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Dance with unified dynamic

A BLUE KOGAGU

Choreography and music: Johanna Hongell. Lights: Scott Darsee. Costume: Anna Elofsson. Dancers: Johanna Hongell, Sara Jean Charles, Asa Horling

A flute is waiting to be used, a handful of sand hides in the pocket, a few flower petals rest in a bowl and nothing has started yet. From the creation story as it is rendered in the Finnish Epic Kalevala, choreographer Johanna Hongell has formed a performance for three dancers, originating in the four elements: earth, fire, air, and water.

The idea brings to mind among other Virpi Pahkinen performance Saligram that could be seen at Dansstationen as late as in May last year, but looking closer there are more differences than likenesses.

While Saligram tone was raw and in parts provocative, A Blue Kogagu is definitely influenced by a more caressing tone. Soft and rolling, the waves of the sea sweep over the stage and three female figures, entangled in their veils, unfold on the shore and gradually become aware of the world.

Fascination is mixed with fear of the unknown but soon enough their courage grows and the women discover their strength. Here Johanna Hongell is using, among others, the rhythms and movements of flamenco; an accentuation that is an effective contrast to the more soft and poetic metaphors. The sea is present throughout, either as a soft whisper or a loud roar, rocks rest by the seashore, and the women collect them, incubate them like eggs.

Time after time the characters shed their skin, let the costumes fall and go on in new forms. The composition as a whole is sensitively put together, not the least is the music that skillfully travels between willfulness and movement, speed and stillness. At times one might have wished more nuances in the abstraction, but the three dancers who manage their roles with impressing force and unison in the dynamic compensate even this small leaning towards the overly clear.