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Dance

Hofesh Shechter

Roundhouse, London

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**Sanjoy Roy**
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Edgy and animalistic ... Hofesh Shechter's *In Your Rooms*. Photograph: Tristram Kenton

Last year, a new whiz-kid appeared on the contemporary dance block: Hofesh Shechter. In a unique venture, the Place, South Bank Centre and Sadler's Wells successively presented the same Shechter double bill over the year. Each outing was adapted to the scale of the venue, and earned publicity, plaudits and applause. Shechter suddenly became hot property.

Hofesh Shechter **Uprising/In Your Rooms**

Roundhouse,

London

NW1 8EH

[Venue website](#)

Now Sadler's Wells has chosen the same programme to open their 2009 "off-site" season. Performed at the Roundhouse - best known as a music venue - it features an enlarged cast and band. The introduction sets up the ambience as a dance gig rather than a concert: the musicians, raised high above the stage, warm up the crowd with pounding drums and chords, while lights rake the auditorium through clouds of smoke.

Uprising features seven men, determinedly blokeish in cargo pants and shirts, who tumble headlong into a fast, urgent drama of hunt and flight. Like marauding invaders, they sweep the stage in long, gibbon-armed lopes, shuffle on shoulders and elbows, swoop in circles with aeroplane arms. The middle section quietens, to the sound of rain - the men lean head to head, or kneel alone for respite - but the finale racks up the thunder again.

In Your Rooms, for 17 men and women, shares that mix of ragged energy and tautness, but it also has considerably more slack. The opening is terrific, squares of light flaring to reveal fragmented scenes - a hunched, flinching duo, a cluster of combatants kicking and punching the air. Later sections are sometimes less focused, and the pace certainly sags, though the edgy, animalistic style is always gripping to watch.

Shechter can't, however, overcome one problem at the Roundhouse: his work relies on depth of field and is often close to the floor, so many of the standing audience don't get

good sightlines.

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