

Vincent Dance Theatre adds humor to heartbreak

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The Pittsburgh Dance Council concluded its 40th season Saturday with British company, Vincent Dance Theatre.

The evening length work, *Broken Chords* began on a somber note, one that accurately reflected the nature of artistic director Charlotte Vincent's "very public" divorce.

The stage was densely filled with wooden chairs and lit by a large chandelier. One had trouble visualizing where the dance would actually take place. In between, over the top of, and in front of the chairs, dancers moved through the stage with gestures of support and simultaneous isolation. Most surprising was when two performers began accompanying the dancers with violin and cello, showing off the incredible multi-talent of the company.

The subdued nature of the piece matched the heaviness of the classical music, at once tugging on the heart strings with its universal theme of love lost. The startling moment came when dancer Luisa Lazzaro cut the music, raised the lights, and demanded into a microphone that the show come to a halt. "In an effort to balance heaviness with humor," said performer Patrycja Kujawska, "interruptions" were choreographed into the piece.

Lazzaro ordered the dancers (at no less than gunpoint) to get rid of the chairs and stand at the front of the stage for what she called the "line up game." The tension created an awkward moment when the audience wasn't certain if they could laugh. But as time went on, laughter ensued. Dancer Aurora Lubos turned suicide into an absurd comedy, puffing on a cigarette in between ludicrous attempts.

Perhaps the most comical moment came when Kip Johnson, deemed the "twenty one year old," whined like a child that the show had become too serious. He attempted to lighten the mood by displaying his talent for basic forms of dance. Not only did he shuffle-ball-change

and jazz slide across the front of the stage; he included his favorite move, the ever classic running man.

The piece ebb and flowed in the way of a dysfunctional family (and I mean that as a compliment), exploiting the complexity and volatility of divorce in all its subtle and not so subtle ways.

Although the dance may not have left the audience cheering on its feet, it certainly did its job evoking emotion. The blending of movement, live music, text and humor proved the wit and smarts of the company. Charlotte Vincent showed the ultimate bravery in leaving her broken heart on the stage. To that I say, major props and a job well done.