



## Lar Lubovitch Dance Company's 50th Anniversary Program is Golden

by Bonnie Rosenstock  
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The Joyce Theater  
175 Eighth Avenue (at the corner of 19th Street)  
New York, NY 10011  
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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company celebrated its 50th anniversary season (April 17-22) at the Joyce by inviting guest groups to perform works drawn from its prolific repertory of more than 120 works.

Principal dancers from the Chicago-based Joffrey Ballet performed scenes from Act III of Lubovitch's acclaimed evening-length *Othello* (1997); "A Brahms Symphony" (1985) was performed by students from the George Mason University School of Dance; and Martha Graham Dance Company, which just wrapped up its own season at New York City Center, reprised "The Legend of Ten" (2010), which was incorporated into its recent program. I didn't see it then, so I went to this company's April 20 show, which also featured Lubovitch's world premiere of "Something About Night" as well as his iconic "Men's Stories: A Concerto in Ruin" (2000). It was a golden evening.

A map legend is depicted with symbols, lines and colors to represent rivers, roads and mountains. For "The Legend of Ten," Lubovitch stated that he used the ten dancers as the legend mapping the musical and emotional terrain of the "Brahms Quintet for Piano, Two Violins, Viola and Cello in F Minor, Opus 34," Movements I & IV (Glenn Gould Edition, recorded with the Montreal String Quartet). The choreography is luxurious in movement, musicality and flow. At first, there were only nine dancers onstage, an undulating tight-knit organism of ever-changing patterns, including stomps, quick steps and skips, who eventually dispersed through space, graceful round-shaped arms held high, roundness a recurrent phrase. At times a dancer left the group for a solo moment and then seamlessly rejoined the flock. Enter Anne Souder, who at first was rejected but through persistence is accepted by the group. The petite Souder and the towering Abdiel Jacobsen made a visually gratifying duet performing magical lifts, swirling patterns and sweeping movements. After each duet, they rejoined the group. At the end they remained an integral part.

"Something About Night" is a work for five dancers (two women and three men), who appear in various blends of pairings. Lubovitch likes to use blackouts to separate sections. Here, there were four: five dancers, a duet, a solo and the last consisted of a trio, quintet and quartet. As Lubovitch explained in a newspaper interview, "It's composed of fragments of many dances I've done over the years, little moments in duets and trios. But mainly, my motivation was that I want to be quiet. I think I value quiet now. And in this dance, I'm seeking a quieting of the mind." In that he has been successful. Slow dancing to musical selections from "Franz Schubert, Songs for Male Chorus." Lubovitch, who prizes formal structures and highly technical choreography, was at his finest.

Lubovitch's sweeping 42-minute "Men's Stories: A Concerto in Ruin," created for nine men, is set to an audio collage of electronically altered classical and original music by Scott Marshall. The multi-layered, physically demanding work is divided into three parts, Allegro Giacoso, Adagio Maestoso and Schizo Scherzo, which presents the many faces of men's nature. Appearing in short formal velvet tailcoats, the men's movements were evocative of genteel court dances. The intense Benjamin Holliday Wardell made a fine bully, but cooler, gentlemanly heads prevailed and further conflict was avoided, temporarily. Then the men got down to it, shedding their skins, so to speak, and showing some skin in sheer undershirts. The dance became more "masculine," more aggressive, rough fighting, flinging bodies, punches, yet emotionally vulnerable. All the

dancers moved as one finely tuned supercharged unit. Many had solo star turns that showcased their exceptional talent. The charismatic Barton Cowperthwaite, tall, model handsome (he was a model), powerfully imposing and sensitive in his solos was majestic. Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry is slight in stature, but a dynamo of strength and drive. The only false step was that creepy marionette at the end, dressed in the previous formal wear, which the men donned again.



Martha Graham Dance Company in Lar Lubovitch's "The Legend of Ten".  
Photo © & courtesy of Justin Chao

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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in  
"Men's Stories".  
Photo © & courtesy of Justin Chao

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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in  
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