

## Lar Lubovitch Dance Company Premieres “Transparent Things,” Set to Debussy

by Steve Weinstein  
EDGE Editor-In-Chief  
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L-R: Brian McGinnis, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Reid Luplau, Laura Rutledge in "Transparent Things" (Source:Rose Eichenbaum)

**The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company** is the last outpost of unrepentant romanticism on the Downtown dance scene.

While everyone else seems to have forgotten that any music existed before electronica came on the scene, he chooses the most fervid works by composers like Brahms and Debussy. Incorporating booty-shaking hip-hop moves and erratic gyrations that resemble Rikki Lake doing "The Roach" in "Hairspray," his dancers glllliiide through their movements.

In his too-short season at Florence Gould Hall, a real jewel box of a performing space with seating tiered at a high enough angle that a Mini Me could sit in back of Yao Ming and not miss a step, Lubovitch takes a stand against minimalism. As if proof were needed of how much his peers appreciate the quality and sheer elegance of his choreography, his company has become a destination for some of our finest dancers.

"The Legend of Ten," from 2010, is one of the few relatively lengthy pieces I've seen in which the entire company is on stage and moving rapidly almost the entire time. Set to a wild Brahms quintet, Lubovitch uses the score's three contrasting rhythms. The choreography, based on classical ballet, incorporates a great deal of country dances.

There are a few tics here and there that veer dangerously close to the gimmicky, such as when the dancers move left and right as the back of their knuckles touches their forehead, like some lovesick collegian (Goethe's Young Werther, perhaps?). But these are few and far between.

The wonderful Clifton Brown, one of Alvin Ailey's most famous alumni and a Bessie winner (the dance Oscars) for his work with that company, does the solo work with Elisa Clark. His exquisite moves might come from rigorous rehearsals; but the added gravitas is something a dancer can only get with years of experience.

The second piece, "Crisis Variations" from 2011, was well placed between the other two. The music, based on one of Liszt's impossibly complicated etudes, might hark back to the classical tradition, but the dancing edged closest to the contemporary. There was a spooky quality to the lighting, dance and music. Overall, it's a lot of fun, even if here and there the image that came to mind was more "The Miracle Worker" than Mariinsky.

### **'Transparent Things'**

The last piece was a world premiere. Lubovitch writes in the program that the work "is suggested by Pablo Picasso's "family of Saltimbanques," pictured [in the program].

These were street performers, and Lubovitch uses some of the vocabulary of mime, Punch and Judy, and amateur acrobatics. Reid Bartelme, a former dancer, shows that he is skilled with a needle and thread as with a jete in his costumes, which exactly duplicate the figures in the painting.

For myself, they evoked Watteau more than Picasso, especially in the piece's elegiac tone. The music is a dreamily beautiful Debussy string quartet. All of dancers were remarkable.

Reed Luplau's rubbery moves brought life to Picasso's elongated figures. Attila Joey Csiki's harlequin collapsed like a marionette after its strings have been cut.

Speaking of strings, it was no slam to the dancers that the biggest innovation of the night went to the onstage Bryant Park Quartet. These musicians not only were able to follow Debussy's maddeningly difficult meter and the tortures to which he puts his violinists; they also did the entire thing without sheet music.

Such professionalism marks this company's every move. Let's hope Lubovitch continues to enthrall audiences with his dedication to good old-fashioned capital-R Romance.

*Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in Debussy's String Quartet in G Minor runs through Nov. 18 at Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (between Park and Madison Avenues). For info or tickets, call 800-745-3000 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or [the company's website](#).*

EDGE Editor-in-Chief Steve Weinstein has been a regular correspondent for the International Herald Tribune, the Advocate, the Village Voice and Out. He has been covering the AIDS crisis since the early '80s, when he began his career. He is the author of "The Q Guide to Fire Island" (Alyson, 2007).