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**Review – *She's gone away***

## **Woman beset by sexual hunger**

Susan Walker, Toronto Star

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Call the exorcist. Or maybe not: whatever has taken possession of **Susanna Hood** makes for a riveting, if disturbing and even repelling performance.

We can't say we weren't warned. On the poster outside the theatre, ***She's Gone Away*** is described as "a moment of sexual suspension." It's many moments, actually, a sustained orgasmic outburst in which Hood is inhabited by the spirit of a cat, an ape and a snake. In between bouts of ecstatic humping, she reverts to the persona of a wide-eyed little girl listening outside her parents' bedroom.

With a microphone woven into her hair, Hood, pigtailed in a short brown dress, emerges out of a deep darkness, seated on a chair, playing a concertina that she pulls open as her legs part and she sings about a hot sand beach and a snake rising "higher and higher and higher" on her thighs. The room she inhabits is the architectural equivalent of a disrupted mind: chairs are flung on their sides, wall lamps flicker on and off and large sections of the walls have been ripped open, as if by an earthquake.

Her text takes the shape of a recurring nightmare. She keeps coming back to the story about sitting outside her parents' room and seeing her mother, "eyes wide open."

That's when she is not being possessed by the animals within. "Sometimes I get these dark, charcoal brown feelings," she says in a little-girl voice. Then the cat emerges, or the ape, and she's rubbing her parts against the walls. Or she morphs into something quite human, face down on the floor in a masturbatory display, her groans, augmented by the body mic, seeming to come from two voices.

Off-stage, musician Nilan Perera provides a radically shifting soundscape, including a passage of '70s-style rock appropriate for a stripper act. Only at this juncture does Hood actually dance, a manic go-go dancer having taken over her person.

A china cup and saucer and flowered teapot symbolize the genteel surface of middle-class life shattered by Hood's menacing sexuality. The feeling at the end

is not of catharsis, but of a temporary respite before the demons overtake her again. ***She's Gone Away***

Created and performed by **Susanna Hood**. Until Sunday at The Theatre Centre, 1087 Queen St. W. 416-538-0988, 571503-397051.jpg | **Susanna Hood** is sexually charged in ***She's Gone Away***.