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**Review – *She's gone away***

## **Beats and Beasts**

**Susanna Hood gets intense – but a little more humour would help**

**Kate Pedersen**

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***SHE'S GONE AWAY*** by Susanna Hood, presented by hum at the Theatre Centre (1087 Queen West). See Continuing Listings. \$15-\$20. 416-538-0988. Rating: **NNN**

Dancer and artist Susanna Hood's new project, ***She's Gone Away***, is a strange beast. Equal parts dance, soundscape and spoken word, it defines itself as "a moment of sexual suspension" and was, for a time, known as The Animal Project. But Carnival Of The Animals this is not.

The piece follows a distinctly musical form, allowing Hood's modern lyricism to gain full expression. In an exploration of sexual and erotic themes, she presents us with anthropomorphized types: one prim and vaguely feline, one serpentine, one slothful, one bullish. Each animal trait functions as a leitmotif throughout the production, taking the dominant line for a time before reintegrating with another. Cacophany results, but not chaos. Hood is highly controlled and, in the course of three years' work on this project in the Theatre Centre residency program, has achieved a harmony of sound and movement. Each animal erupts fully formed from her taut physicality, accompanied by moans or music (and sometimes both). Composer/musician **Nilan Perera**'s score features everything from disco to a wheezing squeezebox, while **Lorenzo Savoini**'s rundown living room set looks ravaged by either an earthquake or a Dali disciple. Both of these frame Hood's mental and physical energy in sound and space.

Hood's wide-eyed stare, gnashing teeth and primal sexual stances are strong and specific; occasionally she cracks a little joke, using a teapot as a penis while leering like a construction worker at a Catholic schoolgirl. More moments of levity could round out the production, because the ones that are there now are welcome short breaks in the intensity.