

# Lar Lubovitch talks 'Crisis'

by Lewis Whittington / EDGE Contributor / Friday Oct 12, 2012



Lar Lubovitch

The **Lar Lubovitch Dance Company** returns to Dance Celebration at the Annenberg Center this week after a four-year absence, with diverse program of newer works and a revival of a signature work, "North Star" first danced in 1978.

Choreographer **Lar Lubovitch** talked about creating his new award winning ballet "Crisis Variations" and the Philadelphia performances from his New York studios earlier this week. The ballet was awarded the 2012 Prix Benois de la Danse at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.

"The piece was secretly nominated (for the award) from a performance in New York, then a panel watched a film of it in Russia and it was awarded. We couldn't take the whole company, but we took two dancers to perform a duet when we got the award," Lubovitch said.

The choreographer worked directly with composer, Yevgeniy Sharlat, for the experimental piece describes the choreography as "dark and violent" and indeed, he used visual imaging that "created a movement vocabulary of crisis. Actually, I used image of people in a van that goes over a cliff. And what is happening to them as it tumbles. I meant this as a commentary on how many of us feel now...that crisis is lurking at our backs."



"Crisis Variations

To further achieve the visceral meaning of the work, Lubovitch "wanted to employ the use of actual crisis in the dance process. I created a crisis to embody a crisis," he explained. He set the work on the dancers "choreographed to piano etudes by Franz Liszt." Then, I substituted the real composer's music at the very last minute before performance in order to create a very disorienting relationship for the dancers between their performance and the music. So it was kind of a catastrophe to have the music removed for them and place them against this other music. The music was written to match the rhythmic structure and basic structure of Liszt," he said.

In contrast, his 2010 ballet "The Legend of Ten" also in its Philly debut, had no last minute surprises for the dancers. It's scored to music by Johannes Brahms, which Lubovitch explains as "The word 'legend' means the codes and symbols by which you read a map. In this the Legend is the music and the ten dancers are drawing the terrain of the music," so it is more abstract and romantic. "I generally like big movement structures. And Brahms seems to call for large sweeping movement structures that fill the space."

The choreographer is particularly thrilled about the company right now. "The demands of my choreography are sometimes extreme, both the technical and poetic demands. And needless to say these wonderful dance artists are integral in making these works," he said.



Concerto Six Twenty-Two

Lubovitch may use unconventional methods to create dance-works, but his choreography is known for its lyricism and overt beauty. He also doesn't shy away from using music from 19th century romantic composers. His piece "Little Rhapsodies," very well received in Philly at their last performance and danced again on this program, is set to very decorous piano etudes by Robert Schumann, but Lubovitch is inside the music. Highlights are the three men's camaraderie, lurches and glissades, reminiscent of Cossack dances. All of those pretty steps break away into three intriguing solos with an impressive range for each dancer, including one who cuts a Byronic figure in this piece.

Lubovitch has won many awards including Winner of the Astaire Award for Broadway's Red Shoes and the DanceUSA Honors Award, not to mention his Grammys, Emmys and Tonys. One of his most famous works "Concerto Six Twenty-Two," choreographed at the height of the AIDS epidemic and depicting a loving relationship between two men that could be seen as gay, has been danced by companies all over the world and continues to resonate with audiences today.

*Lar Lubovitch Dance Company performs as part of Dance Celebration at the Annenberg Center, 3680 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA continues through October 13, 2012. Tickets are \$20-\$55. For more information, visit <LINK"WWW.ANNENBERGCENTER.ORG:THE website Center Annenberg>. The company plays the Citi Performing Arts Center in Boston on October 19 - 20, 2012. For more information about the company, visit [the company's website](#).*

Lewis Whittington writes about the performing arts and gay politics for several publications.