



Ballet Austin's 'Firebird' takes flight



Michael Barnes
Updated September 25, 2018 Filed in arts, Classical, dance, music, Uncategorized.

One of **Ballet Austin's** most memorable efforts from the early 1990s was a popular but controversial 1993 staging of "Firebird" that featured, as arts writer **Sondra Lomax** drily put it: "a prison camp overseen by an evil warden who rides a motorcycle."



Did we need that?

I remember it with fondness, however, because of performances in the title role by **Nadya Zybina**, whose fierce, compact presence onstage won't easily be forgotten.

The next artistic director, **Stephen Mills**, followed with his own reinvention of the ballet in 2009. Mills stuck more closely to the aesthetic of **Igor Stravinsky's** revolutionary 1910 score.



Aara Krumpe as the titular character in Stephen Mills' 'The Firebird.' This photo is from an earlier performance of the same Ballet Austin interpretation. Contributed

Ballet Austin revived this more compatible "Firebird" last week and paired it with **Lar Lubovitch's** 2007 "Dvorák Serenade," which we'll consider first.

Search ... Search

CATEGORIES
Select Category

ARCHIVES
Select Month



ADVERTISING



**Ready to Meet
Someone New in
Austin?**
Try match

In abstract segments that employed between two and 12 dancers, Lubovitch employs mathematical precision to portray various forms of romantic affection.

The choreography fit the company like a glove, in part because Lubovitch's contemporary ballet vocabulary — which includes the liberal use of modern dance — seems closely related to Mills' in the way that curves are elongated and repeated, physical connections are extended, and the patterns are rigorously completed.

Lubovitch's emotional reticence keeps the audience at a distance, except for fleeting moments of tenderness, joy and, at the end, outright diversion. **Ashley Lynn Sherman** and **Oliver Green-Cramer** refined the purity of the ensemble's movements into perfection as the lead couple.

In the much more dynamic "Firebird," Mills staged the first scene — as Prince Ivan hunts then befriends the mythical creature — in a bold, muscular Russian Classical style, then switched over to a softer look out of the Romantic era for the entry of Tsarevna and her princesses.

The arrival of elaborately costumed **Edward Carr** as the evil Kastchei the Immortal changed the tone again to one that could have been borrowed from Asian theater. Eventually, all three styles were combined thrillingly in the climactic showdown.

As they did during the Dvorák, **Peter Bay** and the **Austin Symphony** kept the famous Stravinsky score tightly under rein.

Among the double-cast roles, **Morgan Stillman** embodied the epitome of a balletic prince as Ivan on Sunday, expertly foregrounding his two partners, while **Chelsea Marie Renner** delicately revealed the inner fortitude of Tsarevna.

Yet all eyes were on **Aara Krumpe** whenever she entered — and then dominated — the stage as the Firebird. Her form was all but flawless and her power breathtaking. You don't expect to be moved by "Firebird," but this time I was.

I think I found my new Firebird, 25 years later.

VIEW COMMENTS **0** ▼

< PREVIOUS

'Significant Other' prompts a significant emotional reaction

Promoted Stories

Sponsored Links by Taboola

You're Not Alone If You Get Sued, HPSO Is Here For You!

HPSO®

Top 5 Experiential AV Technologies to Watch

Shepard Expositions

If You Think You've Figured Out 'Inception' Ending You Are Wrong

BreezyBite

6 Dating Sites That Actually Work

www.toptop5.com

Enter Your Name, Wait 12 Seconds, Brace Yourself

The Beacon by Truthfinder

Avoid Cleaning Gutters For Life! See How This Revolutionary Product Helps Homeowners.

LeafFilter™



Follow us:



Copyright © 2018 GateHouse Media, LLC. All rights reserved

[Visitor Agreement](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Mobile App](#)