

Dance review: Rain at Sadler's Wells, EC1

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★★★★★

The work of the Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker can be weighty and austere. That isn't the case with *Rain*. Premiered in 2001, and created for her company Rosas, this 70-minute dance for a cast of ten uses Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* as a springboard.

It's an inspired choice. Reich's masterpiece, played live — and impeccably — by the Ictus Ensemble, is a gorgeous, shimmering ear bath of harmonic pulsations. De Keersmaecker finds the rigour and the joy, mining those qualities for all they're worth yet with the lightest touch. The dancing is marvellous, technically acute but buoyant, warm and wonderfully human. Revivals don't come any fresher.

Rain is set against the designer Jan Versweyveld's curving beaded curtain, an iconically simple cyclorama. Like Dries Van Noten's casually stylish costumes (in shades ranging from pale peach, grey and white to rose and hot pink), Versweyveld's lighting design shares certain characteristics with dancing that is propulsive, constant yet measured and changeable as the weather.

Something similar could be said about the score. That's what's so captivating about the performance: it's all of a piece. The shifts in the music — composed for clarinet, percussion, piano, strings and voice — are reflected in the movement. The scope of the dancers' physical vocabulary is impressive: soft and sharp, slinky and sensual, with spirals, slides and rolls, hops, skips, frog leaps and scissor kicks all flowing out of them organically.

Although we can grasp the demands that De Keersmaecker's deceptively skittering choreography is placing upon them, they make it all appear effortless. She allows us to see them as individuals and a group whose typically fleeting interactions are flecked with wit, romance, rivalry and flashes of ecstasy and power. The cumulative effect of their controlled zest, elasticity and snap is exhilaration.

Rain is, in short, De Keersmaecker, and Reich, on top form. Good news: if you miss it in London you can still catch it at this year's Edinburgh International Festival.

Box office: 0131 473 2000, August 25-27, [eif.co.uk](https://www.eif.co.uk)