

# Ephemeralist

by Susan Yung

Friday, October 17, 2014

## Lar Lubovitch's Cheeky Side



Alessandra Ferri & Tobin Del Cuore. Photo: Phyllis McCabe

Lar Lubovitch's choreography is so flowing and elegant that to serve it up in a kitschy vehicle such as *Artemis in Athens* is, well, refreshing. This production premiere takes as its bones a 2003 commission for a paean to Greek culture given by ABT, with gauzy toga-inspired costumes and Julie Kent and Marcelo Gomes as leads.

This week, at the Joyce, no less a (retired from ABT) prima ballerina than Alessandra Ferri danced the lead, but instead of a toga, she wore Naomi Luppescu's saucy interpretation of a Girl Scout uniform, in keeping with the entire cast and even the pit band, Le Train Bleu, looking like dutiful scouts rehearsing a march (but sounding grown-up, edgy, and expressive playing Christopher Theofanidis' composition). You got the sense that Lubovitch had watched Wes Anderson's *Moonlight Kingdom* not long before sitting down with the designer to sketch out ideas.



Tobin Del Cuore & Alessandra Ferri . Photo: Phyllis McCabe

A cheeky intro given by a fresh-faced scout with a clipboard alluded to the Athens in the title as the town in Georgia, which would explain, in part, the change to an American woodsy milieu, populated by roving pine trees. Despite her khaki uniform, Ferri appeared as evanescent and goddess-like as ever, lithe, buoyant, and flashing her gorgeously arched feet in Girl Scout issued pointe shoes. Tobin Del Cuore was her foil, Akteon, transforming into a faun (in a skillfully toned unitard with smart white lapels) after his BSA uniform was swiftly disbanded, like Shaq ripping off his sweats. The tall Del Cuore lifted Ferri as if she were weightless. Claspng his hands in hoof-like fists, he bounded through, appropriately, stag leaps. Hunted down by a scout troop armed with bows (whose arcs served Lubovitch's fondness for curves). Akteon's image was immortalized in the heavens, twinkling in a starry sky. It was a bit of enchanting, whimsical fun.



The Black Rose. Photo: Phyllis McCabe

The company also danced the premiere of *The Black Rose*, a twist on *The Sleeping Beauty*, whose score Scott Marshall quoted generously in his collaged score. (He mixed the hallucinogenic music for Lubovitch's renowned *Mens' Stories*.) Mucuy Bolles danced the central character opposite Reid Barthelme, who is blinded and crippled by the heartless Barton Cowperthwaite (sinister, roguish, and knife-limbed), who also impregnates Bolles, and hilariously chases after her newborn baby with oversized cutlery.

A group of party-goers formed the chorus, swirling and flowing in Lubovitch's signature cursive movement. Barthelme morphed into a 60's mod-like chap with Lennon glasses and a ruffled shirt (costumes by Fritz Masten). While this dance thumbs its nose at tradition while drawing from it, its goth undertones paint a dark picture of humanity. Together, the two short dances make for a welcome respite from the bounty of mostly serious dance prevalent in New York.

Posted by Susan at 9:00 AM