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STAGE

Time Lapse Dance

THURS.-SUN., JUNE 23-26

Jody Sperling's dances spring from scholarship. Known particularly for her reconstructions of fin de siècle pioneer Loie Fuller, Sperling also finds inspiration in vintage circus and music hall entertainments.

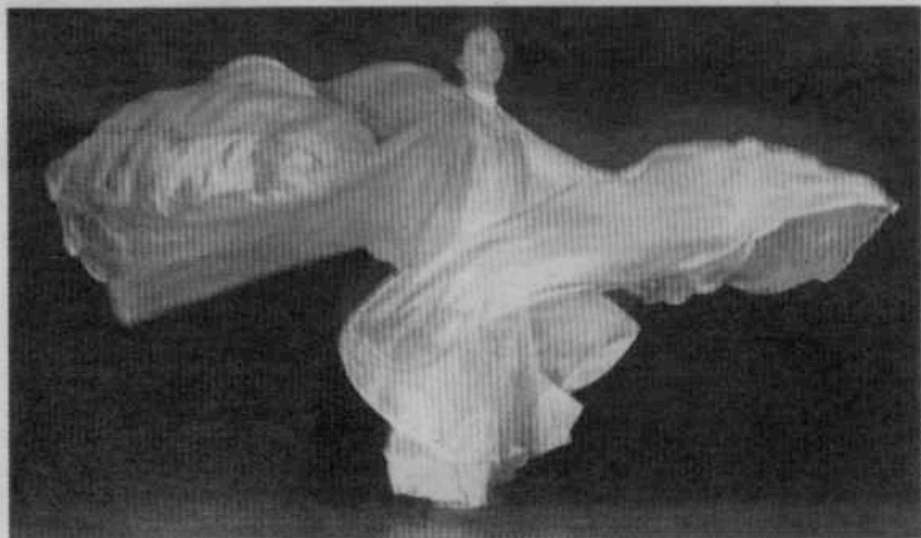
Sperling calls *La Nuit* an imagined Fuller dance. Set to a John Cage piano score from the days when he made music not noise, played live by Jeffrey Middleton, the solo evolves as slowly as the sunrise. Billowing like an Erte lamp come to life, Sperling makes sounds of thunder and all kinds of weather by flapping her wings, with stars shining from under her skirts. On one level you can watch her body as a frilly object in space. You can also occasionally see the person within the object, a serene and lovely woman. Or a saucy one: An unexpected glam ending reminds that Fuller was originally billed as a burlesque act.

In a second solo, *Debussy Soiree*, Sperling spins amid a mass of white yardage like a Sufi or a performer in a 1970's dance by Laura Dean. She might be a mother-of-pearl anemone-butterfly Christmas-tree angel, soothing and ethereal. Again the dance can be read on at least two levels. You don't have to think too much about it and can surrender to its mandala-describing arcs; you don't need to wonder if it means anything. Yet it isn't stupid. Reverent of a literate history and certain Bohemian feminism, the dance can mean something as unique as each watcher's contemplative acumen. Lighting designer David Ferri describes the sound of tinkling piano and illuminates the very air.

In *Cheap Hoops*, hula-hoops eddy the air

around three dancers with four-way hips in a funky-chicken boogaloo. The boozy score of another trio, *Cheapest*, is redolent of a carnival sideshow contortion act. If David Lynch staged clowns at Coney Island, they might act something like this. An ambiguous humor emerges from the dancers' affect, which often seems eerily removed from their preposterous, wince-inducing flexibility. *Henry Street Settlement*, 466 Grand St. (betw. Pitt & Willot Sts.), 212-866-1759; Thurs.-Sat. 8, Sun. 3, \$20.

—Chris Dohse



Pretty in pink: Jody Sperling brings the dance to Henry Street Settlement, Thurs.-Sun., June 23-26

JULIE LEVINGER