

The New York Times

DANCE REVIEW | LAR LUBOVITCH

Tender Mercies in Deadly Combats



Julieta Cervantes for The New York Times

Lar Lubovitch: Attila Joey Csiki (on the floor) and Christopher Vo in “Dogs of War” at the Joyce Theater.

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Published: March 4, 2010

[Lar Lubovitch](#)’s second Joyce Theater program is something of a hybrid: half jazz, half moody duets, with two generally upbeat jazz works from the first program book-ending a pair of premieres.

“Vita Nova,” new only to the company, will be familiar to [American Ballet Theater](#) fans. The work is the second movement in Mr. Lubovitch’s “Meadow,” which the ballet troupe first danced in 1999. On Tuesday night Katarzyna Skarpetowska and Brian McGinnis gave the duet its Lar Lubovitch Dance Company premiere...The couple turned slowly in Jack Mehler’s soft spotlight, their striated unitards (by Ann Hould-Ward) suggesting perhaps the four elements and Gavin Bryars’s score for male alto and string trio explicitly addressing the theme of new life...

The theme pendulum swings the other way in the program’s actual premiere, “Dogs of War,” a...duet for soldiers facing each other across enemy lines. Set to Prokofiev’s turbulent “Piano Sonata No. 7 in B flat” (Op. 83), the work features Paul Vershbow’s handsome and smartly understated video design: three screens behind the dancers depicting historical, often-upsetting photographs of brutal battle, and close-up shots of barbed-wire barricades evoking the sinister claustrophobia of trench warfare.

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Dressed in combat fatigues, Attila Joey Csiki and Christopher Vo began with isolated solos full of hinging, strangled bursts of mechanical movement that brought to mind a host of modern-dance war stories. Soon enough came a...series of stylized grappling embraces in which aggression often melted into a strange tenderness. It ended in death for one of these men; the silent scream of the other suggested that no one got out alive.

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company performs through Sunday at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street, Chelsea; (212) 242-0800, joyce.org.

A version of this article appeared in print on March 5, 2010, on page C3 of the New York edition.

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