

Lichtbende

Garden of Delight

LICHTBENDE TRANSFORMS ORGELPARK INTO A COMFORTING MAGIC GARDEN



Javier López Piñón

21 november 2023

Seen on November 17, 2023, Orgelpark, Amsterdam

In the very well-occupied hall of the Orgelpark, a setup of four large round projection screens of more than a meter in diameter, each on a slender stand, is patiently waiting. A high projection screen hangs against the back wall over the entire width of the playing floor. Music stands and technical instruments are scattered among them. Just before the start, the musicians cross the stage, take a music stand with them and position themselves somewhere invisible, then the two performers who will create the images come to take their place, and then the miracle that Lichtbende seems to have patented can begin.

Rob Logister and Marie Raemakers themselves describe the performance as a light-art concert and indeed all these elements together form a poetic ode to love and desire. Their projections and animations create a true garden where stylized flowers bloom, insects perform mating dances, paradisiacal birds courtship, a boot and a high-heeled pump chase each other in an erotic game. The colorful images line up into a, yes, fairytale-like experience, that dangerous word is certainly appropriate here, because rarely does a theatrical event manage to come closer to the concept of art, where art is defined here as an aesthetic experience.

The animations are of stylized flora and fauna, sometimes abstracted into irregular geometric shapes, at times completely abstractly reduced to hands or a grid. The images on the round screens are mainly animated, those on the large screen change more slowly and also serve as a basis for the animations that are projected by Logister with accurate, tight dynamics. At regular intervals, projected texts of key words in contrasting black and white rhythm the multicolored sequences.

Besides the eye-catching visual qualities that form one main ingredient, the performance is completed by that other indispensable element: the concert, with its flawless choice of musical numbers. Compositions by Volans, Meredith Monk, Kagel, among others, in combination with a surprising fragment from Schwitters' Sonata in Urlauten and as a surprise a slowly melting, sexy performance of Handel Sarabandes on one of the beautiful instruments that fill the Orgelpark, complete this performance that passes by as if one is leafing through a book of poetry.

As an audience you can only surrender to this seamless combination of image and music. When David Lang's composition Just (After Song of Songs) is heard towards the end in a flawless and lived-through performance, it marks the end of a performance where every element has found its own inalienable place. The musical pieces almost seem to have been composed especially for this performance, even though Schwitters' Sonata dates from 1932, Handel's suite from 1706 and Kagel's Rosalie from 1983. Final director Jeannette van Steen has managed to maintain the balance between the flowing and dynamic images. on the one hand and the concentrated performance of the musical pieces on the other. This performance keeps alive the hope that desire, including the despair that is part of it, may always remain a source of joy in life, and that beauty is indeed able to provide comfort.