

I/O FEST 2025
SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 7:30 PM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

STEVE REICH: *Music for Pieces of Wood*

Music for Pieces of Wood grows out of the same roots as *Clapping Music*: a desire to make music with the simplest possible instruments. The claves, or cylindrical pieces of hard wood, used here were selected for their particular pitches (A, B, C#, D#, and D# an octave above), and for their resonant timbre. This piece is one of the loudest I have ever composed, but uses no amplification whatsoever.

The rhythmic structure is based entirely on the process of rhythmic "buildups" or the substitution of beats for rests, and is in three sections of decreasing pattern length: 6/4, 4/4, 3/4. -Steve Reich

Tonight's performance is a version incorporating instruments from Balinese gamelan arranged by Gamelan Yowana Sari director Michael Lipsey.

DOUGLAS BOYCE '92: *Floruit Egregiis*

Floruit Egregiis (2011) is dedicated to M. Jennifer Bloxam, a noted scholar of the Franco-Flemish liturgical music with whom I studied at Williams. While I was studying with her, Jennifer published her seminal study "In Praise of Spurious Saints: The Missae Floruit egregiis by Pipelare and La Rue," an essay from which I borrow liberally in this note and this work. My piece shares its topoi with her essay, the interrelated masses 'Missa de Sancto Livino' of M. Pipelare and 'Missa de Sancto Job' of Pierre de la Rue.

Douglas Boyce composes chamber music that masterfully blends Medieval and Renaissance influences with modernist sensibilities. His compositions are characterized by complex rhythmic structures that navigate between ordered elegance and fierce fragmentation. Drawing deeply from both historical traditions and philosophical inquiry, his work resonates with various humanities disciplines, including history, anthropology, literature, and philosophy. Fanfare magazine's Colin Clarke lauded his work as "vastly stimulating on all levels, whether intellectual or emotional," while Peter Burwasser noted his "natural feel for dramatic, linear flow, and a sense of daring and imagination."

Boyce serves as Professor of Music at George Washington University, and holds a BA in Music and Physics from Williams College, an MM from the University of Oregon, and a PhD in Composition from the University of Pennsylvania. Boyce serves as composer-in-residence of counter)induction, a New York-based composer/performer collective. His works have been featured on several notable labels, including New Dynamic Records, Capstone Records, and New Focus Recordings.

PHIL ACIMOVIC: *Five Poems for Piano*

Five Poems for Piano is a collection of short contemplations exploring various facets of tranquility and disquietude. Precision of pitch and form is mixed with openness of duration, a reflection of similar qualities in poetry. Several chords and gestures persist throughout the piece as musical landmarks.

Phil Acimovic is a composer and gamelan musician from Easthampton, MA. His work explores austere musical worlds of both serenity and disquietude. His works have been performed by the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, the Empyrean Ensemble, Chris Froh, and John McDonald. In 2018 he served as the first Artist-In-Residence at the Cold Hollow Sculpture Park in northern Vermont. Acimovic studied composition at UC Davis, Tufts, and the Hartt School with Kurt Rohde, Sam Nichols, John McDonald, Ken Steen, and David Macbride. He is currently a Lecturer in Music at Yale University.

Acimovic studied Javanese Gamelan in Central Java with Bp. Wakidi Dwidjomartono and Bp. Darsono Hadiraharjo and has worked closely with Bp. Midiyanto and Barry Drummond. In 2018 he conceived and managed a tour of a gamelan gadhon troupe from Surakarta, Java, performing at institutions across the U.S. He directs the Smith College Gamelan Ensemble, the Yale University Gamelan Ensemble, and Gamelan Lebda Budaya. He served as editor for a book of gamelan scores as part of the Lontar Foundation's Wayang Educational package.

JACOB FANTO '25: *Amber and Asphalt*

Amber and Asphalt juxtaposes the beauty and stillness of the natural world, of life preserved, frozen in time, with the grit and rhythm of modern urban landscapes. Written for cello and percussion quartet, the piece explores a wide range of contrasting timbres, from hollow and earthy soundscapes, to intense, electric drum breaks. It depicts the tension and fragile balance between nature's permanence and the fleeting, imposing creations of human progress.

Jacob Fanto is a composer, orchestrator, instrumentalist, and producer based in Western Massachusetts, with a background in classical percussion performance. Jacob's compositional style ranges from chamber ensemble to symphonic and hybrid film music. He has also orchestrated a number of projects for studios such as Lionsgate, Marvel, and Sony Pictures Animation. A senior at Williams College, this is Jacob's fourth and final year playing in, and composing for, the Williams Percussion Ensemble and I/O.

BARTON MCLEAN: *Remembering Steven*

Over the years that Steven Bodner taught at Williams, he and I became good friends, and like many of you, I became a devoted Bodner fan. His energy and talent was boundless, and the results in the performances were nothing short of miraculous. In fact, I even wrote a whole column as guest reviewer in the Advocate's "Classical Beat" entitled "Steven Dennis Bodner—Musician or Magician?" A few months before that fateful I/O series which saw Steve eventually succumb to pneumonia, Steve and I got together with the idea of my composing a work using Steve's own playing, which I recorded in our Petersburg studio. The approach was to write beforehand some saxophone licks or motives, and then Steve would play them and improvise the rest with or without direction from me. Consequently you will not only hear Steve's playing but also acquire a glimpse into his own creative skills, which were considerable. Of course I would gather these and select and edit and transpose and clip, but I think that Steve's personality still comes through.

The audio takes we made on that day remained in the closet for a long time. That fateful I/O festival came and went, and I seemed to block out the realization that the recordings we had made were there. Only recently, upon a digitization project I was undertaking, did I re-discover them and was astonished at how pregnant they were for further creative exploration. "Remembering Steve" was composed in 2023 using the Kyma System, which has a little magic of its own, being the creative vehicle through which I

have written c. 10 works since 2014. These works, along with my composer wife Priscilla's works, are mostly available on Youtube by searching for Barton McLean or Priscilla McLean. "Remembering Steve" will shortly join them on Youtube.

The work will be played in darkness. As you will hear, the ending is soft and compellingly tragic, and I ask that you remain silent after the ending until the lights are turned on, in remembrance and reflection.

– Barton McLean

Barton McLean is an American composer and electronic music pioneer known for his innovative work in integrating traditional acoustic instruments with electronic and computer-generated sounds. Born in 1938, McLean's career spans several decades, during which he has explored themes of nature, technology, and human experience through sound. He currently lives with his composer wife Priscilla McLean next door in Petersburg, NY

McLean began his career as a classical pianist and composer, earning degrees from Indiana University (Mus D) and the Eastman School of Music (M.A.). His early influences were Iannis Xenakis, whose studio he composed in, and Henry Cowell, his teacher at Eastman. Early on, he focused on traditional compositional forms but soon became intrigued by electronic music through Xenakis and others, leading him to work extensively with analog synthesizers, tape manipulation, and later digital tools.

In collaboration with his composer-performer wife Priscilla McLean, Dr. McLean co-founded "The McLean Mix," a performance duo that combines live electronics, visuals, and audience participation. Their works often include multimedia elements and field recordings, reflecting an ecological and experiential approach to composition. Their full-time touring career as composer/performers after leaving academia spanned a total of 33 years in 42 US states and Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

Retired from teaching, McLean continues to create and share his work, leaving a significant impact on the evolution of electronic and contemporary music. His music, most of which is on Youtube, can be most easily accessed by searching for "Barton McLean" on that web site, or on Wikipedia.

ZACH HOULTON '25: *Kaleidoscope*

Kaleidoscope is Zach Houlton's music thesis project, which he composed throughout his last semester at Williams College under the guidance of Professor Ileana Perez Velazquez. Just as a kaleidoscope creates a colorful and symmetric pattern by reflecting light off pieces of glass, this piece pulls many different styles and a few different playing techniques into one cohesive whole. The title of the piece is also a nod to the composer's late grandmother, who loved colors, patterns, and her extensive collection of kaleidoscopes. This work surveys the full range of colors and emotions possible with a kaleidoscope, from the melancholy of soft, cool colors, to a dramatically vibrant and warm spectrum.

Zach Houlton is a senior music major at Williams College, originally from Guilford, CT. He loves composing for both voice and strings, and recent accolades include teaching and conducting his own choral composition, "Fire and Ice" after winning the Williams College student composer's competition in Spring 2024. His work composing for voice combines with his experience as a singer to inspire the lyricism of his string melodies.

Zach is an avid member of the Williams music community. As a performer, Zach sings in the Williams Concert Choir and the Williams Chamber Choir. He was music director of the Williams Octet, where he spent a year and a half directing the group through gigs and concerts, including conducting the national anthem at a Yankees game.

After graduating, Zach is looking to attend either a music master's program in composition, medical school, or both.

STEVE REICH: *Electric Counterpoint*

Electric Counterpoint (1987) was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival for guitarist Pat Metheny. It was composed during the summer of 1987. The duration is about 15 minutes. It is the third in a series of pieces (first Vermont Counterpoint in 1982 for flutist Ransom Wilson followed by New York Counterpoint in 1985 for clarinetist Richard Stolzman) all dealing with a soloist playing against a pre-recorded tape of themselves. In *Electric Counterpoint* the soloist pre-records as many as 10 guitars and 2 electric bass parts and then plays the final 11th guitar part live against the tape. I would like to thank Pat Metheny for showing me how to improve the piece in terms of making it more idiomatic for the guitar.

– Steve Reich

This performance of *Electric Counterpoint* was arranged by Jeffrey Miller for four live guitars, two basses, and recorded tracks.

Steve Reich has been called "the most original musical thinker of our time" (*The New Yorker*) and "among the great composers of the century" (*The New York Times*). Starting in the 1960s, his pieces *It's Gonna Rain*, *Drumming*, *Music for 18 Musicians*, *Tehillim*, *Different Trains*, and many others helped shift the aesthetic center of musical composition worldwide away from extreme complexity and towards rethinking pulsation and tonal attraction in new ways. He continues to influence younger generations of composers and mainstream musicians and artists all over the world.