

Dance company sets art and music in motion

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company takes the stage once again in a two-week run at the Joyce Theater.

By [Amy Stringer](#)

Published Thursday 25 February 2010 07:51pm EST.



Lar Lubovitch Dance Company performs a jazz piece. Courtesy of Erin Baiano

After more than four decades of creating innovative and engaging dance pieces, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company takes the stage once again in a two-week run at the Joyce Theater.

Now through Mar. 7, the company will perform two separate programs. The first program is a compilation of three all-jazz pieces, including the world premiere of a piece set to John Coltrane's "My Favorite Things". The second program overlaps slightly with the first and also includes the world premiere of "Dogs of War" and the company premiere of "Vita Nova".

In the first program, the show begins with the piece "Nature Boy: Kurt Elling", set to a compilation of five jazz recordings by Kurt Elling. The piece begins and ends with impressive solos performed by Christopher Vo, and the center of the piece consists of three duets, each telling a separate love story. The first dance portrays playful flirtation, the second lustful intensity, and the third unrequited love. The dancing couples execute their movements flawlessly, often using each other as balance or support.

While each duet has a different theme, there are similarities among all of the pieces. Each is filled with multiple twirling lifts—the woman frequently spins around or over the man’s body—and the dancers’ strong technique make these complicated movements appear fluid and effortless.

The second piece of the program is “Favorite Things.” The point of the piece, as Lubovitch said in a recent New York Times interview, is to combine Coltrane’s “sheets of sound” and Jackson Pollock’s “fields of action” to create “ribbons of movement.” Set against a backdrop of Pollock’s painting “Autumn Rhythm,” it is a light-footed and light-hearted piece. The contrasting movements are the most dramatic aspect of the piece, which seamlessly transitions from a smooth waltz to freestyle jazz. The dancers take on the essence of the music as if they are mimicking its sounds—during the waltz their movements are fluid, soft, and wave-like, whereas during the freestyle portions of the music, they erupt into shimmies, shakes, and jumps.

The performance culminates with Lubovitch’s “Elemental Brubeck,” originally choreographed in 2005 in collaboration with the San Francisco Ballet. It is clear which parts of the choreography are from San Francisco Ballet, and which are Lubovitch’s. The first part of the dance showcases the extensive classical training of the dancers, as it is mainly incorporates ballet technique, and the second part of the piece showcases Mr. Lubovitch’s teenage memories of dancing the jitterbug.

With an overall fun, light-hearted and jazz-filled evening, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company continues to contribute effortless pieces to modern dance, with several premieres still to come in the season.

The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company performs at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue (at West 19th St.). Performances are Tuesday-Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 and 7:30 p.m., now through Mar. 7. Tickets start at \$10.