



DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Presenting Series

Third Coast Percussion, Eighth Blackbird & Friends Steve Reich Celebration

SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 AT 7 P.M.

LEIGHTON CONCERT HALL

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

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Third Coast Percussion at Notre Dame made possible through the generosity of Shari and Tom Crotty.



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PROGRAM

Music for Pieces of Wood (1973)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Music for 18 Musicians (1976)

Steve Reich

Pulses— Section I— Section II— Section IIIA— Section IIIB—
Section IV— Section V— Section VI— Section VII— Section VIII—
Section IX— Section X— Section XI— Pulses

Third Coast Percussion

Sean Connors, percussion and piano

Robert Dillon, percussion

Peter Martin, percussion

David Skidmore, percussion

Eighth Blackbird

Nathalie Joachim, flutes and voice

Michael J. Maccaferri, clarinets

Yvonne Lam, violin

Nick Photinos, cello

Matthew Duvall, percussion

Lisa Kaplan, piano

Also featuring

Megan Arns, percussion

Kayleigh Butcher, voice

John Corkill, percussion

Zachary Good, clarinets

Adam Marks, piano

Alex Monroe, percussion and piano

Elizabeth Pearse, voice

Daniel Schlosberg, piano

Carrie Henneman Shaw, voice

PROGRAM NOTES

While many composers of the 20th century were crafting music driven by complex theoretical and numerical systems, American composer **Steve Reich** was determined to create music that progressed through clearly audible processes. Often based on repeating musical cells that evolve gradually yet perceptibly over time, Reich's process-based music is credited as one of the pillars of the musical style dubbed "minimalism," a label that applies to some of his works—particularly his early music—more appropriately than others. Reich borrows rhythms from West African drumming and harmonies from bebop, with a variety of other musical influences revealing themselves over the years, including Balinese Gamelan, chanting of Hebrew scripture, and medieval organum.

Much of Steve Reich's music was written for his own ensemble, Steve Reich and Musicians, founded in 1966. For years, these were the only performers of Reich's music, and some of Reich's works were not even written down until this ensemble had toured them extensively, with the performers playing for years from memory or shorthand parts made by the composer. For instance, the score for *Music for 18 Musicians* was created from these shorthand parts and transcribed recordings by composer Marc Mellits in 1997, over 20 years after the work's premiere.

Now celebrating his 80th birthday, Reich has received an endless array of prizes and awards, including the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in Music, and has been praised as " ... the most original musical thinker of our time" (*The New Yorker*) and " ... among the great composers of the century" (*The New York Times*). His music is performed widely across the world by professional ensembles and is studied in conservatories as standard repertoire. In addition to shaping the direction of concert music, his musical influence has seeped into rock, jazz, and electronica.

Both Third Coast Percussion and Eighth Blackbird have performed Reich's music extensively over the years. Third Coast Percussion released a full album of Reich's music in early 2016, with accompanying mobile app. The work

for which Reich was awarded the Pulitzer Prize was his *Double Sextet*, commissioned by Eighth Blackbird. Their recording of the work was released in 2010.

Music for Pieces of Wood is a study in economy of means, both in terms of physical and musical materials. Reich specifies an exact pitch for each of the pieces of wood that are the only instruments in this work, and the three sections of the piece are each comprised of a single rhythm, with each player building up his own version of the pattern before blending into the texture. Many of the rhythms that emerge along the way suggest alternative meters or rhythmic inflections that may change the listener's perception of the whole, and the interplay of the five wooden sounds reveal unexpected melodic fragments.

Music for 18 Musicians explodes similar musical concepts to a much larger scale, creating an immersive, hour-long experience. The musical forces include violin, cello, two clarinets (doubling bass clarinet), four women's voices, four pianos, three marimbas, two xylophones, vibraphone, and maracas.

The work is built around a series of 11 harmonies, presented at the "Pulses" that begin and end the piece. In between, each of the harmonies is built into its own section, episodes each suffused with subtly different musical characters: Section 3 hums with newly minted energy and life; Section 5 enacts a series of competitive piano duels; Section 6 careens towards an ecstatic, maracas-driven climax; Section 11 wrenches us into unexpected darkness.

Within this undulating landscape, distinct parts of the musical machine become clear: a steady interlocking pulse, set up by the marimbas and pianos and later moving up into the xylophones, underlies the entire journey; waves from the clarinets, strings, and voices emerge from the texture and vanish back into it in the space of one long breath; melodic figures are built up one note at a time, often revealing identical copies of the same material echoing in interlocking canons.

The score is a loose alignment of overlapping events, without strict numbers of repeats. Directing traffic is the

lone vibraphone, positioned in the middle of the ensemble. Serving a role similar to the lead drummer in West African music, the vibraphone signals changes from one section to the next, as well as within each section, with distinct calls that are heard over the sea of repeating patterns.

Often considered Reich's greatest work, *Music for 18 Musicians* is a joyful celebration of communal music-making. Performers often lose their sense of individual identity within the collective sound, and listeners emerge at the end of an hour of music, surprised that it has passed so quickly.

BIOS

Hailed by *The New Yorker* as "vibrant" and "superb," **Third Coast Percussion** explores and expands the extraordinary sonic possibilities of the percussion repertoire, delivering exciting performances for audiences of all kinds. Formed in 2005, Third Coast Percussion has developed an international reputation with concerts and recordings of inspiring energy and subtle nuance.

These "hard-grooving" musicians (*New York Times*) have become known for groundbreaking collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including concerts and residency projects with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, astronomers at the Adler Planetarium, and more. The ensemble has also designed free iPhone and iPad apps that allow audience members to create their own musical performances and take a deeper look at the music performed by Third Coast Percussion.

Third Coast Percussion is the Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, a position they assumed in 2013. They have the honor of being the first ensemble at the University of Notre Dame to create a permanent and progressive ensemble residency program at the center. Third Coast Percussion performs multiple recitals annually as part of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center's Presenting Series, engages with the local community, and leads interdisciplinary projects in collaboration with a wide range of disciplines across campus.

Third Coast's recent and upcoming concerts and residencies include University Musical Society (MI), Society for the Performing Arts (Houston), Walton Arts Center (AR), MiTO Settembre Festival (Italy), Peak Performances (NJ), The Clarice at University of Maryland, De Doelen (Rotterdam), National Forum of Music (Wrocław), San Francisco Performances, the Celebrity Series (Boston), the Mondavi Center (CA), Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Eastman Kilbourn Recital Series (NY), St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Liquid Music Series (MN), National Gallery of Art (D.C.), University of Chicago Presents, and more. Third Coast has introduced percussion to chamber music audiences in Texas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Alaska, and Illinois, securing invitations to return to many of these series.

Third Coast's passion for community outreach includes a wide range of residency offerings while on tour, in addition to long-term community engagement residencies at home in Chicago. In addition to its national performances, Third Coast Percussion's hometown presence includes an annual Chicago series, with four to five concerts in locations around the city. The ensemble has collaborated in performance with a wide range of artists and performing ensembles including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Eighth Blackbird, Glenn Kotche, and video artists Luftwerk.

The members of Third Coast Percussion—Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore—hold degrees in music performance from Northwestern University, the Yale School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory, and Rutgers University. Third Coast Percussion performs exclusively with Pearl/Adams Musical Instruments, Zildjian Cymbals, Remo Drumheads, and Vic Firth sticks and mallets.

Eighth Blackbird is “one of the smartest, most dynamic contemporary classical ensembles on the planet” (*Chicago Tribune*). Launched by six entrepreneurial Oberlin Conservatory undergraduates in 1996, this Chicago-based super-group has earned its status as “a brandname ... defined by adventure, vibrancy and quality ... known for performing from memory, employing choreography and collaborations with theater artists, lighting designers and even puppetry artists” (*Detroit Free Press*).

Over the course of two decades, Eighth Blackbird has commissioned and premiered hundreds of works by composers such as David Lang, Steven Mackey, Missy Mazzoli, and Steve Reich, whose *Double Sextet* went on to win the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. A long-term relationship with Chicago's Cedille Records has produced seven acclaimed recordings and four Grammy Awards for Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance, most recently in 2016 for *Filament*. *Hand Eye*, their most recent recording released in March 2016 and featuring the music of composer collective Sleeping Giant, was hailed as “dazzling” and “vigorously, flawlessly performed” (WQXR).

Eighth Blackbird celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016, winning its fourth Grammy Award and the coveted MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Anniversary celebrations continue throughout the 2016-2017 season with tours of music from *Filament* and *Hand Eye*, as well as keystone performances celebrating Steve Reich's 80th birthday, a fresh round of raucous shows with "Appalachian post punk solipsist" (*The Wanderer*) Will Oldham (Bonnie Prince Billy), and world premieres by Holly Harrison, Pulitzer Prize-winner David Lang, and Ned McGowan. This season marks debuts in Paris, at Justin Vernon's (Bon Iver) and Aaron Dessner's (The National) Eaux Claires Festival, with the San Francisco Symphony, and also includes a three-week return to Australia.

Eighth Blackbird's mission—moving music forward through innovative performance, advocating for new music by living composers, and creating a legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians—extends beyond recording and touring to curation and education. The ensemble served as Music Director of the 2009 Ojai Music Festival, enjoyed a three-year residency at the Curtis Institute of Music, and holds an ongoing Ensemble-in-Residence position at the University of Richmond. The 2015-2016 season featured a pioneering residency at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art: a living installation with open rehearsals, performances, guest artists, and public talks. In 2017, Eighth Blackbird launches its boldest initiative yet with the creation of Blackbird Creative Laboratory, a tuition-free, two-week summer workshop and performance festival for musicians in Ojai, CA.

Eighth Blackbird's members hail from the Great Lakes, Keystone, Golden, Empire and Bay states. The name "Eighth Blackbird" derives from the eighth stanza of Wallace Stevens's evocative, imagistic poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*: "I know noble accents / And lucid, inescapable rhythms; / But I know, too, / That the blackbird is involved / In what I know." Eighth Blackbird is managed by David Lieberman Artists. For more info, go to eighthblackbird.org.

Nathalie Joachim is a Burkart Flutes & Piccolos artist, Michael J. Maccaferri is a D'Addario Woodwinds Artist. Matthew Duvall proudly endorses Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets, Zildjian Cymbals, and Black Swamp Percussion Accessories. Lisa Kaplan is a Steinway Artist.



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