

## SIMPLE SENSUALITY

Margie Gillis delivers an enchanting performance

The audience's standing ovation and unreeling applause kept Margie Gillis from leaving the stage for a good 5 minutes after her magnificent and inspiring dance performance last Friday night at the Centre Pierre-Péladeau.

Very rarely do we see such a successful solo performer who is not an actor or a comedian. The 46-year-old modern dancer is the eldest daughter of two former Olympic skiers who, at the tender age of three, began ballet and gymnastics. Now an internationally acclaimed dancer, Gillis dances from the inside out, expressing spirituality and the hearts of the human condition.

The self choreographed five-piece program included music by Leonard Cohen. Not only was Gillis's performance inspirational, it was also witty and humorous. Her props include suitcases, and underwear. A pair of granny panties becomes a habit, a beggar's hat, a hanky and a rag in No Cure, which expresses the angst of love and rejection.

Gillis demonstrated simplicity and innocents in Loon, a piece, which is performed solely by sounds of the wilderness. Gillis's small hand and feet movements give a visual image of birds and insects twittering sound on a hot summer's day.

She closes her performance with the 25-minute piece entitled The Voyage. The symbolic journey of life, with its trails and tribulations, is represented by the two suitcases which transform into books, stepping stones and mountains she must overcome. The music, by Quebec artist Gilles Vigneault, is melodramatic. Gillis wears a long, dark skirt with a small beret and is bare chested beneath a tuxedo jacket.

I have seen Margie Gillis perform on a number of occasions throughout my life and I am always amazed at how one woman can capture the spirit of nature and humanity with such sensual elegance. She celebrates art in its purest form. As a solo artist, she transforms the basics of dance in a truly remarkable, poetic fashion, that has a sincere child-like naivete.

Salle Pierre Mecure was packed for the four nights Gillis performed in Montreal from the 20th to the 23rd. Her enchanted audience continued to whisper "beautiful" and "bravo" as they spilled out onto the streets.