

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. Canon 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.

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.

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

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.