

In the small space of the Edison Theatre on Saturday, January 31, two women at the height of their dance wisdom presented solos and duets so intimate, I almost felt like a voyeur. Canadians both - Gillis lush and Baker lean - these modern dancers demonstrated at least one full spectrum of what magic is possible with a perfectly trained body.

Peggy Baker's restrained, carved look resembled a Giacometti sculpture: her wrists, neck and feet articulated their extended length in unique, riveting angles and poses. Baker's muscular arms and hands looked oversized, like she'd be the first to be recruited for an olympic basketball team. What an introspective mood she created with her quietly energetic work. Each thoughtful stance took the audience with her to a new idea, a new mood dynamically slam dunked. If butoh, Japanese dark soul dance, could have a western cast, if meditation could have a dance form, you'd call on Baker. Her piano accompanist, Andrew Burashko, would be part of the package, onstage and flawless.

Watching Margie Gillis is like rappelling down a redrock cliff face: you've already tested your safety harness and goggles, and slathered on your heavy duty sun screen, but no matter how ready, you'll never be safe. She's another trip, flying into your face like a furious mother cat defending her brood - all soft fur and claws. Gillis' copper hair falls to her knees. She uses it like a prop: a waterfall, a magicians's pointed cap, an umbrella.

Gillis' raw and on-target responses enlarged the music's impact, whether to J.S. Bach's Suite One in G major for cello in *Slipstream*, to Sinead O'Connor's monotone rock dirge in *Torn Roots, Broken Branches*. Gillis gave *Bloom* a passionate pantomime to Joyce's Molly Bloom's famous "Yes!" monologue.

Baker and Gillis danced a lyrical, tender 1986 work, *Vers La Glace*, choreographed by Gillis, her brother - the late Christopher Gillis - and noted Canadian, James Kudelka. Baker's 1993 choreography, *Spatstii* to Brahms opus 117 No.1, ended the concert with an engrossing duet of great delicacy.