

Monday, June 4, 2007

An Evening with Steve Reich
Slee Sinfonietta, Brad Lubman Conductor
Center for the Arts Drama Theater, 8pm

PROGRAM

Tehillim

Steve Reich

Piccolo: Sabatino Scirri
Flute: Jessica Schmitz
Oboe: Jackie Leclair
English Horn: Alison Lowell
Clarinet: Bill Kalinkos, Ken Thomson
Percussion: Jason Trueting, David Skidmore, Adam Sliwins, Josh Quillen,
Percussion: Jon Hepfer, Fabio Oliviera
Keyboard: Oliver Hagen, Bobby Mitchell
High Soprano: Martha Cluver
Lyric Sopranos: Melissa Hughes, Jolle Greenleaf
Alto: Kirsten Sollek
Violin: Courtney Orlando, Olivia DePrato, Caleb Burhans, Will Knuth
Viola: Beth Guterman, Jonathan Larson
Cello: Lauren Radnofsky, Jessica Sammis
Bass: Ivan Sturm

intermission

Daniel Variations

Steve Reich

Clarinet: Bill Kalinkos, Ken Thomson
Vibraphone: Jason Trueting, Adam Sliwins, Josh Quillen, David Skidmore
Percussion: Jon Hepfer, Fabio Oliviera
Piano: Oliver Hagen, Bobby Mitchell, Ning Yu, David Plylar
Soprano: Martha Cluver, Jolle Greenleaf
Tenor: Caleb Burhans, Dan Mutlu
Violin: Courtney Orlando, Olivia DePrato
Viola: Beth Guterman
Cello: Lauren Radnofsky

PROGRAM NOTES

Daniel Variations

The piece is in four movements using texts from the Biblical book of Daniel for the first and third movements and from the words of Daniel Pearl, the American Jewish reporter, kidnapped and murdered by Islamist extremists in Pakistan in 2002, for the second and fourth movements. The texts/movements are:

I saw a dream. Images upon my bed & visions in my head frightened me
(Daniel 4:2 or 4:5 in Christian translations))

My name is Daniel Pearl
(I'm a Jewish American from Encino California)

Let the dream fall back on the dreaded
(Daniel 4:16 or 4:19 in Christian translations)

I sure hope Gabriel likes my music, when the day is done.

The first text, from the book of Daniel, is spoken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (modern day Iraq). He is asking Daniel to interpret his dream of terror. Right now it is unfortunately possible to feel a chill of identification with these words.

The second text was spoken by Daniel Pearl while his captors video taped him. I use only the first five words in the music itself since 'My name is Daniel Pearl' is so emblematic of this remarkable person. In Jewish tradition, and in many others, names are indicative of character.

The third text is the Biblical Daniel's response to Nebuchadnezzar.

The last text is a bit of a surprise and is explained by a friend of Daniel Pearl as follows:

'Once, during a two-day bike trip up the Potomac River, his friend Tom Jennings asked about his belief in an afterlife. "I don't know," Danny replied. "I don't have answers, mainly just questions." Then he added: "But I sure hope Gabriel likes my music."

After Danny died, Tom was going through his friend's vinyl collection (Dvorak, Liszt, Miles Davis, REM) and stumbled across this album: Stuff Smith and the Onyx Club Orchestra. "Danny loved Stuff Smith – a great jazz violinist," Tom says. "Here on side A, track 3, I found this: Stuff Smith playing 'I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music.'"

I have not used any of the music or lyrics of the song and have even edited the title. The addition of 'when the day is done' is my own. I hope Danny would approve.

Musically, Daniel Variations has two related harmonic ground plans. One for the first and third movements using four minor dominant chords a minor third apart in E mi, G mi, Bb mi and C# mi. The other harmonic plan is for the second and fourth movements using four major dominant chords in the relative major keys, G, Bb, Db and E. This gives a darker chromatic harmony to the first and third movements and a more affirmative harmonic underpinning to the second and fourth. Since Daniel Pearl was not only a reporter, but also played the fiddle - particularly jazz and blue grass - the strings take the lead melodically in the second and fourth movements, sometimes doubled by the two clarinets.

The piece is scored for two sopranos and two tenors with two Bb clarinets, four vibes, bass and kick drum, tam-tam, four pianos and string quartet. It is about 30 minutes in duration and was co-commissioned by the Barbican Centre, London, Carnegie Hall in New York, Cité de la Musique in Paris, Casa de Musica in Porto, Portugal and in memory of Daniel Pearl by an anonymous donor in association with Meet The Composer and the Daniel Pearl Foundation which is dedicated to cross cultural understanding and music.

Tehillim (pronounced "the-hill-leem") is the original Hebrew word for "Psalms". Literally translated it means "praises", and it derives from the three letter Hebrew root 'hey, lamed, lamed' (hll) which is also the root of halleluyah. *Tehillim* is a setting of Psalms 19:2-5 (19:1-4 in Christian translations), 34:13-15 (34:12-14 in Christian translations), 18:26-27 (18:25-26 in Christian translations) and 150:4-6.

The chamber version is scored for four women's voices (one high soprano, two lyric sopranos, and one alto), piccolo, flute, oboe, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, six percussion (playing small tuned tambourines with no jingles, clapping, maracas, marimba, vibraphone and crotales), two electric organs, two violins, viola, cello and bass. The voices, winds and strings are amplified in performance. In orchestral version there are full strings and winds with amplification for the voices only.

The first text begins as a solo with drum and clapping accompaniment only. It is repeated with clarinet doubling the voice and with a second drum and clap in canon with the first. It then appears in two voice canon and at last the strings enter with long held harmonies. At this point all four voices, supported by a single maraca, doubled by two electric organs and harmonised by the strings sing 4 four-part canons on each of the four verses of the first text. When these are completed the solo voice restates the original complete melody with all drums and full string harmonisation. The second text begins immediately after a short drum transition. Here the three verses of text are presented in two or three voice harmony in a homophonic texture. Sometimes the voices are replaced by the cor anglais and clarinet or by the drums and clapping. Soon the melodic lines begin augmenting (or lengthening) and then adding melismas. The effect is of a melodic line growing longer and more ornate. After a pause the third text begins in a slower tempo and with the percussion changed to a marimba and vibraphone. The text is presented as a duet first between two and then all four voices. This third text is not only the first slow movement I have composed since my student days, but also the most chromatic music I have ever composed (with the possible exception of *Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards* of 1979). The fourth and final text resumes the original tempo and key signature and combines techniques used in the preceding three movements. It is, in effect, a recapitulation of the entire piece which then, in a coda based solely on the word "Halleluyah", extends the music to its largest instrumental forces and its harmonic conclusion. This last movement affirms the key of D major as the basic tonal centre of the work after considerable harmonic ambiguity.

The tambourines without jingles are perhaps similar to the small drum called "tof" in Hebrew in Psalm 150 and several other places in the Biblical text. Hand clapping as well as rattles were also commonly used throughout the Middle East in the Biblical period as were small pitched cymbals. Beyond this there is no musicological content to *Tehillim*. No Jewish themes were used for any of the melodic materials. One of the reasons I chose to set Psalms as opposed to parts of the Torah or Prophets is that the oral tradition among Jews in the West for singing Psalms has been lost. (It has been maintained by Yemenite Jews.) This meant that I was free to compose the melodies for *Tehillim* without a living oral tradition to either imitate or ignore.

In contrast to most of my earlier work, *Tehillim* is not composed of short repeating patterns. Though an entire melody may be repeated either as the subject of a canon or variation this is actually closer to what one finds throughout the history of Western music. While the four-part canons in the first and last movements may well remind some listeners of my early tape pieces *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, which are composed of short spoken phrases repeated over and over again in close canon, *Tehillim* will probably strike most listeners as quite different from my earlier works. There is no fixed meter or metric pattern in *Tehillim* as there is in my earlier music. The rhythm, of the music here comes directly from the rhythm of the Hebrew text and is consequently in flexible changing meters. This is the first time I have set a text to music since my student days and the result is a piece based on melody in the basic sense of that word. The use of extended melodies, imitative counterpoint functional harmony and full orchestration may well suggest renewed interest in Classical or, more accurately, Baroque and earlier Western musical practice. The non-vibrato, non-operatic vocal production will also remind listeners of Western music prior to 1750. However, the overall sound of *Tehillim* and in particular the intricately interlocking percussion writing which, together with the text, forms the basis of the entire work, marks this music as unique by introducing a basic musical element that one does not find in earlier Western practice including the music of this century. *Tehillim* may thus be heard as traditional and new at the same time.

Steve Reich

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

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).

Performing organizations around the world marked Steve Reich's 70th- birthday year, 2006, with festivals and special concerts. In the composer's hometown of New York, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center joined forces to present complementary programs of his music, and in London, the Barbican mounted a major retrospective. Concerts were also presented in Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, Baden-Baden, Barcelona, Birmingham, Budapest, Chicago, Cologne, Copenhagen, Denver, Dublin, Freiburg, Graz, Helsinki, Los Angeles, Paris, Porto, Vancouver, Vienna and Vilnius among others. In addition, Nonesuch Records released its second box set of Steve Reich's works, *Phases: A Nonesuch Retrospective*, in September 2006. The five-CD collection comprises fourteen of the composer's best-known pieces, spanning the 20 years of his time on the label.

In October 2006 in Tokyo, Mr. Reich was awarded the Preamium Imperial award in Music. This important international award is in areas in the arts not covered by the Nobel Prize. Former winners of the prize in various fields include Pierre Boulez, Lucian Berio, Gyorgy Ligeti, Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns, Richard Serra and Stephen Sondheim.

In May 2007 Mr. Reich will be awarded The Polar Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of music. The prize is presented by His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. The Swedish Academy said: "...Steve Reich has transferred questions of faith, society and philosophy into a hypnotic sounding music that has inspired musicians and composers of all genres." Former winners of the Polar Prize have included Pierre Boulez, Bob Dylan, Gyorgi Ligeti and Sir Paul McCartney.

In December 2006 Mr. Reich was awarded membership in the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest and in April 2007 he was awarded the Chubb Fellowship at Yale University.

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.

Mr. Reich's 1988 piece, *Different Trains*, marked a new compositional method, rooted in *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, in which speech recordings generate the musical material for musical instruments. The New York Times hailed *Different Trains* as "a work of such astonishing originality that breakthrough seems the only possible description....possesses an absolutely harrowing emotional impact." In 1990, Mr. Reich received a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Composition for *Different Trains* as recorded by the Kronos Quartet on the Nonesuch label.

In June 1997, in celebration of Mr. Reich's 60th birthday, Nonesuch released a 10-CD retrospective box set of Mr. Reich's compositions, featuring several newly-recorded and re-mastered works. He won a second Grammy award in 1999 for his piece *Music for 18 Musicians*, also on the Nonesuch label. In July 1999 a major retrospective of Mr. Reich's work was presented by the Lincoln Center Festival. Earlier, in 1988, the South Bank Centre in London, mounted a similar series of retrospective concerts.

In 2000 he was awarded the Schuman Prize from Columbia University, the Montgomery Fellowship from Dartmouth College, the Regent's Lectureship at the University of California at Berkeley, an honorary doctorate from the California Institute of the Arts and was named Composer of the Year by *Musical America* magazine.

The Cave, Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's music theater video piece exploring the Biblical story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, was hailed by *Time Magazine* as "a fascinating glimpse of what opera might be like in the 21st century." Of the Chicago premiere, John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote, "The techniques embraced by this work have the potential to enrich opera as living art a thousandfold...*The Cave* impresses, ultimately, as a powerful and imaginative work of high-tech music theater that brings the troubled present into resonant dialogue with the ancient past, and invites all of us to consider anew our shared cultural heritage."

Three Tales, a three-part digital documentary video opera, is a second collaborative work by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot about three well known events from the twentieth century, reflecting on the growth and implications of technology in the 20th century: *Hindenburg*, on the crash of the German zeppelin in New Jersey in 1937; *Bikini*, on the Atom bomb tests at Bikini atoll in 1946-1954; and *Dolly*, the sheep cloned in 1997, on the issues of genetic engineering and robotics. *Three Tales* is a three act music theater work in which historical film and video footage, video taped interviews, photographs, text, and specially constructed stills are recreated on computer, transferred to video tape and projected on one large screen. Musicians and singers take their places on stage along with the screen, presenting the debate about the physical, ethical and religious nature of technological development. *Three Tales* was premiered at the Vienna Festival in 2002 and subsequently toured all over Europe, America, Australia and Hong Kong. Nonesuch is releasing a DVD/CD of the piece in fall 2003.

Over the years, Steve Reich has received commissions from the Barbican Centre London, the Holland Festival; San Francisco Symphony; the Rothko Chapel; Vienna Festival, Hebbel Theater, Berlin, the Brooklyn Academy of Music for guitarist Pat Metheny; Spoleto Festival USA, West German Radio, Cologne; Settembre Musica, Torino, the Fromm Music Foundation for clarinetist Richard Stoltzman; the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra; Betty Freeman for the Kronos Quartet; and the Festival d'Automne, Paris, for the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution.

Steve Reich's music has been performed by major orchestras and ensembles around the world, including the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, New York Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta; the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas; The Ensemble Modern conducted by Bradley Lubman, The Ensemble Intercontemporain conducted by David Robertson, the London Sinfonietta conducted by Markus Stenz and Martyn Brabbins, the Theater of Voices conducted by Paul Hillier, the Schoenberg Ensemble conducted by Reinbert de Leeuw, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Robert Spano; the Saint Louis Symphony conducted by Leonard Slatkin, the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Neal Stulberg; the BBC Symphony conducted by Peter Eötvös; and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas.

Several noted choreographers have created dances to Steve Reich's music, including Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker ("*Fase*," 1983, set to four early works as well as "*Drumming*," 1998 and "*Rain*" set to "*Music for 18 Musicians*"), Jiri Kylian ("*Falling Angels*," set to "*Drumming Part I*"), Jerome Robbins for the New York City Ballet ("*Eight Lines*") and Laura Dean, who commissioned "*Sextet*". That ballet, entitled "*Impact*," was premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, and earned Steve Reich and Laura Dean a Bessie Award in 1986. Other major choreographers using Mr. Reich's music include Eliot Feld, Alvin Ailey, Lar Lubovitch, Maurice Bejart, Lucinda Childs, Siobhan Davies and Richard Alston.

In 1994 Steve Reich was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, to the Bavarian Academy

of Fine Arts in 1995, and, in 1999, awarded Commandeur de l'ordre des Arts et Lettres.

The Slee Sinfonietta was formed in 1996 by composer David Felder and conductor Magnus Mårtensson. This ensemble, the professional chamber orchestra in residence at UB, performs a series of concerts each year devoted to lesser known repertoire, particularly that of the pre-classic era and the most recent contemporary music. Advanced students in performance are invited to participate along with faculty artists, soloists, and regional professionals in the production of these unique concerts designed to contribute new possibilities for concertgoers within the University and the Western New York region. We hope to introduce new repertoire to audiences of all kinds performed at the highest level, and we invite listeners to join with us in the exploration of these newer musical worlds available to us at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Conductor/composer **Brad Lubman** has played a vital role in modern music for two decades. He was assistant conductor to Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Center from 1989-94 and has since emerged as an unusually versatile conductor of orchestras and ensembles all over the world. He has worked with a great variety of illustrious musical figures including , John Adams, Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, Elliott Carter, Elvis Costello, Steve Reich, DJ Spooky, Michael Tilson Thomas, Charles Wuorinen, and John Zorn.

Lubman has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Ensemble Modern, Steve Reich Ensemble, Saarbruecken Radio Orchestra, Deutsches-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, New World Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, ASKO Ensemble, and the New Millennium Ensemble amongst others. He has recorded for Auvidis Montaigne, BMG/RCA, Bridge, col legno, CRI, Centaur, Koch, and Nonesuch.

Lubman is Associate Professor of Conducting and Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY (www.rochester.edu/Eastman). He is represented by Karsten Witt Musik Management, www.karstenwitt.com.