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Saturday
March 12, 2011
8 pm

PERFORMANCE: CONCERT

**Steve Reich: *Music for 18*
*Musicians + Double Sextet***

Signal

CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Program

Steve Reich: *Double Sextet* (2007), approximately 25 minutes

-Intermission-

Steve Reich: *Music for 18 Musicians* (1974-76), approximately 55 minutes

Ensemble Signal

Brad Lubman	Music Director
Paul Coleman	Sound Director
Special Guests	Third Coast Percussion

Jamie Dietz	Maracas
Brad Lubman	Marimba
Martha Cluver	Soprano 1
Caroline Shaw	Soprano 2
Mellissa Hughes	Soprano 3
Kirsten Sollek	Soprano 4

**Special guest from Third Coast Percussion

Double Sextet

Sextet 1

Courtney Orlando	Violin
Lauren Radnofsky	Cello
Kelli Kathman	Flute
Bill Kalinkos	Clarinet
David Friend	Piano
David Skidmore	Percussion

Sextet 2

Olivia DePrato	Violin
Caitlin Sullivan	Cello
Jessica Schmitz	Flute
Ken Thomson	Clarinet
Lisa Moore	Piano
Doug Perkins	Percussion

Music for 18 Musicians

Olivia DePrato	Violin
Lauren Radnofsky	Cello
Ken Thomson	Clarinet/Bass Clarinet 1
Bill Kalinkos	Clarinet/Bass Clarinet 2
David Friend	Piano 1
Lisa Moore	Piano 2
Red Wierenga	Piano 3
Tom Rosenkranz	Piano 4
David Skidmore	Percussion**
Peter Martin	Vibes**
Owen Clayton Condon	Xylophone 1**
Robert Dillon	Xylophone 2**
Doug Perkins	Marimba 1
Bill Solomon	Marimba 2

Steve Reich: *Music for 18 Musicians* + *Double Sextet* Signal

Composer's Notes: *Music for 18 Musicians*

Music for 18 Musicians is approximately 55 minutes long. The first sketches were made for it in May 1974 and it was completed in March 1976. Although its steady pulse and rhythmic energy relate to many of my earlier works, its instrumentation, structure, and harmony are new.

As to instrumentation, *Music for 18 Musicians* is new in the number and distribution of instruments: a violin, cello, two clarinets doubling bass clarinet, four women's voices, four pianos, three marimbas, two xylophones, and a metallophone (vibraphone with no motor) are used. All instruments are acoustic. The use of electronics is limited to microphones for voices and some of the instruments.

There is more harmonic movement in the first five minutes of *Music for 18 Musicians* than in any other complete work of mine to date. Though the movement from chord to chord is often just a re-voicing, inversion or relative minor or major of a previous chord, usually staying within the key signature of three shapes at all times, nevertheless, within these limits harmonic movement plays a more important role in this piece than in any other I have written.

Rhythmically, there are two different kinds of time occurring simultaneously in *Music for 18 Musicians*. The first is that of a regular rhythmic pulse in the pianos and mallet instruments that continues throughout the piece. The second is the rhythm of the human breath in the voices and wind instruments. The entire opening and closing sections plus part of all sections in between contain pulses by the voices and winds. The musicians take a full breath and sing or play pulses of particular notes for as long as their breath will comfortably sustain them. The breath is the measure of the duration of their pulsing. This combination of one breath after another gradually washing up like waves against the constant rhythm of the pianos and mallet instruments is something I have not heard before and would like to investigate further.

The structure of *Music for 18 Musicians* is based on a cycle of 11 chords played at the very beginning of the piece and repeated at the end. All the instruments and voices play or sing the pulsating notes with each chord. Instruments like the strings, which do not have to breathe, nevertheless follow the rise and fall of the breath by following the breathing patterns of the bass clarinet. Each chord is held for the duration of two breaths, and the next chord gradually is introduced, and so on, until all 11 are played and the ensemble returns to the first chord. The first pulsing chord is then maintained by two pianos and two marimbas. While this pulsing chord is held for about five minutes, a small piece is constructed on it. When this piece is completed there is a sudden change to the second chord, and a second small piece or section is constructed. This means that each chord that might have taken 15 or 20 seconds to play in the opening section is stretched out as the basic pulsing melody for a five minute piece, very much as a single note in a cantus firmus, or chant melody of a twelfth-century organum by Pérotin, might be stretched out for several minutes as the harmonic center for a section of the organum. The opening 11-chord cycle of *Music for 18 Musicians* is a kind of pulsing cantus for the entire piece.

On each pulsing chord, one, or on the third chord, two, small pieces are built. These pieces or sections are either in the form of an arch (ABDCBA), or in the form of a musical process, like that

of substituting beats for rests, working itself out from beginning to end. Elements appearing in one section will also appear in another but will be surrounded by different harmony and instrumentation; for instance, the pulse in pianos and marimbas in sections 1 and 2 changes to marimbas and xylophones in section 3A, and to xylophones and maracas in sections 6 and 7. The low piano pulsing harmonies of section 3A reappear in section 6 supporting a different melody played by different instruments. The process of building up a canon, or phase relation, between two xylophones and two pianos, which first occurs in section 2, occurs again in section 9 but builds up to another overall pattern in a different harmonic context. The relationship among the different sections is thus best understood in terms of resemblances among members of a family. Certain characteristics will be shared, but others will be unique.

Changes from one section to the next, as well as changes within each section are cued by the metallophone, whose patterns are played once only to call for movements to the next bar, much like a Balinese gamelan drummer will audibly call for changes of pattern in West African music. This is in contrast to the visual nods of the head used in earlier pieces of mine to call for changes and in contrast also to the general Western practice of having a non-performing conductor for large ensembles. Audible cues become part of the music and allow the musicians to keep listening.

Steve Reich

Composer's Notes: *Double Sextet*

There are two identical sextets in *Double Sextet*. Each is comprised of flute, clarinet, vibraphone, piano, violin, and cello. Doubling the instrumentation was done, as in so many of my earlier works, so two identical instruments could interlock to produce one overall pattern. For example, in this piece you will hear the pianos and vibes interlocking in a highly rhythmic way to drive the rest of the ensemble.

The piece can be played in two ways; either with 12 musicians, or with six playing against a recording of themselves. In this performance you will hear the sextet Eighth Blackbird, who commissioned the work, playing against their recording.

The idea of a single player playing against a recording of themselves goes all the way back to *Violin Phase* (1967), and extends through *Vermont Counterpoint* (1982), *New York Counterpoint* (1985), *Electric Counterpoint* (1987), and *Cello Counterpoint* (2003). The expansion of this idea to an entire chamber ensemble playing against pre-recordings of themselves began with *Different Trains* (1988), and continued with *Triple Quartet* (1999), and *Double Sextet* (2007). By doubling an entire chamber ensemble one creates the possibility for multiple simultaneous contrapuntal webs of identical instruments. In *Different Trains* and *Triple Quartet* all instruments are strings, producing one large string fabric. In *Double Sextet* there is more timbral variety through the interlocking of six different pairs of percussion, string, and wind instruments.

The piece is in three movements: fast, slow, fast, and within each movement there are four harmonic sections built around the keys of D, F, Ab, and B or their relative minor keys b, d, f and g#. As in almost all of my music, modulations from one key to the next are sudden, clearly setting off each new section.

Double Sextet is approximately 22 minutes long and was completed in October 2007. It was commissioned by Eighth Blackbird and had its world premiere by that group at the University of Richmond in Virginia on March 26, 2008. The New York Premiere was held at Carnegie's Zankel Hall on April 17, 2008.

Steve Reich

Bios

Brad Lubman, conductor/composer, has played a vital role in contemporary music for more than two decades. A frequent guest conductor of the world's leading ensembles, he has gained widespread recognition for his versatility, commanding technique, and insightful interpretations.

Conducting a broad repertoire from classical to contemporary works, Lubman has led major orchestras in Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and the US. Among these are the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, RSO Stuttgart, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic.

In addition, he has worked with some of the most important European and American ensembles for contemporary music, including Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, Klangforum Wien, musikFabrik, ASKO Ensemble, Ensemble Resonanz, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Chicago Symphony MusicNOW, and Steve Reich and Musicians.

Lubman has conducted at new music festivals across Europe, including those in Lucerne, Salzburg, Berlin, Huddersfield, Paris, Cologne, Frankfurt, and Oslo. He has recorded for BMG/RCA, Nonesuch, Koch, and New World, among other labels. His own music has been performed in the US and Europe, and can be heard on his first portrait CD, *Insomniac*, on Tzadik.

Brad Lubman is noted in particular for his ability to master challenging new scores in a variety of settings, a skill honed during his tenure as assistant conductor to Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Center from 1989 to 1994. That aptitude has earned him the opportunity to premiere works by a wide range of composers, including Michael Gordon, Jonny Greenwood, David Lang, Helmut Lachenmann, Meredith Monk, Michael Nyman, Steve Reich, Augusta Read Thomas, Julia Wolfe, Charles Wuorinen, and John Zorn.

Lubman is music director of the new music ensemble Signal, founded in 2008, and recently hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the most vital groups of its kind." With critically praised performances at the Bang on a Can Marathon, Le Poisson Rouge (NYC), and the Ojai Music Festival, Signal has rapidly become a vital force in the American new music scene.

Brad Lubman is on the faculty at the Eastman School of Music and the Bang on a Can Summer Institute. He is represented by Karsten Witt Musik Management.

Signal is a large New York-based ensemble dedicated to performing visionary works of our time. Under the musical direction of Brad Lubman, who founded the group along with cellist and co-artistic director Lauren Radnofsky, Signal's members include some of most gifted young musicians working in the city. Since its debut in spring 2008 at the Bang on a Can Marathon in NYC and at the Ojai Music Festival in California, Signal has become "one of the most vital groups of its kind," according to *The New York Times*.

Lubman, one of the premier conductors of new music, has collaborated with some of the greatest composers of contemporary concert music—among them Boulez, Reich, Wuorinen, and Lachenmann—and has appeared with some of the world's most illustrious orchestras and new music ensembles. With Signal, Lubman has assembled a superb collection of musicians who have worked closely with him during the past decade, including members of JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and other leading ensembles. Signal is flexible in size and instrumentation, enabling it to meet the demands of a repertoire that ranges from Philip Glass to Helmut Lachenmann to Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead.

Signal is at home in nightclubs, concert halls, and international festivals alike. In 2010 alone, the group's New York season included performances at the Miller Theatre at Columbia University, Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, the Bell House (Brooklyn), and Merkin Concert Hall (NYC), where it gave the US premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Corridor*. Future premieres will include the commission and tour of a new work for 20 players by Steve Reich.

Signal is highly active in the studio, as well. During the 2010-11 season, the group is heard in four new recordings: *Glassworks* and *Music in Similar Motion* by Philip Glass (Orange Mountain); a CD/surround-sound DVD of music by Helmut Lachenmann, with the composer as soloist in *Zwei Gefühle* (Mode); Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe's *Shelter* (Cantaloupe); and Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Penelope* (New Amsterdam Records). In spring 2011, Signal will record Steve Reich's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Double Sextet*, along with his iconic *Music for 18 Musicians*.

Signal, praised for its "vibrant, euphoric performances that seemed to electrify [the] audience" (*The New York Times*), is known for partnering closely with both emerging and established composers to prepare its interpretations. For the Lachenmann recording, the composer trained each member of the ensemble individually in the advanced techniques required to play his music. On the educational side, Signal helps emerging creators refine their craft at institutions such as the Eastman School of Music and the June in Buffalo festival.

Upcoming events include an appearance at Tanglewood, performing music by Tobias Picker and Brian Ferneyhough, touring performances of Steve Reich's *Double Sextet* and *Music for 18 Musicians*, and orchestral performances of music by Glass, Ligeti, and Greenwood.