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10-13 THE FALL OF THE MAGNETIC EMPIRE with David Thomas and Pere Ubu

15-20 PHAROAH SANDERS

The Kitchen
in association with Rosas
presents:

Fase

four movements to the music of Steve Reich

Choreography:

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Dancers:

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Michèle Anne De Mey

September 22-26, 1998



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Yasmine Godder Photo by Arja Houtman

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Fase

four movements to the music of Steve Reich

Choreography: Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker
Dancers: Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Michèle Anne De Mey
Music: Steve Reich (*Piano Phase, Come Out, Violin Phase, Clapping Music*)
Recording: Edmund Niemann (piano), Nurit Tilles (piano),
Shem Guibbory (violin)
Costumes: Martine André, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker
Lighting design: Remon Fromont
Technical director: Luc Galle
Lighting: Guy Peeters
Production assistant: Anne Van Aerschot
Production: Rosas & De Munt/La Monnaie
World première: Brussels, March 18, 1982 - Beursschouwburg

ROSAS

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Rosas is the company in residence of de Munt/La Monnaie.
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Rosas is Cultural Ambassador of Flanders.

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General director: Bernard Foccroulle
Financial manager: Bernard Coutant
Technical director: Josep Maria Folch
Assistant Technical director: Benoît Dugardyn

Fase, four movements to the music of Steve Reich (1982)

Piano Phase

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker & Michèle Anne De Mey

Come Out

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker & Michèle Anne De Mey

Violin Phase

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker

Clapping Music

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker & Michèle Anne De Mey

It was not until *Fase* that Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's work systematically began to come together. As point of departure, four works by the American minimalist Steve Reich were chosen. All were composed in the period 1966-1972. Reich incorporated the principle of phasing: a rhythmic phase, a melodious phase and a phase between the different instruments where gradual movements occur.

Two of the four choreographies (*Violin Phase* and *Come Out*) were made by Anne Teresa during her course of study at the Dance Department of the Tisch School of the Arts (New York University). The others (*Piano Phase* and *Clapping Music*) were made upon her return to Brussels. Anne Teresa herself danced *Violin Phase* and the three other pieces in a duet with Michèle Anne De Mey.

The distance from *Asch* (a work created in Brussels in 1980) is immense. *Fase* was rigorously handled with structuring. Movement, mise-en-scène and lighting were confronted in changing patterns with the music. The music was not "translated", nor was there any attempt at narrative. Reich's music is more a guide in the investigation into the possibilities of choreography. In the tradition of American Postmodernists as Lucinda Childs, repetitiveness becomes the structuring and organising element in the dances, and the choreographic writing is going to govern this for years. *Fase* is nevertheless a precursor of *Rosas danst Rosas*. More is involved than the mapping out of constant charges and movements. Speed, force and physical exhaustion keep *Fase* from falling into hopeless intellectualism. This is where Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker begins her investigative journey into a personal vocabulary. The spectator's view is directed towards the hand, foot, hip, head. *Fase* contains the first elements of an individual language, which is grafted onto the repetitive structures in compelling unison.

In a Flemish theater and ballet context where narrative continues to rule, *Fase* manages to generate meaning from the autonomous moving body, without any story intention. When the whirlpool of the solo *Violin Phase* suddenly comes to an end and the dancer's fingers clench into a fist, then this is a formal end but also a sentence from the body story.

In contrast to the credo of *Asch*, *Fase* is the real driving force behind Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's work. Important parameters are flung onto the table, i.e. the structural bond between score and choreography, the need of a personal dance language.

Fragment of the text 'Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Rosas' 1980-1991
Theo Van Rompay - November 1991

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Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (Mechelen, 1960) studied from 1978 to 1980 at MUDRA in Brussels, the school linked to La Monnaie and to Maurice Béjart's Ballet of the XXth Century. In 1981, she attended the Tisch School of the Arts in New York. Meanwhile, she presented her first production, *Asch* (1980), in Brussels. On her return from the U.S.A. in 1982, she created *Fase, four movements to the music of Steve Reich*. This production was immediately invited by various international festivals.

The success of *Fase* contributed largely to the foundation of the company Rosas in 1983. *Rosas danst Rosas* - Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's first choreography for the young company to new compositions of Thierry De Mey and Peter Vermeersch - brought Rosas the international breakthrough. During the eighties, Rosas was supported by Kaaitheater of Brussels (director Hugo De Greef). *Elena's Aria* (1984), *Bartók/Aantekeningen* (1986), a staging of Heiner Müller's triptych *Verkommenes Ufer/Meedeamaterial Landschaft mit Argonauten* (1987), *Mikrokosmos-Monument Selbstporträt mit Reich und Riley (und Chopin ist auch dabei)/In zart fließender Bewegung - Quatuor Nr.4*, (1987), *Ottone, Ottone* (1988), *Stella* (1990) and *Achterland* (1990) were produced in collaboration with Kaaitheater.

In 1992, La Monnaie's general director Bernard Foccroulle invited Rosas to become the resident company of Brussels' Royal Opera de Munt/la Monnaie. At the start of the residency, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker set herself three objectives: to intensify the relation between dance and music, to build a repertory, and to launch a dance school (after the disappearance of MUDRA from Brussels in 1988). That year, Rosas created *ERTS* and released *Rosa* - a film of a choreography by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker to Bartók music directed by Peter Greenaway. Later that year, Rosas created *Mozart Concert Arias, un moto di gioia* for the Avignon Festival. In 1993, Rosas created *Toccata*, to the music of J.S. Bach, for the Holland Festival. In May 1994, the KunstenFESTIVALdes Arts in Brussels premièred *Kinok*, produced in collaboration with Thierry De Mey and the Ictus Ensemble. At the end of 1994, this collaboration resulted into a new creation: *Amor Constante más allá de la muerte*. In November 1995, La Monnaie premièred *Verklärte Nacht*, a choreography that was part of the Schönberg production *Erwartung/Verklärte Nacht*.

In 1995, Rosas and La Monnaie launched in Brussels a new international school for contemporary dance. P.A.R.T.S. - Performing Arts Research & Training Studios, where sixty students coming from some 25 countries are trained, over a three year period, by more than 50 teachers.

In December 1996, *Woud, three movements to the music of Berg, Schönberg & Wagner* was premièred in Seville. At the beginning of 1997, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker created, together with Steve Paxton and The Wooster Group, *Three Solos for Vincent Dunoyer*. In November 1997, *Just Before*, to a live performance by the Ictus Ensemble of music composed by Magnus Lindberg, John Cage, Yannis Xenakis, Steve Reich, Pierre Bartholomé and Thierry De Mey, was presented in La Monnaie. In February 1998, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker made her debut as an opera director at La Monnaie with Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*. In August 1998, the Impuls Festival in Vienna premièred *Drumming*, the latest Rosas production to Steve Reich's composition of the same name.

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker has appeared in New York City at The Kitchen (*Rosas danst Rosas* in 1986, *Elena's Aria* in 1987, and *Stella* in 1991) and at BAM (*Achterland* in 1992 and *Woud* in 1997).

Both the performances and the films of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker have been distinguished by various international awards. *Rosas danst Rosas* won the Bessy Award (1988), *Mikrokosmos* received a Japanese Dance Award for the best foreign production (1989), *Stella* got the London Dance and Performance Award (1989), the film *Hoppial* was awarded a Solo d'Oro in Italy and the Grand Prix Video Danse in Sète (1989), the films *Rosas* (1992) and *Achterland* (1994) have been distinguished by the Dance Award, while the film *Rosas danst Rosas* obtained the Grand Prix International Video Danse in 1997. In June 1995, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker received the title of "Doctor Honoris Causa" at the VUB (Flemish University in Brussels) and in March 1996 she was awarded by the government of the province of Antwerp the Eugene Baie prize.

Michèle Anne De Mey

Michèle Anne De Mey was born in 1959, and studied at Mudra. Her career in dance began with series of projects in which she performed as dancer-actress, and in pieces choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (including *Fase*, *Rosas danst Rosas*, *Elena's Aria*, *Ottone Ottone*). During this time, she choreographed *Passé Simple* and *Face à Face* (1986) performed with Pierre Droulers. In 1989, she choreographed *Vendredi 10 mars*, Angers for the National Modern Dance Center in Angers, while teaching at the National Performing Arts Institute in Brussels. She also choreographed a duo, *Trois Danses Hongroises de Brahms*, performed with Olga De Soto, for a film directed by Eric Pauwels. In these pieces, she refined the qualities already evident in her early works, which in 1990 resulted in the most decisive event of her career: the creation of her own dance company. Her first piece, *Sinfonia Eroica* (1990), brought together seven dancers, including Michèle Anne, in a choreographic composition consisting of a series of infinite variations on the theme of seduction. Beethoven's Third Symphony, *Eroica*, acted as the driving force behind the performance, providing the performers' inspiration. In the company's second piece, *Châteaux en Espagne* (1991), a situation of inherent tension complemented by a hint of nostalgia served as the motivation for the performance. *Sonatas 555* (1992) premiered at the Avignon Festival and opened the Salzburger Festspiele. The Michèle Anne De Mey Company's first film, *Love Sonnets* (35 mm Dolby/color) emerged from the tour which accompanied this piece. Composer-director Thierry De Mey, the company's long-term artistic and music advisor, was chosen to direct. Taking her inspiration from the Massine ballet, Michèle Anne De Mey reworked Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (1994). She surrounded herself with ten dancers, two trapeze performers, 33 musicians and 3 vocalists. Following the marvelous experience of *Pulcinella*, Michèle Anne De Mey felt the need to return to the stage as a soloist. She choreographed *Solo-Arie Antiche* (1995), a prelude piece to a trilogy, which included a men's trio piece and a women's quartet to extracts from Parissoti's *Arie Antiche* for soprano. *Cabier* (1995), a men's trio dedicated to Paul Valéry, was based on the piano work *Gaspard de la Nuit* by Ravel. *Katamènia*, based on the string quartet *Der Tod und das Mädchen* written by Franz Schubert, signals in all senses and from its inception a return to the initial source of the choreographer's inspiration. This intentionally naive approach to introspective research was striking for the originality, freshness, and simple elegance of its direct approach, rigorous yet intuitive, in *Sinfonia Eroica* and *Love Sonnets*. Not only did the choreographer never stray from this, but, as occurs in every artistic project, her most recent pieces have in common a response to the Other: confrontation with the different - either Stravinsky's objectivity, working with a large group including vocalists, musicians and trapeze performers on *Pulcinella*, or Valéry's intellectual spareness in *Cabier*, or most recently, the proposal for an imagic response to Balthus.

Violin Phase: THE solo. The music glides over the body like a bow over a violin. Cyclical sliding inscribed within a circle of light. The arms in a helicoid spiral pull the body into a pivot. The flow is interrupted by suspensions and retentions. The dress that envelopes Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker amplifies the circle and the spiral that returns into the body.

Concentration or eccentricity? Slipping/catching, looking for the rough patches that will stop the form being too smooth? Up against the vain risk of going round in circles, she dares mutiny. A mischievous gesture of the hand that lifts the dress up over the hips allowing a little bit of childhood into this (too) serious game of dance. And rage - on the last draw of the bow, suddenly the whole body is tension. Arms bent, fists closed, neck muscles taught and face resolute. The eyes are shut, seized by a deaf determination. A quickening that lasts few seconds before the circle closes in shadow. The body is exposed, left to the night.

Clapping music: A diversion, a warming up: the art of finishing a performance on a note that refutes austerity. It is a touch of humour dabbed on the palette, the winding down of a spring. Clapping hands in a percussive rhythm, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Michèle Anne De Mey lightly rebound from the ground, from feet flat on the floor to demi-point. The bend of their legs is reflected in their arms. Silhouetted in profile they play a game of measured elasticity that says that dance, from the point of view of two young women growing up, is a game of the most serious kind, but a game nevertheless.

Curiously, *Fase*, the first performance that 'propelled' Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker towards notoriety, cannot be encompassed by the cliché energy to the limits of possibility' that was ascribed to the new Flemish dance scene. It seems more to be articulating, with the minimum of affection, the art of physical expenditure. *Fase*, without a doubt is 'in phase' with the expectation of a dance that modestly (but with determination) knows how to assert itself, how to expose the body within the erratic mechanisms of modern times. Far from ethereal or theatrical beauty, far from the 'high masses' of dance, officiated by corps de ballets, albeit from the XX century, it is dance that has no narration to offer other than the energy that moves it, musicality and lines of flux.

Fase is a piece where each sequence, through the cyclical repetition that animates it, states the importance of the pivot. At the beginning of the eighties, the axis of dance was in the process of pivoting. In its rigorous simplicity *Fase* affirmed the evidence of the new rules of play for an art form where imbalance would cease to be improvised. A form for the future, in its infinite beginning.

August 1998 - Jean-Marc Adolphe (translation by Oonagh Duckworth)

Program notes

The Infinite Beginning

The first step opens the way, decides a direction, sets up a fundamental imbalance. The first step goes forward in the hope that nothing will be like it was before. Its trace is definitive, time will not erase it.

Fase was one of Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker's first steps. With it, on an unknown itinerary away from the beaten track, she invented her own future. It was the launching of a working process as much as its accomplishment.

Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker's past suggests several sources of motivation: childhood and its mysteries, games with dolls, games of hopscotch, games of growing up, learning dance at MUDRA (Brussels 1978 -1980). Dance, but which dance?--*Asch*, a first performance produced almost through spontaneous combustion, was the story of mutual fascination between an obstinate little girl and a great, wounded pilot.

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker was already obstinate, and her obstinance had to be gratified somewhere other than rain soaked Brussels.

Terra incognita - for Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, like for many other artists of her generation, it was New York. A whole year when, looking back, the effect of arriving from a provincial background into cosmopolitan effervescence can now be imagined. There are a few traces from this journey. One is an article on Valeska Gert, the sorceress of the century, the grotesque dancer, written in the Drama Review on her return from New York,

A year, fifteen minutes; what was in Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker's luggage when she came back from New York? Undetectable at customs control, in her muscles was a quarter-of-an-hour solo, constructed on the music of Steve Reich.

Violin Phase: The first step was an outline of a beginning. Free of predictable influences it was to open a door. It was a centrifugal force at the heart of a delineated form that spun the promise of a space to be constructed - an infinite beginning.

With the collaboration and reciprocal energy of Michèle Anne de Mey, the initial solo was duplicated into meticulously structured movement schemes. This was to become *Fase*, four movements to the music of Steve Reich, created at the Brussels Beursschouwburg, March 18, 1982. Choreographed in four sequences based on the early (and genesis) works of the American minimalist composer Steve Reich: *Piano Phase*, *Come Out*, *Violin Phase* and *Clapping Music*. Using different instrumental

registers, Reich begins with a rhythmical structure that he repeats while adjusting it by progressive shifts. The repetition of a pattern is thus subject to a game of variations that seem to 'work' at the very interior of the initial structure. In *Fase* the choreography is modulated on the 'phases' of the music, and some believe they can discern a response to the art of Lucinda Childs. The proximity to minimalism is patent. However, over and beyond, *Fase* doesn't aim for the spellbinding quality of pure visual geometry so much as for a volatile tension between bodies and energies. The constant dialogue between structure and emotion that nourished her subsequent pieces is already legible.

Piano phase: It begins with infinity - loops and more musical loops. After a first wave comes the first gesture. The right arm that lifts and brings the body with it in a spin on itself, the left foot serving as pivot. Uniformly dressed in frocks, shoes and white socks, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Michèle Anne De Mey are poised on a lateral line, the nape of the neck in perfect alignment with the shoulders. Without apparent emotion, they plunge into the perpetual repetition of a phrase. A minimal time-piece of movement, the right arm as a pendulum swings on its axis. They turn but do not swirl. Unlike the whirling of the dervishes of Islam, the cyclical repetition of movement in *Piano Phase* does not have a spiritual purpose. The dervishes revolve between sky and earth with inverted palms, one up one down. They are mechanical dolls whose mechanism is made of flesh. Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Michèle Anne De Mey are the physical reality of autonomous bodily effort. Their arms are the prolongation of their bodies, rooted in them.

The light changes and changes them. Faraway figures, duplicated by the play of shadows on the white backdrop, they glide on close lateral lines silhouetted by the lighting. Through the unbroken vigilance of the rhythm and the cycle of movement, small, nervous gestures emerge. A snatch of the forearm that betrays suppressed determination, hands that close as fists. The flow is fleetingly checked, the turns become sharper, the smoothness more cutting, the repetition gives way to a delight in digression. But ultimately the form always wins. Escape is halted by the light, the music marks its last notes.

Come Out: Fourteen minutes that begin with a litany of words ("Come out to show them") and finishes in the deaf echo of an obsessive vibration and a humming movement where the progressively muffled voice evokes a confused nightmare.

The body is a capricious mechanism. In *Fase*, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker is, for the most part, still exploring the mechanism and its workings. The capricious part comes later, although some distilled signs already indicate its potentiality.

Sitting on black stools in grey trousers, beige shirts and black boots, isolated in a square of light, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Michèle Anne De Mey launch themselves into a composition for arms (similar material is to be found later in the second movement of *Rosas danst Rosas* and in another register in Thierry De Mey's *Musiques de Table*). The epicentre of the movement is a triangle between the neck and the shoulder-blades, there where the dry tension of toughness knots itself (demonstrated in their strained faces) and from where that same tension is released (in the relaxing of an arm). A rhythm of panic, meticulously structured, energetically contained within a corporal clock-face.



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