

REVIEWS • Theatre • Dance

Giszelle

Reviewed by Lisa Jo Sagolla

Presented by and at The Kitchen, 512 W. 19 St., NYC, Oct. 9, 11, 12.

It's usually the choreographer who deserves most of the creative credit for the making of an inspired dance piece. But in the case of "Giszelle"—an engrossing solo dance being given its American premiere at The Kitchen—the performer, **Ezter Salamon**, merits an equal share of the kudos. Though French choreographer **Xavier Le Roy** conceived the work, the choreography was collaboratively created by Le Roy and Salamon, and it is the performer's physical eloquence that lies at the heart of the dance's powerful allure. (Le Roy gives us a clue ahead of time that his work really belongs to the dancer on whom he created it; notice how he spells the title.)

To soaring strains from the familiar Adolphe Adam score, this "Giselle" opens in a blatantly un-balletic fashion, with the stationary image of a woman dressed in jeans and a hot-pink

T-shirt casually lying on her back. Although she eventually rises and performs a ballet variation in silence, we quickly realize that this work is not a reinterpretation of the great Romantic ballet.

Instead, the piece evolves as a series of movement images—historical and contemporary, animalistic and human—that reveal the inherent relationships between such seemingly dissimilar actions as an ape's lumberings, classical ballet, and Travolta's signature "Saturday Night Fever" stances. Salamon takes a few Michael Jackson moonwalk steps, shapes her body into Rodin's "The Thinker," then struts around the stage like a runway model. As the piece progresses, however, the vocabularies become less isolated. Classical *arabesques* appear in the middle of disco sequences. Gorilla postures creep into the sexy supermodel's stroll. An amalgamation of actions emerges that succeeds in breaking down our notions of movement hierarchies. Yet because Salamon's kinesthetic articulation is so clear, it never becomes a blur, but remains a sly montage of sublime quick-shots.