

(translation)

Choreography for a Goddess

The Mannheim Eintanzhaus and Didier Théron manage an exciting collaboration - just to be seen again in the current piece "Atalantes".

A drum kit on the right edge of the back stage is lit red from above. Two benches on each side of the stage are also bathed in glowing light. Only the background shows a relaxed blue, a heavenly contrast to the black dance floor as a playing field. Joël Allouche sets the first signs in Atalantes. It is the sound of his blows on wood, fur and metal, which then adjust to the rhythm and call the dance to the plan. At first only two dancers, both in simple black coats and dark socks on the foot. The face and neck, hands, knees and calves of the two are uncovered and set their own contrast field to the entire arrangement in the light.

Like playing figures, the duo moves side by side in a simple, expansive step movement on a fictitious line in space. Soon one changes direction by a turn of the body, then stands parallel to the other, while both maintain their simple step sequence. The duo continues to move, following a geometry of space, until the arms lying against the body release themselves from their rigidity to short dramatic gestures. In addition, the musician strikes a multi-layered rhythm that generates like a strong life drive.

Breaking out of synchronous patterns

Didier Théron and his internationally dancing company are based in Montpellier in southern France. Since the premiere of his piece "Resurrection" in 2019, the Mannheim Eintanzhaus has been maintaining a productive cooperation with the choreographer. During the pandemic 2020/21, the video project "The Mannheim Piece" was created, which digitally connected dancers from Europe to rehearsals. Théron has developed Atalantes, a piece for six dancers dedicated to the goddess Atalante from Greek mythology. She is a strong outsider with excellent hunting and fighting skills. In vase paintings she appears as an athlete, but also in the typical dress for acrobatics and dancers. Théron dedicates to this figure a dance rich in accuracy and skill of athletic endurance, paired with the jazzy sound and the fiery beat of Allouche.

Soon, the duo will be joined by four other dancers in the same outfit, who in the 60-minute piece convey the audience's amazement at the art of brave loners. In the finest transitions, the six actresses soon determine the space as a group in step, soon isolated to the duo, while the others persist on the benches. The simple steps resulted in highly complex choreographic figures. And out of the synchronously danced patterns, a performer always leaves, breaks through the familiar vocabulary and shows something new.

Nora Abdel Rahman