

Your Doorstep

Weekend

Marguerite Duras' flawless novel about sexual awakening is told through dance in an inventive show, says **Ashley Davies**

MENTION *The Lover* to anyone who's read it and a dreamy, faraway look tends to come over them.

The unforgettable, best-selling novel by celebrated French novelist Marguerite Duras is based on her own sexual awakening as a teenager, told through fragments remembered in her later years.

Now, in a sensual collaboration between the Stellar Quines theatre group, the Scottish Dance Theatre and the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Duras' story is being brought to life with a fresh dose of inventiveness. Much of the action takes place from 1929 when a 15-year-old French girl (played by dancer Amy Hollinshead) catches the

eye of a rich Chinese man more than ten years older than her (Yosuke Kusano). He offers her a lift in his chauffeur-driven car, and what follows is an exploration of youth, love and passion.

There's narration from the girl as an older woman (played by Trainspotting's

Susan Vidler), interspersed with flashbacks depicted largely through dance. The audience is never given the complete story, which heightens the dreamy nature of the piece, reminding us to question the voracity of memory.

Asked about the age gap between the lovers, co-director Jemima Levick (Stellar Quines' artistic director and chief executive) says: 'For us the crucial thing is the girl is in control.'

'I think Marguerite Duras wrote this knowing that it's risqué but she throws herself full force into the headwind and that's what we've got to do.'

Her co-director, Scottish Dance Theatre artistic director Fleur Darkin, is keen to emphasise the girl's

motivations are complex. 'Her family are stuck and this millionaire is a passport to something. It might not work out the way she might hope but we all have to think about the luxury of some of the morality that we have.'

She's a girl who's needing to be calculating, and it is that force that turns her into a writer.'

■ *Tomorrow to Feb 3, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, lyceum.org.uk*

Skin deep: Stars
Amy Hollinshead
and Yosuke Kusano

Embracing The Lover

In rehearsal: Artistic director Fleur Darkin, right, with co-director Jemima Levick

