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DANCE REVIEW

## Like Vines, Reaching, Twining, Curling Lar Lubovitch Dance Celebrates 45 Years

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The veteran choreographer Lar Lubovitch, an art major before he discovered modern dance, has spoken about how he sees the stage as a canvas. Instead of using brush strokes to give a painting a sense of momentum, he relies on bodies that ripple through space, pause to crest and then sweep lushly in another direction. When they succeed, Mr. Lubovitch's dances are visceral paintings come to life.



Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

**Lar Lubovitch Dance Company**, including Reed Luplau and Katarzyna Skarpetowska, is celebrating its 45th season, at the Joyce.

On Tuesday at the Joyce Theater, the [Lar Lubovitch Dance Company](#), celebrating its [45th season](#), came closest to achieving that choreographic ideal in the program's one substantial piece, "[Men's Stories: A Concerto in Ruin](#)" (2000). A three-part work for nine men, the dance — sometimes beautiful, sometimes odd — is an expansive look at many facets of male dancing, in which the group forms tableaux that shift between strife and harmony, then break away to make space for more intimate solos and duets.

For Mr. Lubovitch, who certainly knows how to attract and cultivate male talent, "Men's Stories" is a plush, satisfying work, yet it gained greater splendor by what preceded it. Why make dances for 45 years and lead an anniversary program with three duets?

Along with the 1986 duet from "[Concerto Six Twenty-Two](#)," the evening included "The Time Before the Time After," a revival from 1970, and "Vez," a reimagining of Mr. Lubovitch's 1989 "Fandango," which was originally performed to Ravel's "Bolero." Here, it has new music, by Randall Woolf.

"Vez," named after the Spanish phrase "otra vez," or "again," opens as Clifton Brown holds Nicole Corea diagonally across his body against a red background bordered by black. The vocalist Mellissa Hughes and the guitarist Gyan Riley perform the flamenco-inflected score, as the dancers, their bodies often braided together, move low to the floor with a rubbery persistence.

"Vez" is acrobatic, yet unassumingly so. Mr. Brown — a former member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, who looks refreshed in Mr. Lubovitch's work — assumes a plank position, and Ms. Corea rolls down his back. Later, she thrusts her hips in a bridge pose, and he crawls underneath...

"The Time Before the Time After," set to Stravinsky's Concertino for String Quartet, nearly ends the way it begins, with Katarzyna Skarpetowska and Reed Luplau wrapped in an embrace. Unlike the couple in "Vez," who impart little sexual tension, Ms. Skarpetowska and Mr. Luplau's relationship is fraught with violence and desire.

Mr. Lubovitch cracks a window on a harsh bedroom scene in which Ms. Skarpetowska, threats aside, always returns for more. At one point, Mr. Luplau holds out his palm, and she rests her cheek on it longingly only to have him snatch it away and point at her mockingly. Is this how they like it? In the end, he lies on top of her as she gently strokes the back of his neck. It's just a night of rough sex...

*Lar Lubovitch Dance Company continues performances through Oct. 20 at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street, Chelsea; (212) 242-0800, [joyce.org](#).*

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