



In C by Terry Riley

Allan Buccola, saxophone

Sarah Coates, mezzo-soprano

Damien Grosser, baritone saxophone

Jonan Keeny, percussion

Erin Klimstra, violoncello

Ross Lafleur, electric guitar

Elizabeth Loparits, piano

Adam Murphy, B \flat clarinet and bass clarinet

Chip Newton, guitar

Chris Ozer, keyboard

Will Postlethwait, double bass

Dan Skidmore, violin

Logan Strawn, viola

Arthur White, soprano saxophone and flute

Max Wood, percussion

Pete Zambito, percussion

Organized by Ross Lafleur in partial fulfillment of the
Honors in Music Program
Dr. Scott Rawls, advisor

Friday, November 22, 2002
7:30 PM
Organ Hall, School of Music

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Terry Riley's *In C* is a cornerstone in the genre of minimalism and is considered by many to be a classic of 20th century music. It was first performed in San Francisco in 1964 by a group of young performers and composers (some of whom never having played the piece before the premiere) that included, among others, Riley (b. 1935), Steve Reich, Jon Gibson, Pauline Oliveros, Morton Subotnik, and Ramon Sender. Oliveros recalls, "All of us knew that Terry had done something special with *In C*. Alfred Frankenstein, critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, hailed it as a 20th century masterpiece right then and there even though our performance was pretty bad."

In C is a highly flexible work. Keith Potter writes, "performance practice has evolved quite freely with respect to the written source, making *In C* begin to feel like a kind of urban folk music rather than a 'composition' in a more conventional sense." Any number and combination of instruments can play the piece and they all play from copies of the same score. The score consists of 53 repeating modules of various durations, most very short, which are to be played in order by each musician. Added to this raw material are some elements of improvisation: every single musician decides on their own when to start repeating each module, when to move on to the next module, and when to just stop and listen. The length of the piece is also highly variable as a result. There is no rhythmic meter, but there is an eighth-note pulse, which will be ably provided tonight by Elizabeth Loparits on the piano. This allows the musicians to play their patterns at any alignment with others playing the same pattern or a different one. Riley writes in the performance instructions, "One of the joys of *In C* is the interaction of the players in polyrhythmic combinations that spontaneously arise between players. Some quite fantastic shapes will arise and disintegrate as the group moves through the piece when it is properly played."

In fact, there are many joys in a good performance of *In C*. In addition to the spontaneous contrapuntal combinations of patterns Riley mentions, listeners can appreciate the different combinations of timbres and the changing thickness of texture, as well as the communal atmosphere of collective improvisation. Virtually every aspect of the music except the written patterns is determined by the contributions of each member of the ensemble and their interaction with each other, so the dynamics of the group are very important. Another wonderful feature of *In C* is the overall "tonal" plan that Riley wrote into the patterns; despite the title, the piece shifts tonal emphasis multiple times over its course. Because of the nature of the performance, these shifts are gradual color changes, rather than dramatic gestures as in many other musical works.

In C was originally recorded in 1968 for CBS records and has been recorded several times since. Even the Shanghai Film Orchestra did one recording entirely with Chinese instruments. There is also a recording of the 25th anniversary performance and a very recent one by Bang on a Can.

Thank you so much for participating in this performance, and I hope you enjoy it!



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