



“One Song” by Miet Warlop  
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CRITICISM / BLOG

# Sport, dance, colonization

## Euro-Scene I: “One Song” and “Coulounization”

The Euro-Scene 2023 has started and is opening up a wide field with performances by Miet Warlop and Salim Djaferi.

TANZNETZ.DE EDITORIAL TEAM

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**Between balance beams, wall bars and violin**  
*“One Song” by Miet Warlop opens the euro-scene in Leipzig*

by Emma Bergmann

The metronome ticks tirelessly as the performers come in: a team that will drive themselves to complete exhaustion over the next 90 minutes. In the stands, five fans with scarves and slogans cheer on the athletes. A trainer/stadium announcer dressed in red shouts through her megaphone to show everyone their place. Cheerleaders, violinists, singers and drummers and other band members make their way to the stage. A quick warm-up before everyone rushes to their sports equipment. Their costumes have their name and number emblazoned on them, like a real sports team.

And then it begins: Elisabeth Klinck gracefully balances on the balance beam while playing the violin. Willem Lenaerts has to keep jumping up to reach the keys on his keyboard. Drummer Melvin Slabbinck rushes back and forth between his drums spread across the stage and Simon Beeckaert combines strenuous abdominal training with his double bass playing. Singer Jeppe Tanghe performs the eponymous “One Song” on a treadmill.

The fateful ticking of the metronome mercilessly accompanies the repetitions of the song in this dance performance conceived by Miet Warlop with the dancers of NTGent. The tempo varies, but the piece remains laborious. The “One Song” is formed in layers from individual melodic elements from the music athletes. The colors of the flag that flies over the stands are reflected in their outfits. Red, like the cuffs, gray, like the tops and blue, like the sweatbands. Soon the costumes are dripping with sweat, but no one stops, no one takes a break. It continues in rhythm. It’s not just the musicians who are sweating, the fans, who are constantly showing perfectly synchronized choreographies next to the commentator in red, are also starting to shine. Sweat is dripping, faces are red, pure effort. Exhaustion sets in. That’s

where cheerleader Milan Schudel comes into play. He dances around the stage and utters individual words that were previously arranged in the background of the stage.

“One Song” is an energetic performance of complete restlessness and exhaustion. Little by little the musicians faint and the piece is over. The booming bass falls silent. The atmosphere of the entire 90-minute piece also extends through the rows of the audience. The exhaustion in the room is palpable and the long, euphoric final applause is a relief for everyone.

### World made of language and white Styrofoam Salim Djaferi: “Coulounization”

by Lilly Schabacker

A bit of Styrofoam, a man on a stage and a long thread. Nothing more is needed. Because words become worlds in “Coulounization” by Salim Djaferi, which was just awarded the jury and audience prize at the Dresden Fast Forward Festival. The cooperation with Euro-Scen is new and not a bad idea.

“What is the Arabic word for colonization?” is Djaferi’s key question. The performer takes the audience with him to visit his relatives and friends as he talks to them about the “process of decolonization,” which is alternately referred to as war or revolution. He shares his mother’s “naturalization process,” which means that not only her nationality but also her name have to change. With comments as sharp as bomb splinters and subtle humor, he shows the power imbalance that still exists between Algeria and France.

Djaferi is interested in the power with which colonization is inscribed in the language. Shows how the violence on the French side was hidden through language, how the different perspectives in history turn a revolution into a war. With a simple presentation style, exciting audience interactions and few props, he builds entire cities in order to draw people and let wars rage. His personal story takes us through the history of Algeria.

This realization is shocking, and you can feel it in the audience too. While the mood is initially exuberant, almost cheerful, it becomes more thoughtful towards the end of the piece. This is not only ensured by the blood-red, dripping sponges that hang in the background on the stretched thread that delimits the room. The appearance of Delphine de Baere (artistic collaboration), an alleged technician at the discotheque, does not fail to have an impact. While she starts to clean up the stage, corrects Salim Djaferi and “just wants to help” him, you want to jump out of your chair and drag her off the stage.

With the helplessness and anger that one feels in this moment, Djaferi has achieved his goal. Because suddenly “ist’ammār” (Arabic for colonization) is no longer a term, it is a feeling of desperation. And above all, it is tangible suffering.

„Coulounisation“ ist so erbauend wie zerstörend und greift tief in die emotionale Schublade. Die 75 Minuten sind wie ein stürmisches Meer. Das Stück stellt Fragen: Wichtige Fragen zur eigenen Rolle in der Geschichte und zur Verantwortung die Sprache tagtäglich mit sich bringt. Ein beeindruckendes Werk, das besonders mit Blick auf die politischen Situationen der Welt relevanter denn je erscheint.

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Koulounisation: Salim Djaferi