

STEVE REICH

Biography

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 operas *The Cave* (1993) and *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).

Reich was awarded the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his composition *Double Sextet*, having previously been given both the Polar Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of music and the Japanese Preamium Imperiale Award in Music. In 2000 he was awarded the Schuman Prize from Columbia University and was named Composer of the Year by *Musical America* magazine.

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.

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 to sold-out houses around globe.

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.

Several noted choreographers have created dances to Steve Reich's music, including Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker (*Fase*, 1983, set to four early works as well as *Drumming*, 1998 and *Rain* set to *Music for 18 Musicians*), Jirí Klyán (*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, Larry Keigwin, Siobhan Davies and Richard Alston.

Steve Reich was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, and, in 1999, awarded Commandeur de l'ordre des Arts et Lettres.