

Two young theatre directors enchant during the PLATEAUX-Festival

By Sylvia Staude

In theatre many things can happen. It seems however very unlikely that, during a show poisonous substances can be eliminated: Still, the announcement "This performance is about to eliminate toxins" is made by a pleasant female voice coming from two small white loudspeakers. These are standing on an otherwise completely empty stage in Frankfurt's Mousonturm. Only the light comes and goes slowly. Of all the subjects that the voice announces like a litany in its sentences all beginning with "This performance is about to ...", and which could quite well have their place in a Performance, nothing, absolutely nothing materializes during the first 30 minutes: not the "living body" promised quite from the outset, nor any other "story". And a message? Maybe...

David Weber-Krebs' *This Performance* shows how theatre can arise, deceive and finally meet expectations. *This Performance* is a very clever and minimalistic production supported by Amsterdam's Gasthuis and by Mousonturm during the PLATEAUX festival for young Theatre Directors, Jennifer Minetti being the actor.

Since her name was mentioned in the program, one could have thought that something would follow the voice on the tape, something more than the very discreet action which started after 15 minutes or so on the stage: water leaks on the floor, becomes a puddle, some drops appear on the right hand wall, a glitter of water on the left (installation: Benoît Goupy): "This performance is about to sweat", the voice says at that moment. A performance that sweats, why not?

Finally, our antennae of perception are tuned to a point (unless one has fallen asleep), that Minetti's appearance on stage becomes a reevent. And first of all she stands still, for long minutes, not even blinking with her eyes.

Thereupon "This Performance" demonstrates how scarce theatre signals can be in order to make the audience experience tension or even a rudimentary action: Minetti dances a bit, jumps a bit, swings her arms a bit, pulls faces; then she stands still again, her face against the wall. No word has been said. Finally she pulls her sweater over her head. Lights fade in and vanish. That was it.

This short appearance was mainly a challenge for the great old actress to demonstrate her powerful presence.

(...)

This double-bill (with Kate McIntosh's *All Natural*) was the mid-term and at the same time the first highlight of the PLATEAUX-Festival which gives young theatre directors the opportunity to stage their productions.(...)