



Royal
Academy
of
Music

REICH

for PERCUSSION

The Sainsbury Series



REICH

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- 01 Nagoya Marimbas** Barnaby Archer and Feargus Brennan *marimba* 4:45
- 02 Music for Pieces of Wood** Michael Rareshide, Daniel Robinson,
Barnaby Archer, Rebecca Celebuski and Ben Lewis *claves* 10:01
- Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings:**
- 03 I** 11:34
- 04 II** 6:36
- 05 III** 3:39
- Neil Percy *conductor*
Barnaby Archer, Feargus Brennan, Tom Lee and Ben Lewis *vibraphone*
Alexandra Vaduva and Yixin Mao *piano*
- Wilhelm Quartet: Marciana Buta and Margaret Dziekonski *violin*
Daisy Spiers *viola* Hetty Snell *cello*
- Artesian Quartet: Kate Suthers and Emily Davis *violin*
Matthew Maguire *viola* Alexander Rolton *cello*
- Toki Quartet: Aki Sawa and Midori Komachi *violin*
Joseph Fisher *viola* Amy Jolly *cello*
- 06 Clapping Music** Michael Rareshide and Tom Lee 3:16
- 07 Six Marimbas** Philip Welder, Michael Rareshide, Rebecca Celebuski,
James Crook, Fergus Brennan and Elena Martinez Canto *marimba* 19:15

Recorded at the Royal Academy of Music on 13th–15th November 2011.

Produced and Edited by **Simon Rhodes**

Executive Producer: **Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**

Recording, Editing and Mastering by **Kirsten Cowie**

Cover image from a photograph by **Alice Arnold**

Recorded by kind permission of Boosey and Hawkes and Universal.

We are deeply grateful for the support of Lady Susie Sainsbury towards the Academy's catalogue of recordings.

REICH

Steve Reich's relationship with percussion spans the entirety of his instrumental output. Composed over a period of thirty years, the works on this disc highlight the diversity of tonal, textural and colouristic effects that he achieves. Despite the wide variety of instrumental combinations, Reich follows a remarkably consistent compositional approach. Demonstrating both streamlined efficiency and an unparalleled ability to build complex musical utterances from the most basic of materials, these works show Reich's development of American minimalism into music of considerable intricacy and range.

It was in New York during the 1960s and 70s that Reich developed a musical style that would form the basis for much of his future work. His first acknowledged tape piece, *It's Gonna Rain* (1965), was a major landmark in minimalist development, with the effect of moving simple fragments gradually in and out of synchrony pivotal to its construction. This new technique, incorporated into instrumental music and dubbed 'phasing', underlies much of Reich's music during his early period.

Clapping Music (1971), for two handclapping performers, was born out of the desire to 'create a piece of music that needed no instruments beyond the human body.' Despite successfully using phasing techniques in works such as *Piano Phase* (1967), Reich found the mechanism needed adaptation for the simpler sound of handclapping. His eventual solution was to have one performer remain fixed, 'repeating the same basic pattern throughout, while the second moves abruptly from unison to one beat ahead, and so on, until he is back in unison with the first performer.' For all its simplicity, the ingenious rhythmic counterpoint that results is entrancingly hypnotic. Having earned significant popularity, *Clapping Music* has gone on to become one of minimalism's most iconic works and is still performed frequently today.

Composed little over a year later, **Music for Pieces of Wood** (1973) 'grows out of the same roots as *Clapping Music*' and is again born of the desire to make music using the simplest possible means. Reich describes the rhythmic structure as being based 'entirely on the process of rhythmic 'build-ups' or the substitution of beats for rests.'

The varying sections that result are linked together by an underlying crocheted pulse, heard in isolation at the outset but continuing throughout. Five pairs of claves (cylinders of hard wood) are used for performance of the work, each tuned to their own unique pitch.

Both *Music for Pieces of Wood* and *Clapping Music* were premiered by Reich's own ensemble 'Steve Reich and Musicians'. Initially comprised of just three members, Reich concentrated almost exclusively on composing for this group. Beginning in small lofts and galleries in New York, a rapid expansion soon took the number of players to 18 or more. It continues to remain active with many of the same musicians today.

Although chronologically out of step, **Nagoya Marimbas** (1994) bears many similarities to Reich's earlier music — an 'old piece done more recently' to use his own words. Written in honour of the opening of the Shirakawa Hall in Nagoya, the music incorporates his familiar style alongside a traditional Japanese modal system. Despite the use of earlier techniques, aspects of Reich's maturity are self-evident, not least through the virtuosic demands he makes of the performer and the greater development present in his melodic writing.

The incorporation of traditional Japanese music sits well with Reich, whilst the frequently changing nature of the musical material — in dynamic and character — result in a remarkably varied and compact composition.

The unique timbre of the marimba seems ideally suited to Reich's sound world, and his earlier work *Six Marimbas* is no exception. A 1986 rescoring of ***Six Pianos*** (1973), it was only with the recommendation of friend and group member James Preiss that it was reworked as heard here. The original grew out of a long-standing idea to compose a piece for numerous pianos in a piano store, though the concept was scaled back to facilitate delicate writing and avoid overpoweringly heavy textures. The slightly mechanical nature of *Six Pianos* is softened in the rescoring, a change that has seen *Six Marimbas* grow in popularity in comparison to its predecessor.

The construction of *Six Marimbas* is relatively complex, particularly in comparison to the simpler works of the early 70s. Beginning with three marimbas playing the same rhythmic pattern, Reich describes the gradual build up of additional and identical patterns two beats out of phase.

The remaining instruments are then used to double some of the many new melodic contours formed by the existing four-marimba relationship. 'By gradually increasing their volume they bring the resulting patters up to the surface of the music: then, by lowering the volume they slowly return them to the overall contrapuntal web.' The result is a remarkable textural flexibility, in which the listener is seamlessly drawn to the work's various melodic intricacies. Successively higher pitches are introduced, with the piece's three main sections marked by a gradually higher position on the marimba.

By the turn of the millennium Reich's reputation was secured and his increased stature earned him commissions from orchestras and contemporary music groups around the globe. One such example is his ***Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings***, commissioned by the London Sinfonietta in 2005. Immediately noteworthy for its distinctive instrumentation — four vibraphones, two pianos and three string quartets — the work provided Reich with the opportunity to return to the 'silver sound' of vibraphones and strings first used in *The Four Sections* (1987).

Structured in traditional three-movement form (fast-slow-fast), the Variations are based on a rotating harmonic cycle of four dominant seventh chords, their roots a minor third apart (D, F, A flat and B).

The first movement explores this cycle the most fully and is therefore the longest. An energetic opening sets the tone, with unpredictable bass accents serving not to disrupt but rather to provide an optimistic forward momentum to compliment the 'positive harmonic feeling' felt throughout. Much of the same melodic material is continued in the second movement, though the pace and dynamic are altered to transform it into an unerringly beautiful utterance. Despite its calmer character, a persistent forward motion is never entirely absent and the rhythmic drive bursts back into the foreground in the final movement. By far the shortest, it completes the harmonic cycle and concludes the work in a gloriously optimistic fashion.

In many ways Reich's Variations combine his newer and more varied musical language with older structures and techniques. The work is exceptionally modular and, as Reich acknowledges, returns to 'the old technique of substituting sounds for silence' that was present in *Music for Pieces of Wood*. With such an armoury of technique and imagination, Reich ensures that minimalism continues to surprise and delight four decades after its conception.

Sebastian Grand



Steve Reich

composer

Recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for 2009, Steve Reich has been called ‘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’ (New York Times).

His music has been influential to composers and mainstream musicians all over the world. He is a leading pioneer of Minimalism, having in his youth broken away from the ‘establishment’ that was serialism. His music is known for steady pulse, repetition, and a fascination with canons; it combines rigorous structures with propulsive rhythms and seductive instrumental colour. It also embraces harmonies of non-Western and American vernacular music (especially jazz).

His studies have included the Gamelan, African drumming (at the University of Ghana), and traditional forms of chanting the Hebrew scriptures.

Different Trains and Music for 18 Musicians have each earned him GRAMMY awards, and his ‘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. Over the years his music has significantly grown both in expanded harmonies and instrumentation, resulting in a Pulitzer Prize for his 2007 composition Double Sextet.

‘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.

Steve Reich is published by Boosey & Hawkes.

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A Note From Neil Percy

I suppose there was a degree of inevitability that the Academy's first Timpani and Percussion release would be centered around the music of Steve Reich.

Steve has long been a musical hero of mine and we share collaborations stretching back almost 20 years. To have had the opportunity to put together this programme of Steve's music with exceptionally talented young musicians and have their best efforts recorded by one of the best producers has indeed been an absolute pleasure and privilege.

I would like to thank all of the musicians who took part in the making of this CD for their superb playing and consummate professionalism, together with Simon Rhodes for his immense contribution ably assisted by Kirsten Cowie; Jo Cole (Head of Strings), and Joanna MacGregor (Head of Piano) for supplying such excellent string and keyboard players; professors Simon Carrington and Colin Currie for their invaluable assistance in preparation for this recording; and finally the Principal, Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, for his unswerving support in every aspect of this incredible project.



Neil Percy Dip RCM, ARCM, Hon RAM
Head of Timpani and Percussion

The coming year sees Neil Percy celebrate over 20 years as Principal Percussionist with the London Symphony Orchestra and 12 years as Head of Timpani and Percussion at the Royal Academy of Music. During this time, Neil has worked closely with many major artists and conductors and as a soloist with Sir Colin Davis, Pierre Boulez, Steve Reich, François-Xavier Roth, Karl Jenkins, Ravi Shankar, Kent Nagano and Elgar Howarth.

His EMI recording of Karl Jenkins' Marimba Concerto and Triple Concerto for Percussion, Flutes and Keyboards was released recently to wide critical acclaim, as was the Grammy-nominated Bartok Concerto for Two Pianos and Percussion for Deutsche Grammophon with Pierre Boulez, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Tamara Stefanovich, Nigel Thomas and the LSO.

Both live and in the studio Neil has worked closely with many film music composers, notably John Williams, James Horner, Patrick Doyle and Alexandre Desplat, with their music for films such as Harry Potter, Star Wars, Braveheart, Twilight-New Moon, Brave and Rise of the Guardians.

Neil has also enjoyed working with many major pop and jazz artists including Herbie Hancock, Elvis Costello, Natalie Cole, Dave Brubeck, Joe Zawinal, Tony Bennett, Luther Vandross and Vince Mendoza. Neil collaborated with Tim Garland in a star-studded nine-piece group Momentum, including amongst others John Patitucci, Joe Locke and Geoffrey Keezer. Momentum returned in 2010, culminating in a joint concerto for saxophones and percussion that was premiered by Neil, Tim and the LSO.

As a clinician and educator Neil has given masterclasses at many leading conservatoires and percussion events in the UK, Europe, USA and Asia and has coached many of the world's leading youth orchestras including the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra. Neil is the Zildjian cymbals 'Artist in Residence', a Yamaha drums and keyboards artist and an artist for Evans drumheads.

Neil received Honorary Membership of the Academy (Hon RAM) in July 2010.

Top picture: Neil Percy performs with Steve Reich at the Barbican Hall in 1996.

Bottom picture: Neil and Steve during 'Reich at 75' with the LSO in 2011.

Percussion Studies at the Royal Academy of Music

The Timpani and Percussion Department has a worldwide reputation for its provision for students, and for its training in the multi-faceted world of timpani and percussion. The members of staff include principal players with London's leading orchestras, international soloists, and leading session musicians, all of whom are active in music-making of the highest professional standard.

Orchestral training on timpani and percussion instruments in all its forms is high on the agenda, and the Academy's wide range of orchestras and ensembles, together with its extensive collection of quality instruments and practice facilities, present outstanding opportunities for all students.

Timpani and Percussion lessons are complemented by regular faculty activities such as repertoire classes and masterclasses, together with chamber

music coaching for percussion ensembles and mallet groups. Areas of related study include classes in Latin American, ethnic percussion and drumset, emphasising rhythmic awareness in both solo and ensemble situations.

The Academy has an extensive provision for marimba and solo percussion. Regular masterclasses from many of the world's leading solo percussion specialists offer excellent opportunities for the aspiring solo percussion student.

Our aim is to expose students to a variety of related study areas whilst not compromising standards. We hope to enable graduates to have full, rewarding and varied careers by providing them with the skills needed for their continual development. Employability is key to the ethos of the department.



Eminent soloists, orchestral principals and ensemble leaders are regular visitors to the Academy. Airtó, Birger Sulsbrück, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Oladum Ensemble, Anthony Kerr, Christopher Lamb, Rainer Seegers, Keiko Abe, Juanjo Guillem, Alan Cumberland, David Friedman, Keith Aleo, Frank Epstein and Philippe Spiesser have all recently given masterclasses at the Academy.

Other recent visitors have included She-e Wu, Steve Gadd, Iain Patinson, David Hockings, Makoto Nakura, Mike Manieri, Anders Astrand and Kurt-Hans Goedicke.

Students are eligible for the Academy's annual Zildjian Cymbal Prizes. First prize is \$2,000 and second prize is a visit to Zildjian International in the UK, to select cymbals of their choice.

The Royal Academy of Music is grateful for the generous support of Zildjian Cymbals and Yamaha UK.

www.ram.ac.uk/percussion



Royal Academy of Music

'The Royal Academy of Music in London is internationally known and recognised as representing the highest values of music and musical society'

Daniel Barenboim, February 2010

'This building has been absolutely at the centre of everything that I have done, everything that I have learnt'

Sir Simon Rattle, March 2011

The Royal Academy of Music has been training musicians to the highest professional standards since its foundation in 1822. As Britain's senior conservatoire, its impact on musical life, both in the UK and abroad, is inestimable. The music profession is permeated at all levels with Academy alumni, including classical giants such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Tavener and Sir Harrison Birtwistle, pop icons Sir Elton John and Annie Lennox, a host of opera stars such as Dame Felicity Lott, Lesley Garrett and Susan Bullock, principals in some of the world's leading orchestras (including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras,

the Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera New York, and all of London's leading orchestras), innovative soloists including Dame Evelyn Glennie and Joanna MacGregor, best-selling recording artists such as Katherine Jenkins, and media celebrities Gareth Malone, Aled Jones and Myleene Klass.

An institution that trained Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Henry Wood, Sir John Barbirolli, Lionel Tertis, Dame Myra Hess, Dame Moura Lypany, Richard Lewis, Dennis Brain, Sir Clifford Curzon, Philip Langridge and John Dankworth, and with strong associations back to Mendelssohn, is bound to be proud of its history; but the Academy is firmly focused on refreshing creative traditions for tomorrow's musical leaders in the classical, jazz, media and musical theatre worlds. Every year some of the most talented young musicians from over fifty countries come to study at the Academy, attracted by renowned teachers and by a rich artistic culture that broadens their musical horizons, develops their professional creativity, and fosters their entrepreneurial spirit. In addition to a busy schedule of lessons, classes and masterclasses, students benefit from the Academy's ambitious and unrivalled calendar of concerts, operas, musical theatre shows and other events, in which they work with leading practitioners such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Trevor Pinnock, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Semyon Bychkov, Thomas Brandis and Barbara Bonney. As Conductor Laureate, Sir Charles Mackerras worked regularly with Academy students

until only a few months before his death in July 2010. In February 2012 Maxim Vengerov became the latest renowned performer to join the Academy's teaching staff: as Menuhin Professor of Music, he works every term with students in masterclasses, one-to-one teaching and other events.

All these facets of Royal Academy of Music life contribute to The Guardian's recent ranking of the Academy as top UK conservatoire for three years on the trot, and praising its 'cosmopolitan confidence that is in tune with the global music industry'.

Ever since its inception, the Academy has been committed to transporting its musical activities from its central London home to the widest possible national and international audiences. Today, Academy students perform at many leading venues and festivals, including Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, Kings Place and the Aldeburgh Festival. They collaborate with distinguished partners such as the London Sinfonietta, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Juilliard School in high-profile projects that attract national attention and critical plaudits. Most recently, the Academy and New York's Juilliard School joined orchestral forces in sensational concerts in the Lincoln Center and BBC Proms. The Academy's own CD label, with distribution through Harmonia Mundi, has received critical acclaim for over twenty releases. The Academy is committed to lifelong learning, ranging from the Junior Academy that trains musicians up to the age of 18, through many

'Open Academy' community music projects with schools in London and further afield, to performances and educational events for the musically curious of all ages.

The Academy's museum is home to one of the world's most significant collections of instruments and artefacts. Highlights include the important collection of Italian stringed instruments (with many examples by Stradivari, Guarneri, and members of the Amati family), a unique collection of nineteenth-century keyboard instruments, composers' manuscripts (including Purcell's The Fairy Queen and Vaughan Williams's Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis) and collections that belonged to Sir Henry Wood, Sir John Barbirolli, Lord Menuhin, Otto Klemperer, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nadia Boulanger, Richard Lewis, Robert Spencer, Norman McCann and David Munrow. These collections are an invaluable educational and artistic resource for the Academy's entire community, underpinning teaching and research and enabling young musicians to find their own artistic profile in the context of musical riches of the past.

As the Academy approaches its bicentenary it goes from strength to strength. In the past three years alone, the Academy has been rated the best conservatoire for research by the Times Higher, the top conservatoire and the second-highest rated institution in the country for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey, and top conservatoire in The Times University Guide.

REICH FOR PERCUSSION



RAM 047

Reich for percussion

Royal Academy of Music / Neil Percy

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