

Punchdrunk, The Place, London

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Rather an over-used name these days, but this Punch Drunk is the one to go for. Created to celebrate Vincent Dance Theatre's 10th birthday, it marries a new-found "don't give a f*ck" irreverence (to quote director Charlotte Vincent in this excellent video-interview) with the technical finesse they're already famous for. On a disused, vaudeville backstage, a group of dancers, stuck somehow in this place, go over old numbers and moves. And before long this becomes a questioning about the process of making "a show" — what is it that pulls these poor over-used souls back in front of the audience? The way a "stupid", old-fashioned dance move can still bring forth bucket-loads of joy is brilliantly demonstrated, and placed as analogous to the more personal issue of how to carry on when either past one's prime or simply exhausted. Ricocheting without mercy between hilarious show-off routines and intense bouts of self-conscious introversion, Punch Drunk flows beautifully but shuns any attempt at linear development. Perfect!