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Hour, Op-Art

By Carl Wilson

How do you solve a problem like Margie?

What are we going to do with Margie Gillis? I mean, do we declare her a landmark? A natural resource? Does Hydro-Québec nationalize her and channel her energy off to New England? Applauding her as a dancer and choreographer just won't suffice anymore.

From the mid-seventies, when her famous waist-lengthed tresses seemed the definition of unbound-spirit iconography (as if Margie Trudeau had really meant it), through the middle-year troubles she suffered along with the city (including the loss of her brother, choreographer Christopher Gillis, to AIDS), to her upcoming recitals, being publicized by the most stunning poster campaign in recent memory (a brave tribute to the beauty of the mature body) - Gillis has become ...well, what? The cupbearer for the ambrosia of Montreal's zeitgeist? The muses' pick for mayor? One kick-ass grand dame?

These shows mark her first performances in Montreal in three years aside from her traditional outdoors summer show on Parc La Fontaine. She'll be premiering Voyage, a new 25 minute solo about Gillis's international "striving and arriving" life, with music by Gaetan Leboeuf based on Gilles Vigneault's "Si les bateaux." She'll be doing three other solos (including one based on Joyce's Ulysses and another on Bach's Goldberg Variations) and collaborations with acclaimed guests Paola Styron and Joao Mauricio.

Tickets are a painful \$37.75 (student/seniors \$30/40) and needed to support the perpetually broke dancer's work, including her frequent benefit shows. Coming next election, I'm voting for whoever promises to appoint her Choreographer Laureate and support her in perpetual luxury, to let the public come adore her gratis.