



*VDT's collaboration with Phoenix Dance Theatre: **UNDERWORLD**, commissioned by Cultural Olympiad Leeds, 2012*

COMPANY HISTORY

Vincent Dance Theatre (VDT <http://www.vincentdt.com/>) makes crucial performance for the critical times in which we live.

Artistic Director / Choreographer Charlotte Vincent (<http://www.vincentdt.com/bios/charlotte-vincent/>) and her intergenerational ensemble have been 'moving people and making them think' since 1994, and now distribute work **on stage, on film and online.**

Since 1994, Vincent Dance Theatre has produced over 26 productions (<http://www.vincentdt.com/productions/>), including large ensemble works, smaller duets, trios and solos, video and film installations, interactive digital installations, short films and publications. Company works are conceived, designed and directed by Artistic Director Charlotte Vincent, who also produces the work with the VDT staff team. You can find details of all our past and current work on the VDT website.

Based in Sheffield (Yorkshire) from 1994-2013, Artistic Director Charlotte Vincent relocated the company to Brighton (East Sussex) in 2013, supported by Arts Council England. With a renewal of the Board of Trustees, a new space to work in and a new staff team, (<http://www.vincentdt.com/about-us/the-company/>) this geographical move also marked a strategic and creative shift for the company, from an established 'middle scale' touring company with an associated programme of participation work, to a company working in the heart of the community gathering and assimilating stories and testimonies to weave into the work itself. This new approach transforming raw and challenging issues and individual

experiences into thought-provoking political theatre, that everyone can relate to and that is more representative of the complexity of our times.

Through this approach VDT embeds marginalized voices and integrates non-professional young people into our professional productions. The company inherently mentor young people who devise the work with seasoned professional performers, many of whom go on to pursue careers in the performing arts. Interrogating who we are, and how we live, fosters dialogue, debate and encourages empathy and understanding of 'other'. The work aims to empower everyone involved, affect change and give voice to those whose 'value' is often overlooked, specifically vulnerable, young people and women.

VDT delivers its high-quality work across a wide range of networks and platforms to new audiences, reaching a different demographic outside of the traditional dance/theatre sector, where participants become audience and audience become participants.

VDT's work now reaches a wider and genuinely more diverse audience than conventional 'middle scale touring' ever allowed.

Charlotte Vincent talks about **The Next Four Years**:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14tFGZ0Na3Y>

THE COMPANY

Charlotte Vincent (<http://www.vincentdt.com/bios/charlotte-vincent/>) graduated in English Literature and Drama from Sheffield University in 1989. She co-founded Cut Back Theatre co-operative with 5 other graduates in 1990, making and touring socially engaged and training in physical theatre. In 1992 she moved to Newcastle, employed as a Community Theatre Worker at Theatre Station Blyth in Northumberland, returning to Sheffield to perform with Dance Republic and Side by Side Dance Company. In 1994 she formed Vincent Dance Theatre and, supported by Yorkshire and Humberside Arts and Sheffield City Council, created her inaugural duet, **Intercourse** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/intercourse/>) with Harry Theaker, a dance graduate from Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds. (<http://www.nscd.ac.uk/>)



Intercourse powered through the brutality and deep internal upheaval implicit in sexual possession. Fiercely physical partnering, together with quiet, reflective solo work and pornographic slide projections, Intercourse seized upon the fragile human quest for intimacy and kindness against a backdrop of male ownership, power and deviancy.

'Sheer female strength, challenging the concept of male classical dance, powerful work at the vanguard of physical theatre' **Sheffield Telegraph**

This duet garnered much praise, so, funded by a grant from ACE and a commission from long term partner Yorkshire Dance (<https://yorkshiredance.com/>), Vincent and Theaker created a second duet **Noli Me Tangere** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/noli-me-tangere/>), directed by Vincent and choreographer Gregory Nash.

'Punishing, at times savage choreography...fast, agile, compulsive. Remarkable in its' intensity, dizzying leaps and crashing falls...strong, intelligently conceived...brave self-exploration...' **Yorkshire Post**

These early duets toured the UK and kick-started a career-long reputation for making fearless, new 'physical theatre' that questioned the conventions of dance and gender politics. Following Harry's departure to train as a Buddhist Monk in Scotland, Charlotte grew the company's work in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University Studio Theatre (now Leeds Beckett University <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/>) and Yorkshire Dance, making larger works, with more complex sets, and a growing number of performers on stage. From 1999 to 2003 VDT productions were designed by Richard Lowdon, a founding member of Forced Entertainment (<https://www.forcedentertainment.com/>).

'An extraordinary work from the outset. Charlotte Vincent's multi-tasking vision is fresh and engaging, the dialogue tightly effective, and the dance element elastically watchable' **Independent on Sunday, Let The Mountains Lead You to Love**

Powerhouse female performer TC Howard (<http://www.vincentdt.com/bios/tc-howard/>) worked with VDT from 1997 – 2007, becoming VDT's first Associate Artist from 2003-2007. TC co-directed **Fairy Tale**, (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/fairy-tale/>) VDT's only children's show to date, in collaboration with Vincent.



VDT *Fairy Tale*, Sheffield 2006

During the early years leading the company, Vincent taught and choreographed in the UK, Europe and Asia, making new work with:

Senza Tempo in Barcelona (<http://senzatempo.es/senza-tempo-2/?lang=ca>)

Xida in Linz (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/x-ida-dance-company-austria-club-night/>),

Cloudgate 2 (<https://www.cloudgate.org.tw/en/cg2-about.html>) and

Crossover Dance (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/crossover-dance-company-taiwan-after-the-party/>) in Taipei amongst others.

In 2000 whilst directing /mentoring at the Baltic University of Dance in Gdansk Vincent met striking visual artist/performer Aurora Lubos (<https://culture.pl/en/artist/aurora-lubos>) and multi-skilled performer/musician Patrycja Kujawska (<http://www.vincentdt.com/bios/patrycja-kujawska/>). These meetings were to shift the

company's work and aesthetic forever. Aurora worked with VDT from 2000 – 2015, bringing an alternative, ethereal and emotional presence to the work. Patrycja collaborated from 2001-2015, bringing humour, passion and live musical expertise into the mix, as a skilled violinist.

Whilst teaching and choreographing at Linz Conservatoire in 2002 (<https://www.bruckneruni.at/en/institutes/institute-of-dance-arts-ida/>), Vincent met young Polish dancer Janusz Orlik (<http://www.januszorlik.com>), who has since performed with VDT bringing technical and maverick improvisational skills into the mix. Aurora, Patrycja and Janusz have worked on all VDT's seminal larger productions to date:

Punch Drunk (2004: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/punch-drunk/>),

Broken Chords (2005: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/broken-chords/>),

If We Go On (2009: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/if-we-go-on/>),

Motherland (2012: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/motherland/>) and

Underworld (2015: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/underworld-2015/>)

and on key smaller ones:

Test Run (2006: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/test-run/>) and

Look At Me Now, Mummy (2008/2015: <http://www.vincentdt.com/project/look-at-me-now-mummy-2015/>).

These three multi-talented Polish collaborators have influenced the direction of the company and its work for a decade and a half, and their commitment and contribution to VDT's growth remains unparalleled in the company's history.



Motherland performed live, Peak Performances, NJ, USA, 2014

Vincent met Composer / Cellist / Performer Alex Catona

(<http://www.vincentdt.com/bios/alexandru-catona/>) at an artist exchange at **O Espaço do Tempo** (<http://www.oespacodotempo.pt/en>) in Portugal in 2004 and Alex composed VDT's work from 2005- 2012.

Information on all VDT Collaborators, including Composers, Lighting Designers, Rehearsal Directors, Dramaturg and Production Crew is available: <http://www.vincentdt.com/about-us/the-company/>.

To hear Vincent reflect on and describe the making process and themes of each VDT production, see the Reflections playlist on VDT's **YouTube Channel**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_wWRyuT1Ss&list=PLZwZDyS_uOXr-j7DamnSGCVzrbpsdM1I-&index=1

Alongside making new work, Charlotte Vincent and her ensemble have taught and facilitated dance and performance workshops and residencies in community contexts as diverse as

galleries, football stadiums, swimming pools, prisons and youth centres, dance agencies, art centres in the UK, Europe, America and Asia. See here for information about **VDT SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WORK**: <http://www.vincentdt.com/engagement/>

VDT also teach and lead residencies for students in conservatoires, colleges and universities and have a wide range of **TEACHING AND LEARNING** resources: <http://www.vincentdt.com/teaching-and-learning/>.



VDT SHUT DOWN, performed live in London, 2017

In 2016/17 **Virgin Territory** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/virgin-territory/>) pioneered a new approach to creating and distributing VDT's work **on stage, on film** and **online**. This interdisciplinary, intergenerational production was originally performed on stage to a live audience. The full-length work (1 hour 30mins) was **captured live** and placed online (<https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/education/collections/vincent-dance-theatre/virgin-territory-on-stage>), to be viewed remotely. The material from the production was then reimagined and shot on location to create a **full length multi-screen film installation** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/virgin-territory/>), viewed communally in gallery and theatre spaces), and finally distributed as a **full length split screen production online** (75 mins; viewed remotely <https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/education/collections/vincent-dance-theatre/virgin-territory-film-installation>).

Individual **short films**

(https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZwZDyS_uOXqWxzI6VXH2zqJFzN-PMEPo) from both full length live capture and split screen productions are also screened within workshop or presentation contexts, in community, formal education, dialogue and debate settings. This process has been repeated in 2018/19 with **Virgin Territory's** brother work, **Shut Down** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/shut-down/>).

Due to demand, **Shut Down** also **tours live** to venues across the UK in March / April 2019, alongside **Virgin Territory** and **Shut Down** film installations, touring to alternative venues, thus

creating repertoire of opportunities for audiences to see VDT's work and for promoters to programme it into different contexts for different audiences.

Producing multiple outcomes on stage, on film and online extends the life of each production well beyond conventional live touring, with VDT's work programmed into art galleries, community settings, academic, welfare and social contexts, as well as online platforms (**Digital Theatre** and VDT's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Vincentdt>).

Vincent explains **Virgin Territory Film Installation**:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxzwg1ZG17A>



VDT's **SHUT DOWN** Film Installation, Brighton Festival, 2018

By producing multiple creative outcomes from each new production, VDT's new approach:

- Captures Vincent's body of work, building a crafted, digitized legacy online
- Accommodates the changing way in which people now 'consume' art (through personal devices, online, at home, as well as more conventionally in public theatre and dance venues)
- Makes the most of standstill / reduced ACE funding in the current austere financial climate by creating a layered repertoire, with a variety of contexts in which the work can be accessed seen and distributed
- Contests the cultural norms and narratives within the UK conventional dance touring circuit, preferring instead to gather, represent and embed young, marginalised and minority voices across all aspects of VDT activity
- Ensures those people who take part in our participation programmes and research processes also become audiences for the work (within engagement and participation contexts, for example)
- Accommodates the practical working conditions needed for mature collaborators/parents who have young children (less live touring with all its associated disruptions to home life – <http://www.pipacampaign.com/>)
- Enables VDT's Artistic Director to experiment with challenging themes, non-professional performers and compositional form, in order to expand notions of what socially engaged, 'professional' dance can be.

Vincent's fearless intellect, designer's eye and distinct choreographic voice results in a body of work unique in form, content and aesthetic. Often placing the female experience centre stage, Vincent collaborates across gender, generation, racial and social class to create socially

engaged, enquiry-based productions. Her pioneering work as ambassador for **Gender Equality** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/project/female-practice/>) informs all VDT's artistic and organisational activity, on and off the stage, with the artist's lifelong commitment to women's and children's rights resulting in **social awareness campaigns** such as VDT's Brown Label campaign **#VDTEverydayAction** (<http://www.vincentdt.com/vdteverydayaction/>), to VDT providing supportive conditions for parents returning to work.

For further information about VDT's work visit

www.vincentdt.com

<https://www.facebook.com/vincentdance>

<https://www.instagram.com/vincentdancetheatreuk>

<https://twitter.com/VincentDT>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Vincentdt>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vincentDT>