

## Steve Reich



Steve Reich Photo: Alice Arnold/Nonesuch

### An introduction to Reich's music by K. Robert Schwarz

When Steve Reich was a conservatory student in the late 1950s and early 1960s, young composers had no choice but to conform to the prevailing serial doctrine. Inaudible mathematical permutation, atonality, and arrhythmic pointillism were the academic norm. Audiences were alienated by music that seemed to value structure more than sound, leaving composers increasingly isolated from their listening public. Steve Reich, devoted to the tonality and pulse of jazz and early Stravinsky, found himself estranged from the new-music establishment.

Today, almost thirty years later, this gloomy situation has changed radically, in no small part because of Reich himself. Without pandering to mass taste, Reich has brought the composer out of isolation and allowed him to regain a meaningful place in society. His large audience is not only a personal vindication, but serves as encouragement to a whole generation of younger composers. For Reich's music has created options that did not exist three decades ago. Rather than dogmatically applying a single technique, composers may now follow Reich's more eclectic path, one that has embraced not only aspects of the rationalism of serialism, but the structures, harmonies, and rhythms of non-Western and American vernacular music, especially jazz.

Reich's own musical development has exhibited a constant enlargement of vocabulary, yet he has never compromised his aesthetic beliefs. Although steady pulse, tonal center, structural clarity, repetition, and a fascination with canons have always characterized his work, he has retained a youthful eagerness to broaden both means and scope. The once impersonal process of phasing gave way, under the influence of African and Balinese music, to a counterpoint of polyrhythms; while a study of Hebrew scriptural cantillation led to an expansion of the melodic profile.

In fact, Reich's works reveal a continuing incorporation of new elements into his existing language – from the harmonic cycle and kaleidoscopic colors of

*Music for Eighteen Musicians* to the heightened emotional response evoked by the texts of *Tehillim* and *The Desert Music*.

Prediction is always risky, but it would seem certain that Reich will continue to make from his resources of Western Classical music, non-Western culture, and the American vernacular a rich and surprising synthesis. In whatever guise the synthesis appears, from the eminently portable, jazz-inflected 'Counterpoint' series to the refined scoring for large orchestra of *The Desert Music* and *The Four Sections*, it remains immediately recognizable as the reflection of a man who continues to delight his public without ever denying his roots.

K. Robert Schwarz

(Author of *The Minimalists* [1996, Phaidon Press])

## OPERAS

---

### The Cave

Steve Reich and Beryl Korot

**1990-93**

2 hr 2 min

Audio-visual music theatre work

Text: Torah, the Koran (Arabic) and documentary material

vocal quartet: 2lyrS, T, Bar

2woodwind(fl,ob,corA,cl,bcl)-perc(4):vib/marimba/BD/kick drums/claves-3kbd  
(pft,sampler,computer kbd)-strings(1.1.1.1.0)

9790051150793 **Libretto**

**World Premiere: 15 May 1993**

Messepalast, Vienna, Austria

Beryl Korot, video / Carey Perloff, director; Steve Reich Ensemble

Conductor: Paul Hillier

---

### Three Tales

Steve Reich and Beryl Korot

**2001**

1 hr

Part I: Hindenburg/Part II: Bikini/Part III: Dolly

Text: documentary material (E)

vocal quintet: 2S,3T

perc(4):2vib/2SD/2pedal kick dr/susp.cym/lg gong-2pft-string quartet-pre-recorded tape  
Akai 24 track hard disk unit or DA-88 tape playback and high-quality video projection  
equipment required

**World Premiere: 12 May 2002**

Museumsquartier, Vienna, Austria

Beryl Korot, video; Ensemble Modern/Synergy Voices

Conductor: Bradley Lubman

---

## BALLETS

---

### Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings

2005

25 min

dance piece for vibraphones, pianos and strings

2 pft-4vib-3 string quartets (or sm string section\*)

\*no amplification required if more than 3 to a part

*"The instrumental writing in the variations is as beautifully crafted as ever, built upon a rotating sequence of four chords and creating a fast-slow-fast scheme, with the movements getting progressively shorter."*

*The Guardian*

*"Three string quartets spar with four vibraphones, clashing and aligning in turn. Underneath the subtly changing textures the dark ruminations of two pianos provide a moody balance to some of Reich's most buoyant harmonies."*

*The Times*

**World Premiere: 18 Mar 2006**

Philharmonie, Köln, Germany

Akram Khan, choreographer; London Sinfonietta

Conductor: Bradley Lubman

## FULL ORCHESTRA

### Duet

**1993** 5 min

for two solo violins and string ensemble or string orchestra

2 solo vln.4vla.3vlc.db or sm string orchestra

**World Premiere: 08 Aug 1995**

Gstaad Festival, Gstaad, Switzerland

Gstaad Festival Ensemble

Conductor: Yehudi Menuhin OM KBE

### For Strings (with Winds and Brass)

**1987/2004** 12 min

for orchestra

4(IV=picc).4.4.4-4.4.3.1-2synth-strings(16.16.12.8.6)

**World Premiere: 16 Sep 2004**

Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, California, United States

San Francisco Symphony

Conductor: Michael Tilson Thomas

### The Four Sections

**1987** 25 min

in four movements

4(IV=picc).4.4(IV=bcl).4(IV=dbn)-4.4.4.1-timp.perc(4):2vib/2marimba/  
2BD-2pft(=2synth)-strings(16.16.12.8.6)

9790051211524 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1152**

**World Premiere: 07 Oct 1987**

Davies Hall, San Francisco, California, United States

San Francisco Symphony

Conductor: Michael Tilson Thomas

## Three Movements

**1986** 15 min

for orchestra

2.2picc.2.corA.3.3(III=dbn).dbn-4.3.3.1-perc:2marimbas/2vib/

BD-2pft(4 hands)-strings(db=elec.bass)\*

Strings: left:6.6.4.4.4:right:6.6.4.4.4

If required for balance, 1st vln section right may be expanded to  
8 players.

\*reh. 44 to the end, the Contrabass part is to be played by 2 electric basses, 1 on a  
part. All other acoustic basses are tacet until end of piece.

**World Premiere: 03 Apr 1986**

Powell Symphony Hall, St Louis, Missouri, USA

Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Leonard Slatkin

## Variations for Winds, Strings, and Keyboards

**1979** 21 min 30 sec

for orchestra

3.3.0.0-0.3.3.1-2pft-3elec.organ-strings

9790051211371 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1137**

**World Premiere: 14 May 1980**

War Memorial Auditorium, San Francisco, CA, USA

Steve Reich, organ; San Francisco Symphony

Conductor: Edo de Waart

## CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

---

### Eight Lines

**1983** 17 min 30 sec

2fl(=picc).2cl(=bcl)-2pft-strings(2.2.2.2.0)

For performances where the concert hall has a capacity of greater than 200, the fl (but not picc) & cl/bcl must be amplified.

9790051094875 (Full score)

**World Premiere: 10 Dec 1983**

92nd Street Y, New York, NY, USA

Solisti New York

Conductor: Ransom Wilson

---

### Triple Quartet

**1998** 20 min

string quartet (with pre-recorded tape) and live string quartet, or string ensemble or string orchestra

Version 1: for string quartet and pre-recorded tape (DA-88 tape playback and amplification required)

Version 2: for string ensemble or string orchestra

NB: these are two separate performing editions

**World Premiere: 22 May 1999**

Kennedy Center, Washington, DC, United States

Kronos Quartet

---

## VOICE(S) AND ORCHESTRA

---

### **Tehillim**

**(orchestral version)**

**1981**

30 min

for voices and orchestra

Text: Psalms 19,34,18,150 (Heb)

4female voices(hiS, 2lyrS, A)

1.picc.1.corA.2.1(opt)-perc(6):maracas/clapping/4tuned tamb without  
jingles/marimba/vib/crot-2elec.organ-strings (woodwinds and voices amplified)

---

**World premiere of version: 16 Sep 1982**

Avery Fisher Hall, New York, New York, United States

New York Philharmonic

Conductor: Zubin Mehta

## CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

### The Desert Music

(full version)

1983

46 min

for 10 (or 27) amplified voices and orchestra

Text: William Carlos Williams (E)

4(II,III,IV=picc).4(II,III,IV=corA).4(II,III,IV=bcl).4(IV=dbn)-4.4  
(I=picc.tpt ad lib).3.1-timp(2players=rototoms).perc(7):med tam-t/  
maracas/sticks/2BD/2glsp/2xyl/2vib/2marimba-2pft(4players)-  
strings(12.12.9.9.6)  
(voices and woodwinds amplified)

9790051209835 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 983**

**World Premiere: 17 Mar 1984**

Funkhaus Köln, Großer Sendesaal, Cologne, Germany

Cologne Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of West German Radio

Conductor: Peter Eötvös

### The Desert Music

(version with reduced strings and brass)

1983, arr. 2001

46 min

for 10 amplified voices and reduced orchestra, brass arrangement by Alan Pierson

4(II,III,IV=picc).0.0.0-2.2.3.0-timp(2players=rototoms).perc(7):med  
tam-t/maracas/sticks/2BD/2glsp/  
2xyl/2vib/2marimba-2pft(4players:I,III,IV=synth)-13 solo strings

fl, pft, marimbas, vib, and voices should all be amplified

### The Desert Music

(version with reduced strings, optional brass)

1983

46 min

for 10 (or 27) amplified voices and reduced orchestra

Text: William Carlos Williams (E)

4(II,III,IV=picc).0.0.0-4.4(I=picc.tpt ad lib).3.1(brass optional)-  
timp(2players=rototoms).perc(7):med tam-t/maracas/sticks/2BD/2glsp/  
2xyl/2vib/2marimba-2pft(4players:I,III,IV=synth)-13 solo strings  
(voices and woodwinds amplified)

**World premiere of version: 09 Jan 1986**

Richmond, Virginia, United States

Steve Reich and Musicians with singers and members of the Brooklyn Philharmonic

Conductor: George Manahan

## ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITHOUT VOICE(S)

### 2x5

**2009** 20 min 27 sec

for five musicians and tape, or 10 live musicians  
2 drum sets, 2 pft, 4 elec. gtr, 2 bass gtr

**World Premiere: 02 Jul 2009**

Manchester Velodrome, Manchester, United Kingdom  
Bang on a Can

### City Life

**1995** 24 min

for ensemble

2.2.2.0-0.0.0.0-perc(3 or 4);2vib/cym/SD/gong/2BD-2pft.2samplers  
(3 sampling AKAI-1000 kbd)-strings(1.1.1.1.1)

All musicians amplified except BD, SD and cym.

9790051213191 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1319**

**World Premiere: 07 Mar 1995**

Arsneal de Metz, Metz, France  
Ensemble intercontemporain  
Conductor: David Robertson

### Dance Patterns

**2002** 6 min

for ensemble

2xyl-2vib-2pft

**World Premiere: 13 Mar 2003**

Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium  
Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, choreographer; Ictus Ensemble and Rosas Dance Company

### Different Trains

**1988** 27 min

for string quartet and tape

9790051102976 **String Quartet, CD**

9790051104307 **String Quartet, CD**

9790051211685 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1168**

**World Premiere: 02 Nov 1988**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, United Kingdom  
Kronos Quartet

### Double Sextet

**2007** 22 min

for ensemble (or ensemble and pre-recorded tape)

2fl-2cl-2vln-2vcl-2vib-2pft or fl-cl-vln-vcl-vib-pft and pre-recorded tape

**World Premiere: 26 Mar 2008**

University of Richmond, Richmond, VA, USA  
eighth blackbird

### Duet

**1993** 5 min

for two solo violins and string ensemble or string orchestra

2 solo vln.4vla.3vlc.db or sm string orchestra

**World Premiere: 08 Aug 1995**

Gstaad Festival, Gstaad, Switzerland  
Gstaad Festival Ensemble  
Conductor: Yehudi Menuhin OM KBE

### Mallet Quartet

**2009** 15 min 45 sec

for percussion quartet

4 marimbas or 2 marimbas and 2 vib; or solo perc and tape

**World Premiere: 06 Dec 2009**

Palace of Arts, Budapest, Hungary  
Amadinda

---

**Sextet****1984**

28 min

for percussion and keyboards

2pft[=2elec.pft(synth)].perc(4):pft/2vib(bowed)/3marimba/tam-t/  
click sticks/2BD/crot (+ amplification)

---

**World Premiere: 19 Dec 1984**

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

NEXUS

---

**Six Marimbas****1986**

24 min

transcription of Six Pianos (1973) for 6 marimbas

6 marimbas

9790051103768 **Percussion**9790051211951 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1195**

---

**World Premiere: 20 Apr 1987**

Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY, USA

Steve Reich and Musicians / Members of Manhattan Marimba Quartet / Members of

NEXUS

---

**Triple Quartet****1998**

20 min

string quartet (with pre-recorded tape) and live string quartet, or string ensemble or string orchestra

Version 1: for string quartet and pre-recorded tape (DA-88 tape playback and amplification required)

Version 2: for string ensemble or string orchestra

NB: these are two separate performing editions

---

**World Premiere: 22 May 1999**

Kennedy Center, Washington, DC, United States

Kronos Quartet

---

**Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings****2005**

25 min

dance piece for vibraphones, pianos and strings

2 pft-4vib-3 string quartets (or sm string section\*)

\*no amplification required if more than 3 to a part

*"The instrumental writing in the variations is as beautifully crafted as ever, built upon a rotating sequence of four chords and creating a fast-slow-fast scheme, with the movements getting progressively shorter."*

*The Guardian*

*"Three string quartets spar with four vibraphones, clashing and aligning in turn. Underneath the subtly changing textures the dark ruminations of two pianos provide a moody balance to some of Reich's most buoyant harmonies."*

*The Times*

---

**World Premiere: 18 Mar 2006**

Philharmonie, Köln, Germany

Akram Khan, choreographer; London Sinfonietta

Conductor: Bradley Lubman

## ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITH VOICE(S)

### Daniel Variations

2006

30 min

for large ensemble

Text: Book of Daniel; Daniel Pearl (E)

2cl-4pft-perc(6):BD/tam-t/4vib-\*2vln.vla.vlc-4 voices(\*SSTT)

\*max. 1 player/voice per part

*"Daniel Variations [is] a haunting work that circles around alternating ideas of celebration and discord, the latter represented literally by the bitter harmonic interval of a second, which nags away somewhere in the score, even when the music attains the quintessentially Reichian qualities of hypnotic rapture."*

*The Guardian*

*"In the most recent pieces Reich has consolidated four decades of invention. Neon-lit textures have given way to dense, dusky landscapes, with tender lyrical passages at the heart of each piece. It's as if Reich were finally letting himself look back in time, perhaps even indulging a secret Romantic urge. Yet, in the tribute to Daniel Pearl, there is also a new influx of coiled power: fleets of pianos and percussion tap out telegraphic patterns, warning of the next big crash."*

*The New Yorker*

**World Premiere: 08 Oct 2006**

Barbican Hall, London, United Kingdom  
Steve Reich Ensemble / Synergy Vocals  
Conductor: Bradley Lubman

### Drumming

1970-71

1 hr 25 min

for 8 small tuned drums, 3 marimbas, 3 glockenspiels, 2 female voices, whistling and piccolo

Part1:4pairs of tuned bongo drums 25'  
Part2:3marimbas(6 players),2female voices 26'  
Part3:3glsp(4 players),picc 16'  
Part4:complete ensemble 19'  
(each of the four parts may be performed separately)

**World Premiere: 03 Dec 1971**

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA  
Steve Reich and Musicians

### Know What Is Above You

1999

3 min 30 sec

for four voices and percussion

Text: Pirke Avot 2:1

3S, A  
perc: 2tamborim

**World Premiere: 19 Nov 1999**

St Ann's, Brooklyn, NY, United States  
Anonymous 4

### Music for 18 Musicians

1974-76

55 min

for ensemble

2cl(I,II=bcl)-4pft-perc(6):3marimbas/2xyl/vib-vln.vlc-4female voices(SSSA)

9790051212392 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score1239**

**World Premiere: 24 Apr 1976**

Town Hall, New York, NY, USA  
Steve Reich and Musicians

### Music for a Large Ensemble

1978

17 min

1.0.2.2ssax.0-0.4.0.0-perc:4marimba/2xyl/vib-4pft-2vln.2vla.2vlc.2db  
-2female voices (woodwinds,pft,voices and strings amplified)

**World Premiere: 01 Jun 1979**

Holland Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Nederlands Blazers Ensemble  
Conductor: Reinbert de Leeuw

### Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ

1973

18 min 30 sec

4marimbas.2glsp.metallophone.2 female voices (long tones with organ).  
1 female voice (melodic patterns with marimbas).elec.organ

**World Premiere: 16 May 1973**

John Weber Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
Steve Reich and Musicians

---

**Proverb****1995**

14 min

for voices and ensemble

Text: Ludwig Wittgenstein (E)

3lyrS.2T

2vib-2kbd (playing 4 five-octave kbd)

---

**World premiere complete: 10 Feb 1996**

Alice Tully Hall, New York, New York, USA

Paul Hillier, director; Steve Reich and Musicians / Theater of Voices

---

**Tehillim****(ensemble version)****1981**

30 min

for voices and ensemble

Text: 4 Psalms (Hebrew)

4female voices(hiS, 2lyrS, A)

1.picc.1.corA.2.1(opt)-perc(6):maracas/clapping/4tuned tamb without  
jingles/marimba/vib/crot-2elec.organ-string quintet (woodwinds, voices, and strings  
amplified)9790051211890 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1189**

**PIANO(S)**

**Six Pianos**

**1973**

24 min

for six pianos

(available as Six Marimbas for six marimbas)

9790051103751 **6 Pianos, 12 Hands**

9790051211937 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1193**

**World Premiere: 16 May 1987**

John Weber Gallery, New York, NY, USA

Steve Reich and Musicians

## INSTRUMENTAL

### Cello Counterpoint

**2003** 11 min 30 sec

for cello and pre-recorded tape (or cello octet)

**World Premiere: 18 Oct 2003**

Krannert Center, Urbana-Champaign, IL, USA

Maya Beiser, cello;

### Electric Counterpoint

**1987** 15 min

for electric guitar and tape

Gtr soloist and gtr ensemble, ensemble consists of 12 gtr and 2 elec. bass gtr (ensemble may be live or on tape).  
CD accompaniment available on rental

9790051390700 **Guitar (score & part)**

**World Premiere: 05 Nov 1987**

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY, USA

Pat Metheny, guitar;

### Electric Guitar Phase

**Alternate title; GUITAR PHASE**

**2000** 15 min

for electric guitar and pre-recorded tape

### Hague/Vermont Counterpoint

Steve Reich, arranged by Reine-Marie Verhagen

**1982/2004** 9 min

for solo recorder and tape/recorder ensemble

solo rec (tenor/bass/soprano) and tape/rec ensemble (solo tenor/bass/soprano/, solo soprano/alto, 3 soprano, 3 tenor, 3 bass)

### Nagoya Guitars

Steve Reich, arranged by David Tanenbaum

**1994** 5 min

transcription for two guitars by David Tanebaum in collaboration with the composer (1996)

9790051390946 **2 Guitars**

### Nagoya Marimbas

**1994** 5 min

for two marimbas

9790051260119 **2 Marimbas**

**World Premiere: 21 Dec 1994**

Shirakawa Hall, Nagoya College of Music, Nagoya, Japan

Sekar Sakura, marimba / Yuki Kurihara, marimba / Maki Kurihara, marimba ;

### New York Counterpoint

**1985** 11 min 20 sec

for clarinet and tape, or 11 clarinets (8 clarinets, clarinet (=bass clarinet), 2 bass clarinets)

CD accompaniment available on rental

9790051102822 **Clarinet (score & part)**

**World Premiere: 20 Jan 1986**

Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY, USA

Richard Stoltzman, clarinet;

### New York Counterpoint (arr. for Sax Quartet)

Steve Reich, arranged by Susan Fancher

**1985** 11 min

Arranged for saxophone quartet and pre-recorded tape by Susan Fancher for the Vienna Saxophone Quartet

sax quartet (SATB) with tape

9790051261710 **Saxophone Ensemble (Full Score)**

9790051106035 **Saxophone Quartet, CD**

**World premiere of version: 17 Dec 1995**

Ensemble Theater, Vienna, Austria

Vienna Saxophone Quartet

### New York Counterpoint (Solo soprano sax and tape)

Steve Reich, arranged by Susan Fancher

**1985** 11 min

Arrangement for solo soprano sax and pre-recorded tape by Susan Fancher

9790051106042 **Soprano Saxophone, CD**

---

**Tokyo/Vermont Counterpoint**

Steve Reich, arranged by Miyako Yoshida

**1982**

9 min

for KAT MIDI mallet and pre-recorded tape

---

**Typing Music**

[Genesis XII]

**1993**

3 min

for percussion from The Cave, Act I

Amplified computer kbd.2clapping.2claves.2BD

---

**Vermont Counterpoint**

**1982**

9 min

for flute (=piccolo,alto flute) and tape. Ensemble version for 8 flutes

(1=picc,afl.4=picc) & 3afl

CD accompaniment available on rental

9790051590940 **Flute (score & part)**

---

**World Premiere: 01 Oct 1982**

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY, USA

Ransom Wilson, flute;

## CHORAL

### You Are (Variations)

2004

25 min

for voices and large ensemble

Text: Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Psalm 16, Wittgenstein, The Talmud (E, Heb)

3S.1A.2T\*

2.1.corA.3.0-0.0.0.0-perc(4):2mar/2vib-4pft-strings (3.3.3.3.1 players or more\*\*)

All instruments and singers are amplified. Strings should use clip-on contact microphones if possible.

\*1 or 3 to a part (6 or 18 singers). Voices must be amplified.

\*\* no amplification needed if more than 3 players to a part

*"You Are is an exceptional score... what is so impressive is the way Reich has written through the pithy texts to achieve music that feels as if we are watching (hearing) music bloom to fill not just the room but the consciousness. Part of this is Reich's brilliant and original variation technique... The music gets richer and richer. At the same time the text...has the quality of an injection of wisdom. Gradually it infects awareness, words, tones, rhythms and meanings. Then there is the sheer visceral sensation of compelling music, insistent in its rhythms, building complexities... a masterpiece."*

*Los Angeles Times*

*"You Are (Variations) incorporates "aphoristic truisms" from ancient Hebrew and more recent Wittgenstein... Like a jewel examined in changing light, the text rises and falls through the instrumental texture... The marvel of the work is the newness of its expression, the fresh sounds and messages Reich has found within materials that are already known aspects of his musical language... He continues to find new uses for his 'classic' minimalist techniques, as You Are (Variations) handsomely suggests."*

*Los Angeles Weekly*

**World Premiere: 24 Oct 2004**

Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, California, USA

Grant Gershon; Los Angeles Master Chorale

**BAND**

**City Life**

Steve Reich, arranged by Anthony Fiumara

**1995/2005**

24 min

for wind band

fl.2cl.asax.2tsax-hn.3tpt.2trbn.btrbn-perc(3 or  
4):2vib/cym/SD/gong/2BD-2samplers-2pft-db(or bass gtr)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

---

**Come Out**

1966

13 min

for tape

---

**It's Gonna Rain**

1965

17 min

for tape

---

**Melodica**

1966

11 min

for tape

---

**My Name Is**

1967

for three or more recorders, performers, and audience