Phases — The Music of Steve Reich

In 1964, at the age of thirty, I formed my first ensemble of three musicians. The possibility that in forty years there would be festivals of my music around the world to celebrate my 70th year was unimaginable.

My music has never stayed within conventional boundaries. In 1973, after my ensemble played a concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, a young man with long hair and lipstick came up and said, ‘Hello, I’m Brian Eno’. Three years later in Berlin, David Bowie showed up for the European premiere of ‘Music for 10 Musicians’. In the 1990s I found myself remixed by a younger generation of DJs.

For the young students who sit in clubs in the fifties and sixties listening to Miles Davis, Kenny Clarke and John Coltrane, you could say this was poetic justice. I was taught by William Austin, Hall Overton, Vincent Persichetti, Muriel Milhaud and Luciano Berio. But I was also influenced by Ghanaian drumming, Balinese gamelan and Hebrew chant as I was by Bartok, Strawinsky, Perahia and Bach.

People assumed there was a mathematical basis for what I composed, since there were clearly musical processes working themselves out in my music. But they were wrong. All these processes were founded on musical intuition. I judged the results by ear. I’ve sometimes used samplers and computers, but have also felt the need to rid myself of technology and just write for musicians and singers. And so it has continued and grown to this day.

— Steve Reich

Phases — The Music of Steve Reich
is also part of Di6

For the latest information on this festival visit — www.barbican.org.uk/reich

Phases — The Music of Steve Reich
Rosas/Alston/Khan —
dance to music by Steve Reich
A triple bill

Thu 28/Fri 29/Sat 30 Sep 2006/7.45pm
— Barbican Theatre

Part 1: Rosas Dance Company
Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker & Michèle Anne De Mey
Piano Phase and Violin Phase from Four movements to the music of Steve Reich

Part 2: Richard Alston Dance Company
Theatre of Voices
Athanas Sinfonietta Copenhagen
Paul Hillier director
Conductus Anon. 13th-century Reich Proverbs
Dance commissioned by b1006
(world premiere)

Part 3: Akram Khan Company
London Sinfonietta
Alan Pierson conductor
Reich Variations for Vibes, Pianos & Strings
An Echo commission
(London premiere)

Tickets £12/£16/£21/£26/£30 M

Installation
Thierry De Mey

Violin Phase/Top Shot
Entry is free — please check Barbican website for times

Filmed from the top of a 20 metre high crane, Thierry De Mey’s film shows Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker dancing on smooth white sand that her feet disturb to reveal the pattern of the choreography — a rose (rosas). The audience are free to move around and within the installation.

Photo by Josie Bell

Richard Alston Dance Company in Meryl, photo by Mark Leckey

Photo by Luis Beneito

Akram Khan Company © Colm Nacrada

Steve Reich © Martin Goddard
The Desert Music

Sun 1 Oct 2006 / 7.30pm

Reich Three Movements
Stravinsky The Rite of Spring
Reich (arr.Pierson) The Desert Music

London Symphony Orchestra
Xian Zhang conductor
Synergy Vocals

The 1980s were Reich’s orchestral decade and the shimmering Desert Music features the repeated, interlocking melodic patterns found in much of his earlier music. William Carlos Williams' “desert is a place of both desolation and revelation and his poem ‘The Orchestras’, which Reich incorporates in his visionary cantata, uses the orchestral as a metaphor for civilization. In Three Movements it’s hard to say when rhythmic pulses end and melodic patterns begin, an ambiguity that is a mark of Reich’s music. This also colours Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring, which ripped tradition to shreds.

Tickets £6/12/18/24/30

The Cave

West 4 / Thu & Fri 5 Oct 2006 / 7.30pm
Barbican Theatre

Conceived and developed by Steve Reich & Beryl Korot

Steve Reich music
Beryl Korot multi-channel video
Steve Reich Ensemble
Brad Lubman conductor

A thrilling collaboration between Steve Reich and video artist Beryl Korot. The Cave explores Judaism and Islam through the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. Created in 1993, The Cave was an exciting glimpse into the future of opera — an epic three-act, five-screen, 16 musician production demanding entirely new possibilities for music-theatre. With the innovative use of multimedia, The Cave captures the metaphysical qualities of the human voice to form a richly woven fabric of sound and image and a radical alternative to traditional opera.

Tickets £7/12/16/21/26/30 M

All part of the LSO’s 2006 / 7 season
Part of LSO Live: The Festival Orchestra
Phases — The Music of Steve Reich

**Music Marathon Days**

**— Saturday**

**Session 1** — LSO St Luke’s
Sat 7 Oct 2006/ 11am

**In the Beginning**

This is where it all started. The pioneer of minimalism created his fascinating and far-reaching musical idea of ‘phasing’ with two dancers and two tape loops in It’s Gonna Rain and Come Out, later applying it to instruments in Piano Phase, which is given a powerful visual slant in Video Phase (David Cassin, UK premiere). The wake-up call Four Organs (Bang On A Can All-Stars), often described as Reich’s ‘punk piece’, is made out of one hypnotic chord, surely the longest cadence in the history of Western music. Michael Gordon has no fewer than three byrds of dance rhythm going at once in his energetic breakthrough work Yo Shakespeare (Icebreaker).

Tickets £10/£15 M

**Session 2** — LSO St Luke’s
Sat 7 Oct 2006/ 4pm

**Distant Voices**

Musical music ranging from Pärt’s ‘Viderunt omnes’ one of the surviving major works of the 12th century Maria degli Angeli school to Reich’s own spectacular take on medieval French counterpart Proverb (Theatre of Voices - Paul Hillier). One of Reich’s most significant works, Different Trains (String Quartet), moves recorded speech of Holocaust survivors — as a metaphor rather than lyrical element, with string quartet. It compares and contrasts the associated ambient sounds Reich remembers from his childhood cross-country train trips in 1940s America, with the very different trains taking Jewish children to certain death in Nazi occupied Europe.

Tickets £10/£15 M

**Session 3** — Barbican Theatre
Sat 7 Oct 2006/ 7.30pm

**Diversions**

You Are (Variations) (BBC Symphony Orchestra, Synergy Vocals, Stefan Asbury), one of Reich’s most extended works, receives its Second British performance. It focuses on timeless questions, its epigrammatic texts taken from philosophy and scripture. Reich’s work too has a doctor character in the 1980s, drawing on political themes as well as his Jewish heritage. Tehillim (BBC SO, Synergy Vocals, Asbury), meaning ‘Praises’, one of his most accessible and exciting scores, setting lines of texts to melody and may have the composer’s worlds ending and nuclear age coming to an end. Tehillet — an influence on Reich’s orchestral writing — is featured with his latest work and early concept Music for Strings, Percussion & Celeste (BBC SO), which grows from a single theme.

Tickets £10/£15/£20 M

**Session 4** — Barbican Hall
Sat 7 Oct 2006/ 7.30pm

**Remixing Reich**

Before anyone had ever heard of loops, remixing, samples and protocols, Steve Reich had set the scene for what was to come in the world of electronics. His work with tape machines — recording everyday sounds, creating out-of- synchrony tape loops — turned out to be truly groundbreaking electronic music. Seminal pieces such as Come Out and It’s Gonna Rain influenced a whole generation of artists from Brian Eno to Ryuichi Sakamoto. This special concert features a live performance of Reich’s Drumming (Steve Reich and Musicians with Synergy Vocals) alongside a whole array of contemporary artists whose music and work have been indubitably influenced by Reich. From DJs to electronic samplers and chemists on stage, this unique event features music from many different genres and scenes.

Tickets £10/£15/£20/£25/£30 M
Phases — The Music of Steve Reich

Music Marathon Days — Sunday

Session 5 — St Luke's
Sun 5 Oct 2006 / 11am

Session 6 — St Luke’s
Sun 5 Oct 2006 / 3pm

Extensions

After Drumming Reich began exploring the lengthening of phrases and melodic fragments. Tumbling pulsations evolve from a single musical pattern in Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ (Steve Reich Ensemble with Synergy Vocals) while Eight Lines (Brigitte Sibonuo, Tim Weiss) extends short patterns into longer lines. In Triple Quartet (Kronos Quartet) a quartet performs live against itself, pre-recorded twice, creating a web of twelve dissonant lines and, says Reich, “a life of its own from Bartok’s Fourth String Quartet. Long City Can compose ‘Judaic’ and David Lang features with Lick (Bong On A Can All Stars), which combines the body energy of pop music, motown, funk, rock while the score of Cheating, Lying, Stealing (Bong On A Can All Stars) is like ‘Ominous funk’.

Tickets £10 / £15 / £20

New York

Born and brought up in New York, where he still lives, Reich epitomises the city and its life. City Life (Brigitte Sibonuo, Stefan Abalos) music samples of speech with the gritty grinding, screeching and relentless sounds of this urban landscape. Each of the three movements of New York Counterpoint (Evan Ziporyn) — mysterious, contemplative, humorous — uses minimal means to maximum effect. Full City (new environmental symphony) Gotham (Brigitte Sibonuo, Stefan Abalos) which is another opera for New York City. Reich’s musical 'global village' as seen in Central Park. The voices in The Sad Park (Kronos Quartet, UK premiere) now available on CD. Reich’s score to 2011 as part of the east Ground Zero Project. Tickets £10 / £15 / £20

Responses to Reich

Through Reich contemporary music has been changed forever. His innovative sampling, phasing and electronic experimentation created the templates from which many current artists have developed their own work. This concert features artists from a broad spectrum of musical genres to bring together a response to Reich and his music. A line-up of international artists and composers explores the extraordinary breadth of one man’s influence on today’s music. The evening includes the world premiere of a new commission for a diverse group of musicians by British composer, Gavin Bryars (world premiere), who collaborated on performances of Drumming in the 70s. This is his tribute to the influence of Steve Reich.

Tickets £10 / £15 / £20

Session 7 — Barbican Theatre
Sun 5 Oct 2006 / 5pm

Session 8 — Barbican Hall
Sun 5 Oct 2006 / 8pm

Qwantessential Reich

Daniel Variations (Steve Reich Ensemble with Synergy Vocals, Brad Lubman, world premiere) was commissioned by the Barbican in celebration of Reich’s 70th birthday. Reich puts a text from the Book of Daniel alongside words by the vaulstist and mandolin player Daniel Pelzig, the jazz pianist Lonke Gustafson and himself. The piece is performed by the Barbican’s resident artists and is one of the landmarks in the early history of minimalism, and the work that cemented Reich’s reputation.

Tickets £10 / £15 / £20 / £25 / £30

Bolted Nest...