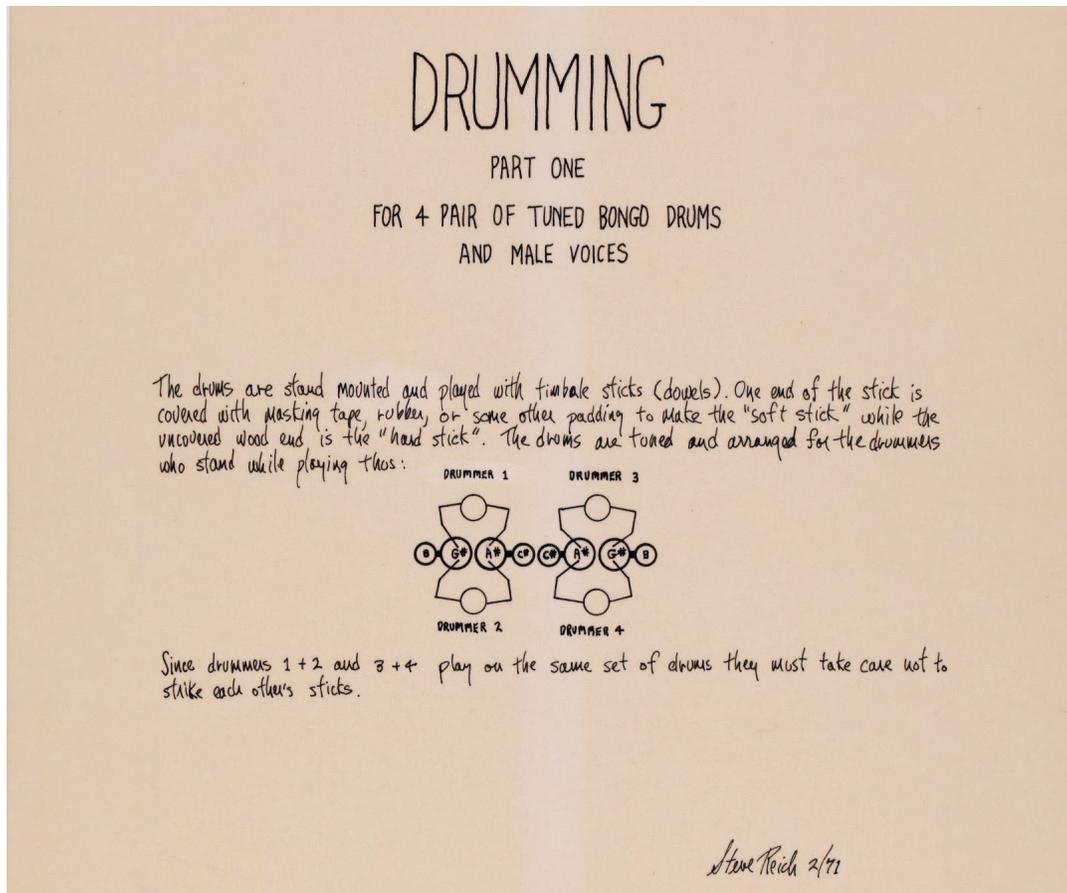


“MINIMALISM’S FIRST MASTERPIECE”
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF STEVE REICH’S ‘DRUMMING’



Title-leaf, signed by the composer.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

STEVE REICH (American, b.1936), composer

O riginal manuscript score of 'Drumming: Part One For 4 Pair of Tuned Bongo Drums and Male Voices,' fair-copy signed twice ("Steve Reich 2/71" on title-leaf, and at end longitudinally at terminus of final measure: "Original version, copied in ink on May 8, 1971 – Steve Reich." [New York], 1971. 8 leaves, including title. On translucent vellum paper. Title with general textual description and drawing of performance parameters, all but two of the leaves of the score with extensive performance notes written at the foot of the page. This comprises the complete first part (of four) of the entire piece, or approximately 15-20 minutes of its 60-75 minute total duration.

Provenance: Steve Reich – acquired directly from the composer by the present owner in New York, early 1970s.

“In the music of Steve Reich, we encounter one of the most radical renewals of musical language in recent times.”

– Paul Hillier

“[One of] a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history”

– Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*

“[Steve Reich] may...be considered, by general acclamation, America’s greatest living composer”

– Kyle Gann, *The Village Voice*

“The most musical thinker of our time”

– Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*

“Among the great composers of the century”

– Richard Taruskin, *The New York Times*

Steve Reich: Composer

Born in 1936, Steve Reich was raised in New York and California before attending Cornell University from 1953 to 57. He graduated with honors in Philosophy and a minor in Music. His choice of Ludwig Wittgenstein as the subject for his B.A. thesis may indicate an early expression of his later creative growth.

Reich studied composition with Hall Overton after graduation, and furthered his musical study at Julliard with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti. He received his master’s degree in music from Mills College in 1963, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud. Influenced in the 1960s by the minimalist composer Terry Riley, Reich began his experiments in pulse, repetition, canons, and phasing – aspects of his artistic originality that have influenced composers and mainstream musicians alike.

Throughout the 1960s Reich was an active participant in New York’s avant garde, where artists crossed fields and collaborated across disciplines. Paul Hillier notes that experimental film and dance were fertile fields for interactive creativity, and among those involved were Michael Snow, Bruce Nauman, Meredith Monk, Richard Serra, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt and Laura Dean (see Hillier’s introduction to *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford UP, p. 16).

The performance begins with two, three or four drummers playing in unison at measure 1. When one drummer moves to the second measure and adds the second drum beat the other drummer(s) can either join him immediately or remain at bar one for several repeats. This process of gradually substituting beats for rests within the pattern is continued with at least 6 or 8 repeats for each measure until all drummers have reached the fully completed pattern at measure 8. At 9 only drummer one and two continue and after several seconds of getting comfortable in close unison drummer two begins to slightly increase his tempo so that after 20 or 30 seconds he has finally moved one quarter note ahead of drummer one, as shown at measure 10. The dotted lines indicate this gradual shift in phase relation between the two drummers. Throughout the piece the alternation of stems up and stems down indicates the alternation of right and left hands. The choice as to which hand is indicated by stems up or down is left to the individual performer.

Performance notes at foot of first page of the score.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

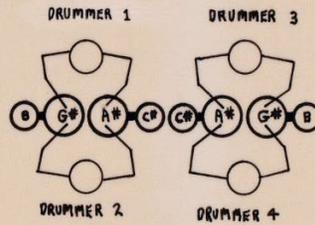
Drumming's Background and Reception

During the summer of 1970, with the help of a grant from the Institute for International Education, Reich studied drumming at the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana in Accra. *Drumming* was a ground-breaking result of this trip. Composed for a percussion ensemble with voices and piccolo, *Drumming* marked the beginning of a new period in Reich's career and the formation of his ensemble, Steve Reich and Musicians.

Although Reich himself has resisted (or rejected outright) the use of the term "minimalism," his aesthetic has reflected hallmarks of the category, whether seen in his use of a Wittgenstein-like aphoristic prose style in his writings or in the formal concepts used in his musical language. His early experiments in developing a unique musical language culminate in *Drumming*, the final work in which Reich used the phasing technique that was so important in his work throughout the 1960s. Reich later reflected on the piece, and its place in his body of work:

In the context of my own music, *Drumming* is the final expansion and refinement of the phasing process, as well as the first use of four new techniques: (1) the process of gradually substituting beats for rests (or rests for beats); (2) the gradual changing of timbre while rhythm and pitch remain constants; (3) the simultaneous combination of instruments of different timbre; and (4) the use of the human voice to become part of the musical ensemble by imitating the exact sound of the instruments. (*Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford UP, p. 64)

The drums are stand mounted and played with timbale sticks (dowels). One end of the stick is covered with masking tape, rubber, or some other padding to make the "soft stick" while the uncovered wood end is the "hard stick". The drums are toned and arranged for the drummers who stand while playing thus:



Since drummers 1+2 and 3+4 play on the same set of drums they must take care not to strike each other's sticks.

Detail from the title-leaf, showing the configuration of the musicians and instructions.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

Drumming has been called by music critic K. Robert Schwarz "minimalism's first masterpiece," a "transitional" piece between Reich's early, more austere compositions and his later works that use less strict forms and structure.

The contemporary review in *New Music Box*, published after its first performance in New York at the Museum of Modern Art on December 3, 1971, captured the immediacy of *Drumming's* acceptance as a major contemporary work:

"It's not very often that a long complex piece of new music receives a standing ovation. What was it about Steve Reich's 'Drumming' that brought the audience to its feet at the Museum of Modern Art on December 3? The simple fact that 13 musicians had performed intricate rhythms with amazing precision for an hour and half no doubt had a lot to do with it. Or perhaps it was because the simple white-note scales were refreshing to ears grown weary of dissonance. Or perhaps it was the joyous blend of marimbas, glockenspiels, drums, and voices that turned everyone on. Or was it the pleasure of seeing African and European elements so thoroughly fused—almost as if we really did live in one world. Or perhaps it was because the music had spoken directly to the senses, with the sound itself never sacrificed for the more intellectual rhythmic side of the piece" (published 9 December 1971)

DRUMMER 1

DRUMMER 2

COMBINED RESULTING PATTERNS OF DRUMMERS 1 AND 2

INDIVIDUAL RESULTING PATTERNS FOR DRUMMERS 3 AND 4 AND/OR MALE VOICES

This one quarter note out of phase relationship is maintained by drummers one and two while drummers three and four sing and/or play patterns they hear clearly emerging from the combination of the first two drummers. Two of these resulting patterns are written out above at A and B, but others can be added or substituted in the blank bars. Though A and B are both four bars long patterns of other lengths can obviously be heard. When singing these patterns a microphone is necessary in order to be heard. The voice should be used to imitate the exact sound of the drum patterns which may involve using syllables like "tak", "dot", and so forth. The voices should enter softly and gradually increase in volume so that these patterns gradually rise to the surface of the music and then just as gradually subside by lowering the volume of the voice. A similar approach should be used when playing these patterns on the drums.

After all the resulting patterns have been sung and/or played drummer two once again slightly increases his tempo so that he slowly moves another quarter note ahead of drummer one as shown at measure 11. Once again resulting patterns are performed and when completed drummer three enters in unison with drummer one as shown at 12. After several seconds in unison he slightly increases his tempo so that in 20 or 30 seconds he is one quarter note ahead of drummer one and therefore one quarter note behind drummer two as shown at measure 13.

The second page of the score.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

Composer's Notes

“For one year, between the fall of 1970 and the fall of 1971, I worked on what turned out to be the longest piece I have ever composed. *Drumming* lasts from 55 to 75 minutes (depending on the number of repeats played) and is divided into four parts that are performed without pause. The first part is for four parts that are performed without pause. The first part is for four pairs of tuned bongo drums, stand-mounted and played with sticks; the second, for three marimbas played by nine players together with two women’s voices; the third, or three glockenspiels played by four players together with whistling and piccolo; and the fourth section is for all these instruments and voices combined...

“I am often asked what influence my visit of Africa in summer of 1970 had on *Drumming*. The answer is confirmation. It confirmed my intuition that acoustic instruments could be used to produce music that was genuinely richer in sound than that produced with electronic instruments, as well as confirming my natural inclination towards percussion (I became a drummer at the age of 14)” (Steve Reich, composer’s notes reproduced by Boosey and Hawkes).

Russell Hartenberger, a percussionist and member of Steve Reich and Musicians since 1971, has written extensively about the performative aspects of the piece in his *Performance Practice in the Music of Steve Reich*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 33ff.

The Manuscript Score

The score for *Drumming* was not published until 2011, and the present manuscript shows noticeable differences from this final form of the piece. Reich's opening notes on the title refer, for instance, to covering one end of the percussionists' sticks with "masking tape, rubber, or some other padding to make the 'soft stick.'" In the published version, refined after years of performance, the instruction is given that "One end of the stick is covered with several layers of felt, or some other padding."

This minor adjustment is not nearly as significant as the complete change in structure of form. Reich remarked in his notes to the published edition that he first had only jottings in notebooks and would use them to teach members of his ensemble how to play the piece during rehearsals: "Only after the entire piece was completed did I make an ink manuscript which in many ways was difficult to read, ambiguous as to interpretation and in some cases, mistaken as to note values... For 40 years this manuscript has circulated [in mechanically-reproduced copies] and an increasing number of unfortunate performances have been the result."

While the published score reads in the conventional left-to-right form, the manuscript requires a performer to jump periodically down a column of bars. The difference is significant in several ways, not least of which is evident in its appearance: the manuscript, with its elegantly written performance notes, looks like a work of art. This graphic quality is missing from the utilitarian structure of the printed score. And while its published edition may more fully reflect the composer's musical intentions after more than a quarter century of performances, the original manuscript represents an artistic sensibility in and of itself. Reich's textual notes throughout interact and inform the musical notation, and reinforce the work's conceptual framework. It is, in brief, a beautiful encapsulation of all that Reich was trying to achieve in the piece, and a summation of his experimentations throughout the previous decade.

DRUMMER 1

DRUMMER 2

COMBINED RESULTING PATTERNS OF DRUMMERS 1 AND 2

INDIVIDUAL RESULTING PATTERNS FOR DRUMMERS 3 AND 4 AND/OR MALE VOICES

This one quarter note out of phase relationship is maintained by drummers one and two while drummers three and four sing and/or play patterns they hear clearly emerging from the combination of the first two drummers. Two of these resulting patterns are written out above at A and B, but others can be added or substituted in the blank bars. Though A and B are both four bars long patterns of other lengths can obviously be heard. When singing these patterns a microphone is necessary in order to be heard. The voice should be used to imitate the exact sound of the drum patterns which may involve using syllables like "tak", "dok", and so forth. The voices should enter softly and gradually increase in volume so that these patterns gradually rise to the surface of the music and then just as gradually subside by lowering the volume of the voice. A similar approach should be used when playing these patterns on the drums.

After all the resulting patterns have been sung and/or played drummer two once again slightly increases his tempo so that he slowly moves another quarter note ahead of drummer one as shown at measure 11. Once again resulting patterns are performed and when completed drummer three enters in unison with drummer one as shown at 12. After several seconds in unison he slightly increases his tempo so that in 20 or 20 seconds he is one quarter note ahead of drummer one and therefore one quarter note behind drummer two as shown at measure 13.

The third page of the score.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

DRUMMER 1

DRUMMER 2

DRUMMER 3

DRUMMER 4

TWO, THREE, OR FOUR DRUMMERS

SWITCH TO SOFT STICKS

This relationship between all four drummers should be held for a minute or so and then, at a nod from one drummer, drummers two, three and four slightly increase their tempo so that in 30 seconds or so they are all in unison with drummer one at measure 15. At measure 16 all four, or only three or two drummers, playing in unison, begin to insert rests into the complete pattern in a reversing of the sort of process performed at measure 1 thru 8. As before, when one drummer inserts a rest and moves from one bar to the next, the other drummers may either follow him immediately or wait for several repeats. At measure 21 the pattern has been reduced to 3 notes and bar 22, played once, serves merely as a way of changing counts to arrive at 23. Here, while one drummer continues to play with hard sticks, forte, the other(s) switch to soft sticks and enter, piano, which then allows the first drummer to drop out, turn his sticks around and join them, piano. Measures 23 thru 28 then reconstruct the same rhythmic pattern, one beat at a time, with slightly different pitches.

The fifth page of the score.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

Scarcity of Reich manuscript material in the market

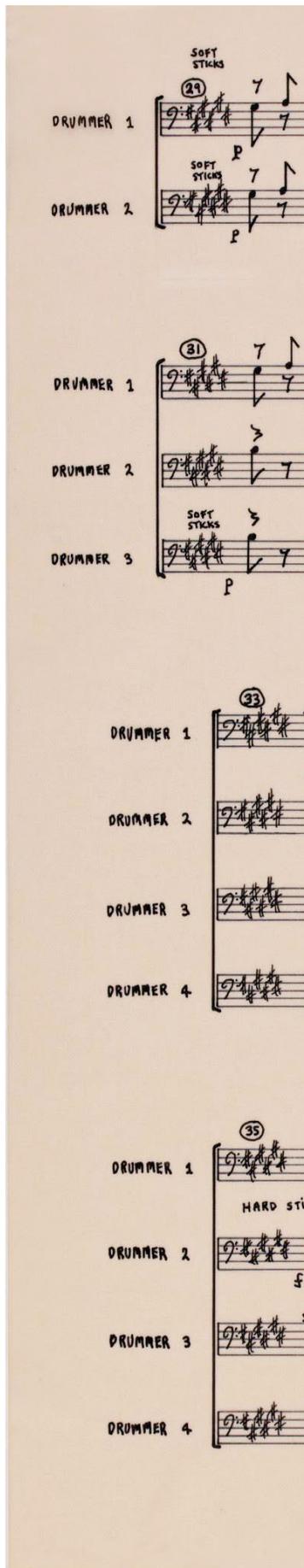
As late as 1990 – well after Reich’s stature was established – it was difficult to obtain Reich’s scores in any form: manuscript, printed or reproduced. “There can be few major composers, at least in the 20th century, whose scores have been as difficult to obtain as those of Steve Reich” (Keith Potter, “Reich in Score,” *The Musical Times*, Vol. 131, No. 1773, November 1990, pp.597-98). The score to *Drumming* was printed in 1972 by John Gibson and Multiples, Inc. in a signed edition of 500 copies. But general access to scores was restricted until Universal Edition and Boosey and Hawkes were engaged to reproduce Reich’s scores. As difficult as it was for musicians to obtain scores for performance, acquiring Reich manuscript material has always been among the most elusive of goals.

At measure 29 drummer one and two are in unison on the new pattern and drummer two once again slowly increases his tempo so as to gradually move one quarter note ahead as shown at 30. After several seconds drummer three enters, with soft sticks - piano, with drummer two at 31 and then gradually phases one quarter note ahead of drummer two as shown at 32. This three drummer relationship is then maintained in measures 33 thru 36 except that drummer four doubles each of the others in turn with his soft sticks allowing each in turn to drop out for a moment, turn their sticks around, and re-enter, forte. At 36 all three drummers are playing forte with hard sticks and at 37 drummer four enters directly one quarter note ahead of drummer three. After about a minute of this relationship drummer one adds two C#'s in place of A#'s in his pattern and after several seconds drummer two does likewise and is followed in turn by drummers three and four. After holding this relationship for about a minute at 41, all drummers switch together to all C#'s in place of the stems up A#'s in their patterns at 42. This final relationship is held for a minute or so until all drummers end together.

Detail from the final leaf of the score, including the final performance notes.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

Availability is likely to remain virtually non-existent. In 2008, Reich negotiated the donation of his archive to The Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel. The collection there covers the composer's entire oeuvre, from his dodecaphonic early works to his most recent compositions. The archive consists of letters, sound recordings, manuscripts from various stages in the creative process, and other documents. Also included are his many audio and program files, which capture his working methods that long have made use of computers, synthesizers, and samplers.

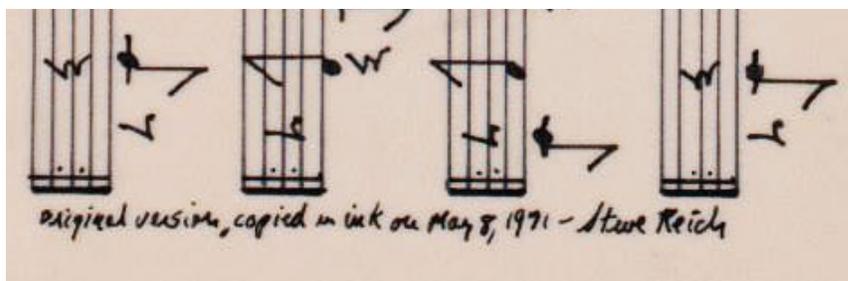
Because Reich kept meticulous care of his archive, virtually no original manuscript material has been seen in the open market. Even fewer opportunities are now likely since the archive was acquired by the Sacher Stiftung. We are aware of only one fragmentary autograph manuscript to come to the market: a passage of eight-bars from 'Variations for Winds Strings & Keyboards,' sold at Sotheby's London in 2009. This 1980-piece dates from later in Reich's career, and was but a tiny quotation from this work for orchestra. This fragment was sold at a charity auction for the War Child Foundation, and its presence on the market was then the first and last time a Reich manuscript of any kind was recorded at auction. No other Reich material has sold at auction before or since, and there have been no documented private sales.



Detail from the penultimate leaf.
© Hendon Music, Inc.

The present manuscript comprises the entire first part of *Drumming*, is in superb condition, and shows the beautiful graphic process by which Reich prepared his finished working manuscripts. This manuscript was acquired from Reich in the early 1970s, soon after the debut of the piece, and has remained since in the same private collection.

This is likely a unique opportunity to acquire a major manuscript from this ground-breaking American artist.



Detail from the final leaf showing the composer's identification of the manuscript fair copy.
© Hendon Music, Inc.