

rests are gradually substituted for the beats, one at a time, until only a section leads to a build-up for the drums, marimbas, and glockenspiels simultaneously.

There is, then, only one basic rhythmic pattern for all of *Drumming*. This pattern undergoes changes of phase position, pitch, and timbre, but all the performers play this pattern, or some part of it, throughout the entire piece. — Steve Reich

Steve Reich was recently called "our greatest living composer" (The New York Times), "America's greatest living composer" (The Village VOICE), "...the most original musical thinker of our time" (The New Yorker) and "...among the great composers of the century" (The New York Times). From his early taped speech pieces *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966) to his and video artist Beryl Korot's digital video opera *Three Tales* (2002), Mr. Reich's path has embraced not only aspects of Western Classical music, but the structures, harmonies, and rhythms of non-Western and American vernacular music, particularly jazz. "There's just a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history and Steve Reich is one of them," states The Guardian (London). In April, 2009 Steve Reich was awarded the Pulitzer prize in Music for his composition *Double Sextet*.

Born in New York and raised there and in California, Mr. Reich graduated with honors in philosophy from Cornell University in 1957. For the next two years, he studied composition with Hall Overton, and from 1958 to 1961 he studied at the Juilliard School of Music with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti. Mr. Reich received his M.A. in Music from Mills College in 1963, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud.

During the summer of 1970, with the help of a grant from the Institute for International Education, Mr. Reich studied drumming at the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana in Accra. In 1973 and 1974 he studied Balinese Gamelan Semar Pegulingan and Gamelan Gambang at the American Society for Eastern Arts in Seattle and Berkeley, California. From 1976 to 1977 he studied the traditional forms of cantillation (chanting) of the Hebrew scriptures in New York and Jerusalem.

In 1966 Steve Reich founded his own ensemble of three musicians, which rapidly grew to 18 members or more. Since 1971, Steve Reich and Musicians have frequently toured the world, and have the distinction of performing to sold-out houses at venues as diverse as Carnegie Hall and the Bottom Line Cabaret.

The Southern Oregon University Percussion Ensemble, directed by Terry Longshore, is dedicated to the performance of contemporary percussion repertoire and providing the members with a variety of percussive experiences. The ensemble frequently collaborates with notable composers on premieres of new works, and repertoire ranges from contemporary music to world traditions to jazz- and rock-inspired compositions. The ensemble gives several concerts every year at the Oregon Center for the Arts at Southern Oregon University, as well as many performances throughout the Southern Oregon community and the Pacific Northwest, and was invited to perform at the 2013 and 2014 Percussive Arts Society International Conventions (PASIC). The ensemble has self-released two CDs, "La Alma del Árbol - The Soul of the Tree", and "Electric Rebel Poetry". In 2015 the SOU Percussion Ensemble recorded the CD, "30", by Stanford University composer Mark Applebaum, released internationally on the Innova Recordings label. The SOU Percussion Ensemble endorses Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets.

OREGON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Southern Oregon University
Percussion Ensembles

Terry Longshore, Artistic Director
assisted by Bryan Jeffs

Steve Reich's *Drumming*

Music at SOU

May 26, 2016 ▪ 7:30 p.m.

SOU Music Recital Hall

COMPOSER'S NOTES

For one year, between the fall of 1970 and the fall of 1971, I worked on what turned out to be the longest piece I have ever composed. *Drumming* lasts from 55 to 75 minutes (depending on the number of repeats played) and is divided into four parts that are performed without pause. The first part is for four pairs of tuned bongo drums, stand-mounted and played with sticks; the second, for three marimbas played by nine players together with two women's voices; the third, for three glockenspiels played by four players together with whistling and piccolo; and the fourth section is for all these instruments and voices combined.

While first playing the drums during the process of composition, I found myself sometimes singing with them, using my voice to imitate the sounds they made. I began to understand that this might also be possible with the marimbas and glockenspiels as well. Thus the basic assumption about the voices in *Drumming* was that they would not sing words, but would precisely imitate the sound of the instruments. The women's voices sing patterns resulting from the combination of two or more marimbas playing the identical repeating pattern one of more quarter notes out of phase with each other. By exactly imitating the sound of the instruments, and by gradually fading the patterns in and out, the singers cause them to slowly rise to the surface of the music and then fade back into it, allowing the listener to hear these patterns, along with many others, actually sounding in the instruments. For the marimbas, the female voice was needed, using consonants like "b" and "d" with a more or less "u" (as in "you") vowel sound. In the case of the glockenspiels, the extremely high range of the instrument precluded any use of the voice and necessitated whistling. Even this form of vocal production proved impossible when the instrument was played in its higher ranges, and this created the need for a more sophisticated form of whistle: the piccolo. In the last section of the piece these techniques are combined simultaneously with each imitating its particular instrument.

The sections are joined together by the new instruments doubling the exact pattern of the instruments already playing. At the end of the drum section three drummers play the same pattern two quarter notes out of phase with each other. Three marimba players enter softly with the same pattern also played two quarter notes out of phase. The drummers gradually fade out so that the same rhythm and pitches are maintained with a gradual change of timbre. At the end of the marimba section the players are doubled by three glockenspiels in their lowest range so that the process of maintaining rhythm and pitch while gradually changing timbre is repeated. The sections are not set off from each other by changes in key, the traditional means of gaining extended length in Western music. *Drumming* shows that it is possible to keep going in the same key for quite a while if there are instead considerable rhythmic developments together with occasional, but complete, changes of timbre to supply variety.

I am often asked what influence my visit to Africa in summer of 1970 had on *Drumming*. The answer is confirmation. It confirmed my intuition that acoustic instruments could be used to produce music that was genuinely richer in sound than that produced with electronic instruments, as well as confirming my natural inclination towards percussion (I became a drummer at the age of 14).

The transition from glockenspiels to the last section of the piece, for all instruments and voices combined, is made by a new musical process I call build-up and reduction. *Drumming* begins with two drummers building up the basic rhythmic pattern of the entire piece from a single drum beat, played in a cycle of twelve beats with rests on all the other beats. Gradually additional drumbeats are substituted for the rests, one at a time, until the pattern is completed. The reduction process is simply the reverse where

PROGRAM

<i>Drumming</i> (1970-71)	Steve Reich (b. 1936)
Part 1	Jared Brown, Jordan Curcuruto, Joseph Howe, Kevin Younker, bongos
Part 2	Lindsay Burns, Nelson Cornejo, Evan Daggett, Adam Lion, Brenna Netzky, Jake Riggs, Lucas Sennhauser, Brian Taylor, Joseph Tierney, marimbas Jordan Curcuruto, Rain Milam, vocals
Part 3	Jared Brown, Jordan Curcuruto, Joseph Howe, Kevin Younker, glockenspiels Bryan Jeffs, whistler; Chelsea Villanueva, piccolo
Part 4	Jared Brown, Adam Lion, Brenna Netzky, Joseph Tierney, bongos Evan Daggett, Terry Longshore, Jake Riggs, marimbas Joseph Howe, Lucas Sennhauser, Kevin Younker, glockenspiels Lindsay Burns, Nelson Cornejo, Jordan Curcuruto, Rain Milam, Brian Taylor, vocals Bryan Jeffs, whistler; Chelsea Villanueva, piccolo