

# For Lovers of Live Performance

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Coming to Edinburgh for the first time Vincent dance Theatre's Punch Drunk left the audience buzzing with delight and hoping they'll return soon.

The set suggests the stage and wings of a theatre that is running down. In silence a tall but faded fan dancer, Patrycja Kujawska, tries to find a better way to enter through the gauze white curtains, it's clear she's seen better days. Then a pair of squabbling tiny women appear leaping, scabbling like mice about the stage, one blond, wide eyed and comic, Aurora Lubos the other dark, more muscular and feisty TC Howard.

An enigmatic man, Geir Hytten, observes. Then when he intervenes it's clear he has a abusive nature, hurling Kujawska so that when stripping music starts to be played on the Wurlitzer Kujawska's dancer, through she appears to be in charge of the other dancers their employer possibly, it's clear he has some control of her. As she strips, it's a relief when she finds the courage to stop.

Arriving via one of the circus ropes is a basque wearing aerialist, Lindsey Bucher, her skill of moving suspended in the air balletic and amazing. The movement and characterisation by each of the cast is premiere cru as they dance solos, duos and ensemble pieces. But most breathtaking of all is Janusz Orlik who towards the beginning dances like a female balletic swan, his arms so precise and eloquent. Then later, clad in a singlet and tight subtly flowered pants Orlik dances with immense grace, his long legs and finely crafted movement releasing a wholly convincing female soul.

From Charlotte Vincent's direction and the dancers' devising we find many funny moments-showering in a tin bath, wings falling off ballerina, musical chairs to conventionally recorded Bach and the whole company's ensemble dance routine to Mr Sandman and Avalon on the Wurlitzer. When the dancers go to the more classical techniques the absence

of the normal tutus and tights reveal how much the classical ballet owes to gentleman and woman wanting to see the erotic nature of the human form concealed in the clothing of high culture.

Punch Drunk lasts an hour and forty minutes with no interval and contains within it dance, theatre, beauty, cruelty, superb artistic acrobatics, elements of performance art all served up by a company of artists at the top of their game.