

DANCE REVIEW

## Lar Lubovitch troupe mixes classical, contemporary styles

By Sid Smith Special to the Tribune

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Four decades is an epic span by any measure, but in the iffy world of dance, endurance that long approaches a miracle.

After 40 years in which so many others have come and gone, Chicago-born Lar Lubovitch's troupe survives, glorying in a celebratory engagement over the weekend at the Harris Theater. Two works—"Jangle" and "Dvorak Serenade"—shone with the lilt and lyricism, the pop appeal and structural integrity, that distinguish his talent. A third, "Men's Stories," a muddied, overly long and disappointing piece, nevertheless allowed for sharp dancing, especially from its gifted soloists.

The newest piece, "Jangle," is brief and beguiling, and a twist on the choreographer's gifts at mingling the freedom of modern dance and the beauty of classical form. Here he notably tosses in ethnic dance, too, and the folk transplant seamlessly joins contemporary and classicism for an altogether original piece that is invigorating and delightful. It luxuriates in Slavic choral lines and snappy footwork, just as it brings out the folk strains in Bela Bartok's classical score. It's also a showpiece for a duet featuring Brian McGinnis and Katarzyna Skarpetowska—one with a startling final pose—and for the soloist high jinks of Jonathan E. Alsberry, a nimble showman and alumnus of the Chicago Academy of the Arts.

"Dvorak Serenade" is similarly musical in its response to its score, a beautiful ensemble piece mixing intricate choral design and haunting tableaux. Flowing and transcendent, as delicate as the gossamer white costumes that recall bedtime attire, "Dvorak" is also a feast of *port de bras*, the ballet term for carriage of the arms, employed here as rapturous motif.

"Men's Stories" offers both deconstructionist score, liberally intermixing Scott Marshall's collage with classical components, for mysteries evoking 18th Century dueling and more modern male relationships. It remains as hazy as its foggy scenic atmosphere, striking choreographic turns that never add up or come into dramatic focus. Former Hubbard Streeter Jay Franke, Christopher Vo and especially Scott Rink are among the stars of the grueling, expressive and impressive solos.