

## **TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC: EXTENDING THE DEFINITION OF MUSIC (3)**

### **STEVE REICH: PHASING TECHNIQUE**

#### **INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF TAPE LOOPS/TAPE LOOPING**

Although not originating by Reich himself, by rather by Paul Schaeffer in the 1940's, tape looping started when magnetic tape technology became available. Tapes were repeated with repetition, with or without electronic transformation. Terry Riley then expanded the use of looping in a variety of ways. One of the ways he did so was by recording a number of different sources and samples (including piano music, speech and other sounds) which were reproduced on speakers surrounding the audience along with live performances.

#### **STEVE REICH: PHASING (TECHNIQUE)**

Phasing is created by the composer Steve Reich in the 1960's. It is a process or technique of playing two identical lines of music, which start in sync (together), but move out of sync when one line slightly speeds up. The piece finishes only when both lines of music return and are played at the original tempo. As it uses this technique, it is often associated with minimal music. Phasing can occur through essentially any playable musical instrument, whether pitched or not and may or may not make the process audible to the listener.

#### **STEVE REICH: PHASING PIECES**

Piano Phase is the first piece to be written using phasing. This led to a further number of pieces written after it's completion; one included violins (Violin Phase), and another included a number of drums (Drumming). There are slight differences between the recording and live performances of these pieces.