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**Ballet Florida boosts mix of modernists**

By Lawrence Budmen  
Special Correspondent  
Posted February 6 2007

Ballets from the past four decades with a modernist choreographic aesthetic were the focus of Ballet Florida's program on Saturday at the Kravis Center. The oldest work proved remarkably durable, while a more recent piece seemed dated.

Although a surefire crowd pleaser, Lar Lubovitch's *Elemental Brubeck* was the least attractive work presented. Originally created for the San Francisco Ballet in 2005, the ballet is choreographically derivative of Jerome Robbins' *N.Y. Export-Opus Jazz* and *West Side Story*. Lubovitch remains an important contemporary dance maker but this is far from his best.

Set to recorded music by jazz icon Dave Brubeck, the piece's most effective section is a sexy pas de deux. Tina Martin and Douglas Gawriljuk were a grandly romantic duo, dancing Lubovitch's difficult, rapid-fire patterns as though they were child's play. Gary Lenington was hyperathletic in the opening *Iberia* section.

The late Vicente Nebrada set his *Percussion for Six Men* on the Harkness Ballet, a touring company that briefly flourished in the late 1960s and early '70s. With an original percussion score by Lee Gurst performed by an onstage ensemble, the piece was considered cutting-edge, envelope-pushing dance almost 40 years ago. Still compelling today, the ballet remains an impressive showcase of male agility and speed. Nebrada's kinetic movements mirror Gurst's fireball percussive opus.

Percussion virtuosos Andrew Proctor, David Markgrat and Neel Shukla performed under the able direction of Rafael Jimenez. Iavor Doytchinov's leaps, Markus Schaffer's spins and the sheer horsepower and razzle-dazzle of Roger Corrales highlighted an exciting ensemble performance at breakneck tempo.

The premiere of Trey McIntyre's *Pluck* was cause for celebration. McIntyre is a fresh choreographic voice who has been attracting attention in such balletic strongholds as Jacob's Pillow and the New York City Ballet. To the intoxicating figurations of Ravel's String Quartet, the choreographer has crafted a new spin on Balanchine's brand of neo-classicism, at once romantic and high tech. In the incisive Scherzo, McIntyre creates flickering images and seamless ensemble transitions, while the Adagio brings a sensual duet.

The flawless technique, lithe partnering and superb execution of Yumelia Garcia, Lorena Jimenez, Maria-Angeles Llamas, Martin, Darian Aguila, Gawriljuk, Lenington and Schaffer were electric. Evocative lighting by Nicholas Phillips and Patrick Long's costumes in rich pastels aided the romantic aura of McIntyre's entrancing vision.

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