

Broken Chords

EdinburghGuide.com, 12 November 2005, Barbara Brian

Broken Chords is a powerful piece of dance theatre. It revolves around the turbulence created in a human soul profoundly affected by the break-up of a relationship – “a future that never began”. Like the variety of notes in a musical chord, Broken Chords deals with the variety of emotions – physical and mental – that saturate the senses in the multi faceted state caused by grief. Sadness, anger, manic humour, suicidal tendencies, contemplation – all these emotions are revealed in the production.

At the beginning of the performance dozens of chairs are already arranged in symmetrical rows. A violin and cello are the only props. A solitary figure comes onto the stage and her emotional state is immediately discerned when she clutches the back of a chair for support. Gingerly, as she proceeds along the row in her state of grief, another figure emerges to tenderly offer support and encourage her to pick up the violin. The haunting, piercing lament mirrors her desolation.

Other figures come on stage, initially moving in isolation, immersed in contemplation they occasionally gravitate towards another before continuing their solitary stance. But this sense of controlled order soon descends into chaos as human emotions prevail.

Anger erupts. Chairs are hurled about indiscriminately. Couples start to argue violently. A woman bursts onto the stage wielding a gun and starts to terrorise the troupe into obedience but her dictatorial stance however is gloriously transformed into great humour as she farcically orders them around. Even the subject of suicide is dealt with humorously as the performer Aurora Lubos reduces the audience to a fit of giggles in her failed attempts to end her life.

But although there is much jesting in this production, we are nevertheless taken on an emotional rollercoaster ride. And manic behaviour pervades the performance. Even the

musicians – Patrycja Kujawska on violin, Alex Catona on cello – mirror emotional turmoil as their music fluctuates from beautiful melodies to discordant screeching. With movement and speech Broken Chords pertinently portrays the agonies of a mind unhinged. A provocative piece, it begins and ends with a disconsolate solitary figure, a poignant reminder that despite being supported by loving friends during traumatic times we are, at the end of the day, left to contemplate the pain of separation by ourselves.