

Dampfzentrale Turbinensaal

SA 14.5. | 19:00

SO 15.5. | 20:00

Stammtisch | SA 14.5. | 21:30

Lies Pauwels / HETPALEIS (Antwerpen)

Het Hamiltoncomplex

Der Hamilton-Komplex

Mit: Anne Coopman, Luna De Boos, Bruce Eelen, Zita Fransen, Lies Genné, Robine Goedheid, Liesbeth Houtain, Julia Krekels, Aline Moponami, Ans Schoepen, Emma Van Broeckhoven, Mona Van den Bossche, Lisa Van den Houte, Stefan Gota

Regie: Lies Pauwels

Bühne: Chloe Lamford

Kostüm: Johanna Trudzinski

Choreografie: Lisi Estaras

Licht & Inspizienz: Barbara De Wit

Technik: Fati Ben Azouz

Ton: Zoran Vyncke

Ankleiderinnen: Hilde Mertens, Veerle Segers

Produktionsleitung: Erik Moonen

Sprache: Flämisch und Englisch mit deutschen Übertiteln

Dauer: 1h 40min

Auf der Bühne agieren dreizehn 13-jährige Mädchen und ein Bodybuilder. Aber wer sind diese jungen Mädchen? Manchmal sind sie alle gleich, manchmal sind sie einfach sich selbst. Schamlos kopieren und zitieren sie die Vergangenheit und die Gegenwart und verunsichern das Publikum dabei ganz schön. Nichts ist, wie es scheint, in dieser ebenso physischen wie philosophischen Produktion über die Momente im Leben, wo die Dinge ins Wanken kommen. Und wackelig wird auch unsere Ansicht darüber, wer in einer Kinder- Erwachsenen-Konstellation eigentlich die Macht hat. Diese Mädchen haben ihre Wirkung ziemlich im Griff und ziehen als manipulierende Meisterinnen der Verwandlungskunst stets dasjenige Register, das ihnen gerade am meisten bringt. Frech, liebenswürdig und rührend werden hier Dinge vermischt, die wir im Alltag lieber nicht so verwoben sehen.

HETPALEIS ist das grösste Kinder- und Jugendtheater Belgiens. Neben der Kreation von Eigenproduktionen und dem Zeigen von Gastspielen setzt sich das Theater dafür ein, dass alle Kinder Zugang zu Kultur erhalten. **Lies Pauwels** arbeitete oft mit Alain Platel und Victoria (heute: Campo). Seit 2001 arbeitet sie hauptsächlich an eigenen Kreationen. 2005 war ihre Inszenierung *White Star* bei AUA zu sehen, ein Stück, das vielen Zuschauer*innen in Erinnerung blieb.

Einfach gesagt

13 Mädchen und ein erwachsener Mann stellen dar, wie gewandt heutige Kinder mit verschiedenen Rollen umgehen. Sie überraschen uns mit grossartigem Spielen und Tanzen.

ANKÜNDIGUNG DER GRUPPE

The Hamilton Complex is a performance by 13 thirteen-year-old girls and a bodybuilder. But who are these thirteen-year-old girls? Sometimes they all look alike, sometimes they're just themselves. They quote, copy, and shamelessly confuse past and present. They pull the rug of certainty right out from under your feet. Nothing is what it seems. The Hamilton Complex promises to be a physical, visual but also philosophical production about those moments in life when things begin to change. But can a turning point also determine your identity? In The Hamilton Complex, fantasy and reality, past and present, thoughts and expressions, imitation and heroism merge into each other, sometimes smoothly, sometimes cheekily.

ÜBER HETPALEIS

HETPALEIS is a theatre for children, young people and performing artists in the heart of Antwerp. It is the largest theatre for children and young people in Benelux. HETPALEIS has two theatre venues: the main theatre has 540 seats, and the smaller theatre seats 100 spectators. It also has rehearsal rooms and runs a broad range of educational workshops. HETPALEIS produces, creates and presents high-quality theatre for all ages.

HETPALEIS creates plays, dance performances, music theatre and everything in between. It has a dual focus on new works and on the classics of the theatre's repertoire. HETPALEIS aims to make high-quality contemporary performing arts accessible to a broad and diverse audience. To that end, it works with the most promising as well as the most renowned performing artists from Flanders, the Netherlands and beyond.

As well as being a children's theatre, HETPALEIS is also an organisation which advocates for the right of every child to have access to cultural experiences. All of its activities stem from the conviction that a favourable artistic environment for children and young people is crucial. With its rich complexity and diversity, the city of Antwerp is an important source of inspiration for the artistic activities. In addition to creating, performing and touring with its own productions, HETPALEIS also offers elaborate educational activities. It organises school productions, providing customised introductory sessions, and also runs a variety of workshops for all age groups.

<http://www.hetpaleis.be>

ÜBER LIES PAUWELS

Lies Pauwels (° 1968, Ghent) is both director and actress.

She worked closely with Alain Platel and Arne Sierens, and was featured in the trilogy they made together for Victoria: 'Mother and Child', 'Bernadetje' and 'All Indian'. She acted over the years even in many other Victoria-productions (eg WYSIWYG, üBUNG, Puss Puss Puss, Aalst. A woman who has reached the horizon), and performances of various artists and groups such as the Enthusiasts, Stella Den Haag, Tg STAN, Theatre Klara (CH), Toneelhuis, Dood Paard ... She worked with among others Johan Dehollander, Eric De Volder, Peter vanden Eede, Tom Van Dyck, Frank van Passel, Pol Heyvaert. She worked for productions with writers like Christophe Vekeman, Brusselmans Herman, Paul Mennes, Kamagurka, Pascale Platel, Pjeroo Robjee, Rob de Graaf, Dimitri Verhulst, Finally she starred in films such Josse De Pauw, Dominique Deruddere and Felix Van Groeningen, and she did television work.

Since 2001, Lies Pauwels mainly focused on creation. Together with a group of friends, she created her directorial debut in Victoria Club Astrid (2001), which immediately caught on internationally. A final international breakthrough came with her second performance, White Star (2004), who in 2005 was furthermore awarded the prize for best presentation at the Contact Festival in Torun (P). In 2007, Lies Pauwels at the question from Manchester International Festival and Contact Theatre in Manchester a performance casting and directing. This resulted in Reasons For all the wrong that went on tour through Europe and was also invited by the Singapore Arts Festival.

Lies Pauwels works for all her performances significantly with improvisations, albeit very controlled improvisations:

Meanwhile Lies Pauwels did a lot coach work (eg for the dance of Latrinite) and gave several workshops (eg Kulturhuset Stockholm, Rote Fabrik Zürich, Espace des Arts Chalon-sur-Saone, Dublin). For some time, she also taught at the RITS. In early 2010 directed Lies Pauwels in Torun in Poland the self-created presentation Caritas, two minutes of silence. (Caritas I dwie minty czisy) In 2011 she plays as an actress in Freetown by the Dutch company Dead Horse and won the Columbina (prize for best instrumental role) 2011 This show played recently in NY. In 2011 she directs at the request of the National Theatre of Scotland for the first time an existing text Knives in Hens by David Harrower. In 2012 she was again asked by the National Theatre of Scotland to make My Shrinking life to make. A play based on the experiences of Alison Peebles as MS patient. Domestically made them in the same year Laisse tomber for the KIP.

"Lies Pauwels can invest. She gives herself totally - with much trepidation, she wants no gratuitous things - continuously assessed against its sense of "is that correct?" But with a very high risk factor.

<http://www.sontag.be>

Pressematerial (Fotos in druckfähiger Auflösung und Pressedossiers zu den einzelnen Produktionen) stehen auf <http://auawirleben.ch/de/presse> für Sie zum Herunterladen bereit.

Für weitere Auskünfte, Unterlagen zu den Produktionen, Bild- und eventuell Videomaterial wenden Sie sich bitte an +41 (0) 31 318 62 16 resp. nicollette.kretz@auawirleben.ch. Wir stehen gerne zu Ihrer Verfügung. Spezielle Wünsche wie Interviews oder Porträts melden Sie bitte frühzeitig an.

PRESSE

DE STANDAARD, 16 SEPTEMBER 2015

Thirteen pubescent girls and one bodybuilder

By Charlotte De Somviele

After closing last season with a pearl from Lucas Vandervorst, youth theatre Het Paleis has opened its new season with a cracker of a play. With thirteen girls, all thirteen years old, producer Lies Pauwels has created a moving depiction of growing up. Nobody would want to relive puberty. The body and mind are shooting off in all directions, and it's tough to find your place in a contradictory world. Pauwels describes these dynamics in all their fullness. Her rich collage of images, text, song and dance is filled with emotionality. The music in particular – from Joan Baez to Les Choristes – tugs at the heartstrings.

But The Hamilton Complex isn't for pussies, and Pauwels peppers her nostalgic fantasy with juicy irony and social criticism. As sullen little red riding hoods or virginal nymphs, 'Charity', 'Destiny' and 'Eternity' play on their nascent sexuality. The muscle-bound adult on the stage seems a bit uncomfortable: he can look but not touch. His relationship with the girls is multi-faceted: some he tries to tame, while they playfully swing their skirts, others he invites to dance, like a loving father. Through this man the group of girls rediscover themselves, not only as children, but also as budding women, as humans, as indignant citizens. Because in the background of all this colourful fancy dress and these stirring songs, an unsettling reality can be glimpsed: the war in Syria, child marriages and paedophile scandals.

It raises the question of how and in what complex world we are letting these children grow up. Can they still follow their own time? The freedom with which these resilient adolescents fight back against the expectations of adults and the manipulative ideals of the media is a powerful fist. The Hamilton Complex is one of those rare productions which speaks entirely for itself.

THEATERKRANT.NL, Viewed on 29 August 2015

An encounter somewhere between utopia and dystopia

By Evelyne Coussens

It's a rare thing to find a play that doesn't necessarily want to tell a story, but which fully embodies everything it says. A play without a message; instead of showing us the meaning, it simply 'is'. This is the production Director Lies Pauwels has created for HETPALEIS, the Antwerp theatre for children and young people. In The Hamilton Complex thirteen thirteen-year-old girls abandon the expectations of society to exhibit themselves so that, in some breathtakingly beautiful moments, they can just be.

When they decide to say something to the audience they're serious about it, and so they should be. All the same, the setting is light and girlish: the décor is like something out of the Sound of Music, full of kitsch false columns, with the most striking feature being a musical stave made of balloons, which rises like a rainbow in the background – think Kids' Academy, or a junior version of Stars In Their Eyes. But the determination with which the thirteen girls march across the stage in their high heels and the penetrating and direct gazes with which they assess the room express great seriousness. It is not the seriousness of taking themselves seriously, because in The Hamilton Complex irony is applied to almost everything, but the seriousness that goes with the act of speaking: they're not standing up there for nothing, they have something to say and they want you to pay attention, not just respond with 'oohs' and 'aahs' like their families. They demand to be taken seriously. The power of their number, their powerful collective charisma and the multi-voiced singing with which they open the production force this connection, from the very first moment.

The stakes of The Hamilton Complex are evident from the names with which the girls keep introducing themselves, in high squeaky American voices: 'Hi, I'm Gift, I'm Prudence, I'm Charity, Precious, Destiny, Faith ...' These aren't names, they're promises, burdens placed by naive parents on their daughters' shoulders, in the hope that they will grow to embody their names. The Hamilton Complex goes beyond this mirror of expectations, this gap between what a girl is and what she is supposed to be, and therefore also sometimes what she is forced to be. The production is a succession of loosely-connected scenes, which either magnify the utopian adult view of thirteen-year-olds through images, music and dance – as in a ridiculous ballet of innocent girls with little pink yapping dogs – or which present a dystopia, in the form of thirteen teenage girls with pregnant tummies.

The girls themselves cheerfully drag the adult audience from one image to the next. Now they're screaming hysterically for Matteo Simoni, now they're provocatively flashing their knickers. They play with the irony of prim pleated skirts and socks pulled up high, then fire a dark Beckettian volley of words at the audience, as if they had torn their blackest thoughts from their diaries and the scraps of paper have joined together to spit out: "Piss off". These are Arcadian nymphs, dazzling air hostesses and furious rebels all at the same time. In between these exaggerations and spectres are the most beautiful scenes: the ones in which they're not acting, but are just there on the stage.

Fear is the opposite of freedom. In the immature dealings of the adult world with adolescent girls, the symptoms of a society sick with fear accumulate, and that fear is eagerly transferred to our daughters. There is the extreme focus on safety and protection, ironically inverted in the opening scene, in which the girls are air hostesses, demonstrating the safety features of the theatre – they are ensuring our safety. There is the fear of an uninhibited, drifting life, which must be controlled by a neo-liberal ethic of individual responsibility. There is the new prudery, in particular around the bodies of young children.

The only adult on the stage, a male bodybuilder (Stefan Gota), has to deal with this repeatedly. He is unable to control the provocative behaviour of the shrieking bodies. They challenge him, then with their pointe shoes on they leap and jauntily trip out of his reach. Thirteen-year-old girls: there's nothing you can do about them, because – as an adult, as a man – there's nothing you're allowed to do. These girls know it; they are fully aware of their power and their inviolability. They eagerly play on their sensuality. Some of the fathers in the theatre may need to take a moment to digest this. But

why do we really prefer to see these children as weak and fragile rather than strong and full of confidence?

The best part is perhaps the way in which The Hamilton Complex counters the fear of “the other”, in large part through the presence of “Queen” (Robine Goedheid), a girl with a physical and intellectual disability. She needs the support of two other girls when she walks, and sometimes pulls herself across the stage on her bottom. Occasionally she emits incoherent sounds, but the fantastic thing is that absolutely nothing happens. Queen is there, just as the other twelve girls are there: she is an obvious presence. There is no spotlight on her, and no story about inclusion. Her duet with Stefan Gota is astonishingly beautiful, not because it’s a disabled girl performing, but because of the quality of the dance (by choreographer Lisi Estaras). Queen is inclusive, like everything in this production she seems to have grown organically, to have sprung to life in a moment, instead of being dreamt up, worked out and rehearsed in advance.

Of course that wasn’t the case, as our common sense tells us, but it is to the credit of Lies Pauwels that she keeps her production free any ostentatious need to prove itself. In his writings, Flemish art philosopher Frank Vande Veire often complained about art that points at itself with a great big finger and says: “Look how arty I am.” Pauwels does the complete opposite. She gets rid of any desire to please. What’s left is a pure encounter between performers and the audience – a risky undertaking for any performer, but particularly when you’re only thirteen. Pauwels has clearly inspired her girls with the utmost respect and confidence, and with an enviable, untamed sense of freedom.

Anyone who manages to get thirteen children to perform on stage while avoiding the obvious pitfalls of overacting, sentiment and gratuitous cuteness, must come from a good background. And Lies Pauwels does. Largely developed in the nineties and the early years of the new millennium in a typical Ghent context – rubbing shoulders with influential figures like Arne Sierens and Alain Platel – her idiom is a mix of visual arts, theatre, music and dance, which has evolved into a fragmented dramaturgy, frequently infused with the raw undertones of a snigger. Pauwels has scant regard for linear narratives. She prefers to paint with a play – the painting is her play. Her images are unsettling and multilayered.

In The Hamilton Complex, at one point the naked bodybuilder is surrounded by thirteen little red riding hoods, with the red hoods hanging down in a creepy way – an image that simultaneously evokes innocence and perversion. Twelve red riding hoods disappear and one remains – the smallest girl. She is lifted by that massive man like an object; he can hold her on one hand. The duet which unfolds between the two seems to have been set up casually, as if it was completely unintentional, as if it wasn’t a dance, but a tender encounter between two people.

And in the end, that’s what it’s all about: you see people, in their actual and metaphorical nakedness – it’s as simple as that. Whether the people are thirteen or 83 doesn’t really matter. They are ageless: they are people, and they are free. To be able to see and take part in that is an achingly beautiful experience.

DE VOLKSKRANT, 25 September 2015

Het Hamiltoncomplex: brutal, uncertain and beautiful

by Vincent Kouters

Thirteen thirteen-year-old girls with raging hormones are given a stage upon which they can be themselves: brutal, uncertain and beautiful. The result is a festive collage of a show, and nothing more and nothing less than that.

There are thirteen thirteen-year-old girls on the stage, all exhibiting striking physical differences. They sing a song in French then lift up their dresses – provoking the audience with their underwear. And when they see a photograph of Flemish actor and teen idol Matteo Simoni they descend into hysterical screaming for minutes.

They are on the stage because actor and director Lies Pauwels wished to create a show with and about thirteen girls who were thirteen years old. Pauwels says that she wanted to use the performance to gain an understanding of the current complex era. And when one considers complex and abrupt changes, a teenage girl of thirteen is a perfect example.

CHEERFUL REBELLION

It's not that you'll understand the present age by watching Het Hamiltoncomplex, but it is a festive collage of a show, full of cheerful rebellion and the occasional middle finger cocked at the adults in the audience. In self-contained scenes Pauwels has the girls tell horror stories, dance to Stromae and flirt with their budding sexuality. She uses them to nimbly play with patterns of expectations and crushes persistent romantic ideas of youthful innocence. The girls have names such as Chastity, Faith, Prudence, Gift and Queen, symbolising the great expectations that hopeful parents burden them with.

In the midst of all these raging hormones there is a man, Stefan Gota – a dancer with the body of a bodybuilder. At one moment he is a monument of calm and authority, and the next moment he is a vain clown who is ignored totally by the girls. Pauwels gives her girls a stage upon which they can show the audience who they are: brutal, uncertain, beautiful and – especially – themselves.