

# Theater Pizzazz!

## Lar Lubovitch Dance Company 46th Anniversary – Ancient Tales

October 22, 2014



Review by Joel Benjamin

The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company presented two world premiere story ballets at the intimate Joyce Theater celebrating its 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. “Artemis in Athens,” a gloss on the Greek legend was an opportunity to see the super-star ballerina, Alessandra Ferri back on stage again and “The Black Rose,” was a vampirish noir fairytale.

“Artemis” used the conceit of a troupe of boy/girl scouts from Athens, Georgia visiting their “sister city,” Athens, Greece to perform their version of this Greek myth. Artemis the huntress (Ms. Ferri) lived in a secluded glade given her by Zeus, her father. Zeus declared that if any mortal dared to intrude into her clearing in the forest he would have to die for the crime of glancing at his daughter. Even so Artemis falls in love at first sight with Akteon (Tobin Del Cuore) a hunter who innocently wanders by. To save him from death she turns him into a deer who will roam her idyllic glade forever.

Mr. Lubovitch told the story in a straightforward, decorative manner, with the witty touch of having all the chorus members wear scout uniforms. Members of Juilliard Dance portrayed nymphs and satyrs. The nymphs attending Artemis had little wings. (Costumes by Naomi Luppescu.) Satyrs also surrounded the huntress completing a little tranquil community. They danced in Mr. Lubovitch’s signature style: voluptuous large circular arms, lines of dancers interweaving in sequential modes and witty sculptural arrangements. Akteon is an Eagle Scout, of course, and his friends, the hunters carried little bows. Mr. Lubovitch eschewed Martha Graham style heavy handed psychology in favor of pleasant directness. His choreography for Ms. Ferri was mostly simple ballet steps, performed, of course, with her inimitable panache, often partnered and framed by her little corps de ballet. She might have been less composed and more lighthearted and spritely. Mr. Del Cuore, a smoothly full-bodied dancer, was properly smitten and partnered Ms. Ferri with passion. When he is transformed into the deer, his uniform stripped off him in a wonderful coup de theatre, his physical embodiment of the animal was sensual and weighty. Christopher Theofanidis’s lovely score was played live by the chamber group Le Train Bleu (also in scout uniforms!), conducted by Ransom Wilson, the internationally famous flutist.

“The Black Rose,” to a score by Scott Marshall that had dreamy references to Tchaikovsky and Disney soundtracks, was like a Disney animated film on hallucinogens: sweetness destroyed, love thwarted and a newborn eaten! Lovely Mucuy Bolles was romanced by the entranced, youthfully ardent Reid Bartelme who gifted her a red rose. Their idyll was interrupted by the sexy Dracula-esque Barton Cowperthwaite, in black from head to toe, whirling his cape hypnotically. His black rose represented his evil heart. He beat up and blinded Mr. Bartelme and raped Ms. Bolles. The resulting baby is cut out of her and carried off on a dinner platter. The choreography was more disjointed for this work, using lots of floorwork, but still had the Lubovitch sweep.

The choreography dancing, costuming, lighting and music all came together to tell two very different stories.

Photos: Yi-Chun Wu

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

*Ancient Tales* – October 15-19, 2014

The Joyce Theater 175 Eighth Ave. at 19<sup>th</sup> St. New York, Ny

Tickets for Joyce events: 212-242-0800 or [www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org)

More Information on the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company: 212-221-7909 or [www.lubovitch.org](http://www.lubovitch.org)