

# Famous for 15 Minutes and Other Tricks

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Call me unsubtle but I do love a good stunt, and choreographer Charlotte Vincent is happy to provide stunts by the truckload. Not content to have found, in the striking Polish dancer Patrycja Kujawska, what one might reasonably assume to be the world's only singing and dancing violin virtuoso, she asks the impossible of her, to play a beguiling string melody while turning slow, no handed somersaults. At a stroke the magical imagery Chagall is made flesh before your eyes.

This feat was worthy of a circus fanfare. How much better, though, that Vincent slips it insouciantly into her latest piece as if it's perfectly standard dance practice. Let The Mountains Lead You To Love is an extraordinary work from the outset, inhabiting that awkward fringe of contemporary dance theatre where stylised dialogue and mildly confrontational stage manners play equal partner to music and movement.

Some bits work, others misfire: like all truly experimental work Let The Mountains Lead You To Love is only partly successful. But its best ideas are emotionally bold and physically remarkable, and its six characters unceasingly held my interest. The six chums meet up for old times' sake and hold a party in a wood. We know it's a wood by the stripped bark poles of Richard Lowden's abstract set. But later these same features are made to suggest a nightclub and a school playground. By the end I felt Vincent Dance Theatre could persuade me of almost anything.

Vincent's theme is adolescent love – finding it, losing it, and the difficulties of living with and without it. The notion that nature, music and folk superstition inform our dreams and motivations underpins the show, and upside-down fiddle-playing is only the half of it. Young women in tight cocktail dresses and perilous party heels swoop and flutter like bluebirds, exciting themselves quite as much as the lovers who yearn for them. Women fall for women

(or at least try Sapphic romance for size), men test their feelings for each other and re-examine old loves turned sour, old friendships struggle to accommodate change.

Whether or not this says anything new, the bottom line is that Charlotte Vincent's multi-tasking vision is fresh and engaging, the dialogue tightly effective, and the dance element elastically watchable. I still marvel at the way these performers have learned to launch themselves from each other's necks and knees and cradled palms apparently without gouging flesh. Dancers can work with all manner of handicaps, but kitten heels have to be the cruellest.