BRENT HEISINGER

American Minimalism in the 1980s

The debate in recent years over the authenticity and viability of minimal music has stirred the "serious" music world in ways not displayed since the anarchistic revelations of John Cage in the fifties. Strong opinions have been expressed regarding the promise of the minimalist movement and the merits of its artifacts, and few musicians, I believe, are not without a stand. Value judgments and predictions abound, sides have been taken, and views expressed. Pierre Boulez, for example, has proclaimed, "Repetitive music appeals to an extremely primitive perception, and it reduces the elements of music to one, single component—periodicity. . . . It's simply like a detail of a painting enlarged many times, and there's no substance to it at all."[1] William Schuman in a 1985 interview explains, "I believe in the music of development, stemming from the aesthetic, basically, of Beethoven. I recognize that there are many other people that are intrigued by the music that requires sitting ability; the ability to respond to endless repetition."[2] John Adams, considered by some a minimalist composer, is not above criticizing the movement. In a 1984 article, he described some minimalist music as "those Great Prairies of non-event," and said that he admires most of Glass's work but has "grave reservations about the direction he has been taking recently—very commercial, very opportunistic, insincere."[3] On the other hand, John Rockwell, in a chapter on Glass in his timely and relevant book *All-American Music*, asserts, "People *like* this music. For a serious composer in the late twentieth century, that is no mean achievement."[4]

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Publications devoted to minimalists are growing in number; and reviews, recordings, and awards are attracting increased attention to the movement. A recent book by Wim Mertens, *American Minimal Music* (published in English in 1983), for example, discusses the minimalist school in detail, analyzing the background and contributions of Young, Riley, Reich, and Glass in historical and ideological perspective.[5] And music critics now seem to express their views with greater confidence and authority (although unfortunately in some cases with questionable fervor). The reviewer Richard Freed gave the Brooklyn Philharmonic recording of Steve Reich's *The Desert Music* very high marks but couldn't resist adding "Even some determinedly sympathetic listeners . . . are likely to respond to the whole minimalist phenomenon with thoughts of the Emperor's new clothes."[6] On the other hand, a *Sunday Times* review of the BBC Symphony British premiere stated without reservation that the piece was "a knockout." Linda Sanders in a review of a recent Philip Glass release by CBS Masterworks comments, "There are only two American operas I'd call masterpieces without reservation or irony. One is Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, the other is Philip Glass's *Satyagraha*,"[7] In an article titled "The Maturing of Minimalism," Michael Walsh calls Glass's opera *The Juniper Tree* (composed, incidentally, with Robert Moran, who received relatively little mention) "a stunning new opera from the American avant-garde."[8] In 1985, between *Time* magazine and *Stereo Review* alone, awards for outstanding recordings were granted three composers associated with the minimalist movement: John Adams for his *Harmonium*, Terry Riley for his *Cadenza on the Night Plains*, and Philip Glass for his soundtrack to the film *Mishima*.

In spite of the hyperbole, what is evident is that "the new kid on the block," minimalism, is now a genuine segment of mainstream contemporary art music. Questions of merit and longevity aside, the movement's impact and relative sustaining power are undeniable. No longer can it simply be considered a musical knickknack created to counter complex abstract music. With its presence in concert halls and opera houses throughout the world along with appearances in rock clubs and at universities, minimal music has unquestionably come of age. Walsh asks, "When the youthful goals of discomfiting elders and shocking the bourgeoisie have been achieved, what remains to be accomplished? Can an erstwhile avant-garde development settle comfortably into maturity and still avoid middle-age spread?"[9] Thus far the decade of the 1980s has answered yes. Witness, in addition to the above, the frequent programming of minimal music by the new music ensemble Solisti New York (formed in 1980); the establishment and success of Group 180, a Hungarian new music ensemble devoted solely to the performance and recording of repetitive music; the 1980 three-day festival of minimal music presented by Columbia University's radio station,

WKCR; the 1986 Pittsburgh International Music Festival with programs including the music of Reich, along with that of Boulez, Stockhausen, and Xenakis (among others); or the 1986–87 San Francisco Bay Area concert season featuring works by Glass, Reich, and Riley (world premier of Riley's *Salome Dances for Peace, Part II* for string quartet). The list goes on. Perhaps most symbolic is a recently published picture of three distinguished composers standing together in London with smiles and a "pleased-to-be-in-this-company" mien: Pierre Boulez, Elliot Carter, and Steve Reich! It is as though Leonard Meyer's words (from his exceptional book *Music, Arts, and Ideas* [1967]) have suddenly taken on meaning: "The time for partisan polemic has long since passed. It is foolish to assume categorical positions, invoke a priori arguments, and make absolute judgments, whether about the propriety of writing tonal music in the mid-twentieth century, about the legitimacy of the method and practice of serialism, or about the validity of the aesthetic goals of transcendental particularism. All these ways of making music are with us and . . . will probably continue to be with us for many years."[10]

The emergence and success of minimalism, it seems to me, was predictable—a natural episode in the history of American musical output (although Europe should get credit for its promotion). The 1960s and early 1970s in this country were particularly conducive to bold artistic reaction, with antiestablishment sentiments nurturing individualism, and technology and acculturation providing new modes and materials for expression. Leonard Meyer quotes James Ackerman as saying, "the pattern of [style] change is a product of the tension in society and in the artist between the instinct for stability and security of established schemes and the human capacity . . . for creating something unique and individualized. Change is slow when the former is stronger, and rapid when the latter prevails. As a rule the factor of stability gets more support from society and its institutions, and the factor of change from the individual imagination."[11] Certainly many influences contribute to the emergence and change of a style, but this concept seems to me pervasive. Our institutions and respective ideas and actions were questioned during this period, and individual notions in the arts reached levels of diversity and extremes never before realized. The setting was ripe for new modes of musical expression. With the music and thoughts of Cage and Babbitt representing distant opposites in the spectrum of musical aesthetics, it would appear that minimalism (as defined below) could live a life of its own, especially with non-Western, jazz, and/or rock elements serving as stylistic components. And the leading proponents—La Monte Young, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley—were the perfect spokesmen: staunch, prolific, well trained, and uncompromising individualists who had always performed and thus could readily promote their own music.

Timely support also came from artists of other media (notably painting and dance) during a period when much of the established musical world was assailing minimalism as less than substantive, or, as Rockwell puts it, "damned by its enemies as so lacking in complexity and emotional range that it [could] hardly be called 'serious' at all."[12]

It is clear that the divergency of musical expression in the 1960s and 1970s continued into the 1980s. Rockwell's book illustrates this. In a very appropriate format, he offers twenty essays (chapters), each centered on a single composer representing a particular segment of this country's musical life. Postwar rationalism, experimentalism, neoromanticism, minimalism, "art-rock," electronic music, "public/site" composition, sound studio *musique concrète*, jazz, folk music (Latin), American musicals, and rock are topics that he discretely presents, demonstrating the plurality of America's musical world. (He also risks placing these styles in the "cultivated music to vernacular music" continuum.) Rockwell states, "In America today, the diversity seems greater than ever. Yet even as the separate styles maintain their vitality, they are also coming together in subtle and unexpected ways. That can be perplexing and disturbing, but can also be enormously exciting."[13] Bryan Simms, in *Music of the Twentieth Century*, agrees: "Since the mid-1960s the development of music has been neither consistent nor uniform. This period has witnessed a sporadic continuation of earlier approaches, with little consolidation into a mainstream and even less prospect for the emergency of a common practice."[14] In *Avant-Garde Music*, Paul Griffiths adds, "Music at the opening of the last quarter of the twentieth century presents a confused picture, one barely susceptible any more to historical discussion."[15]

But ideas of common practice, consistency of style, and historical continuity no longer serve as trustworthy references for the understanding of current musical trends. Nor are they especially helpful as criteria for the assessment of stylistic viability. Meyer's hypothesis (of 1967!) seems particularly suitable today, and that is that this "perplexing and disturbing . . . confused picture" of the art world is nothing more than a fluctuating dynamic "steady-state in which an indefinite number of styles and idioms, techniques and movements . . . coexist in each of the arts. There will be no central, common practice in the arts, no stylistic 'victory.' . . . Though new methods and directions may be developed in any or in all of the arts, these will not displace existing styles. The new will simply be additions to the already existing spectrum of styles."[16] Current widespread appearances and acceptance of different minimalist compositions and composers give evidence not only that minimalism in this decade is an additional style, but that it is a firmly entrenched school consisting of literature created by (1) prominent composers whose complete output is in a repetitive minimalist

style (for example, Reich, Glass), (2) composers who on occasion produce works using various minimalist techniques (Lentz, Rzewski), (3) those who make use of minimalist techniques in more dramatic settings (Adams), and (4) composers particularly interested in Indian performance practices, special intonations and improvisation (Young, Riley). These four categories are admittedly arbitrary and most certainly too confining; nevertheless, they serve to demonstrate to some degree the extent to which minimalist ideas have permeated contemporary composition and suggest that a branching out is taking place which is bound to promote a certain degree of permanence.

No word singularly defines this school of composition (and improvisation). "Minimal" was selected here because it has been used more than any other in connection with the work of Young, Riley, Glass and Reich—those most responsible for the movement—and because it suggests restriction or reduction which in the arts implies making the most of less. Under this rather encompassing definition, such different but representative works as Young's *Drift Study*, Riley's *In C*, Glass's *Satyagraha*, Reich's *"Come Out To Show"* can be listed. Unfortunately, non-minimalist pieces like Webern's *Six Bagatelles* or Cage's *4'33"* also fit. And the minimalist practice of producing pieces of extreme length hardly demonstrates restriction.

Minimal music, however, contains an unprecedented artistic redundancy that in the best of works is not superfluous (as contrasted to *Vexations* by Satie). It features reiteration (or as Peter Hamel puts it, "constant regeneration")—long sustained tones, repeated rhythmic, melodic, and/or harmonic patterns, cells, or phrases, or the like—that creates relatively static "drawn-out" qualities. For the most part, the four main composers of this style prefer prolonged sublety as an aesthetic ideal over dialectic drama. Each in one way or another at various times has commented on this aspect of his music. Glass, for example, explains his *Music in Twelve Parts:* "The music is placed outside the usual time scale, substituting a non-narrative and extended time sense in its place."[17] In *Writings About Music*, Reich comments, "To facilitate closely detailed listening a musical process should happen extremely gradually."[18] Terry Riley recently mentioned that he has been influenced "by the vast static mystic spaces created by my longtime friend La Monte Young."[19] And Young, describing "one of the most natural and important steps in my development," claims, "By listening to these long sustained tones, I became more and more aware of the relevance of harmonics, and what effect they have on music."[20] John Adams, a significant newcomer to the symphonic world, has adapted this aesthetic notion in his own way. In discussing approaches to changing harmony in *Harmonium*, Adams mentions, "One way was to bring in

a new key area almost on the sly, stretching the ambiguity out over such a length of time that the listener would hardly notice that a change had taken place (you find yourself in a new landscape but you don't know how you got there)."[21] More than most contemporary mainstream Western classical musics, this type of extended sublety allows for and encourages introspection on the part of the listener; perhaps more significantly, the style requires of the Western consumer sensitivity to a much smaller spectrum of contrast over a much longer time span. Detractors argue that this tendency dilutes musical power and reduces meaning. Others, however, feel that in minimal music "a wealth of small variations in detail . . . provide an endlessly fascinating carpet of sound when the ear has been redirected to listen for them."[22]

Making more of less, requiring of the listener attention to subtle occurrences in sound(s), demanding awareness of musical detail—all these notions can be linked to John Cage. However, as influential as his aesthetic outlook and music were on the initial products of this school, tenets of "transcendental particularism"—i.e., purposelessness, anonymity, natural object equals artistic object, less determinancy equals greater "artistic" realization—never took hold. Reich prefers to affect his listeners favorably and considers the emotional aspect of music primary. "It's really difficult to say anything specific about it, other than: It's number one, and without it, why bother?"[23] His music has become increasingly controlled and dramatic. In a 1986 interview, Terry Riley speaks specifically of distinguishing qualities in his style: "I think there's a particular way ideas are developed, and possibly some melodic ingenuity, undoubtedly due to my varied background in classical, jazz, contemporary, and Indian classical music. One thing that is peculiar to what I do is the way I blend these different elements."[24] Though much of his music is improvised, his intense study of Indian singing and his long hours of keyboard practice demonstrate a commitment to musical discipline in the traditional sense. Glass's purpose is simply put, "I don't care whether someone understands how the music is constructed. I'd much prefer that they just really *like* it."[25] He strongly claims his art and freely discusses his mode(s) of composing. La Monte Young's trust in his intuition most greatly influences his compositional process "where I've tuned into some greater force, some sense of universal structure that I try to tune into. This thing comes through me, it comes out, and this is the kind of music you hear."[26] The sounds that he uses in his music are preplanned through studied use of natural acoustics and resultant tunings. And regardless of the unmatched length of time some of his compositions last (or are lasting), they are not left to chance.

Beyond the practices of restriction and reiteration, virtually nothing is common among the "sub-styles" of various composers using min-

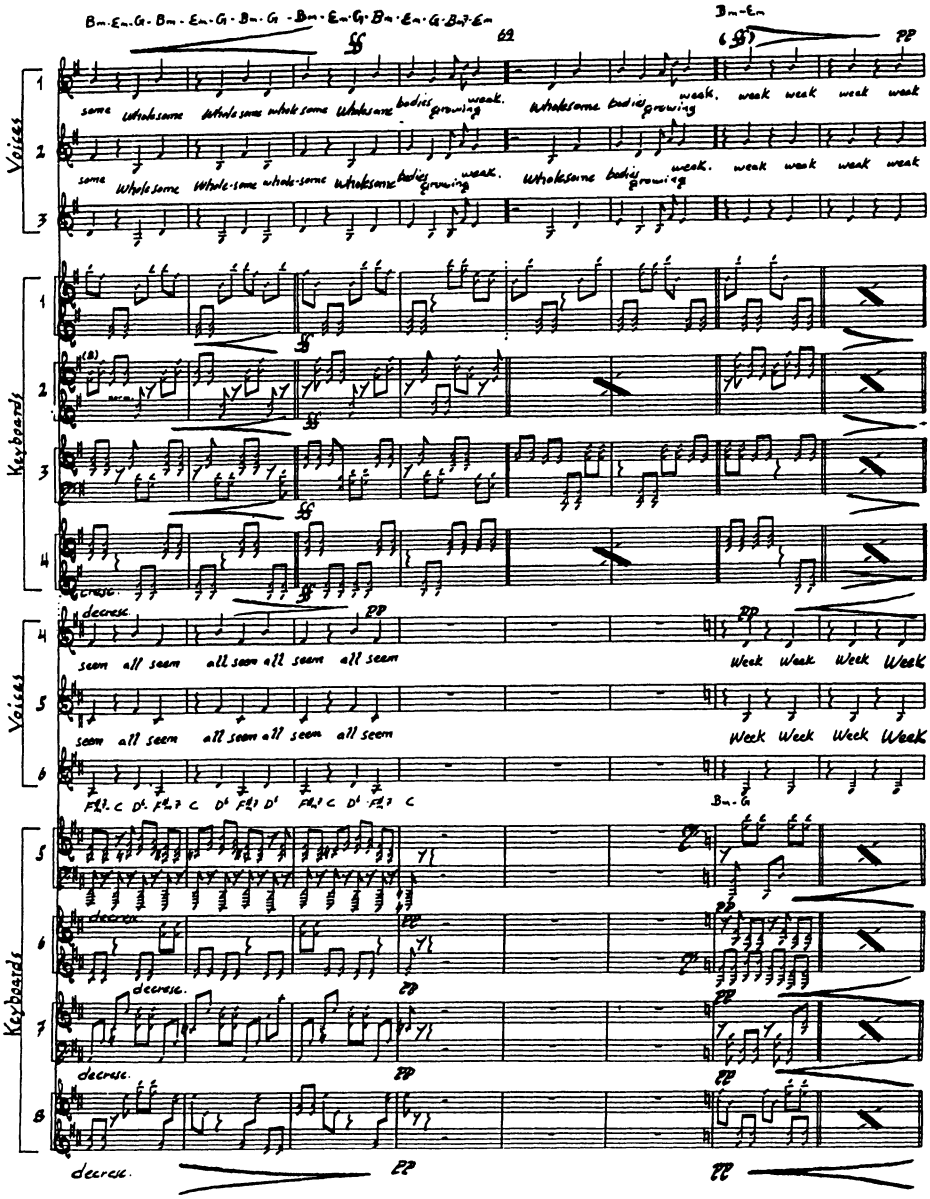
imalist ideas (other than the fact that acoustic instruments are generally favored now). Some parallels can be drawn—Young and Riley working in just intonation primarily through improvisation and influenced greatly by Indian teaching; Reich and Glass composing in notated equal temperament, based primarily on diatonic repeated patterns, etc.—still, each composer (and each work, for that matter) is unique. A brief look at a few works roughly paired according to medium and/or intention and approximate date of conception may serve to illustrate these points.

Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano* (work-in-progress since 1964) is an improvised composition for piano tuned in just intonation. Harmonics and combination tones that result from paired or sets of fundamentals produce, as Young puts it, a "powerful and at the same time harmonious effect that gives a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. This phenomenon has . . . the ability to produce very profound psychological states. It is the goal of my music to produce these states in the listener."[27] This programmatic piece, which is his primary public performance work, is approximately five hours in length and is based on several chordal areas and themes. In a performance recorded in October 1981 a passage based on the "Romantic Chord" lasts about one hour. Within that chordal area are heard the Romantic Theme, Brahman Theme, Gamelan Theme (with harmonic "clouds" derived from the Gamelan Chord), Ancestral Boogie, and finally a cloud on the Gamelan Chord (the idea of utilizing extremely slow harmonic rhythm has since been employed by Reich and Adams). Relatively sustained sounds (melodic and harmonic), repeated arpeggios of limited range, occasional somewhat fast repeated notes and intervals, rapid "tremolos" that produce "clouds"—all of this in a diatonic non-dialectic setting—allow for a subtle richness of sound most are not accustomed to hearing.

Where subtlety is projected in Young's piano piece through harmonics and combination tones over great lengths of time, it is produced in Steve Reich's piano duet *Piano Phase* (1967) through the repetition and phase shifting of a pattern of twelve sixteenth notes comprised of five pitches. After beginning in unison the second player gradually accelerates until the next sixteenth note is reached, resulting in rhythmic synchronization. The new point of arrival projects a completely unique texture with its own rhythmic and melodic sub-patterns; this process continues until the full cycle returns to the unison "at which point the basic pattern is changed and the process happens again."[28] The number of pitches, rhythmic variety in each part, range, and dynamic contrast are limited; harmony is not a structural ingredient. Unique and compelling are the rhythmic and melodic sub-patterns, the "rattling" effect created during the phase shifting, and the unchanging rhythmic energy.

On the lighter side are two works: "Is It Love" from *On the Leopard Altar* (1984) by Daniel Lentz, and "Freezing" from *Songs from Liquid*

Example 1. Daniel Lentz, "Wolf Is Dead" (similar to "Is It Love") from *On the Leopard Altar*, 69. © 1982, Lentz Music (BMI). Used by permission.

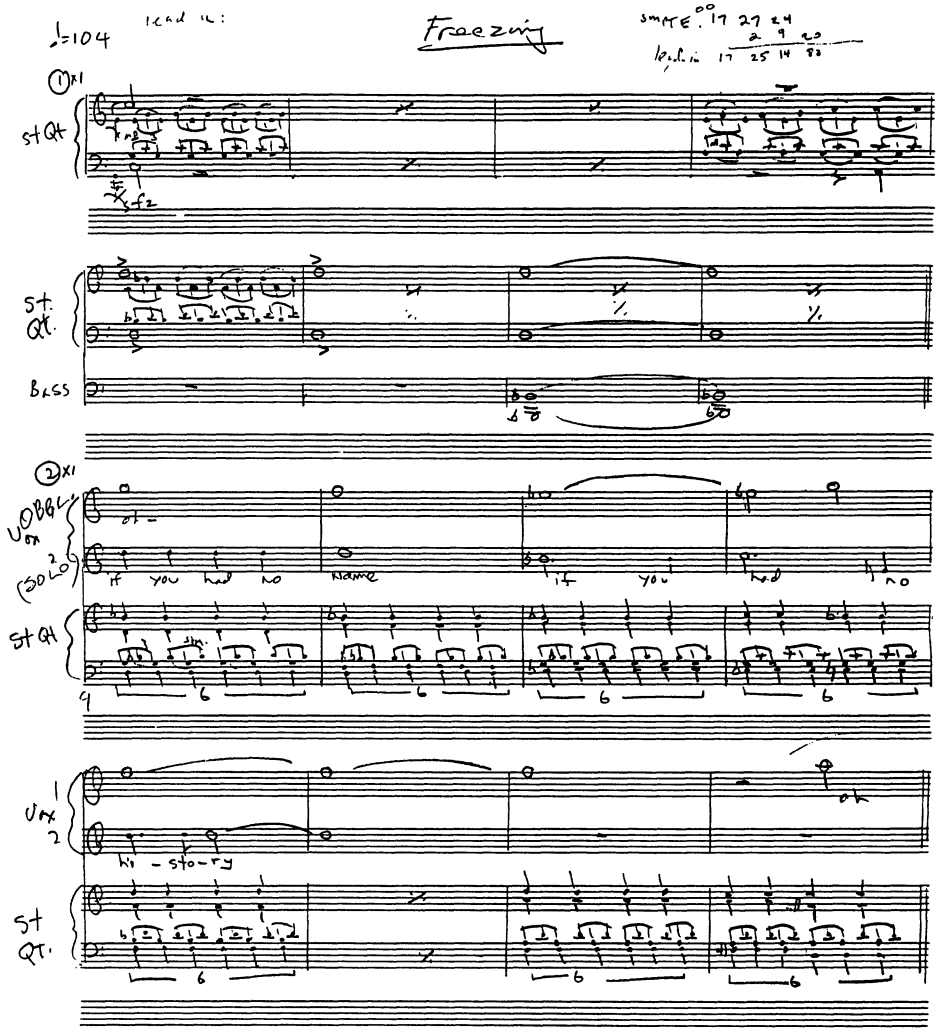


Days (1986) by Philip Glass with words by Suzanne Vega. Lentz, an eclectic composer of merit, creates in his piece a complex diatonic texture comprised of multiple vocal and electronic parts. An unceasing fast pulse—four notes per moderately fast beat—sets up the minimalist feel, with mallet instrument qualities reminiscent of Reich's *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ* making the association even stronger. Very striking is the use of a vocal part—initially to reinforce the rapid pulsation of the electronic parts and then to provide juxtaposed sustained lines in contrast. The vocal strands are used more to complement the texture than to convey the meaning of Lentz's own text (an idea used earlier by Reich and Glass). Several abrupt shifts of mode and tonic lead to passages based on short repeated chord progressions comprised of parallel extended tertial harmonies. The complex texture (along with tonally oriented harmonic progressions, relatively frequent changes of dynamics, timbre, modes, and key centers) produces a piece more Western in concept—that is, one with dramatic musical direction. Constant (prolonged) pulsation in a diatonic context gives the work an unmistakable minimalist quality.

Glass's setting of "Freezing" is written for voice (Linda Ronstadt), the Kronos String Quartet, and keyboards. This relatively short song, just over three minutes, makes use of the patent Glass arpeggios in a texture possessing different levels of pulsation. Both features project the minimalist feel. However, the strong "functional" harmonic progressions and the relatively strict accommodation of the structure and meaning of the prose—no repetition of the text, paraphrasing, breaking down of the words, etc.—contrast with the Lentz work and reflect older, more traditional Western practices. And the comparatively lyrical (wordless) descant adds to musical momentum in rather conventional ways; it contrasts with the more static main melody and the driving rhythmic figures of the accompaniment, and reinforces tonal tension and repose. Certainly this is a departure from Glass's earlier artistic intention, about which he says, "When it becomes apparent that nothing 'happens' in the usual sense, but that, instead, the gradual accretion of musical material can and does serve as the basis of the listener's attention, then he can perhaps discover another mode of listening."[29] This collection of short works, and others, such as *Northstar, Glassworks,* and selections from the film *Mishima*, musically present an aesthetic position quite different from that quoted above—and certainly one based primarily on Western goal-oriented notions.

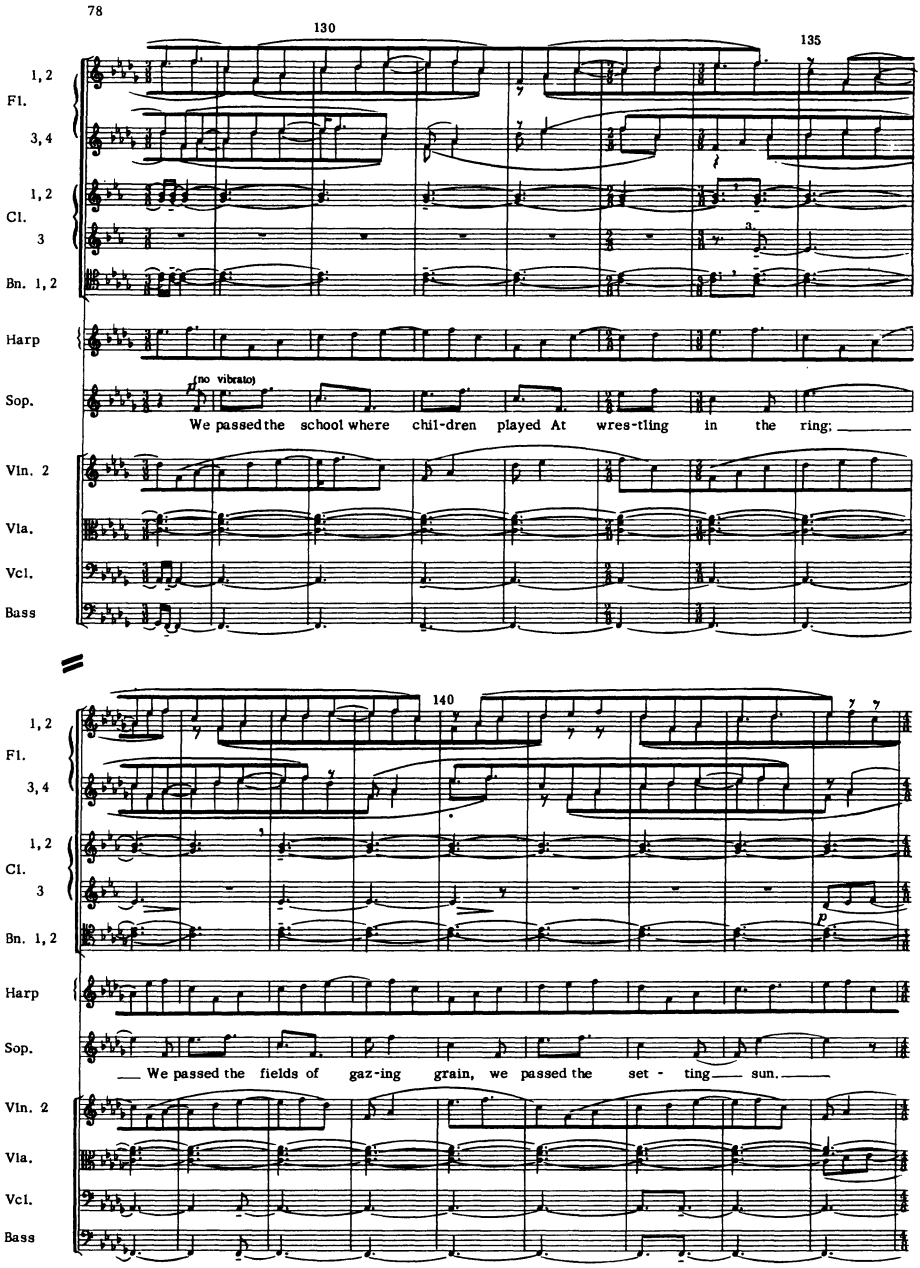
Two major symphonic works are John Adams's *Harmonium* (1981) and Steve Reich's *The Desert Music* (1984). Both are scored for large forces: orchestra and chorus in *Harmonium*, and orchestra with amplified woodwinds, three synthesizers, and amplified chorus in *The Desert Music.*

Example 2. Philip Glass/Suzanne Vega, "Freezing." Music composed by Philip Glass. © 1986, Dunvagen Music Publishers, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Lyrics by Suzanne Vega. © 1987 AGF Music Ltd./Waifersongs Ltd. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



Harmonium is a powerful, dramatic work over thirty minutes in length, in two parts, based on texts by John Donne (Part I) and Emily Dickinson (Part II). Contrary to most minimal music, it is a highly emotional composition with a clearly expressed text that exhibits the Romantic practice of enlisting musical contrasts to emphasize or reinforce text meaning. Prepared and unprepared points of arrival, sudden and gradual changes of character, and imaginative and diverse use of

Example 3. John Adams, *Harmonium*. © 1981 by Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (BMI). International Copyright Secured. Used by permission.



instruments and voices are unmistakable Western qualities. The extreme range of dramatic inflection, occasional wordless vocal passages, and virtuoso-like gestures are practices found in Western art music of this century. Perhaps it is because of these salient features that Adams feels he should not be considered a member of the minimalist camp. Nevertheless, his preference for diatonic relationships, his extended use of repeated cells projecting various levels of pulsation, and his interest in radically slowed harmonic rhythm, or as he describes it, "Large, harmonically stable key areas, often governed by a single mode or even a single chord . . . brought to life and impelled forward by an inner pulse and by a constantly evolving wave-like manipulation of the surface texture," link *Harmonium* unequivocally to the minimalist movement.[30] The connection is especially clear, for it is the presence of these features that gives the work its uniqueness. For the most part, however, Adams's pulsating effects are unlike others. First, they change character more readily and with greater extremes; second, they do not exist throughout the work; and third, they often become secondary to or supportive of more prevailing musical features. The first section of Part II, for instance, begins and ends without typical pulsating patterns, while the canonic middle section contains gentle pulses that clearly serve the meaning of Dickinson's words:

> We passed the school where children played
> At wrestling in a ring . . .

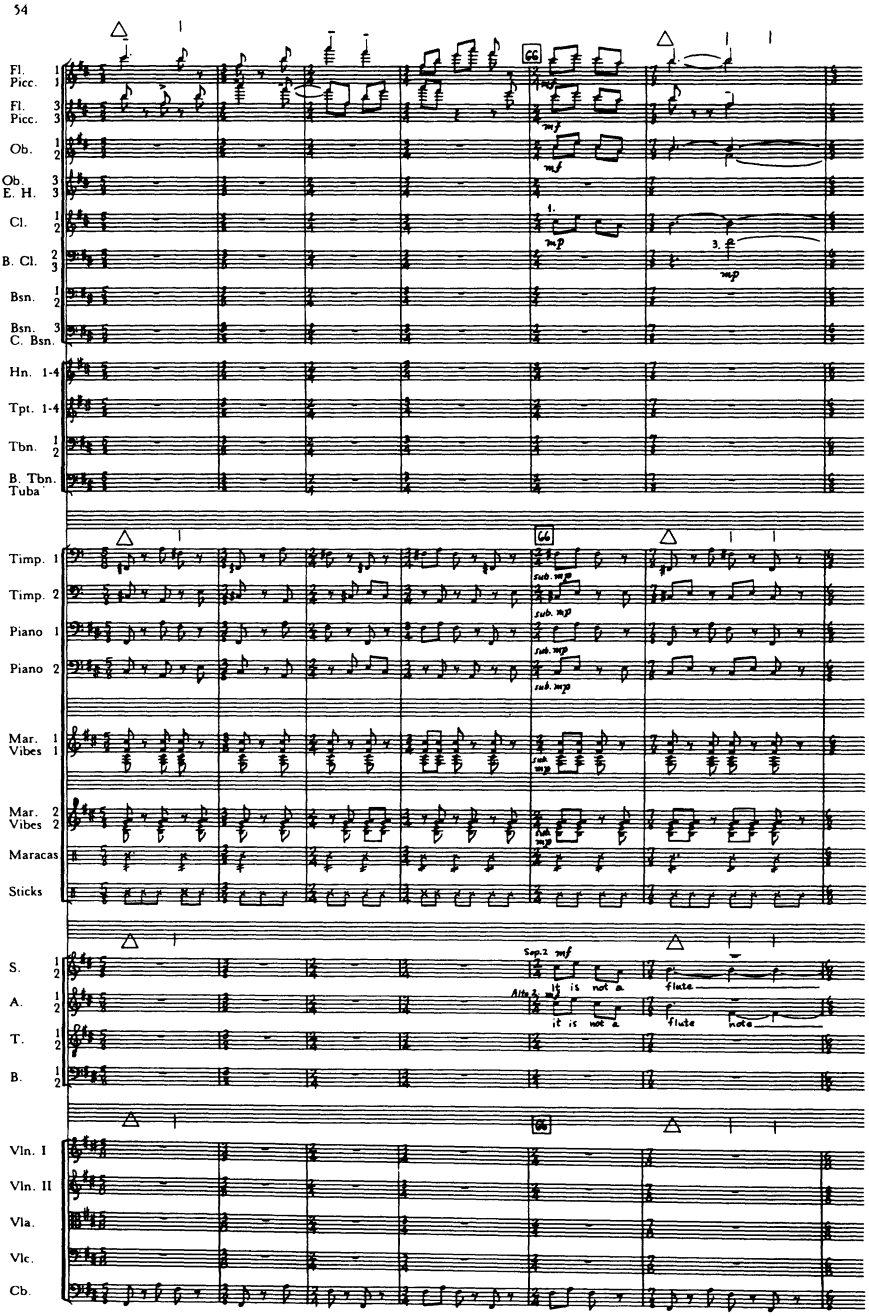
Similarly in the last section of the work, a prolonged pulsating figure, set up by female voices on the word "Rowing," highlights the final words of Dickinson's "Wild Night":

> Rowing in Eden–
> Ah, the sea!
> Might I but moor—Tonight—
> In thee!

Adams's use of minimalist practices in a dialectic, dramatic, and thus, Western context, may well be an example of things to come. Certainly, the manner in which he has been able to adapt and adopt these practices and maintain his individual style points favorably to the potential of the minimalist school.

Approximately fifty minutes in length, *The Desert Music* by Steve Reich is based on words by William Carlos Williams: "Orchestra" and "Theocritus: Idyl I—A version from the Greek," from the collection titled *The Desert Music*, and "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower," from another collection. The work is in arch form (a structure favored by Reich after studying the Bartók string quartets), with the following

Example 4. Steve Reich, *The Desert Music*. © 1984 by Steve Reich. Reich Music Publications, publisher. Hendon Music, Inc. (a Boosey & Hawkes Company), exclusive agents. Reprinted by permission of Hendon Music, Inc.



tempo relationships: I-fast, II-moderate, IIIA-slow, IIIB-moderate, IIIC-slow, IV-moderate, V-fast. Movements I and V share the same tempo and harmonic cycle; sections II and IV and sections IIIA and IIIC the same text and tempo. Tempos between movements are produced through metric modulation (3:2). These structural decisions clearly emanate from composers trained in the Western art music tradition, namely Béla Bartók and Elliot Carter.

As in the Adams piece, voices are used to produce independent wordless lines that contribute to the overall texture, and to project clearly the meaning of the text. Vocal parts are treated in ways typical of earlier eras, e.g., traditional choral part writing, metric-syllabic accent compatibility, no unusual vocal effects, polyphonic and homophonic settings, canonic writing, "word painting." Also common is the relationship of instruments to voices, the former serving primarily to accompany, to provide interludes, and to prepare for the latter. Melody is not the generator of form in either work, but rather an extension of the musical texture. As Adams explains, melody "is born out of the ongoing harmonic and rhythmic flow of the continuum."[31] These features, along with the prevalent use of repetitive gestures (produced a number of ways), rather loosely place the two works in the same fold. Differences, however, are many.

Reich's music on the whole is less goal-oriented and, to me, less dramatic than Adams's. Once a passage is launched by Reich, the style or "process" remains relatively constant. While passages change musically with text meaning, and vocal parts change depending on words, stanzas, or poems, the underlying pulsations of the moment create a feeling of stasis—an important aesthetic principle of Reich's expression: "*The Desert Music* begins with this pulsation in order to set up the feeling, structure, and harmony of the entire piece."[32] The difference in this work, however, is that passages, sections, and subsections generally change more frequently and noticeably than in his earlier works.

Although the comparison of dramatic impact here is a debatable matter, there can be little argument that *The Desert Music* is by far Reich's most dramatic piece. The practice of setting up a process allowing for gradual, subtle change over a long period of time is missing in this work. Fresh elements are the use of unusually fast harmonic rhythm in a chromatic setting, more pronounced dynamic changes, and considerably shorter passages that differ distinctly from one another. The style of vocal writing (as compared with that in such works as *Drumming* and *Tehillim*) is also new: it changes appropriately to accommodate the meaning and feeling of the text. In some instances word painting is employed. The soloistic use of flute and percussion, for example, introduces the words

It is not
a flute note either; it is the relation
of a flute note
to a drum. . . .

A canonic passage sung by women in staccato style emphasizes the following text:

it is a principle of music
to repeat the theme. Repeat
and repeat again,
as the pace mounts. . . .

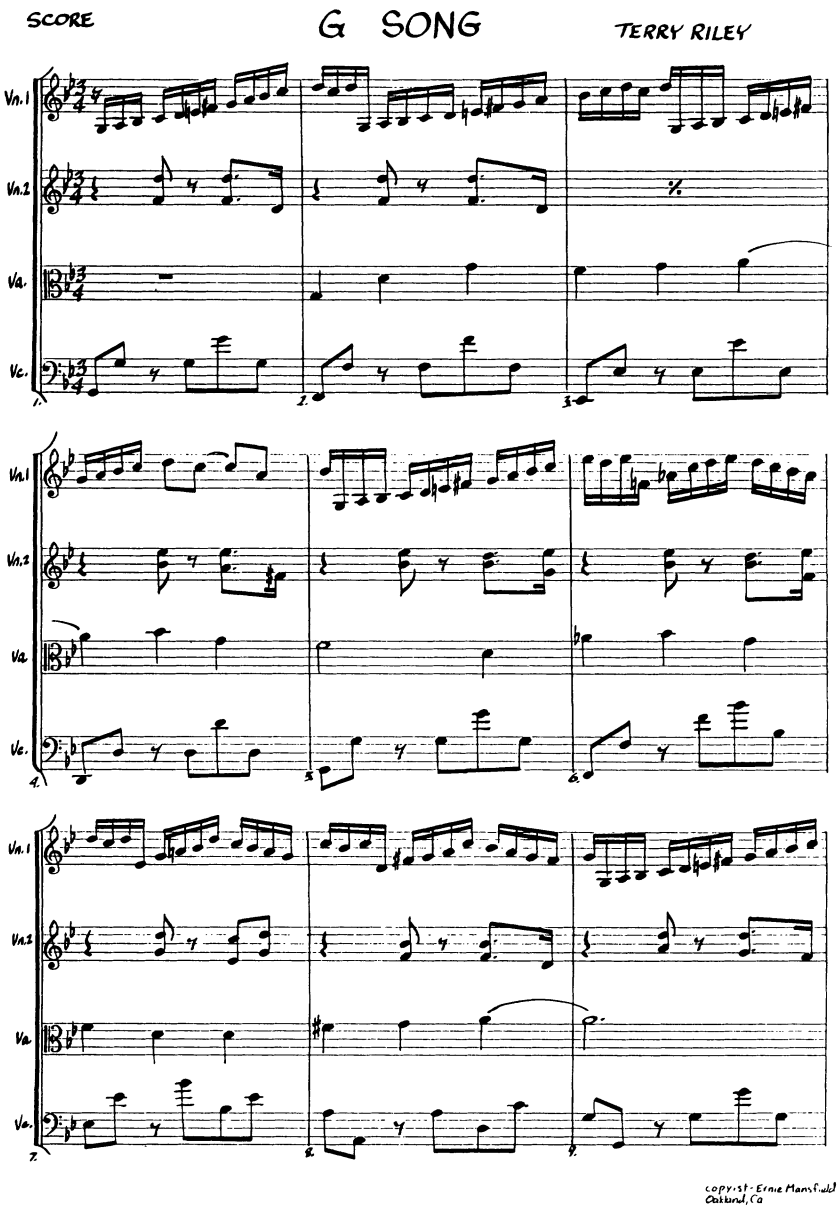
And a siren effect by the violas anticipates the text

> "Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize them, he must either change them or perish."

Still central to the work, however, is Reich's trademark, the repeating, highly syncopated interlocking rhythmic figures about which he says, "If you want to write music that is repetitive in any literal sense, you have to work to keep a lightness and constant ambiguity with regard to where the stresses and where the beginnings and endings are. . . . In this way, one's listening mind can shift back and forth within the musical fabric, because the fabric encourages that."[33] While Reich uses repetition to greater extent than Adams, in *The Desert Music* (as in *Variations for Winds, Strings, and Keyboards* [1980]), musical features other than sounds generated through the repetition of short cells reach new levels of prominence. His patent sustaining qualities, for example, are brought more to life through attractive harmonic progressions; instrumental and vocal color are more noticeable because of greater frequency and abruptness of timbre and register changes; and motives seem increasingly memorable because of their more compelling melodic-rhythmic content. Where traditional Western musical syntax is more pronounced with Adams (and at one time of little concern to Reich), it now appears more important to Reich than before. The power and complexity of the exceptional fifth movement of this work are exemplary.

If the six pieces discussed above are any indication, there was a trend in 1980s minimalism to reduce subtlety and to integrate minimalist gestures into more dialectic settings. Progression, that is, musical teleology, seems to be replacing mere succession. "G-Song" from Terry Riley's *Cadenza on the Night Plain* for string quartet is also illustrative. The growth in complexity, the exquisite counterpoint, the sophisticated deviations used in variations that lead to an "expected" cadence are

Example 5. Terry Riley, "G Song." © 1973 Ancient Word Music (BMI). Worldwide administration rights controlled by Celestial Harmonies, Tucson, Arizona. Used by permission.



notated features of this work that differ considerably from the somewhat indeterminate gestures of his now famous *In C*. Even his recent improvisations on acoustic piano tuned in just intonation (following the influence of La Monte Young) are dramatically filled with contrasts and the unexpected. And the few repetition pieces by European composers that I have had a chance to hear are likewise conceived. Clearly, use of the terms "trance music" or "meditation music" to describe contemporary minimalist style is far from accurate.

Perhaps this reduction of redundancy and incorporation of the more dramatic in so many recent works by composers associated with this movement signal a later stage of minimalism. It is this stage that Meyer calls "mannerist," and defines as "marked by an active and often explicit pursuit of the less common and probable facets of syntax and structure. . . . Compositional redundancy is drastically reduced. Sensitive, accurate appreciation demands considerable experience and training."[34] But has the eloquence of earlier extended works, which perhaps demand even greater perceptual acuity, been lost to what we as a culture are more conditioned to hearing? Have practices of Western dramatic expression become victorious over the original minimalist aesthetic? Answers to these questions may be revealed this decade. But even if they aren't, it is increasingly evident that minimalism is not ready to relinquish its place in the musical mainstream nor to leave with us anything less than a valuable, indelible artistic style.

NOTES

My thanks to a colleague, Professor Allen Strange, for use of his tape library.

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7. Linda Sanders, "Satyagraha Simulacra," review of CBS Masterworks recording of *Satyagraha* by Philip Glass, *Voice* (Sept. 10, 1985), 78.
8. Michael Walsh, "The Maturing of Minimalism," review of *The Juniper Tree* by Philip Glass, *Time* (Dec. 23, 1985), 73.
9. Ibid.
10. Leonard Meyer, *Music, Arts, and Ideas—Patterns and Predictions in Twentieth-Century Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 238.
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