

The Herald

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Dance Theatre

**ACT ONE, TRON THEATRE,
GLASGOW**

SHONA CRAVEN

★★★★★

THE three performers of Vincent Dance Theatre's *Test Run* – one dancer, two violinists – shuffle onstage with nervous expressions, a plastic carrier bag and apologies for their lack of preparation. It's daft but perfectly pitched; the kind of thing a director might do playfully to lull the audience into just the right frame of mind to be blown away by what follows. It works.

As dancer Janusz Orlik positions himself and musician Patrycja Kujawska begins to blow into her violin, all signs point to a comic pastiche. Then Matt Howden picks up his violin and as his bow deliberately scrapes the strings, Orlik's limbs begin to

flex. From that moment on *Test Run* is a tremendous fusion of virtuoso musicianship and mesmerising dance. Orlik initially seems to be a marionette controlled by the strings of the instruments, but then the roles switch and he takes physical revenge on his tormentors. The trio's abrupt exit is even more low-key than their entrance, with barely a backward glance at the awe-struck audience.

In contrast, *Aurora Lubos* can't keep her eyes off us, the imagined audience in her balloon-strewn bomb-site of a kitchen. Even when she's playing a sleeping beauty she can't help but sneak a peek, just to check we're still watching. *Look At Me Now, Mummy* is a solo piece about the conflict between maternal and exhibitionist instincts. Its protagonist delights in eliciting laughter and gasps of surprise as her behaviour becomes ever more erratic, but an inevitable descent into melancholy follows, which feels all the more harrowing thanks to our complicity in what has come before.