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The Enigma of the Male Gaze: Lar Lubovitch Dance Company 50th Anniversary Season at the Joyce Theater

[Brahms](#), [Joyce Theater](#), [Lar Lubovitch](#)



By [Mari S. Gold](#) , April 23, 2018. Revised April 26, 2018.



The Dancers of George Mason University in Lar Lubovitch's "A Brahms Symphony"

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company
50th Anniversary Season
Program C

Joyce Theater
April 22, 2018

The Enigma of the Male Gaze

Lar Lubovitch has been making dances for fifty years creating a body of work that holds up well - solid, well-danced and gripping.

The first half of the evening, *A Brahms Symphony*, created by Lubovitch in 1985, was performed by dancers from the George Mason University School of Dance in Fairfax, Virginia with the four lead dancers connecting via email, phone and in-person with the cast who originated the roles. Staged by Ginger Thatcher and set to movements 1, 2 and 3 of Brahms' Third Symphony, the movements are simple in the best sense of the word with no unnecessary embellishments. The piece is lyrical as the four leads supported by eight company members lift and swoop, often rounding their arms with the hands joined to complete the circle.

The evening's standout was the second piece, *Men's Stories: A Concerto in Ruins*, from 2000. This work employs many conflicting elements both in the music, an "audio collage" that incorporates snatches of song and narrative with original music by Scott Marshall with movements that range from fellowship to fighting. The nine men begin wearing formal-looking tailcoats which are removed later; they pare down to thin shirts and tights as the action transitions from elegance to more personal interactions. Towards the end of the work, back come the tailcoats. There is irony in much of this work, a "how dare you" quality in some moments juxtaposed against the classic grace of ballet turns and extensions. Sometimes the men, notably Benjamin Holliday Wardell, posture effectively; sometimes they go all out, for example when Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry jazzes it up.

Besides the musical collage that includes snatches of popular songs and a tongue-in-cheek voiceover with a father almost explaining the facts of life to a young son, (straight out of *Leave it to Beaver*), the work itself is a collage, showing the many different ways of being male—as friends, enemies, antagonists, lovers and more. The dancers are all strong and a pleasure to watch during their solos and as a group.

As a whole, the piece is wonderful. There is a lot of disagreement about the validity of the ending with the marionette which I felt was a good summation of boys to men and back again.

Lar Lubovitch is one of America's most versatile, acclaimed, and widely seen choreographers. In addition to being performed by his own Company, works by Lar Lubovitch have been performed by other major companies throughout the world, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet,

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Lubovitch is the recipient of numerous awards including being named a Ford Fellow by United States Artists. In 2013, the American Dance Guild honored him for lifetime achievement and in 2014 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by The Juilliard School. In 2016, Lubovitch received the Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for lifetime achievement and the Dance Magazine Award, and was named one of America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures by the Dance Heritage Coalition. This year, he will be honored with the Martha Graham Award.



About [Mari S. Gold](#)

Mari S. Gold is a freelance writer who contributes to many magazines and websites. Her blog, *But I Digress...*, on cultural events, travel, food and other topics is at www.marigoldonline.net. She lives in New York City.

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