**« fruits of labor » by Miet Warlop**

This time, we can see her face. And she bewitches with a rocking voice. In her most recent production “Fruits of Labor”, which premiered in Germany at Hamburg’s “Internationalen Sommerfestival”, Miet Warlop switches from the anarchically colourful splatter show to the dark Hard-Rock ambience. In her last successful piece “Mystery Magnet” curious faceless beings were concealed under enormous floppy wigs, now the Belgian performance artist is at the microphone dressed in a tight-fitting black bodysuit smiling into the footlights, surrounded by four cool guys who’ve found themselves playing in a band together specifically for this piece. Here, they shake their real hair while their hands grip the guitar strings tightly or perform ecstatic drum rolls. Several more drum kits grace the stage. In their midst, a white polystyrene block that dominates the room like a gargantuan monolith. The room mutates from dance stage to martyr’s cross as soon as the guitarist is attached to the pegs he’d set out before. Rockband is still performing. Especially given someone as accurate and at the same time subtly ironic as Miet Warlop who understands how to play clichés: the postures, the slightly sluggish movements, the grip on the instrument. The guitar becomes a wide-ranging gun, targeting the audience, when the trigger is pulled, the shooter himself goes down. The air is pregnant with the odour of sage. A Dervish in white robes appears. Each subsequent act is like a new beginning, a kind of initiation ritual, one that alternates between quest and thesis. Water, fire, air – here, too, the artist excites the magic of the elements. A lot is smoked. At some point, there is the nauseating stench of sulphur. A smell right out of hell. Mercilessly tumultuous sound and dazzling strobe lights attack the senses. It becomes increasingly clear that the, as it were, mythically charged rock concert serves first and foremost as a slide for Warlop’s metamorphosis. The colours mix on the black and white that initially establishes the scenery. The pictorial character emerges. Brightly-coloured cable harnesses are laid out as marked. Rain is falling from the heavens above the stage, the drops beat down on the drum set. The mechanised warfare is also inevitable this time. However, there are no theatrical tricks. Everything is handmade, visual for the audience. The tanker, from which water is sprayed and sucked back again, is wheeled in. At the technical console, the spinning wheels of a bicycle generate light effects. Art creation is turned into a manual act. This constitutes both the charm and the substance of the performance and in the meantime gives cult status, at least judging from the applause in Hamburg, to Miet Warlop.

Irmela Kästner (Tanz, October 2016)

translated by Isobel Mackie