



Rosas
The Kitchen
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Pared Down

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

Put *Fase*, please, on the list of post-modern greats. This is thrilling work: rigorous and pure, the dancing burns like dry ice. And like the splendid early Steve Reich compositions it's set to, its minimal elements stir up rich cross-currents. The production is elegant in its austerity. Projected white titles announce each section. For "Piano Phase," Luc Galle lights De Keersmacker and Michèle Anne De Mey so that they dance in front of their own shadows—one for each and a central composite that emphasizes their every divagation from unison.

You watch, hypnotized, as they settle into gentle, firm half turns in place, reaching one arm to the side; gradually De Keersmacker increases her speed, slipping more and more out of phase with De Mey, complicating their relationship. This is Reich's process too. Sound and movements slide past one another disquietingly. You can predict resolution but seldom conclusion.

The work teems with such beauties. The vocal loop that figures in Reich's "Come Out" was drawn from the account of a police suspect. De

Keersmacker and De Mey sit on stools, under lamps, and you read into their abrupt gestures the music's subliminal message of increasing frustration. The choreographer solos in "Violin Phase." Dancing in a circle, playing out a finely chosen array of springing and turning movements, she looks impulsive, almost frisky. "Clapping Music" builds on a 12-count phrase. As the women gradually inch backward along horizontal paths of light, their feet repeat it over and over, with a rise onto the toes of their sneakers for punctuation, but their arms have another dance that's out of sync with the steps, so the picture keeps altering. More than 16 years after its creation, *Fase* and the women who dance it create a stunning image of daring within order and turbulence within calm. Probably few people have spent sleepless hours yearning for the return of '70s minimalism in dance, but when you see such a sterling example, it sweeps your mind clean of all the dance theater excesses. Remember when beauty of form could practically bring you to tears?