



BWW Review: Lar Lubovitch Concludes 50th Anniversary Run with an Impressive Quadruple Bill

[Sondra Forsyth](#) Apr. 23, 2018

On the afternoon of April 22nd at the Joyce Theater in NYC, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company gave the final performance of a six-day run that offered three different programs to celebrate Lubovitch's 50th anniversary as an internationally acclaimed choreographer. Program A featured the Martha Graham Dance Company while Program B added Joffrey principal dancers to Lubovitch's own roster of superb dancers, and Program C added students from the George Mason University School of Dance to the list of performers.

The Sunday matinee that wrapped up the season was Program B, an impressive quadruple bill showcasing the variety of Lubovitch's vast repertoire and making clear that he is a master of melding contemporary and ballet styles with added fillips of his own quirky and delightful movement inventions laced with wit.

The opener, *Little Rhapsodies* to the music of Robert Schumann, premiered in 2007 and holds its own 11 years later as a spirited, playful romp for three men with bravura technique and an easy rapport with one another as well as with the audience.

Up next was an excerpt from Lubovitch's gripping retelling of Shakespeare's *Othello* to a commissioned score by Elliot B. Goldenthal. The ballet was originally produced in 1997, commissioned by the American Ballet Theater and the San Francisco Ballet, and has been in the repertoire of the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago since 2009. For the Joyce run, four Joffrey

principals enacted the gripping scenes from Act III of the evening-length work, with Victoria Jaiani in the role of Desdemona giving an especially powerful performance that adept pointe work and believable passion. Ginger Thatcher, Lubovitch's Rehearsal Director, served as Assistant Choreographer.

Something About Night, which premiered on April 17th 2018 at the Gala Opening of the Joyce season, was the third ballet in Program B. The lush and entrancing work showed beyond a doubt that Lubovitch, who turned 75 on April 9th, remains at the peak of his powers. The musical accompaniment is *Songs for Male Chorus* by Franz Schubert. As I always do, I yearned for live music. Yet I resigned myself to appreciating the excellent audio in lieu of the costly addition of live musicians to any run.

After an intermission, the entire second half of the program was devoted to Lubovitch's lengthy but captivating *Men's Stories*. Often, I wish that long ballets had been trimmed by an editor. That was not the case with this one. In three distinct parts, it is superb from start to finish. My attention never lagged as nine powerful men danced to an audio collage and original music by Scott Marshall. I thought about the famous Balanchine quote, "Ballet is woman." Not so in Lubovitch's ballet universe! His men prove that danseurs are as essential as ballerinas. A particularly moving moment happened when a voiceover of a father and his young son let us hear the father explain to the boy that the feeling of desire happens when males begin to mature. Also magnificent was the ending in which all the men but one are on stage. The last dancer appears with a marionette of a little boy. The puppet is wearing the same striking velvet-looking tux jackets, designed by Ann Hould-Ward, that the men have been sporting off and on throughout. The puppet interacts adorably with the men and finally raises its little puppet arms in a perfect fifth position *en haut*. The audible "Aw!" from the entire audience of dancelovers was testimony to Lubovitch's talent.

He founded his company in 1968. He has created more than 110 dances and performed before millions throughout the United States and in more than 40 countries. We are fortunate indeed that he continues to enchant us. He took a bow at the end of the program and received a standing ovation, as he should have. Bravo to one of the best!

Photo by Nan Melville

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Sondra Forsyth is Editor-in-Chief of Broadway World Dance. A National Magazine Award winner and a member of Dance Critics Association, she founded Ballet Ambassadors in New York City and was the Artistic Director for 16 years with support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Sondra has served as a guest teacher for the American Ballet Theatre open classes and on the faculty of The School at Steps on Broadway, the Harkness Dance Center of the 92nd Street Y, the Interlochen Center for the Arts, and Studio de Ballet Opera in Beirut, Lebanon. She was Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director with Jan Hanniford Goetz of the Huntington School of Ballet and the Huntington Ballet Theatre on Long Island. Sondra is also Co-Editor-in-Chief of thirdAGE.com and formerly held the posts of Executive Editor at Ladies'

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