

**MONDAY
EVENING
CONCERTS**

**REICH/LÉONIN/PÉROTIN:
'HOW SMALL A
THOUGHT IT TAKES'**

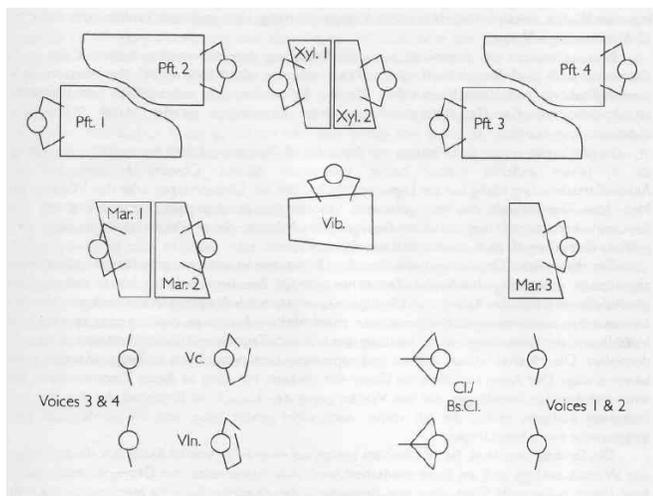
December 17, 2018 | 8:00 PM
Zipper Concert Hall



Steve Reich



[title not known] – Frank Stella



Stage Diagram for *Music for 18 Musicians*

MONDAY EVENING CONCERTS DECEMBER 17, 2018

Reich/Léonin/Pérotin: 'How Small a Thought It Takes'

Steve Reich – **Come Out** (1966) [13']

for electronic tape
Michael Pisaro, sound projection

Léonin – **Viderunt Omnes** (ca. 1160) [8']

Pérotin – **Viderunt Omnes** (ca. 1198) [12']

MEC Early Music Consort (Joel Nesvadba, project leader)

Taylor Jacobs, tenor
David Morales, tenor
Joel Nesvadba, baritone
Jae Park, bass
Malachai Bandy, vielle
Jonathan Hepfer, bells

Intermission

Steve Reich – **Music for 18 Musicians** (1974-76) [55']

ECHOI Ensemble

Jack Dettling, piano and marimba
Vicki Ray, piano
Gloria Cheng, piano
Nicholas Carozzi, piano auxiliary
Thomas Feng, piano
Richard An, piano auxiliary
Brian Walsh, clarinets
Madison Greenstone, clarinets
Sidney Hopson, marimba
Dustin Donahue, marimba
Cory Hills, marimba
Eric Derr, xylophone
Derek Tywoniuk, xylophone
Clint Dodson, maracas and marimba
Kathryn Shuman, voice
Laurel Irene, voice
Anna Schubert, voice
Amanda Keenan, voice
Xenia Deviatkina-Loh, violin
Seth Parker Woods, violoncello
Jonathan Hepfer, vibraphone and project director

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MAY 20: BOULEZ / DEBUSSY / TAKEMITSU

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Monday Evening Concerts thanks Cal Perc LA for their generosity and hospitality with their rehearsal space.

PROGRAM NOTES

"How small a thought it takes to fill a whole life!" – Ludwig Wittgenstein

This concert marks not only the opening of our 2018/19 concert season, but also the first time Steve Reich's music has been significantly programmed in the history of Monday Evening Concerts. Nodding at philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, an early influence on Reich, we trace out, tonight, ways in which Reich's small thoughts have proliferated to form a composer's broader worldview. Reich's music is typically characterized by the repetition of small musical materials. However, small thoughts filling whole lives goes beyond mere sound waves occupying the concert hall. As you hear the endless loop of Daniel Hamm's voice in *Come Out*, or the opening marimba chord in *Music for 18 Musicians*, the very appearance and meaning of those materials undergo the journey of a lifetime. By the end of his pieces, you will have heard not much more than you did in the first two seconds. Yet, the relationship you have with that small musical droplet will have expanded into an ocean.

Founded in 1939, Monday Evening Concerts is the longest running contemporary music series in the United States. Throughout that time, alongside these new works, we have paired some of the oldest in the Western Classical music tradition. Léonin and Pérotin take us back to the 12th and 13th century, when polyphony (music with more than one pitch occurring at once) was making its first appearance in Western music. Just as Reich stood on the edge of the 20th century, his music laying the groundwork for what is now referred to as 'minimalism,' Léonin established early forms of polyphony in the late 12th century. Pérotin, only a few years later, pushed forward in this new direction, and marked the 13th century with a shift that would forever move Western music into a tradition of polyphony. When Pérotin set the text of *Viderunt Omnes*, it is unlikely he would have thought anything more of his work than responding to the work of Léonin. However, tonight alongside Steve Reich, we hope you hear that early polyphony as just a small thought, one that would fill up an entire millennium of Western music.

Reich preferred for the gradual processes in his music to be as evident to the listener as it is to the composer. He withholds no secrets from us, composing a music in which the mysteries of listening are experienced in community. In a similar attitude, we hope that our musical convictions tonight would resonate strongly with your listening experience. We will be laying it all on the table, and we are thrilled that you will be here to experience it with us.

Steve Reich (b. 1936) – *Come Out*

In 1966, Steve Reich worked with civil rights activist Truman Nelson to create a sound collage for a benefit for the Harlem Six, a group of young black men arrested and beaten during the 1964 Little Fruit Stand Riot. Nelson gave Reich over seventy hours of tapes and footage related to the incident. Out of that collage, Reich created *Come Out*, which used only four seconds of that archive. Those four seconds were of Daniel Hamm, one of the Harlem Six. In the audio he explains how it was difficult to get medical attention in the prison. Strategically, he would make himself bleed, knowing that the only way to get aid was to make his injuries appear more serious than they already were, "I had to, like, open the bruise up, and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them."

Reich takes a single spoken phrase from this interview, "...come out to show them," and places it on an infinite loop. With another tape looping the same phrase in unison, he slowly shifts one of the loops forward in time, creating a phasing effect that gradually increases in intensity and creates an imperceptibly evolving form of counterpoint. He repeats this phase-shifting process many times, adding more and more loops, until the semantic legibility of the words is completely obscured. An early work in Reich's career, *Come Out* exemplifies the composer's interest in self-evident, gradual musical processes in the most straightforward of ways. The speech itself never actually changes. However, throughout the gradual process of phase-shifting, the semantic meaning of the words dissolves, making way for a musicalized ostinato of rhythmic phonemes. Though Reich was rarely explicit in his political expression, this piece stands out in his catalogue. What begins as a single voice, through Reich's process of transformation, multiplies and proliferates into a mass of voices. Language doesn't dissolve, so much as transcend. The impression *Come Out* makes on the listener is profound and haunting. Addressing issues of racial violence and police brutality, it is as relevant today as it was when it was composed fifty years ago.

Léonin (fl. 1150s – d. 1201) – *Viderunt Omnes*
Pérotin (fl. 1200s – d. 1205 or 1225) – *Viderunt Omnes*

Viderunt Omnes is not a title of Léonin's own invention. For about a hundred years before him, the text *Viderunt Omnes* was sung as a Gregorian chant in the Catholic church. What you are hearing tonight is Léonin and Pérotin taking this monophonic sacred melody and constructing a polyphonic musical work on top of it. In this way, polyphony was not a lightbulb moment invention for these 12th and 13th century composers. It emerged gradually from the body of monophonic music that had been codified in the church since the 11th century.

Léonin, the earlier of the two composers, creates a two-part polyphony with this piece. The bottom voice is the original Gregorian chant, on top of which original, more active melodies of Léonin skate over. It is a very simple expression of polyphony, in which the sung words are relatively intelligible and the counterpoint between the voices is smooth. It would take several more centuries until polyphony began to shape the drama of a piece, through tonal harmony. However, even in this earliest foray, we can hear clear moments of tension and release marked through the vowels of the text. The piece opens with a single unison note, on the closed vowel of "Vi-." The unison splits into two different lines, which float around until the open vowel of "-de-" makes way for an expansive release of energy, which then settles down with the closed vowel of "-runt."

Pérotin, who came after Léonin, creates a more complex polyphony out of *Viderunt Omnes*, setting the text to four parts instead of two. Not only that, his melodic treatment of the text moves farther away from the original character of the Gregorian chant. Léonin's two-part composition carried a fluid, floating nature. The rhythms were specified, but not so sharp in their syncopation. This created a music not far off in character from the original chant melody. When the Léonin intersperses its two part sections with moments of the chant alone, the state of the music does not feel so different. Pérotin, on the other hand, injects much more energy into his rhythm. In the moments the singers are in homophony (singing different pitches, but all in the same rhythm), the music takes on a dance-like quality, and when the voices split into fully independent lines, the text becomes nearly unintelligible.

The Western music of the early second millennium is a gradual process in itself. That is, the gradual process of polyphony emerging out of monophony. Interestingly, just as the text of *Come Out* gradually loses its semantic meaning and takes up a more acoustical one, the words of *Viderunt Omnes* become more difficult to discern, and the music, more active as we move from Léonin to Pérotin.

Steve Reich – *Music for 18 Musicians*

With agile momentum, near-orchestral force, and a network of cues between the musicians, *Music for 18 Musicians* is quick, immense, and fluid all at once. In the foreword to his collected writings, Steve Reich describes *Music for 18 Musicians* as the fullest maturation of his interest in music as a gradual process. While *Come Out* and other early works of Reich are straightforward in their development, the processes at work in *Music for 18 Musicians* occur subtly under the surface of the music. There is no single gradual process that applies to the entire piece. Rather, the work is structured around a sequence of 11 different chords, which the ensemble moves through over the course of the hour-long piece through cueing each other.

The opening marimba chord sets off the momentum for the entire 55-minute work. The ensemble, split into four smaller groups fade in and out around this marimba chord, wrapping new harmonies and timbres around it, as if we were catching different glints of light off a single rare gem. For an instrumentation of this size, it is unusual for a piece to not have a conductor. However, Reich intended for this, and originally composed this piece by simply writing shorthand directions to each musician, where all change in the piece occurred through cues from each performer. In this way, the gradual nature of the piece's momentum occurs organically at the ease of the musicians, rather than at the command of a conductor.

At first glance on paper, *Music for 18 Musicians* appears to be a piece of repetitions and loops. Upon listening to a performance, that perception takes on a new context. The repetitions become ubiquitous, a standard building block for the sound world. Out of that, a massive, undulating fabric is laid out. As harmonies and timbres fade in and fade out, it is as if the very space around us bends and folds in energy.

(program notes by Brandon Lincoln Snyder)

Brandon Lincoln Snyder is a composer, writer, and performer. He studied music at Harvard University and is currently the assistant producer for Monday Evening Concerts.

TEXTS and TRANSLATION

Come Out

"I had to, like, open the bruise up, and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them."

– Daniel Hamm

Viderunt Omnes

*Viderunt omnes fines terrae
salutare Dei nostril*

Jubilate Deo, omnis terra.

Notum fecit Dominus salutare suum;

ante conspectum gentium

revelavit justitiam suam.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

Rejoice in the Lord, all lands.

The Lord has made known his salvation;

in the sight of the heathen

he has revealed his righteousness.

BIOGRAPHIES

Jonathan Hepfer (b. 1983) is a percussionist, conductor, and concert curator specializing in avant-garde and experimental music. He began playing classical music at age 17 after discovering the work of John Cage while studying at SUNY Buffalo. Subsequently, Jonathan attended Oberlin Conservatory, UC – San Diego and the Musikhochschule Freiburg (with the support of a two-year DAAD fellowship), where he studied with Michael Rosen (craft), Steven Schick (interpretation) and Bernhard Wulff (metaphysics), respectively. Other major influences have included Jan Williams (aesthetics), Lewis Nielson (ethics), Brian Alegant (analysis), Hamza Walker (visual art), Margaret Morgan (critical theory) and William O'Brien (philosophy).

Jonathan is the Artistic Director of Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles. He has taken part in the US premieres of major works by Salvatore Sciarrino, Gérard Grisey, György Kurtág, Rolf Riehm, Jo Kondo, Aldo Clementi, Klaus Lang, Ramon Lazkano, Francisco Guerrero, Thomas Meadowcroft and Simon Steen-Andersen. His collaborators have included such luminaries as Alexei Lubimov, Séverine Ballon, Natalia Pschenitschnikova, and Mario Caroli.

Jonathan is the director of Echoi, a flexible chamber ensemble which he co-founded in 2006. He has collaborated as a soloist, chamber musician and conductor with ensembles such as Talea, Ensemble Mosaik, Ensemble SurPlus, asamisimasa, hand werk, the Formalist Quartet, ICE and Signal. He was also formerly a member red fish blue fish and the Freiburg Percussion Ensemble, which regularly toured central Europe, as well as Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia, Taiwan, Mexico and Ukraine.

As a soloist, Jonathan has focused extensively on the works of the composers Pierluigi Billone, Walter Zimmermann, Iannis Xenakis, Brian Ferneyhough, Helmut Lachenmann, Giacinto Scelsi, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Georges Aperghis and Vinko Globokar. He has given solo performances at the Stone in New York, Harvard University, the Tonhalle Düsseldorf (Germany), the Odessa Philharmonic Theater (Ukraine), and the National History Museum in Ulan Bator (Mongolia).

Notable projects have included co-directing Steve Reich's *Drumming* for Jacaranda Music in Santa Monica, performing Pierre Boulez' *Le Marteau sans Maître* in Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Israel and New York (under the direction of the composer), music-directing a live performance of Samuel Beckett's radio play *Words and Music* in Los Angeles, performing Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetry* and *For Philip Guston* in Buffalo, San Diego, Freiburg, LA and Marfa (Texas), and performing in a production of Shakespeare's *Othello* at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, directed by Barry Edelstein.

Jonathan has participated in artistic residencies at Harvard, Oberlin, SUNY Buffalo, and the universities of Minnesota, Huddersfield and Leeds. He has contributed articles to *Percussive Notes* and *Die Musik von Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf*, and has written liner notes on Pierluigi Billone's music for Kairos. Jonathan has also had the privilege of documenting the oral histories of the first generation of eminent European percussion soloists (namely, Christoph Caskel, Sylvio Gualda, Jean-Pierre Drouet, Gaston Sylvestre, Maurizio Ben-Omar), and will (theoretically) be releasing a book about this generation in the near future.

From 2015-2018, he served on the faculty of CalArts.

Of particular interest to Jonathan is the alchemical relationship of language and music...

Steve Reich (b. 1936) has been called "America's greatest living composer" (*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*).

Reich's musical legacy has been influential on composers and mainstream musicians all over the world. His music is known for steady pulse, repetition, and a fascination with canons; it combines rigorous structures with propulsive rhythms and seductive instrumental color, and also embraces harmonies of non-Western and American vernacular music (especially jazz).

Born in New York and raised there and in California, 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. Reich received his master's degree in music from Mills College in 1963, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud. His studies have also included Balinese gamelan, African drumming (at the University of Ghana), and traditional forms of chanting of the Hebrew scriptures.

Different Trains and *Music for 18 Musicians*, as well as an album of his percussion works, have earned Grammy Awards, and *Double Sextet* won the Pulitzer Prize in 2009.

Reich's documentary video opera works—*The Cave* and *Three Tales*, done in collaboration with video artist Beryl Korot—have pushed the boundaries of the operatic medium and have been presented on four continents.

Reich's music has been performed by major orchestras and ensembles around the world, including the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; London, Sydney, San Francisco, Boston, and BBC symphony orchestras; London Sinfonietta; Kronos Quartet; Ensemble Modern; Ensemble Intercontemporain; Ensemble Signal; International Contemporary Ensemble; Bang on a Can All-Stars; Alarm Will Sound; and eighth blackbird. Several noted choreographers have created dances to his music, such as Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Jirí Kylián, Jerome Robbins, Justin Peck, Wayne McGregor, Benjamin Millepied, and Christopher Wheeldon.

Reich was awarded the Gold Medal in Music by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2012. He was named Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France, as well as member in the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts. His honors include the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo, the Polar Music Prize in Stockholm, the BBVA Award in Madrid, the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, the 2016 Nemmers Prize in Music Composition from Northwestern University, as well as the Schuman Award from Columbia University, the Montgomery Fellowship from Dartmouth College, and the Regent's Lectureship at the University of California at Berkeley. He has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music in London, the Juilliard School, the Liszt Academy in Budapest, and the New England Conservatory of Music, among others.

This November, Susanna Mälkki leads the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the world premiere of Reich's *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra*. An extension of the Baroque concerto grosso, the work features a group of 20 soloists pulled from the orchestra's ranks. The piece is also performed this season by the London Symphony Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson, and San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas. Reich has also composed a new collaborative art piece with Gerhard Richter for the opening of *The Shed*, a new multi-arts center in New York City. Debuting this spring, the new large ensemble work explores the shared structure of Reich's new work and Richter's *Patterns*, and is premiered by musicians from Ensemble Signal and the International Contemporary Ensemble.

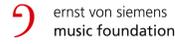
"There's just a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history and Steve Reich is one of them" (*The Guardian*).

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