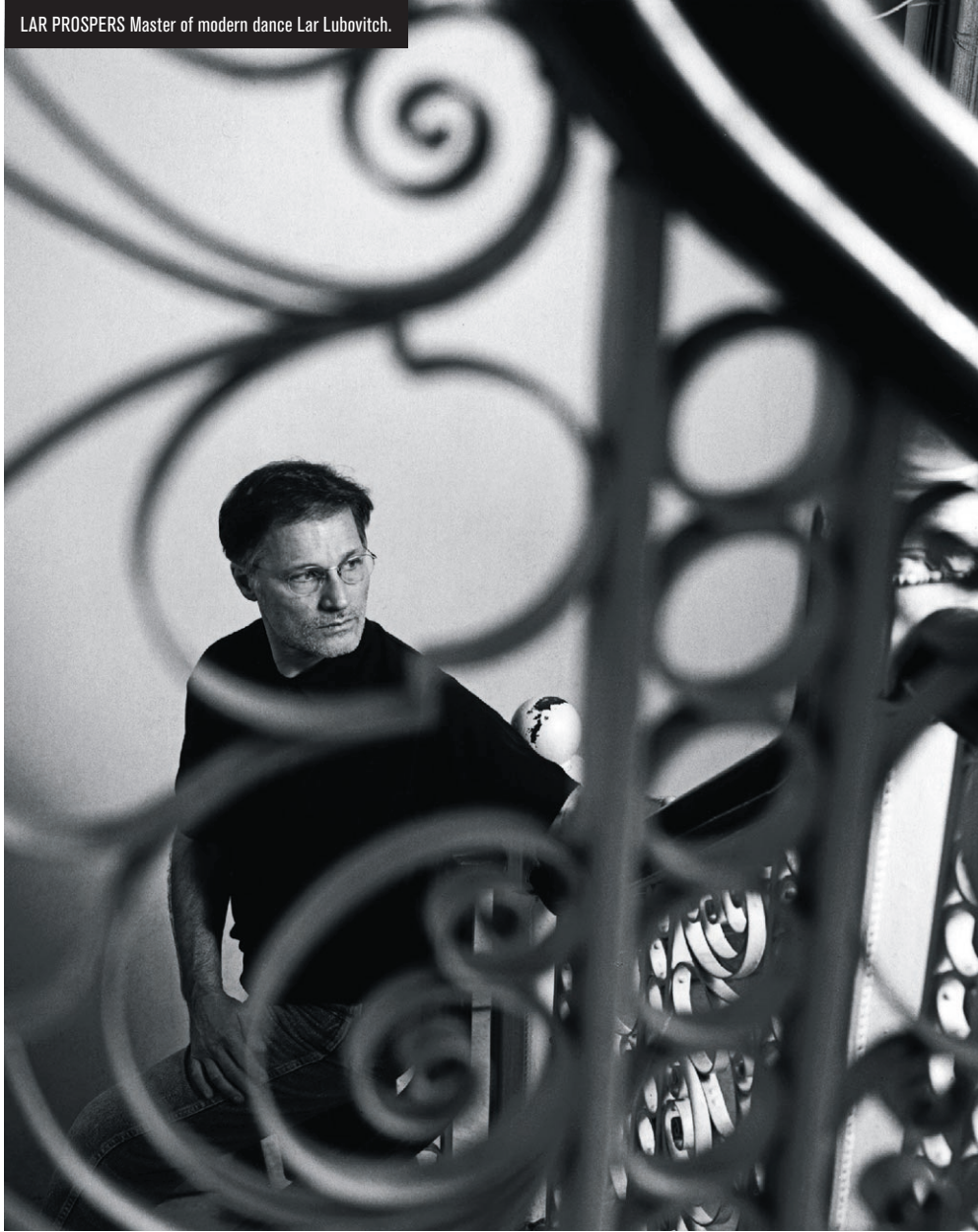


LAR PROSPERS Master of modern dance Lar Lubovitch.



Lar and the Second City

A legendary choreographer makes a triumphant return home

| By Vicki Crain | Photography by Rose Eichenbaum |

Growing up on Maxwell Street, Lar Lubovitch dreamed of being an artist. But after seeing his first dance performance at the University of Iowa at age 20, his career path changed dramatically. Lubovitch, now 66, had found his calling. His renowned New York-based contemporary dance company is now entering its 41st season, and he's choreographed everything from Broadway shows to films to ice dancing. For his work, he's been nominated for a Tony, an International Emmy, a CableACE and a Grammy, and has also received Astaire and Elan Awards for choreography. This month, the Joffrey Ballet performs the Midwest premiere of his three-act ballet *Othello* at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.

(LAR'S CHICAGO FAVORITES)

Restaurants: [The Gage](#), [Topolobampo](#), [Frontera Grill](#)... anything by ([Top Chef Masters](#) winner) [Rick Bayless](#) Local Attractions: [Chicago's amazing architecture](#), [The Harris Theater for Music and Dance](#), [The Museum of Contemporary Art](#), the new [Joffrey Tower](#) Places to Stay: [The Palmer House Hilton](#)

Since cofounding the Chicago Dancing Festival in 2007, you get back to visit Chicago more often. Do you have any favorite memories of growing up here?

One night in the bitterly cold winter there was an incredible fire on the second story of Woolworth's across the street from our apartment, and the fire engines came to douse it with tons and tons of water. In the morning, all the gushes of water froze, virtually coming out of the window, and inside the ice were little lipsticks and candies and toys.

*Joffrey's artistic director, Ashley Wheater, was working with the San Francisco Ballet Company in 1997 when you originally set *Othello*. How instrumental was he in getting you to come restage it here?* One hundred percent. I'm very grateful to him. It's a very big dance and therefore a very expensive dance, and for Ashley to take the risk on doing something controversial and risky, particularly at a time when being conservative would be the way to go, is a very uplifting thing.

*You've said that seeing Jose Limon's company perform *Othello*-inspired Moor's Pavane changed your life. Is it synchronicity or coincidence that you're now staging *Othello*?* I think you could call it synchronicity. It made the kind of impression that was locked into my mind, and I thought there was another way I could approach the idea.

What's been interesting about resetting the ballet with a new company after so many years? The most wonderful thing is I finally have the opportunity to fix it. I've done a lot of altering, additions and subtractions of things that I've wanted to do since I finished. A lot of things have been re-examined.

Are you enjoying working with the Joffrey dancers? Very, very much. They're the top of the heap of dancers in the world. They're as good as it gets.

It's a cliché, but we have to ask: If you were a superhero, what would your super power be? To cause all human brains to understand that art is not a decoration; it's an essential expression of our basic humanity and as indispensable as food.

You've said that when you choreograph you always look for "the next inevitable step." What's your next inevitable step? I hope that it's to become a resident company in Chicago. I've wanted for some time to have a home in Chicago for the company and to be a bi-city company. Certain pieces are falling into place that are beginning to make it look more possible... or possibly inevitable. ■