

English Translation of Klassekampen review of PROUD CLOUD by IdaLou Larsen

"Proud Cloud" is an innovative and captivating international experience.

When you walk down the steep stairs of Grusomhetens Teater's venue, you never know what's going to meet you down there. Only one thing is certain: Lars Øyno will always somehow grasp the main ideas of Antonin Artaud. In 1926 the French theater innovator created the term "Theater of Cruelty", a theater that would receive "all that the human mind is dark, buried and unexplained to be defined as a kind of material projection". And the almost 25 years Grusomhetens Teater has existed, Lars Øyno has undoubtedly extended my concept of performing arts, plus he has given me a number of fascinating and different experiences.

And so does he this time. If I understand this correctly "Proud Cloud" is not solely Lars Øyno's works, but a collaboration between Grusomhetens Teater and the German/English Hopscotch Ensemble consisting of six musicians. There are also several other exciting international artists in the show. In the program Lars Øyno is referred as "instant director" and it is as an instant leader he wanders around among the actors and darkens the scene as a sign of a new shift within the story?

It is never easy to penetrate Lars Øyno's universe, but this time it does not degrade the experience, as it sometimes has in the past. As I experience "Proud Cloud" it is the story of two journeys: In one of the journeys an English mother takes the train out to a strange world with two teenage daughters and a male companion. The four dance, eat at a restaurant and enjoy life. Abruptly this journey ends, and we enter into an absurd life-travel where one witty and slightly burlesque scene follows another. But right from the opening image, the black-clad Japanese Hisaka Horikawa, poetic and minimalist, wanders across the stage in an expressive dance performance - an omniscient symbol of death and inevitable sorrow? At first she is accompanied by a totally unmusical trumpet solo performed by Axel Dörner, but soon all the instruments, which until now have been scattered all over the stage, are being used zealously. And thus the music starts and the instruments become part of the show.

Music has always a part in Øyno's theatrical universe, but here it does not just accompany and emphasize what happens, but is an important part of the performance itself. Not least thanks to the strong efforts of the free jazz cellist and composer Tristan Honsinger who has been an active co-creator of "Proud Cloud". For he himself has said, "it's almost necessary for me to use stories and texts when I compose." And as he enters the stage wearing a loose-fitting pink dress, it confirms that he is not only an outstanding musician, but also an accomplished slapstick comedian.

That said, I have a hard time understanding this absurd theatrical universe. But it does not matter, all that time I was not bored for a moment, but could always rejoice in new and unexpected recordings. Right from the jolly Dutch Ciska Jansen standing and stirring energetically around a wok on a burner, to all the participants marching in and out of the stage

after performed its farewell song, "Proud Cloud" is a stunning, sparkling performance and special international experience in Norwegian theater.

I have no doubt: Grusomhetens Teater is in many ways the most original and innovative free group in Norwegian theater. Not only is it a shame that the Arts Council doesn't recognize this, but they also refuse basic financing for the company. Lars Øyno should simply have a separate post on the annual budget of the Culture Ministry.