

**Steve Reich**

# Steve Reich and Musicians

## Work in Progress for 21 musicians and singers

18

Russ Hartenberger  
marimba/xylophone

James Preiss  
metallophone/piano

Bob Becker  
marimba/xylophone/piano

Glen Velez  
marimba

David Van Tieghem  
marimba

Gary Schall  
marimba

Steve Reich  
marimba/piano

Steve Chambers  
piano

Nurit Tilles  
piano

Larry Karush  
piano

David Lopato  
piano

Shem Guibbory  
violin

Ken Ishii  
cello

Leslie Scott  
clarinet/bass clarinet

Richard Cohen  
clarinet/bass clarinet

Jay Clayton  
voice

Pamela Fraley  
voice

Janice Jarrett  
voice

~~Sheila Schonbrun~~  
voice

Geordie Arnold  
voice

Johana Arnold  
voice

Section I  
Bar 4

MARIMBA 1  
MARIAMBA 2  
PIANO 1  
PIANO 2  
MARIAMBA 3  
PIANO 3  
2 VIOLINS (Violin 1 & 2)  
CELLO  
2 CLARINETS  
2 VIBRAPHONES  
PERCUSSION

Music for 18 Musicians - Section I, bar 4 - Steve Reich 1975

Music for 18 Musicians is my largest work to date. The first sketches were begun in May 1974 and it was completed in March 1976. The piece is about 55 minutes long. It is scored for violin, cello, 2 clarinets doubling bass clarinet, 4 women's voices, 4 pianos, 3 marimbas, 2 xylophones, 1 metallophone (vibraphone with mallets) and maracas. All instruments are acoustical. The use of electronics is limited to microphones for the voices + some of the instruments.

Although its regular beat and rhythmic energy are similar to earlier works of mine its instrumentation, structure and use of harmony are new. There is more harmonic movement in the first 5 minutes of Music for 18 Musicians than in all of my previous works combined. Although the change of harmony may often be a simple inversion of a previous chord, or a change from minor to relative major and vice-versa, nevertheless, within these limits, there is more harmonic movement in this piece than in all my previous works.

The structure of Music for 18 Musicians is built on a cycle of 11 chords which are played as a sort of pulsing cantus at the beginning and end of the piece. This cycle of 11 chords serves as a sort of cantus firmus for the entire piece. Each section of the piece takes one chord after the other and stretches it out for 3-4 minutes as the harmonic center for that section, much as a single tone in the plainchant cantus of a Polyphonic 4 part organum will serve as the tonal center for polyphony.

Transitions from section to section, as well as changes within sections are made by audible cues throughout the piece played by the metallophone, whose only function is to give cues. This is similar in function, though not in sound, to the audible cues given by a drummer in a Balinese Gamelan for changes of tempo or pattern, and to the audible cues given by a master drummer in a West African ensemble for changes in the music. Audible cues are in contrast to the Western practice of having a non-performing conductor giving visual cues. Audible cues become part of the music and allow all musicians to keep listening.

Steve Reich - 1976