

The Sun

Lubovitch The Romantic

Dance

By [JOEL LOBENTHAL](#)

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In the opening and closing movements of "Love's Stories," Mr. Lubovitch makes interesting use of Sean Stewart, who left American Ballet Theatre in 2002 and began dancing with Mr. Lubovitch in 2005. In the opening "Nature Boy," Mr. Stewart is a stranger in the midst of the ensemble, a specimen of wild child or provocative faun. Mr. Stewart is among the most balletic of the dancers now prominently featured in Mr. Lubovitch's troupe and this role both made use of and reimagined his balletic identity.

The second piece, "Little Rhapsodies," which was given its world premiere, was danced by Rasta Thomas, Jay Franke, and Mr. Stewart, while pianist Pedja Muzijevic performed Schumann's "Symphonic Etudes" onstage. Mr. Lubovitch is again on familiar territory here, but it is territory in which he seems to have more of a personal stake: He is intrigued by the constructs of sexual identity and he wants to make pieces for men that expand and explore their personas.

"Little Rhapsodies" is notable for its jocular posing and its re-affirmation of the way colloquial and contemporary attitudes can coexist with music of a distant era. There is some, but not too much, of the camaraderie and competition that could be called standard issue in an all-male piece like this. The cascading notes seem to settle in and around the dancers' arm flourishes. The three men exist independently, but their identities also entwine.

Mr. Lubovitch's material for Mr. Thomas insightfully distills the personality of this dancer, framing him in portraiture. Although only in his mid-20s, Mr. Thomas already seems like a veteran, since he's been ricocheting around the world dancing with different companies for a decade now. Is he someone who can do it all or is he someone who will do anything? Perhaps Mr. Thomas struggles with his own propensity to sell his material.

Here, Mr. Lubovitch allowed him to flirt with the audience in a different way than he might usually do: Mr. Thomas faced the audience in stances that recalled femme fatale parodies.

The program closed with the world premiere of Mr. Lubovitch's "Dvorák Serenade," performed by a 10-member ensemble, which slinked and wafted around in the dark, making intermittent meetings with a lead couple, danced by Drew Jacoby and Scott Rink.

Working in unison, the ensemble encompassed all different types of bodies and varieties of attack that turned its work into a humanistic statement. Though the work was performed to four movements of Dvorák's "Serenade in E Major," Mr. Lubovitch's "Dvorák Serenade" could have gone on longer.

Until April 21 (566 La Guardia Place at Washington Square South, 212-279-4200).

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