

# Electric Counterpoint (third movement) - Steve Reich. Composed in 1987.

## The Elements of Music

### Melody



### Rhythm



### Texture



### Instruments



### Genre



### Harmony & Tonality



### Structure



#### MELODY

The music is very repetitive - this syncopated melody is performed by four of the guitars. One guitar starts, then the others come in. Canonic one bar riff - repeating pattern played as a round.

**Note addition** is used to build up the riff (guitar 3)

Bass guitar ostinato.

Melodies are made up of **cells**.

**Resultant melody**- new melody produced when different parts play their melodies at the same time.

#### RHYTHM

Time signature of 3/2. Three minim beats per bar. At some points, a few guitarists play in 12/8. The parts still fit together because both time signatures divide into 12 quavers  
This movement is marked 'fast.'  
Displaced accents  
Cross rhythms.

#### TEXTURE

Polyphonic -made of several independent parts being played at the same time.  
Parts gradually build up to help define structure.  
Once all parts are introduced the texture is quite constant.  
Counterpoint - obvious when some parts are playing in 3/2 and others in 12/8 (in section B)  
Parts fade out on the end  
Coda returns to four-part canon

#### INSTRUMENTS

7 electric guitars.  
2 bass guitars  
Solo guitar part.  
The whole piece should be performed by one guitarist - the other parts are recorded before a performance.

#### GENRE

Minimalist. Steve Reich's influences include: jazz, African drumming, Balinese Gamelan.  
Called Electric Counterpoint - electric instruments, multitrack recorder.  
Piece was written for jazz guitarist Pat Metheny.

#### STRUCTURE

In two main sections with a coda.  
**Section A** Starts with one guitar playing a one bar ostinato, then each of the remaining guitars are gradually added. Suggests key of E minor.  
**Section B** Big key change to C minor.  
**Coda** (ending) Finishes in E minor and crescendos to a final E chord.

#### HARMONY AND TONALITY

Suggested E minor and C minor  
Actually modal (we don't hear a D# we expect in E minor therefore its in the E aeolian mode) **Tonal Ambiguity**.  
Key changes (modulates) half way through the piece at bar 74. There are more frequent key changes as the piece builds up.