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REVIEW

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*Jasmin Vardimon Company**'Justitia'**May 2009**London, Peacock*© *Jeffery Taylor**Former dancer, Dance Critic and an Arts feature writer for the Sunday Express. Pub 03 05 2009*

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Charlie (Luke Burrough) and Mimi (YunKrung Song) getting happily together in Hong Kong. In a series of simple sets on designer Merls Hensel's revolving stage, we are introduced to Charlie's mate, Seth (Paul Blackman), TJ (Tim Casson), a cross between a prison officer and a juvenile delinquent, David Nondorf neurotic in drag and Christine Gouzelis as the down to earth typist. Holding the whole piece together is Mafalda Deville as the lawyer and central figure who, though a powerful and expressive dancer, is almost entirely scripted. And this is where the

Choreographer Jasmin Vardimon's take on theatre bridges the gap between so-called benefit dance, state funded courses to keep claimants off the streets, and conventional performances. And judging by the enthusiastic and involved reaction from a theatre packed with 20-somethings last week, Vardimon has hit the youth button square and fair.

To add immediacy to a non dance audience, most of her performers have no or little classical training, turning on its head today's fashion of modern dance makers relying on highly trained bodies to add lustre to often tawdry pretence. Vardimon also mixes dialogue and the written word into the pot, and as the themes of Justitia are sex, violence and guilt, those nagging irritations that keep most of us awake in the early hours, there is something for everyone.

Vardimon appears first as the court stenographer in the sky, a sort of female St Peter totting up our good and the bad bits before opening up the pearly gates - or not. The story starts with



trouble starts. As an actress Deville is just not good enough. Rebecca Lenkiewicz's words are audible but the range of basic technique to deliver them, from drama to information and most difficult of all, humour, is simply lacking in her repertory.



Mafalda Deville, Christine Gouzelis (typing), Tim Casson in *Justitia*  
© Dave Morgan

Deville links a number of scenarios explaining Seth's murder across two acts and though her delivery became monotonous, Johnny Cash singing Bridge Over Troubled Waters as Seth and Mimi viciously fight to the death, was simply a brilliant piece of theatre. But the final scene topped it easily. In a group therapy session Deville confesses to killing a child in a road accident. As her guilt reaches unbearable, the little girl's voice echoes Deville's and tears out all our hearts. That's the magic of theatre at any age.

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