

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company @ SPAC, 6/9/11

June 9, 2011 at 11:58 pm by [Tresca Weinstein](#)

By Tresca Weinstein

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SARATOGA SPRINGS – Lar Lubovitch is all about the music. His dances—whether they’re accompanied by Philip Glass, Johannes Brahms or John Coltrane—look like what the composers might have dreamed at night after working on the piece all day. During the company’s performance at Saratoga Performing Arts Center Thursday evening, the movement flowed when the music did, tightened when it grew tense and mirrored its declarations and crescendos.

But there’s nothing glib or cheesy about Lubovitch’s musicality; he captures the spirit and hue of each composition, as in “North Star,” from 1978, in which he sends linked lines of dancers sweeping from one side of the stage to the other, inexorably driven by Glass’s work of the same name. Echoing the repetitive, hypnotic rhythms of the music, the dancers cluster together and burst apart, turn and turn, sink close to the ground and rise up, reaching out. The final section of the piece is almost regal, with dancer Reid Bartelme leading the ensemble in powerful, stately leaps and balances.

Last year’s “The Legend of Ten” is set to the first and fourth movements of Brahms’ Piano Quartet and maps the emotional terrain of the music as well as its construction, using the number 10 and its permutations. There is a sense of mathematical precision in the pace and composition, with one wave of leaps and turns giving way to the next, all fitting together like a perfectly solved Rubik’s cube. The curving, intricate arm gestures are like little dances in themselves.

“Coltrane’s Favorite Things,” also from 2010, is an interpretation of an interpretation: Set to Coltrane’s 1961 saxophone interpretation of Richard Rodgers’ “My Favorite Things,” it’s a delightful jazz-inflected romp with a balletic buoyancy. The dancers float and glide through choreography that is tightly composed while projecting a loose, easy vibe, particularly in Katarzyna Skarpetowska and Jonathan E. Alsberry’s electric pas de deux.

The program also included a duet from the 1999 work “Meadow,” set to Gavin Bryars’ “Incipit Vita Nova,” which includes Latin sections from Dante’s “La Vita Nuova.” The ancient-sounding vocals set the stage for a sculptural dance between Skarpetowska and Brian McGinnis. The acrobatic, slow-motion shapes they create suggest something elemental and symbolic.

Lubovitch has said he aims for a certain inevitable “rightness” in his choreography, a sense that this is the only way the movement could unfold. He achieves it in nearly every moment, often in achingly beautiful ways...

Tresca Weinstein is a frequent contributor to the Times Union.

LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY

Where: Saratoga Performing Arts Center, 108 Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs

When: 8 p.m. Thursday

Length: One hour and 50 minutes, two intermissions

Program: “North Star,” duet from “Meadow,” “The Legend of Ten,” “Coltrane’s Favorite Things”