

Choreographer created dance about friendship

By **SUSAN BROILI** : The Herald-Sun
sbroili@heraldsun.com
Jun 27, 2008

DURHAM -- True friendship and the deep love implicit in it inspired Lar Lubovitch's 1986 "Concerto Six Twenty-Two."

The love-in-action he saw at the height of the AIDS crisis in New York when "friends were helping friends die" led the choreographer to create a ground-breaking dance and initiate the dance world's first organized response to AIDS, Lubovitch said in an interview earlier this week.

He saw "great courage and nobility" in the way friends helped each other in these devastating circumstances, he added.

He also brought managers of dance companies together to organize the first such event of its kind, Dance for Life, held at Lincoln Center, in which many dance companies participated, raised \$1.5 million to benefit people with AIDS and was emulated across the country, Lubovitch said.

The AIDS crisis had hit the arts community, including the choreographer's close friends and many colleagues in the dance world, he said.



Lar Lubovitch Dance Company
Members of Lar Lubovitch Dance Company will perform "Concerto Six Twenty-Two."

In another first, his dance portrayed a caring, supportive, loving relationship between two men and brought a new freedom of expression to the concept of men dancing.

The music he chose for this dance, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, K. No. 622, had special resonance because the composer had created it for his friend, Anton Stadler, a clarinetist.

The music, composed in 1791, was one of the last works Mozart wrote before his death in December 1791 at age 35, and the only one he wrote for clarinet. "Out of friendship, Mozart wrote this piece for him," Lubovitch said.

In the music, the choreographer said he can hear the depths of that friendship, the honesty and poignancy. "I think that Mozart was a very emotional composer," Lubovitch said.

"I care deeply about music. My work is a response to music," Lubovitch said.

This dance, with support from American Masterpieces: Dance, is among the works Lubovitch's company is performing on its first tour in more than 10 years to celebrate the company's 40th anniversary. The ADF is the first stop on the tour.

Lubovitch first encountered dance as an art major at the University of Iowa where he was also a gymnast. One day, a woman came to the gym and asked if any gymnasts wanted to be in a dance. He volunteered and, after he saw the Jose Limon Dance Company perform, that clinched it. He knew what he wanted to do. "I saw the two things I did best put together: art and gymnastics," Lubovitch said.

He had been struck by the sculptural forms the Limon dancers made, he added.

He studied with both Limon and Martha Graham at Juilliard. "Both were very humanistic. Martha went right to the heart of human emotion and put it on the stage. The universe put me next to things that matched my sensibilities," Lubovitch said, adding that he felt "honored" to share an ADF program with Graham.