



BWW Reviews:

LAR LUBOVITCH Dance Company at the Joyce

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by Holly Kerr



Men's Stories

The internationally renowned Lar Lubovitch Dance Company returned to The Joyce Theater October 15-19, 2014. The program was entitled *Ancient Tales*, and the company presented two works based on ancient myths and folk stories from which fairy tales were formed.

The first work on the program, *Artemis in Athens*, was a delightfully charming vehicle for an illustrious and luminous human goddess of the dance, Alessandra Ferri as the mythical Greek Goddess of the Hunt, Artemis. Lubovitch originally choreographed this witty work for American Ballet Theatre in 2003, when it was commissioned by the Cultural Olympiad in honor of the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece. Following its premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House, it was performed in Greece at the Herodes Atticus Odeon, an ancient outdoor Greek theater.

The staging at the Joyce evokes a starry night in Athens where gods and goddesses, nymphs, satyrs and hunters frolic. In a delightful twist, we have a dance work within a dance work. The performers are introduced as young people from a Boys and Girls Scouts summer camp in Athens, Georgia. The Scouts are presenting a pageant based on the ancient Greek myth of Artemis and Akteon. In the myth, Zeus has given his daughter, Artemis, the Goddess of the Hunt, a forest glade to play in and declared that any mortal who lays eyes upon her will die. Akteon, a Hunter, enters her glade and they fall in love. To protect Akteon from his certain death, Artemis turns him into a deer. Ms. Ferri is still in her glamorous and glorious *prima ballerina assoluta* form, her pointe work shimmers, and her dancing remains sensuous and fluid. Tobin Del Cuore was excellent as Akteon and the Juilliard Dance Company, comprised of Kara Chan, Kelsey Connolly, Ruth Howard, Dean Biosca, Victor Loranzo, Michael Marquez, Colin Fuller, Austin Goodwin, Jesse Obremski and Anthony Tiedeman, were all wonderful. The score by Christopher Theofanidis was performed live by the superb Le Train Bleu ensemble under the direction of Ransom Wilson.

The Black Rose was a world premiere. A macabre tale, it paints a dark and gothic psychological view of humanity. The score by Scott Marshall is a hallucinogenic musical collage that mixes Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* with popular love standards and several other musical genres. *The Black Rose* opens with a chorus of party-goers. Mucuy Bolles as the female lead gave a brilliant performance. Reid Bartelme, who played her loving suitor, and Barton Cowperthwaite, who played her evil seducer were both outstanding. This piece drew on and echoed several dance masterpieces and presented its story in a totally unique and contemporary way. Lubovitch's choreography in the first half of this work was lustrous and evocative.

All of the great choreographers learned from and honored the masters who came before them. For example, George Balanchine paid homage to Marius Petipa in his neoclassical ballets. Lubovitch's choreographic genius lies in fact that he has learned from the greatest masters and then melds this knowledge with own unique vision. The first half of *The Black Rose* echoes Balanchine's masterpiece *La Valse*, *The Black Rose's* partygoers are reminiscent of Gene Kelly's brilliant *Ring Around the Rosy* party scene from *Invitation to the Dance*. *Artemis in Athens* evoked shades of Sir Frederic Ashton's *The Dream*, a ballet in which Ferri's Titania was considered one of her most iconic roles. **With a clever nod to the geniuses of the past and a great affinity for storytelling, Lubovitch is one of the most brilliant, innovative, and original choreographers working today---it's a shame the Joyce season of this superb company was so short.**