



Photo by Eric Baiano

Elemental Brubeck

Things of Beauty and an Odd New Piece

Lar Lubovitch at the Joyce Theater

By [QUINN BATSON](#)
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Lar Lubovitch showed why he is still vital in a show with two new pieces, one quite strong and the other more personal. The oldest piece of the evening, *Vita Nova*, was the most magical, but a 10-year-old piece in a 40-year-long career isn't necessarily "old."

The opening new piece, *Coltrane's Favorite Things*, seemed oddly angular and edgy compared to much of Lubovitch's work, possibly because the movement follows the music almost too closely and this version of Rogers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things" gives no time to rest or relax. Combined with a distracting gigantic version of a Jackson Pollock painting filling the backdrop, the overall effect is noisy and a little irritating. Strange shoe and costume choices distract as well, but the duet of Jonathan Alsberry and Katarzyna Skarpetowska breaks through the noise to stand out and satisfy, with big, wild movement to go with a big, wild music moment.

Vita Nova, on the other hand, is breathtaking from the first sung note and the vision of Brian McGinnis holding Skarpetowska aloft in a striking shape, both appearing to glow in the middle of a dark stage. Countertenor or falsetto singing by Gavin Bryars of "Incipit Vita Nova" sends shivers through spines, and the transcendently slow, beautiful partnering and lifts this duo do never waver from mesmerizing. Form-fitting costumes by Ann Hould-Ward and lighting by Jack Mehler complete the beauty of the piece.

LAR LUBOVITCH 2010

Choreography by: **Lar Lubovitch**.
Dancers: **Jonathan E. Alsberry, Reid Bartelme, Jonathan Campbell, Nicole Corea, Attila Joey Csiki, Jay Franke, Charlaine Mei Katsuyoshi, Brian McGinnis, Laura Rutledge, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Christopher Vo**.
Lighting design by: **Jack Mehler**.
Production stage manager: **Maxine Glorsky**.

SCHEDULE

Joyce Theater
February 23-March 7, 2010

A new male duet, *Dogs of War*, showcases more impressive dancing by Attila Joey Csiki and Christopher Vo in a highly charged and physical piece to music by Prokofiev. Both dancers are striking, but Vo is so powerful and sharp and musical he grabs even more attention. The story of adversaries in mortal combat, sharing moments of humanity in the hellish midst of war, is often quite intimate, almost as if the two are on the same side at times, which, perhaps, is part of the point. It is highly stylized and beautiful violence, full of dramatic solo moments.

Elemental Brubeck is a large group piece to end the evening, inspired by Lubovitch's memories of being a teen in the 1950s, dancing the "jitterbug" at school socials, where an individual or couple would occasionally steal the spotlight and become the momentary center of attention. This is much how the piece feels, with Csiki in bright red playing the role of the crazy improviser, though his movement vocabulary seems much closer to ballet than jitterbug and his stage grin feels a little artificial. It is a fun group piece, allowing everyone to move freely and fluidly in the way Lubovitch manages so well.

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