

■ PERFORMANCE/REVIEW

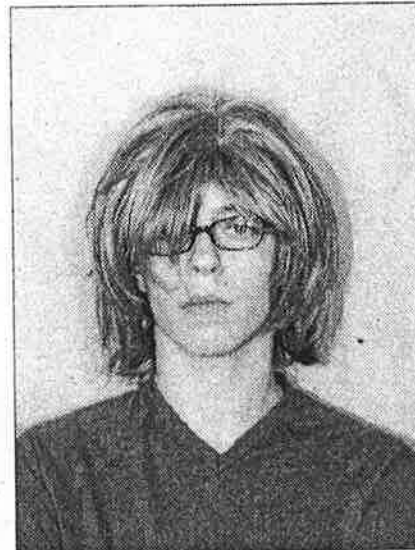
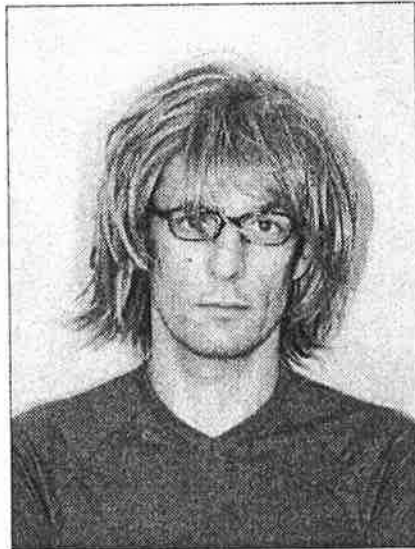
Exquisite Transformation

Characters in motion from France and San Francisco

BY BRIAN MCCORMICK

Gizselle, a collaboration between Xavier Le Roy and Eszter Salamon, is a brilliant and ticklish work of art, a smart blend of high and low, form and substance. It is a choreographic gem that challenges convention and expectation, with a solo performance by Ms. Salamon that is dazzling. For most of the dance, she has her back to the audience, yet every move is mesmerizing.

Seen at The Kitchen (October 11), *Gizselle* begins with the lights already up on stage. A voice calls from the back of the house, "Lights!" Ms. Salamon, wearing a pink shirt, gray slacks, and sneakers, throws herself onto the stage and lies unmoving, while dramatic classical music by Adolphe Adam blares. When the music ends, she says, "Black!" but the lights don't go out. (There's not a single light change in the piece, or any score for that matter). She repeats the "lights" command and dances some generic ballet moves. "Black" she calls, and



■ IDENTITY DISORDER Xavier LeRoy and Eszter Salamon.

hunches over, butt out, ankles pronated, head jutting forward, knuckling across the stage like an ape. Her commands continue, unheeded, as small phrases of familiar and odd material—a pastiche of classical images, the last 30 years of pop dance, and pedestrian gestures—seem to take over her body. Moonwalking, Rodin's *The Thinker*, *Saturday Night Fever*, standing at a urinal, and dancing in the living room all make their way into the mix.

This is all a delight, a clever recycling job, but just the tease before the choreography takes over. During a second round of a stop-reverse-repeat-action fragment, this time done toward the front of the audience, the sound of squeaking sneakers becomes a soundtrack that leads us to the climax. The content, which was very much the focus in the beginning, is repeated, but it is integrated now into one long sequence. It is exquisite to see

how easily the medium transforms and takes over the message. Like an engine winding down, the sequence slows, with long, long pauses between simple gestures. Finally, Ms. Salamon leaves the stage, cue for the music to come up again.

The program also included *The B Side of Gizselle* (or some of *Gizselle's* garbage), another witty and intelligent solo for Ms. Salamon with a collection of props that combined to become a body double.

18-24 OCT 2002

Gay City NEWS