

New post on NYC Dance Project



[Barton Cowperthwaite](#)

by [Ken Browar](#) and [Deborah Ory](#)

Oct 13, 2014



"In all the dancers with whom I choose to work, I look for an intuitive, poetic spark. It's something with which certain dancers automatically imbue their movement. Of course, my work requires extreme technical ability as well. But dance is, as I see it, a form of poetry for which physical prowess is merely a means but surely not an end. Dancers who get stuck emphasizing only the athletic aspect of dance seem to have only one note they strike repeatedly. They appear to be shouting all of the time. It's the difference between yelling and singing. Barton sings. It's a choice." - Lar Lubovitch

We at NYC Dance Project think that Barton Cowperthwaite is a name you will be hearing a lot of in the near future.

Fresh out of college, the 22-year-old is the youngest dancer in the cast of Lar Lubovitch's new work, *Ancient Tales*, but holds his own sharing the stage with ballet greats such as Alessandra Ferri. Barton was plucked from the corps to learn the lead role in *The Black Rose*, which he'll perform this week at the Joyce (Oct 15-19).

We talked with Barton after his photo shoot with NYC Dance Project and discussed the show, his life, and what's next.

I was always sort of in the right place and the right time.

When I auditioned for Lar, I was drawn to the movement. It was very interesting contemporary ballet movement, and very musical.

I researched a lot after the audition to learn more about his work.

You hear the term, "Master Choreographer" and you think of a drill sergeant, which can be intimidating. But Lar is really the nicest, smartest, kindest man.

After the first week of learning the corps movement, Lar told me, "Everyone has off tomorrow, except for you. There's a part I want you to try, but I'm not sure you're right for it."

I came in to rehearsal the next day at the Ailey studios. It was this transcendent experience because I was in the studio with Lar and I was like, "Oh my god. I'm here this is really happening."

It hit me so hard towards the end of the rehearsal when Alessandra Ferri came into the studio. She was watching me dance and I was thinking, "What is happening". It was incredible. He was setting this really awesome wavy movement that I loved. It just felt so good in my body.

The next day Lar announced, "Everyone, Bart is *The Black Rose*", which is the title of the piece.

My partner in the dance (Mucuy Bolles) has had a 23-year career and is coming out of retirement to do this performance. I'm the youngest person in the studio. I don't feel like it, but it's the case and I get along with them so well. I'm grateful and humbled to be working with them.

The fact that I get to watch these amazing dancers everyday warms my soul.

Lar choreographed the heck out of my body. Stretched me to places I didn't know I could go.

He's done such a good job with me as a mover, and he's why I've learned so much. I'm a physical dancer, and he's made me move my mind and cognitive ability a lot more in my dancing. He taught me to push less physically and use more of my mental ability.

He makes you think.

Written by Cory Stieg

Hair and Makeup by [Juliet Jane](#), Costumes by [Fritz Masten](#), Shoes by [Capezio](#)

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