

Dance preview:

Lar Lubovitch uses his creativity to stretch dancers in new directions

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Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company performs its signature piece, "North Star," at the Chicago Dancing Festival in 2010.

By Sara Bauknecht / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Lar Lubovitch's 40-plus years in dance have been varied and robust. He heads his own New York City-based dance company, has choreographed for the stage and the ice skating rink and has been deemed by The New York Times one of the top 10 choreographers in the world.

But what has fueled his fire for creativity all these years is simple.

"I've done what I've been doing for a long time because I must do it. Because I have a creative urgency, and the urgency remains very alive and needs to be answered to," he said. "For some mysterious reason, I create dances. I don't know why. I don't really need to know why."

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

Where: Byham Theater, Downtown.

When: 8 p.m. Saturday.

Tickets: \$19 to \$45 at www.trustarts.org or 412-456-6666.

Information: lubovitch.org.

Pittsburgh audiences will witness the product of this artistic urgency Saturday when the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company closes the Pittsburgh Dance Council's 2011-12 season at Byham Theater, Downtown.

When creating new pieces (to date, he's conceived more than 100), Mr. Lubovitch looks to the audio to feed the visuals.

"You might generally say that my work is an expression of music," he said. "It's a way of seeing music, or you might say a way of painting a picture of music."

What has further enriched his artistry is the range of projects he's taken on. His choreography has been broadcast on PBS's "Great Performances" series, colored Broadway performances such as "Into the Woods" and the revival of "The King and I," and executed by Olympic skaters Dorothy Hamill and Peggy Fleming, among others.

"I think it's necessary to remain interested and remain curious and to always want to stretch your imagination and stretch your abilities," he said. "Every stretch in one direction stretches you in a number of directions simultaneously."

This weekend, the company will present a cross section of diversity from its 43-year history, opening with the signature "North Star" (1978) performed to music by Philip Glass.

"It really is like many things I do, pure dance work. But in saying that, keeping in mind that dance is an expression of humanity and an expression of passion and idealism."

Two more recent selections will follow: "Little Rhapsodies" (2007) with Robert Schumann music and "Crisis Variations" (2011) to Yevgeniy Sharlat compositions. The latter is a "very dark piece," Mr. Lubovitch said. "It's a dance which speaks to the moment in which we find ourselves in a moment of crisis on many levels. It's not a story, but it is an invocation of the sensations and an invocation of the emotions given rise to in the occasion of a crisis."

The more lyrical "Legend of Ten" (2010) to Johannes Brahms melodies will complete the program.

"When I go to see a dance, I like to be changed by it, ... and by changed I mean in some way lifted or filled," Mr. Lubovitch said. "I certainly hope that's the experience that audience members might have."

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