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Dance: 'Blood' Premiere By Lar Lubovitch Troupe

By ANNA KISSELGOFF

LAR LUBOVITCH, one of the few choreographers capable of generating genuine excitement nowadays, proceeded to do just that again at the City Center last night: his dance company opened there with a gory little premiere called "Blood" and two very fine earlier works.

This is thrilling stuff. Mr. Lubovitch's latest pieces have a sweep, surge and soar about them that are most unusual. There is nothing broad-stroked and plain about the bold dimension of his kinetic images. Instead there is an intense musicality that translates every movement from his joyous and sensitive company into passionate dancing. It can be quiet passion as well, not always the kind that roars.

These are the qualities that have marked Mr. Lubovitch's current phase — a newly creative jag that was announced in 1985 when he presented "A Brahms Symphony" and then followed up last January with his magnificent Mozart work, "Concerto Six Twenty-Two."

Both these pieces are on the current program, which runs through Sunday. And in some way, the Mozart work, named after the composer's Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, K. 622, was receiving a second premiere in that it was seen earlier in New York only at a single performance at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Lubovitch has not had a local season since May 1985. That single performance, a benefit for the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, used live music provided by the Solisti New York Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Ransom Wilson.

Financial considerations have now obliged the company to substitute taped music — and if this lessens the wonderful sense of Mozartian divertimento Mr. Lubovitch has captured in contemporary terms, his "Concerto" remains a stunningly inventive piece of choreography. Everyone now has a chance to see it — and should.

The Cast

BLOOD (World Premiere), choreography, Lar Lubovitch; music, George Antheil's "Ballet Mécanique"; lighting, Craig Miller.

WITH: Mia Babalis, Peggy Baker, Kathy Casey, John Dayger, Ronni Favors, Sylvain Lafortune, Rick Michalek and Bruce Wood.

Presented by the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company at the City Center 55th Street Dance Theater.

Nonetheless, the official novelty was "Blood," certainly not as substantial a work but composed to a very interesting score. This is the "Ballet Mécanique," by George Antheil, the modernist American composer who also collaborated with George Balanchine in the 1930's. His collaborator in this instance was the French painter Fernand Léger. "Ballet Mécanique" was to have served as the score for a Léger film, and while it was dropped from the film, the music's 1926 premiere created considerable commotion — namely because the player pianos and sirens in the score caused some commotion on their own.

These are the sounds we hear in "Blood," although Mr. Lubovitch has chosen to eschew the assembly-line imagery we might expect. He does not give us a picture of the machine age — merely the high blood pressure that results from it.

Mr. Lubovitch has given his version of one of Paul Taylor's meditations about civilization and its discontents — he gives it his own mad twist. His stage is peopled with the maimed and grotesque moving in a continuum of parodistic behavior. Having decided

to be outrageous, Mr. Lubovitch achieves his destination finally when his cast of characters goes at one other with meat cleavers and the like. And so the closing mayhem consists of Kathy Casey, John Dayger, Peggy Baker, Rick Michalek, Ronni Favors, Sylvain Lafortune, Mia Babalis and Bruce Wood running around with their heads in a vise or penetrated by an assortment of axes, knives and hammers.

Not everyone will find this macabre activity all that funny and it takes Mr. Lubovitch some time before he hits his stride in the piece. Yet he does halfway through and the work comes to an ultimate boil, wittily integrated into the music with a satirical disco flavor.

All the dancers are excellent — and it was wonderful to see Jeanne Solan return to the company, contributing her earthy solid quality, with Miss Baker, voluptuous in her movement, and Mr. Lafortune and Mr. Michalek outstanding in the other pieces. The newcomers include Gloria Brisbin, Daniel Baudendistel and Kevin Schroder.