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## DANCE REVIEW

# Slipping In and Out of Phase With Steve Reich

By ANNA KISSELGOFF

We may all be taught that form follows function, but for the ever-brilliant Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, form generates meaning.

The stunning revival of "Fase," her 1982 piece to Steve Reich's music, on view through tomorrow at the Kitchen in Chelsea, does much to explain why Ms. De Keersmaeker, once labeled a minimalist, has suddenly been seen as an expressionist.

As even "Woud," a large-scale production that she presented last year at the Brooklyn Academy of Music indicated, the truth is that she is both expressionist and minimalist, and neither. "Fase," a mental and physical tour de force, is typical. Ms. De Keersmaeker and her longtime collaborator and fellow Belgian choreographer, Michèle Anne de Mey, performed it on Thursday with rigor and intensity.

The rigor is evident from the start in the choreography's structure: repetitive movement with a reduced vocabulary, regularly showing dancers slipping in and out of unison (out

of phase with one another) and offering the counterpart of shifts in rhythmic phase heard in the music.

At its simplest, the structure plays with syncopation and synchronization. But at its most complex, not to speak of its phenomenal speed, the choreography has much to do with how the dances relate to the music as well as to one another.

This minimalism, if you will, is remote from the cool geometric designs of American minimalist choreographers like Lucinda Childs or the repetitive mystical dervishlike patterns of Laura Dean. Within the passionate execution of Ms. De Keersmaeker's movement, everyday gestures (a girlish lift of a skirt in the one solo among three duets) are interpolated, facial expressions telegraph a hint of alienation, highly theatrical lighting sets the scene and even an audible expulsion of breath gives what looks like pure form a dramatic meaning.

"Fase," subtitled "Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich," uses Mr. Reich's musical titles for each section. "Piano Phase" is de-

ceptively formal. The two women, occasionally multiplied by shadows that merge to show how they slip in and out of phase with each other, repeat a basic sequence of a step forward or back with right arm thrown out, sometimes with a change of direction or half turn.

When the dancers face each other, a mirror dance replaces their side by side image. A human relationship is set up, but the relationship to the music is equally complex. When the dancers pause or shift into a different sequence, the pianists on the recording do not. Both performers insert a ragelike clenching of fists and whiplash turns, and a brutal tinge covers the movement. One doesn't know when the clenching will recur, but one knows it will.

The drama is extended in "Come Out," where Mr. Reich speeds up the speech of a man saying "Come out to show you" until the words become unintelligible. The two women, in black boots and pants, perform a sitting dance with violent gestures under two lights: two prisoners being interrogated.

"Violin Phase," to jagged violin music, is chiefly a circular solo for Ms. De Keersmaeker, a gambol that ends in a near sob, an admirable if self-aware reverie. "Clapping Music," to one of Mr. Reich's best-known compositions, is an apotheosis. The women, in profile, accelerate a sequence that has them rise up on the tips of their athletic shoes: pointe work for the future. Clearly, "Fase" is not at all a dated work.