

Playful new circus at the Orienteatern

Playfulness pervades the whole show, writes Loretto Villalobos.

Imagine a race of android beings from a distant galaxy adjusting the coordinates in their mother ship to our solar system, to our planet, to a stage in southern Stockholm. Then imagine them taking shape as women, or rather gynoides, robot humans imitating women, with the task of exploring possibilities and limitations of bodies in the physical prerequisites prevailing on Tellus. Such is the basic touch of Gynoïdes, a circus performance created by Marie-Andrée Robitaille



Contorsionist Manda Rydman in Gynoïdes. Picture: Einar Kling-Odenrants

The first half of the show is strongly concentrated on a search for the positions of the bodies, strictly physically but also to a certain extent based upon Robitaille's explicitly feminist vision. The artists establish themselves on stage accompanied by different artificial sounds from, among other things, an old modem and the Pacman game, and soon Sophie Duncan breaks out in a dancing number. Contortionist Manda Rydman creates bodily centers in the most unexpected ways, and Sarah Lett makes fun of gravity in her textile acrobatics number. Niclas Lindgren's suggestive soundscape is made even more lucid by Anna-Maria Hefele on harp and hurdy-gurdy; her overtone singing creates still another landscape which according to our physical laws should be simply impossible. Sade Kamppila executes an acrobatic dance number to the sounds of her own breathing and playful amplified cries overlapping in an endless loop. All the artists display enormous virtuosity in a wide variety of disciplines. In the interval numbers, the ensemble plays with gender stereotypes, puts them on and then quickly dispose of them.

Playfulness pervades the whole show, with a collective skipping-rope number as a humouristic peak. However, the basic, academically post-humanist themes decrease during the course of the performance. We're still seeing circus, human bodies deprived of all cultural gender attributes by wearing skin coloured tights, but the show is conventionally based on single numbers, and the main thread is severed. This is not a failure per se, not being able to stick to the theoretical angle through the whole show, as it still is an incredibly beautifully executed circus performance, with lots of humour and multi-dimensional esthetics stimulating the imagination and all the senses. As a feministic focused political project, it's also successful, in a norm-creative rather than norm-critical spirit, creating an including space of its own.

Loretto Villalobos

<http://www.unt.se/kultur-noje/scen/lekfull-nycirkus-pa-orionteatern-4046932.aspx>



Artist on Picture: Laura Lippert Photographer: Einar Kling Odencrants