin American cultures and a minor in Dance. She now works at Environmental Defense Fund, a non-profit environmental organization in New York City. When not working, Evan can be found in dance studios around the city, attending performances, chatting with people at the Union Square farmers' market, cooking at home, or hiking and kayaking in the Adirondacks. She can be reached at evan@dancingperfectlyfree.com.

Co-founder, Former Contributor:

Allison grew up in Northern California. She was a competitive gymnast for eight years before she began studying ballet, jazz, and theater. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in May of 2007 with a concentration in biology and psychology. In college she spent a year studying at Columbia University, where she danced with Orchesis dance group and studied for five months in Vienna, Austria, where she taught dance and English classes at the Vienna Bilingual School. After living in New York for five years, Allison moved to California in June 2008. She currently lives in San Francisco and works for Alonzo King's LINES Ballet. She can be reached at allison@linesballet.org.