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***Amjad*** — performed by **La La La Human Steps**  
choreographed by **Édouard Lock**

May 15, 2007 • Hummingbird Centre • Toronto

by David Fujino

**A**crobat speed — strength — dancers diving across the stage. We thought we'd see this from La La La Human Steps.

O.K. We didn't.

What we saw was, *Amjad* — a dramatic dance en pointe; it looked like classical ballet, with many of its individual movements sped up. It was well done.

But *Amjad* was also choreographer Édouard Lock's highly personal and respectful view of the Romantic ballets, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*.

And Gavin Byars' fine score was a true re-composition of Tchaikovsky's original melodies which the four onstage musicians — pianist, cellist, violist, and violinist — interpreted with sheer passion.

*Amjad* was also romantic and sexy. The men and women were dressed in black; their dance a series of impressive quick-cuts of fluttering arm and swift leg movements; all with a controlled torso.

And when the white spotlights shifted position on the black stage, the dance and the dancers moved on.

But over time, this free patterning of *Amjad* was difficult to follow ... it was hard to see a structure, and the piece started to feel too long ...

Here was a case of liking and (yet) disliking a performance piece.



Xuan Cheng & Keir Knight

## The dancers

Xuan Cheng | Andrea Boardman | Zofia Tujaka  
Talia Evutshenko | Mistaya Hemingway | Bernard Martin  
Keir Knight | Jason Shipley-Holmes | Dominic Santia

## The musicians

Njo Kong Kie — piano & director  
Élisabeth Giroux — cello  
Jill Van Gee — violin  
Jennifer Thiessen — violin