

Another impressive evening with Lubovitch

By **TRESCA WEINSTEIN**, Special to the Times Union

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BECKET, Mass. -- The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company's 40th anniversary program at Jacob's Pillow Wednesday evening was as light and sweet as a dollop of whipped cream on a slice of birthday cake.

The troupe, which celebrates its big four-oh this year with a 22-city tour and two seasons at home in New York City, is much acclaimed and much adored -- and it's easy to see why. You can always count on Lubovitch to deliver something that's perfectly put together -- and he's dependable in multiple mediums, including film ("The Company"), Broadway ("Into the Woods," "The Red Shoes") and on ice, where he's choreographed dances for Dorothy Hamill and Peggy Fleming, among many others.

Kicking off its anniversary tour Wednesday at the Pillow, the company performed Lubovitch's 1986 work "Concerto Six Twenty-two" for the first time since 1995. Set to the music of Mozart, the piece is about relationships, but you can also read it as an homage to innocence and youthful high spirits. The opening allegro section feels as if it could be set on a playground; the dancers, dressed in white against a backdrop of summer-sky blue, prance and leap with smiles on their faces.

In an adagio pas de deux, Griff Braun and Jay Franke's creative partnering reveals the depth and ease of their connection: They could be lovers -- or they might be best pals. There's a lovely little phrase in which Franke scoops something invisible off the ground and the two men examine it closely and pass it back and forth -- going with the playground imagery, I pictured a little green frog.

"Little Rhapsodies," choreographed last year to Robert Schumann's "Symphonic Etudes," Opus 13, features both sweeping, dramatic movement and clever, high-spirited sequences -- but the most exciting thing about the trio is Rasta Thomas. Perhaps the best known member of the company (he starred in Twyla Tharp's "Movin' Out" on Broadway and has his own troupe, Bad Boys of Dance), Thomas is unmistakably a star. Franke and Attila Joey Csiki are both wonderful dancers, but when Thomas is on stage he sucks all the light toward him with the effortlessness and exuberance of his dancing.

The last piece on the program, "Dvorak Serenade," set to Antonin Dvorak's "Serenade in E Major," was the least compelling. Dressed in diaphanous tunics, the dancers flutter and float as

they weave in and out of the flock. Mucoy Bolles and Scott Rink's pas de deux, a graceful interleaving of limbs, is almost too romantic and pretty. Mark Morris would have thrown in a dash of irony, David Parsons would have spiced it up with something tricky, Merce Cunningham would have set it to a dissonant score -- but for Lubovitch, who has long since taken his place among these masters, beautiful movement is enough.

Tresca Weinstein is a freelance writer from Canaan, N.Y. and a regular contributor to the Times Union.

DANCE REVIEW

LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY

When: 8 p.m. Wednesday

Where: Jacob's Pillow, 358 George Carter Road, Becket, Mass.

Program: "Concerto Six Twenty-two," "Little Rhapsodies," "Dvorak Serenade"

Length: Two hours, two intermissions

Continues: 8 p.m. tonight through Saturday; 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; \$58 Info: (413) 243-0745
or <http://www.jacobspillow.org>