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EDITION

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Of Love, Dance and Mozart (Mostly)

MOZART AND THE DANCE. Music by Mozart, Rameau, Rebel, Bach. New York Baroque Dance Company, Catherine Turocy, director, Concert Royal. James Richman, conductor. Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Lar Lubovitch, artistic director; Solisti New York, Ransom Wilson, conductor. Mostly Mozart Festival, Sunday night. Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Repeated Thursday night.

TO THE COMPLEX, sensuous sound of the clarinet, two young men face one another across a dark stage. Slowly they raise their hands, in a gesture recalling God's to Adam in Michelangelo's "Creation." They walk toward one another, put their arms around each other's shoulders, and begin to dance.

It is a fervent dance, full of intense passion, a *pas de deux* of love. They twine about, lean, lift and carry one another just as men have carried women in ballets through the centuries. At first, the audience Sunday night at Avery Fisher Hall, watching the second movement of Lar Lubovitch's "Concerto Six Twenty Two" (set to Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622), didn't know quite how to respond.

There were rustlings and some titters at the emotional openness of the dance. One man guffawed loudly at each lift — perhaps from embarrassment. Certainly those whose sexuality is more conventional could find this a disturbing thing to watch, especially during what

had begun as a fairly light evening at the Mostly Mozart Festival.

But the audience realized it was seeing something tough, vulnerable and revealing, and it finally turned angrily to shush the laughter. When the movement was over, the applause was loud and prolonged.

Love knows no boundaries. Lubovitch, working with dancers Sylvain Lafortune and Rick Michael, offered an interpretation of this sweet, painful movement that touched the depths of being. It was the high point of an unusual Mostly Mozart evening dedicated to "Mozart and the Dance" (although, with music by Rameau, Rebel and Bach, Mozart had a bare plurality in the program).

The concert, to be repeated Thursday, offered dance baroque and modern. The first part of the evening featured the New York Baroque Dance Company with recreations of baroque ballets, accompanied by Concert Royal playing reproduc-



Jack Mitchell

From left, dancing in the Mostly Mozart Festival are Nora Reynolds, Christine Wright, Doug Varone, Laura Gates, Nancy Colahan and Rob Besserer of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

MUSIC REVIEW



Peter Goodman

tions of baroque instruments. The second part, which included the clarinet concerto, featured the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, accompanied by Solisti New York, a modern chamber orchestra, and the Mostly Mozart Festival Chorus.

The baroque company, which ordinarily presents its carefully researched programs at such tiny, intimate halls as that of Marymount Manhattan College, offered three works. The first was a formal, stiff segment entitled "L'Oracle" from Rameau's "Les Fetes d'Hebe." Then company director Catherine Turocy, wearing a doll-like mask, danced "Les caracteres de la danse," to music by Jean Fery Rebel: quick character sketches in tiny movements of feet and hands. Finally, there was "Les petits riens," Turocy's reconstruction of a dance to a Mozart score, a tale of Cupid (Diane Epstein) and some courtiers that was coy and funny, and seemed far more 1980s than 1770s.

These were effete, delicate works that seemed feathery light and a little out of place in Fisher. They would be more effective in their own homes, with singers and elaborate scenery.

Lubovitch's work, far more aggressive and vigorous, fit the space better. But it also played with, and sometimes against, far greater music. At times during the clarinet concerto (played elegantly by Todd Levy), one was offended at the distraction the dancers made from the composition itself. This was especially apparent during the several moments of comedy, for there is little humor in this monumental musical work.

The second Lubovitch piece, "Of My Soul," was the world premiere of a setting of Bach's Cantata "Jesu, der du meine Seele" (BWV 78). Here Lubovitch presented the torment of fallen souls finally redeemed to joy. Again, the music is some of Bach's finest, and it was unfortunate that the singers (tucked, with the orchestra, under the balcony to the left of the stage) had to be amplified, thus reducing their effectiveness. But the dance was clearly appropriate and moving.

It was a fascinating program, alternately light and profound, a refreshing addition to the festival. /II