

# The Peeping Tom dance company is intriguingly original in *A louer*

## A question of abandonment

At one time they were a small circle that bumped into each other almost by chance in a production by Alain Platel. Now, ten years later, Peeping Tom, the company started by Gabriela Carrizo and Franck Chartier, is known all over the world for its refreshing dance productions in an utterly unique style. The latest is *A louer*, made as a coproduction with the KVS. An intriguing show.

The setting most resembles the red room, scene of action for the splendid dwarf in *Twin Peaks*: endless red velvet curtains, a floor in a geometric pattern, a couple of lamps and armchairs. An odd mixture of creepy cosiness and an ominous sort of isolation from the world. There is a piano too, and when the curtains open one suddenly imagines oneself in a stately home.

Anyone expecting a lively dance show with numerous displays of virtuosity will find no satisfaction here. *A louer* is the dream you expect to have when you see the set. With recurring themes and images, with a slowed rhythm, with an aberrant logic, and, if so desired, this nightmare even has a basis in interpretable traumas, though that might just be me.

Whatever story I might make up for this performance, it could always be countered by another. This is a unique sort of world that you get a brief glimpse into and think what you like of. I'll try to give you some idea anyway: there is in any case the mezzo-soprano Eurudike De Beul. A woman who lives for her art, which becomes painful when her art no longer wants her. She pays too little attention to her husband and son, who try not to let it hurt too much. There is the lady of the house, her butler and his lookalike. They run around with coffee and are constantly restraining themselves. And then there's a bunch of other people too. Sometimes the admirers of the moment who run after the singing star, then a nondescript crowd crawling round like cockroaches, hiding and then popping out again. And of course we see armchairs that lead a life of their own. What did you expect?

A couple of times someone says it's time to begin, but then nothing begins at all. It's more a matter of images and atmospheres. From witty to oppressive, from dramatic to still. The scant dance movements are repetitive (that juggling with elastic legs that shoot in all directions is marvellous). The music ranges from classical through contemporary to the verge of kitsch and beyond.

This *A louer* is a question of abandoning yourself. To Peeping Tom's imagination. To a rhythm that some might venture to call sluggish, but which could just as easily be called compelling: 'we, the makers, need this slowness to get you into the right mood'. Those who can manage to abandon themselves will have quite an experience. It's a trip you don't easily get over. A vision of loneliness and fear, of ego and the lack of one, of impotence and alienation. For me, at least. You will probably see something else in it.

In any case, Peeping Tom proves once again that it occupies a unique place in the dance landscape. And yes, you either love it or hate it. But the same can be said of a lot of interesting art.

De Morgen, 18.10.2011

Griet Op de Beeck



The setting for *A louer*. Red velvet curtains, a couple of lamps and armchairs: reminiscent of the red room in *Twin Peaks*.