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Dance

**Motionhouse**

★★★★★ Purcell Room, London

**Sanjoy Roy**  
 Tuesday May 31, 2005  
[The Guardian](#)

Perfect, an hour-long piece by Kevin Finnan for Motionhouse Dance Theatre, is ostensibly about time - time passing or pressing, gained or spent. The theme is more the spark for Finnan's choreographic ideas than the subject of the piece itself, however, and it's most clearly suggested in the opening sequence.

The stage is covered with a thick layer of sand, which four dancers variously grasp and sift. A fifth dancer, Helen Parlor, lies in front of Simon Dormon's simple but ingenious set - a metal cube that encases the stage, its front covered with a stretched paper screen on to which is projected a time-lapse film showing trees, commuters, city streets.

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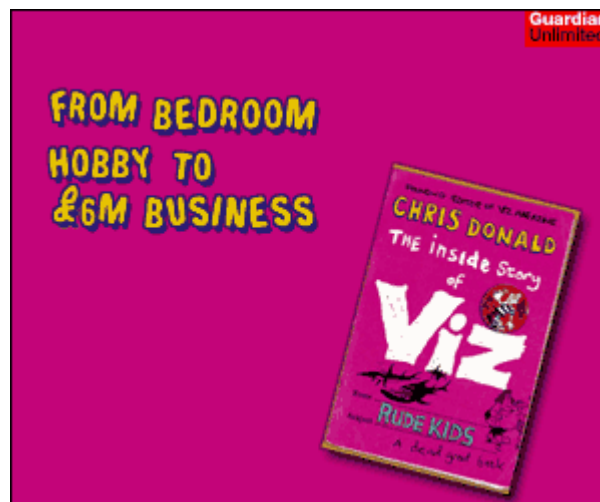
 

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The screen clears and, as Parlor judders into life, she's shadowed by the silhouettes of dancers behind the screen, sliding and shifting behind her like unreliable memories.

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In the following scene, the screen lifts slightly to show only the dancers' bare legs prancing on the sand, like a saucy seaside show. The screen is gradually shredded and scrunched into fistfuls, which the performers plant in the sand and water like a flowerbed. There are hints of fights, courtships and canoodlings.

These sometimes corny theatrical ideas may have little to do with time, but no matter: the best part of this work is not about ideas but about physics and senses. The fleet and fearless dancers launch and dive across the floor, flipping each other skywards or swinging into backwards cartwheels, spraying sand like aftershocks made visible.

In one striking sequence, huge projected hands and fists invade the screen, like forces of physics or fate that seem to scoop, sweep and splat the dancers as they hurl and roll.

In the final scene, they swing and loop across the stage, suspended from long slings. You feel the soar of flight in your chest and the tug of gravity in your gut. Leave aside the quasi-philosophical musings on time and relationships - Perfect works on a visceral level of motion and momentum.

• At the Point, Eastleigh (023-8065 2333), on June 14. Then touring.

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