

Let the Mountains Lead You to Love, The Place, London

The Stage, 17 April 2003, Gareth Evans

For Vincent Dance Theatre's tenth performance piece, Charlotte Vincent has gone to the heart of the matter with a spirited study of the many faces of love. The politics of desire have always informed her dance and this 75-minute work is no exception, moving from comic narcissism, aspiring attraction and the urgencies of sex towards the flip sides of loneliness and relationship disillusionment. All within Richard Lowden's striking spare set of slender tree trunks, flanked by racks of neutrally hued clothes.

TC Howard, Iris Heitzinger, Elliot Kay, Janusz Orlik, Patrycja Kujawska and Aurora Lubos pass from childhood games of imagined folk dances and vigorous sketches of consolation or challenge between individuals and the group.

Vincent's pleasurable choreography is fluid and sharp, knocking classical fragments against folk and gestural motifs. The results are given extra resonance by John Avery's atmospheric minimalist score – indeed, too often the action is only moved forward by musical shifts. This more formal trigger highlights the primary weakness of the piece.

Whereas Vincent's strongest work is characterised by examining the tensions of the personal within a social framework, here that larger frame is absent – with the exception of a disturbing, ritualised humiliation sequence, suggesting a latent violence in communal relations. The poetic physicality of her style is absolutely suited to the rough and tumble complexity of our times. It would be a loss to contemporary choreography if she stayed too long out of the fray.