

## Instruments

- 7 electric guitars
- 2 bass guitars
- Solo guitar part (who plays along with a multi-track recording of the other parts)
- Composed for Pat Metheny, a well known jazz guitarist

## Minimalist features used in the piece

- **Ostinati/repeated patterns**
- **Note addition/additive melody** (starts off playing just a few notes of the riff, then two or three notes are added each time its played until the whole riff is heard)
- **Layering**
- **Resultant melody** (a new melody produced when a variety of parts play their melodies at the same time)
- **Short motifs**
- **Texture gradually builds** as layers are added

## 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

## Rhythms used:

Opening guitar riff:



But it can be notated (sounds the same):



Resultant melody (heard later on)



# Electric Counterpoint 3rd movement By Steve Reich



## Structure

In two section A B—binary form.

## 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. All parts playing. During this section the key shifts to E minor and back to C minor a few times. Parts start to drop out

**Coda** (ending) Finishes in E minor and crescendos to a final E chord.

## Tonality/Harmony

- Suggests E minor (Section A) and C minor (Section B)
- Actually **modal** (we don't hear a D# we expect in E minor - therefore its in the aeolian mode on E)
- Key changes (modulates) half way through the piece at bar 74, this marks the start of Section B
- There are more frequent key changes as the piece builds up

## Why is this piece called *Electric Counterpoint*?

- Electric guitars are used
- Counterpoint is the main texture
- Most of the layers are recorded onto tape (uses electrical tape recorder)



## Three musical points that I like/don't like about this song *Justify your points and used musical vocabulary*

## Music Technology

- Multi-tracking
- Panning (used to separate out the guitar parts to left and right speakers)

## Dynamics

- Fairly constant—only the live guitar has crescendos and diminuendos.
- Crescendo at end to final chord

## Rhythm and metre

- In 3/2, at some points a few guitars play in 12/8 while others stay in 3/2
- The parts still fit together because both time signatures divide into 12 quavers.
- Much use of **ostinatos** and uses **syncopated rhythms** and **cross rhythms**

## Melody

- Made up of short, repeating patterns (ostinatos)
- Use of additive melodies

## Tempo

- Fast throughout (constant). Clear pulse
- Crotchet = 192

## Texture (in detail)

### Section A

- Begins with guitar 1, then other guitar added as follows: live guitar, guitar 2, guitar 3, guitar 4—Reich calls this a 'four-part guitar canon', guitar 4 doubles the live guitar.
- Bass guitar parts are introduced
- Live guitar introduces new idea by playing strummed chords. Dramatic effect that cuts across other parts.
- Guitars 5-7 play a chord sequence that creates rhythmic counterpoint

### Section B

- Texture remains the same
- Counterpoint becomes obvious when the metre changes (3/2 against 12/8)
- Metre shifts regularly creating tension from the counterpoint
- Guitars 5-7 and two bass parts fade out at bar 106

### Coda

- Four part canon with live guitar playing resultant melodies



