

Lar Lubovitch Celebrates Golden Anniversary at The Joyce

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By [Andrew Blackmore-Dobbyn](#), 22 April 2018

After fifty years, it's safe to make some generalizations about [Lar Lubovitch](#)'s work. One of the things I have always liked about his ballets is that I know the music better after seeing them. This applies even to pieces of music that I know very well. He reveals thematic content and subtle textures in his choreography, thereby making the music visible. Lubovitch's work makes frequent use of the balletic vocabulary and it marks him out as a romantic amid the moderns. Some have criticized his vocabulary as being too steeped in classical ballet and not modern enough. I prefer to take him as he is and just enjoy the sweeping beauty of the movement and his admirable restraint against over-choreographing the music. He is unapologetically who he is and much of what he created is rapturously beautiful. This program featured works from the last twenty years and each of them gave a vivid account of his ideas and the music that inspired them.



Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in *Something About Night*

© Justin Chao

Lubovitch has set his company's works on a lot of other companies over the years so it makes perfect sense to have some of them perform as guests for this engagement. Dancers from the Martha Graham company opened Program A with *The Legend of Ten* in which ten dancers serve as our guide to Brahms's musical ideas in the first and fourth movements of his great *Quintet for piano and strings in F minor*. In shifting combinations of twos and threes, the dancers showed us the rhythms, thematic development and joy in the music. Anne Souder and Abdiel Jacobsen served as the central couple for the adagio portions of the fourth movement. With their keen grasp of the phrasing, they moved through the adagios with airy suspension while the rest of the dancers accounted for the allegro parts. The Graham dancers proved perfectly adept at the classical steps and were lively and musical throughout.

When Franz Schubert was composing, most of the world still lived by the light of the sun and our sleep habits were far different than they are now. There was a first sleep that took up the early part of the night which was followed by a period of wakefulness when families might rouse and do some reading, tell stories or make music. A second sleep came after and lasted until dawn, the beginning of the new day. That nocturnal interregnum between first and second sleep is when the music and dance for this new piece, *Something About Night*, would have to have been created. Schubert was one of a handful of the finest songwriters who ever lived and these songs for male chorus perfectly capture the flavor of the night. The dancers moved softly with the songs, gliding and soaring through a dim, near dreamscape.



Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in *Something About Night*

© Nan Melville

There are few of the early American modern dance choreographers still living so it's worth going out of your way to see them before their original inspiration is gone and we're left with second hand accounts of how they wanted their work performed. This program surveyed the last twenty years of Lar Lubovitch's work and showed his complete command of choreographic and musical structure. At its best, his work elevates the spirit and serves as a reminder that there's beauty in the world.

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