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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

Fine Arts Center, Amherst, MA

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By Stacie Beland

Oftentimes, the most powerful communication occurs when no words are used. So, what is there to be written about a dance company that wordlessly speaks volumes? It is a difficult thing to review the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company without lapsing into cliché. Words seem to fall short in describing the visual feast that presented.

Lar Lubovitch is known for the musicality of his choreography. Often, his works are without discernable plots. Instead, Lubovitch's dancers become visual representations of music. In *North Star*, a 1978 piece set to a piece of music of the same name by Philip Glass, movements ranged from a water-like flow to jerky, staccato movements. The result was fugue-like, as if witnessing a dream. Lubovitch is also a master at choreographing negative space (the space that isn't occupied by a dancer's body) and the resulting images are fascinating, which holds particularly true in *North Star*. The result is breathtaking.

The same musicality could be found in *Duet from Meadow and Marimba (A Trance Dance)*. Both pieces showcased the Company's exceptional precision, their movement almost tide-like-precisely timed, but still beautifully surprising. The Company ebbed and flowed together; their movements powerful, graceful and captivating.

The real highlight of the evening was *Coltrane's Favorite Things*, a work debuted earlier this year. Performed on a bare stage (the curtain legs and back traveler were removed, leaving the exposed backstage and wings for the audience to see), the piece was set to the John Coltrane Quartet's infamous 1963 live performance of *My Favorite Things*. The music itself is wildly improvisational and spontaneous. The dancers, outfitted in casual clothing, down to sneaker-like footwear, took flight. The result was magical, a piece as free and as improvisational (yet steeped in mathematical discipline) as jazz itself. The message was clear: that dance, beauty, and music can come from anywhere, go anywhere, and surprise you at every moment in the journey. It's a concept that holds true for all of Lubovitch's pieces, and it's what makes him one of the world's most dynamic choreographers.