**Lia Rodrigues/Carte Blanche: 'Nororoca'**

**As part of the Autumn Festival, in Salle Gémier, the Théâtre de Chaillot has just presented the historic piece *Nororoca* (2009) by Lia Rodrigues, performed by Carte Blanche, the Norwegian National Company for Contemporary Dance.**

*«Salue les constricteurs / Entrons dans les reptilières / Ouïs l'oie oua-oua les singes hurlent les oiseaux cloches / Vagues du Prororoca l'immense mascaret».*

Guillaume Apollinaire, Pressentiment d’Amérique (1915)

**An unembellished tidal bore**

The tidal bore, a natural phenomenon created when a breaking ocean wave meets a river, particularly violent in the case of the Amazon, inspired this piece by the contemporary Brazilian choreographer. *Nororoca* describes the shock of contrary currents colliding with the calm of the doldrums that precedes a storm. The fourteen dancers, mostly male, survivors perhaps of one of the rafts of the Medusa, noisily shed their clothes and luggage by throwing them onto an imaginary bank on the right-hand side of the stage. This poetic, political and ecological metaphor is spun out for almost an hour.

*Galerie photo © Laurent Philippe*

Pause

Without unnecessary mannerisms, in light, relaxed and colourful clothes («come as you are», the invitation undoubtedly said), with no drums or trumpets, with body percussion, the cries of the playground and of the farm as musical support, giving no heed to decorum, the young men and women of all shapes and sizes seem to be having a great time, their hyperactivity intermittently punctuated by moments of frozen movement - when even their breathing stops. The dance is not just free, the waves that once motivated Isadora Duncan are more unleashed than usual. The choreographer is sparing with the vocabulary of ballet, but not with the vocabulary of children's play.

**The king commands …**

What is most remarkable in this work, as indeed in other works by Rodrigues, is the control with which it deals with this chaotic universe. The individual and collective energy is always channelled, reaching for an extremely precise goal, useful or seemingly futile, titillating and sometimes annoying the audience, but never threatening it. Some will regret that the company does not make more use of the accessories discarded at the beginning. Others that their personalities are not emphasised more in solos or variations - although two strong guys do walk and dance on their hands for quite a long time.

*Galerie photo © Laurent Philippe*

Pause

But this broth is not rough: form wins over formlessness; group work is manifested in a human sculpture; the light, as often with Lia, also does its work here, the almost black colours merging and helping to give rhythm to the samba. The dancers, of voting age, regress to their pre-adolescence. Their work is very serious, it consists of two playful activities: «Red light, green light» and «Simon says», which in Rio are called 'Um, dois, três, macaquinho do chinês' and 'O rei manda', respectively.

**Nicolas Villodre**

 Seen on 10 November 2021 at Chaillot- Théâtre national de la danse