

Saturday
Sunday

Dubious sexual alignment

INTERCOURSE. Not a title that beats about the bush *writes Geoffrey West*. The dictionary definition includes: connection by dealings; commerce; communication; communion.

However, immediately we see two naked people sitting either side of a double bed, it is clear that it is intercourse as "coition" which is being dealt with by **Vincent dance theatre** Well, nothing wrong with that. Sex sells. It is, after all, fairly universally indulged in, and most people are fascinated – whether they admit it or not – by scenes of others engaging in it.

However, "fucking" – the term is liberally thrown at the audience – is a subject that would seem to have limited application in terms of varied movement imagery – a pretty vital dance ingredient. Spoken text in dance is often problematical. Is the text there to be "danced out", or does it merely form the basis for improvisational ideas? In *Intercourse*, we are certainly presented with plenty of images of copulation, mostly suggesting a violent intent on the part of the male. Intercourse is depicted in right-on feminist terms, with man the perpetrator of an act of self-empowerment.

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This sort of politicising within dance is extremely hard to bring off, and unlikely to succeed when the connecting thread is this tenuous and obscured. At just under 50 minutes, *Intercourse* hardly grabs the imagination, despite the nudity and suggestions of pornography.

The dance vocabulary is limited, the ideas muddled (and barely in line with current concepts of sexual identity). The two performers seem committed, with some credit accruing from the fact they faced an audience of just nine people, but in the woman/mother and man/child associations, there was a dreadful coyness so common when adults attempt to play children – with just an occasionally rewarding Pietà image.

This is a new Sheffield based company named, presumably and perhaps rather egotistically, after dancer and artistic director Charlotte Vincent. Greg Nash, who was based for a number of years in Scotland, is the movement director, while composer Dean Honer and dancer Harry Theaker are listed as collaborators on the piece.

Co-operative dance is a worthy ideal, allowing different skills to be merged. But what seems to have happened on this occasion, as in so many such projects, is that no-one has sat back and asked what it is an audience might enjoy, and be affected by. For a message to carry – and clearly somewhere amidst the rather flaccid rough and tumble there is intended to be a message, a degree of tension must be established, the piece must evolve and ultimately be resolved. Simple theatre tools that were largely ignored in the construction of this uneven and disjointed work.

□ *vincent dance theatre, St Brides Arts Centre, Edinburgh. Run ended.*