

'The Host' by Andros Zins-Browne pictures the relationship man-nature without words.

Tough cowboys in a futile attempt to tame the earth.

If a dance performance claims to be about the relationship between man and nature, it usually means you're in for a complaining pedantic evening. Unless the teacher is the American choreographer-dancer Andros Zins-Browne.

Without words but with real movements and a real set Zins-Browne sketches an image of our staggering relationship to the earth.

A grandstand around a big black, wrinkled canvas. On the sides small wind machines. In the yellowish twilight they start blowing. Here and there the canvas puffs up. The zooming rises to a drone. The image immediately conjures up a vision of the earth before there was life. Or is it a landscape after the apocalypse?

Suddenly the course of events take a new turn when 3 fellows with Stetson hats and boots, thumbs toughly hooked in their belts appear. Fearless, they trample back and forth across the wavy landscape, that very quickly starts to rupture. Underneath the surface, big, brightly colored balloons pop up. The cowboys 'attack' them with all their strength and ability: they squeeze the air out of them and fold them up. After which they drag them off stage.

It's an unusual scene. On the one hand it stays a concrete action: a real fight of 3 men with obstinate, heavy artificial canvasses in order to obtain a flat stage floor. Pure movement in other words. But you also see a bit of acting, since in their poses and costumes these fellows unmistakably conjure up the primal-American that tames nature. But also the charm of the original object, the wavy surface, leaves a lasting impression.

What follows is yet another new development. Jaime Llopis starts dancing on the now flat dance floor. His arms hardly move at all. The thumbs of this cowboy stay hooked behind his belt. His feet on the other hand stamp hard and proud, with a tight rhythm, on the ground. Zins-Browne himself and Sidney Leoni follow him, be it a little less self-assured.

How good or bad they perform this dance is soon of no importance anymore, because suddenly the floor puffs up again, much more and higher than the first time, into a gigantic air pillow. The tap dancing becomes pretty hard this way, even though the men arrogantly ignore this. With frozen faces they continue. Until the gigantic structure wildly starts to flip: to the left, right, backwards, forwards. For a short time they manage to keep it up, but eventually one after the other tumbles off the air cushion, to crawl up again only with the greatest effort. Until finally even that is no longer possible.

Also that is a fascinating moment. The action stays very concrete and close by. The tug of war between the dancers and the pillow almost become tangible for the audience: everyone immediately recognizes the childish excitement while trying to keep your balance on a bouncy castle. But again, because the dancers continue being cowboys, you can also see a metaphor in this. Men thought they had tamed nature, while nature takes its revenge and wins the fight. Even though the men pretend right up until the end to be the master of the situation.

Children who wrongly believe to master the situation. In its concreteness that is a troubling image of the position of mankind.

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