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Narrative Trails in the Speech-Based Music of Steve Reich

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2013

*Permission to reproduce transcriptions of archival material for examination purposes only was kindly granted by the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel. These transcripts are now deposited in the Stiftung.*



## ABSTRACT

This thesis considers Steve Reich's speech-based compositions between 1963 and 1988 in the light of their source materials. The collection comprises seven pieces: *The Plastic Haircut* (1964); *Livelihood* (1964); *It's Gonna Rain* (1965); *Come Out* (1966); *Buy Art, Buy Art* (1967); *My Name Is* (1967), and *Different Trains* (1988). The sources for these pieces constitute a plethora of hitherto unexamined audio recordings, transcriptions of which are included in a separate volume of appendices.

The study presents a detailed transcription and consideration of these archival sources, culminating in a new narrative reading of each of Steve Reich's speech-based pieces from the first three decades of his compositional output. Although some recordings now exist on-line, Reich's decision in 2008 to transfer his private archive to the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland, has opened up a much larger collection. This considerable body of source material allows a new understanding of the stories told by each of these seven pieces. Whilst firmly rejecting the notion that his music tells stories, Reich has accepted that the documentary nature of the recorded materials for his speech-based works marks them out as a special case. This invites scrutiny of the relationship between these recordings and the pieces themselves, shedding new light on the narrative trails that connect them.

## CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	6
Glossary of Narrative Terms	8
Acknowledgements	11
Chapter 1: Mapping Reich's Narrative Trails	15
Chapter 2: <i>The Plastic Haircut and Livelihood</i>	39
Chapter 3: <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	65
Chapter 4: <i>Come Out</i>	105
Chapter 5: Bye, Bye Art: 1967 And All That	155
Chapter 6: <i>Different Trains</i>	193
Chapter 7: Conclusions	255
Bibliography	265

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Reich's speech-based compositions: 1963-2011	18
Table 2 Source materials for Reich's speech-based compositions: 1963-1988	20
Table 3 Structure of <i>Livelihood</i> (1964)	55
Table 4 Speech gobbets transcribed in MSS sources for <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	73
Table 5 Structure of the sound collage of <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	76
Table 6 Scriptural allusion in Walter's preaching in the sound collage of <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	85
Table 7 Scriptural allusion in the Fat Spanish Woman's preaching in the sound collage of <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	89
Table 8 Scriptural allusion in the Believer Girl's contributions to the sound collage of <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	92
Table 9 Gospel songs used in the sound collage of <i>It's Gonna Rain</i>	101
Table 10 Newspaper sources used in Truman Nelson's <i>The Torture of Mothers</i>	122
Table 11 Arrangement of tape transcriptions in Truman Nelson's <i>The Torture of Mothers</i>	126
Table 12 Arrangement of tape transcriptions in Steve Reich's <i>Harlem's Six Condemned</i>	131
Table 13 Time allocations in Steve Reich's <i>Harlem's Six Condemned</i>	134
Table 14 Word allocations in Truman Nelson's <i>The Torture of Mothers</i>	134
Table 15 Structure of Woodie King Jnr's film <i>The Torture of Mothers</i>	148
Table 16 Arrangement of speakers' voices in <i>Buy Art, Buy Art</i>	164
Table 17 Arrangement of speakers' voices in <i>My Name Is</i> [Performance 1]	173
Table 18 Phase relationships in <i>My Name Is</i> [Performance 1]	174
Table 19 Arrangement of speakers' voices in <i>My Name Is</i> [Performance 2]	177

Table 20	Phase relationships in <i>My Name Is</i> [Performance 2]	178
Table 21	Phase relationships in <i>My Name Is</i> [Performance 3]	179
Table 22	Arrangement of speakers' voices in <i>Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)</i>	184
Table 23	Phase relationships in <i>Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)</i>	186
Table 24	Structure of <i>My Name Is Oona.</i>	189
Table 25	<i>Different Trains</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> Movement	226
Table 26	<i>Different Trains</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> Movement	236
Table 27	<i>Different Trains</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Movement	245

## GLOSSARY OF NARRATIVE TERMS

*The terms in this glossary are those most appropriate to the discussion of narrative trails in Steve Reich's speech-based music. This terminology has been developed by a wide range of scholars and the following list does not therefore represent the approach of any particular narrative theorist. See page 18 for further details.*

Achrony	A dateless event, which has no temporal link with other events.
Achronic Structure	A sequence of dateless events.
Agency	The ability of a character (or 'agent') to bring about deliberately initiated actions or events within the context of the narrative.
Agent	A character that acts or influences others.
Anachrony	The difference between the order in which events take place and the order in which they are presented.
Analepsis	A flashback to events that have already occurred.
Anisochrony	A variation in narrative speed.
Antagonist	The major opponent of the protagonist.
Auteur	The creator of a work, who harnesses all of the parameters involved in support of his or her directorial stance.
Author	The creator of a narrative.
Authorial Narrative Situation	A story in which the narrator is all-knowing about events in which he or she is not a participant.
Character	A person or existent engaged in anthropomorphic actions.
Chronological Order	The order of events as they took place.
De-familiarisation	Distancing what is familiar to make it appear unfamiliar.
Deictic	A temporal locator of an event.

Dénouement	The outcome of the plot.
Dialogic Narrative	Narrative in which two or more voices interact.
Dialogue	Representation of discourse between two or more characters.
Diegesis	The story world in which events occur. The telling of those events.
Diegetic	Pertaining to the given diegesis.
Distance	The length of time between events and their narration.
Double or Dual Focalisation	A narrative that brings together two different strands simultaneously.
Ellipsis (see also Gap)	A break in the temporal continuity of events.
Episode	A section of the narrative, containing one or more related events.
Extradiegetic	Not part of the same diegesis.
Framing Narrative	An overarching story that serves to define constituent stories or events.
Gap	A lacuna or omission in the narrative.
Heterodiegetic Narrator	A character outside of the situations he or she recounts.
Homodiegetic Narrator	A character in the situations he or she recounts.
In medias res	Starting in the midst of the action, assuming that the listener is aware of the background to the events.
Isodiegetic	Part of the same diegesis.
Iterative Narrative	A recurring event or occurrence.
Metanarrative	An overarching story.
Mimesis	The showing of events. [In contrast to diegesis, the telling of events].

Narrative Speed	The relationship between the time taken for events as they occurred and the time devoted to their narration.
Monologic Narrative	A narrative related by a single voice.
Montage	A narrative work created by the juxtaposition of events or episodes.
Narrativity	The characteristic features of a narrative.
Narrative Closure	The point at which the story is concluded.
Pace	The tempo at which the story is related.
Plot	The incidents in the story, as opposed to its characters.
Polychronic Narration	Relating a story in a way that changes the original order of events.
Privilege	A narrator's unique right to relate events as he or she wishes.
Prolepsis	A glimpse of what is to happen later in the narrative.
Pseudo-Iterative Frequency	Making events that happened once appear to have taken place several times.
Rounded Character	A character capable of complex and unpredictable actions, as opposed to a one-dimensional character.
Structure	The overall manner in which the constituents of a work are organised.
Time	The period of time taken for the events presented to occur.

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I also wish to acknowledge with gratitude the financial support of my employer, the University of Wolverhampton, in paying my tuition fees and for making available time to undertake short periods of research at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland. Staff at the Stiftung have been untiring in their support, and I am especially grateful to Matthias Kassel, Tina Kilvio and Johanna Blask for guiding me through the extensive collection of Reich's archival material. I am also grateful to the librarians at Queen's College, New York for making available relevant sources from the K. Robert Schwarz archive.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the Society for Minimalist Music. It is surely rare for one's doctoral study to be accompanied by the founding of a learned society in the same area of research. I have been enormously privileged to be its Secretary whilst working on this thesis and I would like to thank Pwyll ap Siôn and Tristian Evans for their far-sightedness in establishing the Society at its first international conference in September 2007 at Bangor University. I have valued the constructive feedback from members on papers I have presented at the Society's three international conferences, which have helped me refine my ideas in the present thesis. In particular, I would like to offer my thanks to Keith Potter for sharing his unparalleled knowledge, expertise and insights into Steve Reich's work.

Completing a PhD as a part-time student whilst working full-time as an academic is a challenging experience and I am most privileged to have had the close support and encouragement of my colleagues, each at different points on the same journey: Karen Bill, Kay Biscomb and Will Foster. I am also indebted to Clare Lidbury for reading drafts of individual chapters and to my PA, Jenny Hensman for her patience and good humour in helping me to keep ahead of the plenteous e-mails that competed for my attention during the period of writing-up.



### **Dedication**

To Sarah, my wife; to Joan, my mother; to Dawn, my mother-in-law: all of whom waited patiently to see this thesis completed.



## Chapter 1      Mapping Reich's Narrative Trails

### 1.1      Defining narrative trails

Minimalist music has not been regularly associated with the telling of stories, and Steve Reich's music is often considered to be narrative-free, not least by the composer himself. In 2008, however, the choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker put to Reich the suggestion that narrative had come to play an increasingly important part in his compositions: 'Your music tells stories now. Do you agree with this interpretation?'.<sup>1</sup> Reich's reply sets out a contrary view, challenging de Keersmaeker's belief that his music had somehow developed narrativity over time, a rebuttal softened only slightly by his attempt to draw distinctions between three different types of composition.

Reich begins by categorizing his instrumental music as completely non-narrative, especially that from the 1960s with its extreme organisation of musical material. More unexpectedly, he delivers a similar judgment on his five 'vocal' pieces: *Tehillim*; *The Desert Music*; *Proverb*; *You Are (Variations)*, and *Daniel Variations* in which he asserts, 'no stories are told', although reluctantly conceding the narrative potential of their subject matter. Most striking, however, is the composer's assertion that his speech-based pieces do not convey narrative either:

There is yet a third category of pieces that use pre-recorded voices and sounds of life around us, including machines. These pieces would include *Different Trains* (which began my return to pre-recorded voices from *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*), *The Cave*, *City Life* and *Three Tales*. Again, no stories are ever told, but real documentary subject matter is talked about with differing implications the audience must sort out for themselves. The essence of these pieces is that they are rooted in documentary material.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The e-mail correspondence between Reich and de Keersmaeker is found at <http://www.stevereich.com>, accessed 7/2/13. Subsequent quotations are also taken from this correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The speech-based pieces are given special attention because of the documentary nature of their source materials, which Reich portrays as lending narrative significance to each work. He does not elaborate on what the 'differing implications' of these sources might be, leaving the responsibility with the audience to work them out.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere, Reich has been more forthcoming about the relationship of his speech-based pieces to their source materials. In a much earlier radio interview, he explains the connection between the voices heard in *Different Trains* and the wider body of speech recordings from which they were selected. The listener is not, it seems, expected to engage in an act of unguided narrative construction but should be directed by the stories embedded in the piece's source material. A rounded understanding of the piece can therefore only be achieved once listeners are fully aware of this relationship. By way of example, Reich refers to the context that informed his choice of speech extracts from Rachella, one of three Holocaust survivors whose voices are used in *Different Trains*:

And I mean, they're experiences that most people don't ever have to go through. But when you hear about them, it supercharges the atmosphere and so what *is* presented of her lives in the light of what is *not* presented of her, and you're quite right: the editing of the tapes, the choosing of the material that was going to be in the piece was a very intense and involving process and you're quite right, it definitely loaded the situation so that the framing of the material, that *is* there, lives in the light of that other material.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Reich also repudiates, in passing, the suggestion that narrative elements are restricted to his later pieces since the works to which he refers span the bulk of his compositional career.

<sup>4</sup> This unidentified interview for US public radio is found in the Paul Sacher Stiftung on CD-SR 11, Track 4, and lasts for 20'48". The interview is transcribed in full in Appendix 14, with the quotation referred to being found in Gobbet 1.18 in the transcription.

This observation establishes a fundamental principle that applies not only to *Different Trains*, but also to all of Reich's speech-based music: the documentary sources provide a narrative context in which these pieces can be fully understood.

This principle inspires the research question for the present thesis: how is the story of what is presented in Reich's pieces shaped by what is not represented? In other words, what can we learn from the emerging narrative trails that lead in each case from source materials to finished composition? This is an approach that has attracted little scholarly consideration to date, mainly because the sources themselves have been unavailable for scrutiny. The following analysis therefore offers a revisionist reading of seven of Reich's speech-based pieces in the light of newly available source materials.

## 1.2 *Repertoire*

Reich's reputation as a composer of speech-based works rests on a small number of well-known pieces: *It's Gonna Rain*; *Come Out*; *Different Trains*; *City Life*; *The Cave*; *Three Tales*; and – most recently – *WTC 9/11*.<sup>5</sup> The complete list of such works – including soundtracks for films and music for theatre pieces – is considerably larger, however and is set out in Table 1.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Steve Reich Website, <http://www.stevereich.com>, does not include the speech-based pieces composed in San Francisco prior to *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) or three later speech pieces, *Buy Art, Buy Art* (1967), *My Shoes Are New* (1967) and *Yesterday Afternoon* (1991). The most recent piece to incorporate human speech, *WTC 9/11*, was yet to be added when the site was accessed on 10/02/13.

<sup>6</sup> *My Shoes Are New* was an experimental piece of work undertaken at Bell Laboratories and was aimed at slowing down human speech whilst retaining the same pitch. In the 1974 edition of his *Writings*, Reich describes an African girl learning English, saying 'My shoes are new' on the pitches e', c<sup>#</sup>, a, and b, both when the teacher spoke and when the girl imitated. See Robert Angus McTyre, *Steve Reich's The Cave: the Relationship of Music with Text*, DMA Dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 2005, pp.8-9. *Yesterday Afternoon* is an opportunistic composition, barely mentioned in the literature on Reich's music and not at all in Reich's *Writings* (2002). There is a very brief introduction in the festival brochure for the first performance on 15 March 1991 as part of an arts festival in Japan. This is cited by Georg Sachse in *Sprechmelodien, Mischklänge, Atemzüge: Phonetische Aspekte im Vokalwerk Steve Reichs*. Gustav Bosse Verlag, Kassel, 2004, p.199. Sachse

January 1963	<i>The Plastic Haircut</i>
August 1963	<i>Ruzzante's Maneuvers</i>
December 1963	<i>King Ubu</i>
February 1964	<i>Along Came a Spider</i>
July 1964	<i>Tartuffe</i>
November 1964	<i>Livelihood</i>
January 1965	<i>It's Gonna Rain or Meet Brother Walter in Union Square after listening to Terry Riley</i>
July 1965	<i>Oh Dem Watermelons</i>
1965 (uncertain)	<i>Thick Pucker and Thick Pucker 2</i>
April 1966	<i>Harlem's Six Condemned/Come Out</i>
May 1967	<i>Buy Art, Buy Art</i>
May 1967	<i>My Name Is</i>
September 1967	<i>My Shoes Are New</i>
1969	<i>My Name is Oona</i>
January 1981	<i>My Name Is: Ensemble Portrait</i>
May 1981	<i>Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)</i>
November 1988	<i>Different Trains</i>
March 1991	<i>Yesterday Afternoon</i>
May 1993	<i>The Cave</i>
July 1995	<i>City Life</i>
May 2002	<i>Three Tales</i>
March 2011	<i>WTC 9/11</i>

Table 1: Reich's speech-based compositions: 1963-2011

The body of this thesis consists of a narrative analysis of seven of Reich's speech-based pieces: *The Plastic Haircut*; *Livelihood*; *It's Gonna Rain*; *Come Out*; *Buy Art, Buy Art*; *My Name Is*; and *Different Trains*. These cover the twenty-five year period between 1963 and 1988 and, with a single exception, exclude film soundtracks or pieces of drama.<sup>7</sup> The focus of the analysis is on the relationship

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describes the pieces as consisting of recordings of Neville Chamberlain's voice brought together with piano sounds. There is also a snippet of five roughly-sketched bars of the piece in Reich's sketchbooks of 1991, containing what appears to be a transcription of the words, 'Yesterday afternoon I had a long talk with Herr Hitler and I feel satisfied now. Ich bin Mister Chamberlain...'. There are several changes of key in the transcript and the style prefigures that of *Different Trains*.

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Eaton, *Unheard Minimalisms: The Functions of the Minimalist Technique in Film Scores*, PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2008, p.52. The soundtrack for *The Plastic Haircut* is included as it exists as a stand-alone sound collage rather than an integrated soundtrack to the film. Reich produced soundtracks for

between the context and content of each piece's source materials and their subsequent usage by Reich. This brings together for the first time a disparate range of source materials that shed new light on the pieces themselves, illuminating in each case a complex and multifaceted narrative.

### 1.3 Sources

The present study is possible now that these source materials are available. Some exist on-line, but most are archived in the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, which announced in December 2008 that Reich had entered into a professional agreement to house his compositional archive there. This extensive collection includes source materials for *It's Gonna Rain*, *Come Out* and *Different Trains* as well as original recordings of performances of *Buy Art, Buy Art* and *My Name Is*. The Sacher press release points to a veritable treasure trove of items:

In addition to letters, sound recordings, manuscripts from various stages in the creative process, and other documents, special importance attaches to his many audio and program files, which capture various working layers in the music of a composer to whom computers, synthesizers, and samplers have long been standard compositional tools.<sup>8</sup>

The collection also includes recordings of proto-versions of speech-based compositions as well as interviews from which material was selected. The body of source material that forms the basis of the present discussion is listed in Table 2.<sup>9</sup>

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Robert Nelson's other experimental films, *Oh Dem Watermelons*, *Thick Pucker* and *Thick Pucker 2* as well as Gunvor Grundel Nelson's 1969 film, *My Name is Oona*. This latter is also included since it provides an important dimension for understanding Reich's *My Name Is*. Producing music for short experimental films is a discipline for which Reich demonstrated no abiding passion, although the two large-scale video operas produced with his wife Beryl Korot, *The Cave* and *Three Tales*, are two of the composer's most substantial works.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.stevereich.com/images/SteveReichCollectionWithSacher.pdf>, accessed on 14/11/12.

<sup>9</sup> Transcriptions of material held in the Paul Sacher Stiftung are for purposes of examination only. Copyright usage of materials from the Steve Reich collection in the Paul Sacher Stiftung resides with the composer during his lifetime, mediated through the curator of the collection. Copies of transcript material produced for the

	Title	Source
1	<i>The Plastic Haircut</i>	<a href="http://www.artbabble.org/video/saam/plastic-haircut">http://www.artbabble.org/video/saam/plastic-haircut</a>
2	<i>Livelihood</i>	<a href="http://www.nakido.com/635BCC87335F3A8884E0C640793BCD7E372B2ECC">http://www.nakido.com/635BCC87335F3A8884E0C640793BCD7E372B2ECC</a>
3	<i>Proto-version of It's Gonna Rain</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 8 Tracks 1 & 2
4	Truman Nelson's <i>The Torture of Mothers</i>	Boston: Beacon Press, 1968
5	<i>Harlem's Six Condemned</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 3 Track 5
6	<i>The Torture of Mothers</i> [film version]	A film directed by Woodie King, Jr. (1980), released in VHS format by Essenay Entertainment, 1991
7	<i>Buy Art, Buy Art</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 2 Tracks 1 & 2
8	<i>My Name Is</i> (Performance 1)	UC Berkeley University Museum <a href="http://archive.org/details/ReichBerkeleyMuseum">http://archive.org/details/ReichBerkeleyMuseum</a>
	<i>My Name Is</i> (Performance 2)	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 28 Tracks 1 & 2
	<i>My Name Is</i> (Performance 3)	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 48 Tracks 1 & 2
	<i>Mein Name Ist</i>	<a href="http://www.discogs.com/Brian-Ferneyhough-Mauricio-Kagel-Steve-Reich-Atelier-Schola-Cantorum-5/release/3089490">http://www.discogs.com/Brian-Ferneyhough-Mauricio-Kagel-Steve-Reich-Atelier-Schola-Cantorum-5/release/3089490</a>
	<i>My Name Is Oona</i>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pe8O5h9EEs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pe8O5h9EEs</a>
9	<i>First interview with Virginia Mitchell</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 10 Tracks 1-3
11	<i>Second interview with Virginia Mitchell</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 10 Tracks 1 & 2
10	<i>Interview with Lawrence "Happy" Davies</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 9 Tracks 1-4
12	<i>Steve Reich talking about Trains</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 11 Track 3
13	<i>Reich interviewed about Different Trains</i>	Paul Sacher Stiftung: SR-CD 11 Track 4

Table 2: Source materials for Reich's speech-based compositions: 1963-1988

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present thesis may be viewed by personal visit to the Stiftung. Transcription copyright remains with the present author.

The reference to ‘working layers’ in the Stiftung’s press release suggests a vertical relationship between Reich’s compositions and their source material, possibly in the manner of a Roman palimpsest, where manuscript is erased and the writing surface reused. The impression made by the previous script is deep enough, however, for glimpses of it to continue to show through. In fact, several previous impressions might be traceable through careful examination of the palimpsest, although separating these inevitably becomes more intricate as each additional level merges with its predecessor.

This implies that each composition develops in an orderly manner, with one stage progressing neatly to the next. Although this might apply to some instrumental pieces where Reich’s sketchbooks are clearly dated, it is less true of the speech-based music, where the roots are considerably more tangled. Rather than attempting the excavation of working layers, the methodology pursued here is based on the mapping of narrative trails, which seeks to discern complex intertwining stories. This thesis explores the trails created by each set of sources and their significance in shaping the narrative of the final piece. Although these trails vary considerably in nature, length and complexity, the resulting reading is in each case richer and more multi-faceted than if individual compositions were examined in isolation.

#### **1.4     *Narrative trails and narrative traits***

The focus of the current study, therefore, is on the trails created by the source materials rather than with a search for narrative properties within the music itself. The mapping of such narrative trails is quite distinct from the hunt for narrative

traits in music, the latter being concerned with the search for musical elements that might suggest or communicate a story. The debate as to whether music contains narrative properties at all has been the subject of a great deal of recent scholarly attention, and has been responsible for appropriating a rich and diverse technical vocabulary from the discipline of narrative theory. Some of this is helpful as a means of discussing narrative traits and a brief glossary of appropriate terms is included at the front of this thesis. Such terminology was developed primarily by narrative theorists such as Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, and Genette Gerard as a means of understanding narrative constructs. Technical terms are used here for the identification of narrative strands rather than with the intention of applying practitioner-led narrative models to Reich's music.<sup>10</sup>

This approach is endorsed by Reich's strongly-voiced opinion of the incapacity of music on its own to tell a story, set out unambiguously in his response to an article by Clytus Gottwald, published in *Melos NZ* in March 1975.<sup>11</sup> Gottwald's likening of the repetitious nature of Reich's phase pieces to the experience of working on an industrial production line provoked a muscular response from the composer. This sets out a bleak view of any possible relationship between music and language, leaving the reader in no doubt as to Reich's conviction of the

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<sup>10</sup> For three commonly used models of narrativity see: Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997; Seymour Chatman, *Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978; Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Ithaca: Cornell, 1980. The technical terminology is summarized in David Herman, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. A thorough introduction to the issues involved is provided in Fred Everett Maus, 'Narratology, narrativity', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), London: MacMillan, 2002, Vol. 17, pp.641-643.

<sup>11</sup> Reich's reply appeared in the third issue of the journal: Steve Reich, "Steve Reich schreibt an Clytus Gottwald", in *Melos NZ*, Vol. 1 Issue 3, May-June 1975, pp.198-200. Reich believed his views to have been misrepresented since Gottwald's article was based on his recollections of a conversation with Reich over dinner at which no notes were made.

powerlessness of music to convey meaning to its listeners.<sup>12</sup> If such information proved necessary, the composer is adamant that would be found in his (then) recently published *Writings*,<sup>13</sup> rather than his music.

To answer your statement that I do not think music is a language, I agree it is true that I believe that language is language and music is music. If I have 'ideas to express' then I set them down as clearly as I can in words as I am doing now and as I have done in my recent book. My music arises not from ideas about life but from literally sitting at the piano or standing at the marimba and improvising material, writing some of it down, throwing much of it away, adding more and more, with corrections, until a piece is finished.<sup>14</sup>

Reich scornfully calls for an explanation of what narrative messages might lie unencrypted in the music of earlier generations. Mocking the idea that such meanings exist at all, he displays a categorical lack of enthusiasm for searching for them, even in his own compositions.

You seem to believe that music itself is some sort of 'language to be decoded'. I really find this a bit amusing – but since you seem to suggest it, may I ask you, what is the message encoded in The Well Tempered Clavier? Or in Beethoven's late quartets, or even his symphonies? After so many years it must surely be possible to 'decode' these messages and now, please tell me, was Beethoven really telling us that fate was knocking at his door? Or encoded within the 'machine like' tempos of Bach's music do we find a linguistic message about the obstinate nature of his character as evidenced against Ernesti in Leipzig and elsewhere? Or a cleverly worked out theology encoded in The Well Tempered Clavier instead of words? – If you will forgive me, I love music, it often moves me to tears, and I must admit that I have not even been able (or interested) in 'decoding' the 'verbal messages' in my own music.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Reich's phlegmatic response stands in contrast to the opinion expressed in his 1971 interview with Michael Nyman, in which he describes the possibility of people imitating machines as 'psychologically very useful, and even pleasurable'. See Michael Nyman, 'Interview with Reich' in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 112, No. 1537, (1971), p.229.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Reich, *Writings About Music*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> Clytus Gottwald, "Signale zwischen Exotik und Industrie: Steve Reich auf der Suche nach einer neuen Identität von Klang und Struktur", in *Melos NZ*, Vol. 1, No. 1: Jan-Feb 1975, pp.3-6.

<sup>15</sup> Steve Reich, "Steve Reich schreibt an Clytus Gottwald", in *Melos NZ*, Vol. 1 Issue 3, May-June 1975, p.199.

Although this appears to make pointless the search for narrative elements, Reich is clearly alluding to non-referential instrumental pieces. Igor Stravinsky, a composer whose music and views proved immensely influential to Reich, expresses similar convictions in his autobiography:

For I consider that music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc. Expression has never been an inherent property of music. That is by no means the purpose of its existence. If, as is nearly always the case, music appears to express something, this is only an illusion and not a reality. It is simply an additional attribute which, by tacit and inveterate agreement, we have lent it, thrust upon it, as a label, a convention – in short, an aspect which, unconsciously or by force of habit, we have come to confuse with its essential being.<sup>16</sup>

The view of music as purely sonorous form stretches back to classical and patristic writers such as Boethius (c.480-524/5) and Augustine (354-430), but receives an intensely polemical twist in the more recent writings of Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904). Although bounded by the prevailing positivistic ideology of the time,<sup>17</sup> Hanslick is unequivocal that whilst music might evoke an emotional response from its listener, that does not constitute its primary purpose since it can neither put into words exact concepts nor express specific feelings.<sup>18</sup>

All of this flies in the face of recent musicology, which has seen heightened interest in the potential narrative functions of music, either intentionally or through the subconscious organization of materials by their composer. The publication of Edward Cone's *The Composer's Voice* in 1974, contemporaneous with Reich's correspondence with Gottwald, heralded a new concern for identifying narrative

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<sup>16</sup> Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1936, pp.53-54.

<sup>17</sup> David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, p.136.

<sup>18</sup> Eduard Hanslick (trans. Geoffrey Payzant), *On the Musically Beautiful*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986.

voices in music, an endeavour taken up enthusiastically by music scholarship.<sup>19</sup>

Neither is such interest in narrative confined to music. In the four decades since Cone's book there has been heightened curiosity as to how humanity creates and shapes narrative as a means of understanding the world. Writing about the 2008 US presidential election, Stephen Mansfield identifies stories, rather than systems, as prevalent tools for constructing a postmodern worldview based on the individual subject rather than regard for transcendent truths:

The story is the big thing, as personal and as detailed as possible. We also live in postmodern times, an age in which what passes for truth comes from the narratives that define our lives. Again the story is the thing. It is how we apprehend genuineness. Not by exposition and preaching, but by tales well told, by accounts of journeys pregnant with meaning. Story is the medium of our age.<sup>20</sup>

Keith Potter echoes this view, affirming that narrative forms of music 'continue to hold up in the flux of the "postmodern world", offering satisfying, and not always merely reassuring, musical experiences'.<sup>21</sup> Yet the substance of such narrative remains unclear and the potential of music to convey narrative messages has generated vigorous scholarly debate,<sup>22</sup> especially in the case of instrumental music.

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<sup>19</sup> Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of Barack Obama*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008, p.101.

<sup>21</sup> Keith Potter, 'The Pursuit of the Unimaginable by the Unnarratable, or Some Potentially Telling Developments in Non-Developmental Music' in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 15, No.3, (1996), p.9.

<sup>22</sup> Two of the most wide-ranging and significant surveys of the debates surrounding narrativity in music have are by Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, Bloomington, 2008 and Vincent Meelberg, *New Sounds, New Stories*, Amsterdam, 2006. In addition, helpful contextual summaries have also been provided by – *inter alia* – Jan Pasler, *Writing Through Music: Essays on Music, Culture and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 25-48; Joshua B Mailman, 'An Imagined Drama of Competitive Opposition in Carter's *Scrivo in Vento*, with notes on Narrative, Symmetry, Quantitative Flux and Heraclitus', *Music Analysis*, 28/3 (2009): pp. 373-422; and Nicholas Reyland, *Akcja and Narrativity in the Music of Witold Lutosławski*, PhD thesis, University of Cardiff, 2005, pp. 91-176.

Susan McClary<sup>23</sup> and Lawrence Kramer,<sup>24</sup> among others, have proposed ways in which the organisation of instrumental music creates musical narrative, leading to a revisionist account of particular compositions or their composers.

Jean-Jacques Nattiez, however, suggests that the search for narrativity slips easily into narrativisation: the imbuing of inherently meaningless sonic utterances with imagined stories that amount to little more than mental images stimulated by an emotional response to music, akin to the pictures created in the mind's eye from seeing shapes in the clouds.<sup>25</sup> For Nattiez (and others, such as Carolyn Abbate),<sup>26</sup> a significant amount of writing on narrativity in music consists of precisely this narrativisation: readings of nineteenth-century instrumental music that impose agency, characterization, and even contemporary worldviews on such repertoire.

### 1.5 *Minimalism, narrativity and analysis*

Despite such widespread scholarly interest in narrativity in music, relatively little has been written about its presence in minimalist music, which probably reflects a widely held belief that the style is non-narrative with little or no interest in the telling of stories. Evidence to support this view would appear to be in plentiful supply in the minimalist works of the mid-1960s. The extreme use of repetition, lack of differentiation, austere scoring and reduced instrumental forces,

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<sup>23</sup> Susan McClary, *Conventional Tonal Wisdom*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?' in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 115, No.2, (1990): pp.240-257.

<sup>26</sup> Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, p.139.

and focus on sonic rather than semantic elements has been described as ‘acoustic positivism’,<sup>27</sup> leading to a widespread view of Minimalist music as non-diegetic.<sup>28</sup>

Such views are echoed by a host of scholarly voices. Amy Lynn Włodarski has pointed to the fact that the first minimalist composers ‘sought forms that resisted cohesive narrative and attempted to focus attention on the musical object through repetitive or gradual musical processes’.<sup>29</sup> Susan McClary has argued that ‘the flat-line procedures of minimalism frequently seem to have pulled the plug ... on the very notion of signification in music’,<sup>30</sup> a view reinforced by Tarasti’s proposition that ‘minimal music does not express any tension, and thus does not articulate musical events’.<sup>31</sup> Ernst Albrecht Stiebler claims that ‘it is a characteristic of repetitive music that nothing is being expressed; it stands only for itself’;<sup>32</sup> Adrian Baker labels it as ‘a self-sufficient entity, not a vehicle for conveying some meaning about itself’.<sup>33</sup> Michael Craig-Martin’s assessment is even starker: ‘there is no reference to another previous experience (no representation), no implication of a higher level of experience (no metaphysics) ... [and] no promise of a deeper

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<sup>27</sup> Jeremy Grimshaw, “Music of a More Exalted Sphere”: Compositional Practice, Biography, and Cosmology in the Music of La Monte Young”, PhD dissertation, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, (2005), p.180.

<sup>28</sup> Eaton, *Op. cit.*, p.32.

<sup>29</sup> Amy Lyn Włodarski, ‘The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 63, No. 1, (2010), p.103.

<sup>30</sup> Susan McClary, “Minima Romantica,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, edited by Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert, 48-65. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, p.52, both cited in Eaton, *Op. cit.*, p.43.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in Vincent Meelberg, *Op. cit.*, 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Cited in Wim Mertens, *American Minimal Music*, Kahn & Averill, 1983, p.88.

<sup>33</sup> Adrian Baker, *Steve Reich and the Minimalist Tradition*, MMus Thesis, University of Southampton, 1993, p.11.

intellectual experience (no metaphor).<sup>34</sup> Following a comprehensive survey of narrative approaches to the reading of instrumental works, Bryon Almén concludes that minimalist music is essentially non-narrative as a result of its lack of contrast and differentiation and therefore falls outside a study of musical narrativity,<sup>35</sup>

The meagre critical apparatus assembled for the analysis of minimalist music in the 1980s and 1990s has done little to challenge this non-narrative outlook. In his pioneering development of a systematic framework for the analysis of minimalist compositions, Daniel Warburton focuses exclusively on the structural and sonic elements of the music. Subsequently developed into 'a working terminology for Minimalist Music', Warburton's approach offers a clear taxonomy well suited to the analysis of non-referential minimalism. This comprises five broad areas: phasing, linear additive process, block additive process, textural additive process, and interleaf, which he duly applies to the analysis of Reich's *Piano Phase* (1967), *Clapping Music* (1972) and *Sextet* (1984-85).<sup>36</sup> Concentrated as it is on process and structure, however, Warburton's methodology offers little assistance in identifying narrative elements.

Other minimalist scholarship from the 1980s adopts a similar approach, highlighting the organisation of musical materials and their structural relationship to each other. Paul Epstein's seminal analysis of *Piano Phase*, for example, published in the same year as Warburton's terminology, works through the characteristics of the pattern itself, and offers a thorough relational study of how

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<sup>34</sup> Liner notes for *Minimalist*, Virgin Classics compilation 7243 5 61121 2 4.

<sup>35</sup> Bryon Almén, *Op cit.*, p.91.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Warburton, 'A Working Terminology for Minimal Music', in *Integral*, Vol. 2, (1988), pp.135-159.

the two parts operate through the phasing process.<sup>37</sup> Almost two decades later, Robert Bridges' extended analysis of *Sextet* focuses on harmony, rhythm and form, albeit with a passing nod towards the possible role of interpretation in the piece.<sup>38</sup>

The *a priori* assumption that minimalist music has no stories to tell glosses over a multitude of works that might inconveniently suggest an element of narrative. This includes such pieces as Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969), Terry Riley's *Music With Balls* (1969) and *Les Yeux Fermés* (1972), Glass's *North Star* (1977) and Frederic Rzewski's *Coming Together* (1973) as well, of course, as the speech-based pieces of Steve Reich. These are all abandoned as apparently tiresome exceptions to the 'rule' that minimalist music does not concern itself with the telling of tales.

In addition, the a-teleological nature of much of the 1960s minimalist canon offers little sense of a story unfolding towards its end point, which explains further why there has been no great clamour among scholars to search for narrativity in such music. Although the additive rhythms of Philip Glass or the phase patterns of Steve Reich might stimulate a kind of 'seeing-as' through their ability to inspire pictures in the mind, this constitutes the type of narrativisation already referred to. This reinforces the perception that minimalist music is fundamentally systemic rather than referential, and that any responsibility for making meaning resides with the listener rather than the composer. Put simply, minimalism is a postmodern

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Epstein, 'Pattern Structure and Process in Steve Reich's *Piano Phase*', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 72, No. 4, (1986), pp.494-502.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Bridge, 'An Overview of Steve Reich's *Sextet*', *Percussive Notes*, Vol. 41, No.4, (2003), pp.61-69.

form of 'absolute music', and the search for narrative is neither necessary nor appropriate: end of story.

Notwithstanding such unforgiving analytical terrain, others have hinted at elements of narrative in selected minimalist music. Nattiez concedes with slight reluctance that, since stories unfold over time, the temporal aspects of music may indeed create a potential narrative framework.<sup>39</sup> Applying this to minimalist music, Potter suggests that 'Reich and Glass ... might well be argued to have been more involved, even in their minimal compositions, with the notion of a time-object, even with narrativity, than Cage, or than La Monte Young or Terry Riley.'<sup>40</sup> Although Vincent Meelberg focuses his discussion on 'contemporary, instrumental music works, both acoustic, electro-acoustic and electronic',<sup>41</sup> he goes on to describe narrative as the representation of a temporal development, illustrating this through a temporal reading of Reich's *Piano Phase* and charting a supposed narrative journey between the two parts as they move out of phase with each other.<sup>42</sup>

Recent scholarship has shown more empathy towards referential elements contained in minimalist works, which cannot be dealt with through analysis of the architecture of the piece. Nattiez suggests that the presence of a text or programme engages our narrative listening strategies, and that we do not hear a narrative until we are given a linguistic clue.<sup>43</sup> These clues are picked up in Rebecca

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<sup>39</sup> Nattiez, *Op. cit.*, p.241.

<sup>40</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.5.

<sup>41</sup> Meelberg, *Op. cit.*, pp.1-2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.88-92.

<sup>43</sup> Cited in Byron Almén, *Op cit.*, p.29.

Leydon's more broadly based approach to analysing minimalist music. She dismisses the purely sonic understanding of minimalist music as 'a monolithic technique of "musematic" repetition',<sup>44</sup> proposing instead a methodology in which more discursive elements of minimalist music are seen to create a linear trajectory, even in the absence of words. Distinguishing between musematic (unvaried repetition of small musical units) and discursive (repetition of longer phrases) elements, Leydon expounds the principle that musical subjects have, to a greater or lesser extent, volitional will. This creates an identity through what she terms 'obstinate repetition', which has the potential to create different types of stories.

In contrast to Warburton's five-fold technical apparatus, Leydon identifies six 'repetition tropes', each focused on different states that might be evoked by particular pieces of minimalist music. The maternal trope is concerned with regression to the safe environment of the womb; whereas the mantric trope suggests a state of mystical transcendence. The kinetic trope portrays images of dancing forms; whilst the totalitarian trope evokes an involuntary state of confinement, the exact reverse of the maternal trope. The motoric trope brings to mind impersonal mechanistic processes; whereas the aphasic trope conjures up a sense of the absurd, possibly even of insanity.

To illustrate these, Leydon offers examples of minimalist compositions she believes likely to draw the listener into each of the described state of consciousness. Louis Andriessen's *De Staat* (1976) is given as an example of the totalitarian trope, whereas John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986) is presented as an exemplar of the motoric trope. Some examples make use of text or the spoken

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<sup>44</sup> Rebecca Leydon, 'Towards a Typology of Minimalist Tropes', *Music Theory Online*, Vol. 8, No. 4, (2002).

word, while others are purely instrumental, but the dominant principle in Leydon's methodology is that responsibility for the creation of meaning lies with the listening subject rather than with the composer.

Whilst laudable in moving beyond the view of minimalism as meaningless utterance, Leydon's dependence on the emotional responses of the listening subject is highly subjective. Potentially based on nothing more than knowledge of the title, the approach lies open to the charge of narrativisation since a given work might evoke several – if not all – of the imagined states at any one time.

Nevertheless, Leydon's view is enthusiastically embraced by Fred Maus in proposing a narrative listening stance. Maus describes this as 'a narrative or reversal that ultimately places the theorist in active roles, as both the fantasy composer in an act of imagined re-composition and the writer who displays control over verbal material'.<sup>45</sup>

As Reich's most autobiographical work, it was always likely that narrative attention would focus on *Different Trains* and Naomi Cumming's 1997 study of the piece focuses on the listening subject.<sup>46</sup> Although including a transcript of some of the speech extracts of the piece, Cumming's analysis is based not on examination of the score but on a psychoanalytical view of the potential meaning of the work to a listening subject, who has assumed the narrative listening stance proposed by Maus. This is based on her repeated hearing of Reich's piece with a particular focus on the significance of the train, which she takes to be a dominant, and unifying, motif in

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<sup>45</sup> Maus, *Op. cit.*, pp.641-643.

<sup>46</sup> Whilst admitting the speculative nature of some of this, the focus on the listening subject also has its roots in David Schwarz, 'Listening Subjects: Semiotics, Psychoanalysis, and the music of John Adams and Steve Reich', *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 31, No. 2, (1993), pp.24-56.

the piece. Prefaced by a harrowing citation from Viktor Frankl's autobiographical reminiscence of being taken by train to Auschwitz,<sup>47</sup> Cumming links the compulsive rhythms of Reich's music to the train trope, a depersonalising force, the 'other' over which the passengers have no authority. Discussion of the first part of the piece is heavily focused on the psychological significance of the train. The second, and to some extent the third, part of *Different Trains* receives a more detailed treatment of its narrative in which the semantic significance of what is said is afforded greater prominence.<sup>48</sup>

Cumming's methodology is prefigured in Christopher Fox's 1990 examination of the piece, which attempts to explain its significance 'not so much through a note-to-note analysis of the music as through an analysis of the ideas the music articulates'.<sup>49</sup> Fox establishes the principle of taking the words as the basis for understanding *Different Trains*, setting it out as if it were the script to a short play, as indeed Reich himself does in the score. Whilst touching on some narrative aspects of the composition, however, there is no overview of the narrative organization of the piece and the discussion takes place in the context of Reich's approaches to text setting.

Sumanth Gopinath's detailed consideration of *Oh Dem Watermelons, It's Gonna Rain*, and *Come Out* foregrounds political and racial stories hidden in Reich's early speech-based music. Acknowledging its limitations as 'only a partial interpretation of minimalist music and other musics of the 1960s ... read through

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<sup>47</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1959.

<sup>48</sup> Naomi Cumming, 'The Horrors of Identification: Reich's *Different Trains*', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 35, No.1, (1997), pp.129-152.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Fox, 'Steve Reich's *Different Trains*', *Tempo*, No.172, (1990), p.2.

the admittedly narrow lens of Reich's race works',<sup>50</sup> Gopinath's approach marks a new departure by taking full account of the cultural, ethnic, political and social dimensions of these pieces. His analysis elevates the significance of the racial tensions endemic in the period and the progressive social attitudes of New Left thinking, which form a framing narrative for the pieces themselves. Gopinath nevertheless acknowledges that some conclusions are based on informed conjecture, albeit founded almost exclusively on secondary sources drawn from contemporary news media, rather than a narrative listening stance.

### 1.6 *Minimalism, narrative and source materials*

The search for narrative dimensions in Steve Reich's music takes its most significant turn in Amy Wlodarski's investigation of *Different Trains* in 2010.<sup>51</sup> Her analytical method marks an important departure since it is based on the results of meticulous scrutiny of some of the source materials for the piece, and the way that *Different Trains* is shaped by Reich's selection and usage of these sources. In terms of the present thesis, her work represents a vital development in analytical method, establishing an approach capable of being developed and applied to a wider range of pieces.

Wlodarski undertakes a scrupulous re-examination of the archival source recordings of the Holocaust survivors used in *Different Trains*, selected from the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, and the Wiener Oral History Project at New York Public Library. Her re-transcription of

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<sup>50</sup> Sumanth Gopinath, *Contraband Children: The Politics of Race and Liberation in the Music of Steve Reich, 1965-1966*, PhD Thesis, Yale University, (2005), p.17.

<sup>51</sup> Wlodarski, *Op. cit.*, pp. 99-141.

these source tapes challenges Reich's accepted narrative of the piece. Włodarski points to how the interviewers' framing of the questions and Reich's subsequent manipulation of the recorded interviews creates a different story to that intended by the original speakers. In discussing such 'testimonial aesthetics', Reich's approach is judged to be predominantly about his own predilections, being found wanting as a faithful historical witness to the Holocaust.

This thesis adopts a similar analytical method for examining the relationship between Reich's source materials and the seven speech-based pieces under consideration. Włodarski's work on *Different Trains* examines the way in which Reich modified existing archival material created by others for use in a single composition. The present thesis examines – across a range of compositions – Reich's use of source material that he created himself, or was given to him as a commission, thus broadening considerably the scope of the research model. The focus is entirely on the narrative trails that emerge as the source material is examined and there is no consideration of these works from the point of view of the listening subject, or in terms of testimonial aesthetics. Scholarly consideration of Reich's pieces from *Livelihood* to *Different Trains* has hitherto focused entirely on the construction of the pieces themselves, paying little attention to the narrative trails that led to them. As noted previously, however, this thesis is concerned with the way that what is presented in Reich's speech-based music lives in the light of what is not presented, that is to say, its extensive source material.

## 1.7 *Narrative organisation and the auteur*

The consideration of narrative trails requires an appreciation of Reich's approach to creating large-scale composition through the arrangement of shorter gobbets of recorded speech, the resulting episodic structure being typified by narrative gaps to be filled in by the listener. The composer was clearly attracted by this fragmented non-linear style, which derives from his 1960s work with non-narrative theatre and experimental filmmakers in San Francisco. Reich's approach mirrors that of Michael Snow's 1968 film, *Wavelength*, described by Dean Suzuki as

one of the earliest examples of Structuralist or Constructivist cinema. Like the works of the minimalist composers, it is characterized by long durations in which changes occur slowly and gradually, through a readily perceptible process. The duration and seeming static quality of the film allow the viewer the necessary time to notice and inspect the subtle detail, the minutiae of the scene. ... It consists of a single, slow zoom lasting forty-five minutes moving across Snow's loft towards a photograph of the ocean on the wall opposite the camera.<sup>52</sup>

In discussing the film, Reich himself emphasizes the disjointed narrative line and the responsibility on the viewer to act as listener-participant by. On three occasions, Reich's commentary on *Wavelength* reiterates the need for the person watching to 'complete it in your head'.<sup>53</sup>

Describing a similar process – that of listening to songs on concept albums of the 1970s – David Nicholls coined the phrase 'virtual operas',<sup>54</sup> since the narrative is located in the imagination of the listener rather than created by the artists

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<sup>52</sup> Dean Paul Suzuki, *Minimal Music: Its Evolution as seen in the works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and LaMonte Young*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, (1991), pp.186-187.

<sup>53</sup> Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.37.

<sup>54</sup> David Nicholls, 'Virtual Opera, or Opera Between the Ears', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 129, No.1, (2004), pp.100-142.

themselves. This filling-in of the gaps is akin to Seymour Chatman's view of the construction of such pieces where the author

selects those events that he feels are sufficient to elicit the necessary sense 'of continuum' and finds 'inference drawing' or the filling in of the gaps left by those temporal condensations or reorderings, to be an important aspect of narrative and that which differentiates it from lyric, expository, or other genres.<sup>55</sup>

In creating such fragmentary episodic structures, Reich assumes the role of an auteur rather than that of author. This places him in the same position as a film director, able to realise his creative vision through the selection and assembly of materials. As auteur, Reich has the dominant narrative voice in each piece and, despite adopting various narrative standpoints, the composer's own voice in his speech-based music is heard entirely through the voices of others. The documentary source material is rich with narrative potential and it is the way that it is shaped that determines what story is told and the manner in which it is told.

The following analyses thus take as their point of departure Reich's advice to Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker: that the audience must sort out the differing implications of the documentary source material in order to understand fully his speech-based compositions. Exactly how an audience could be expected to 'sort out' this without access to these source materials is unclear and their detailed consideration here is therefore timely. The ensuing discussion of the narrative trails surrounding each work provides a possible means for future audiences to make informed judgments about the complex range of stories told by each of these pieces of music.

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<sup>55</sup> Jan Pasler, *Writing Through Music: Essays on Music, Culture and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.34.



## Chapter 2     *The Plastic Haircut and Livelihood*

### 2.1     *First narrative trails: collage, film and non-narrative theatre*

Steve Reich's earliest compositions are based on recorded speech material, an interest motivated by his study with Luciano Berio at Mills College, Oakland. Although Reich's recollections of his time at Mills are not favourable,<sup>1</sup> his encounter with Berio had a positive effect in shaping the style of his subsequent music. Reich has referred frequently to his teacher's encouragement to write tonal music if he wished,<sup>2</sup> but has made little mention of the inspiration he drew from Berio's use of human speech as compositional material.

The person who wrote *Omaggio a Joyce* and *Parole*, which is one of the sexiest pieces of electronic music ever made, really had a keen ear for speech, and I think Berio really confirmed and pushed me in the direction of exploring speech as a source for tape music.<sup>3</sup>

Reich's soundtrack for Robert Nelson's film, *The Plastic Haircut* (1963) became the first outlet for his new-found enthusiasm for using speech. Between 1963 and 1967, he composed a series of pieces that reveal his interest in working with speech to produce sound collages. This approach has passed largely unnoticed in accounts of the composer's early music, a blind spot seemingly created by Reich's later assertion that sound collages were not his 'stock in trade'<sup>4</sup> and fuelled by the

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.158.

<sup>2</sup> Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.10.

<sup>3</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, Transcript of Interview with Reich, 18 July 1994, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Ev Grimes, number 186 a-I OH V, tape and transcript, Oral History of American Music, Yale University, tape 186-I and transcript, p.21. In addition to sound collages, the Commedia-based performances developed by the San Francisco Mime Troupe – such as their performance of *Ruzzante's Maneuvers* between 15 August and 2 November 1963 – also required Reich to produce music for a pre-determined scenario.

suggestion that music composed prior to *It's Gonna Rain* was mere juvenilia unworthy of serious consideration.<sup>5</sup>

Reich's serendipitous discovery of how to create phase pieces using tape loops appears to have erased from his mind those works that began – and in some cases ended up – as sound collages. From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, phasing can now be viewed as a relatively small component in Reich's output, whilst sound collages have proved to be a recurring feature over almost fifty years.

Understanding the style and structure of these collages is essential to an appreciation of Reich's approach to narrative in his speech-based music. Hugh Davies suggests that 'the best surviving source for Reich's earliest style would be an archive of experimental films'<sup>6</sup> on the basis that their non-narrative approach is reflected in the episodic music Reich composed for them. It is fitting that Reich's first sound collage was created for film since the style originated in that genre. These origins can be traced back to the work of experimental German film director Walter Ruttmann, whose 1920s films incorporated collages of sound, words and music. The same principle of using source sounds from the concrete world was subsequently developed by composer Pierre Schaeffer in his 1948 *musique concrète* piece, *Étude aux chemins de fer*.<sup>7</sup> Advances in technology in the 1950s enabled the

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<sup>5</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.160 proposes that 'nothing that [Reich] wrote before *It's Gonna Rain* may be much more than a historical curiosity'.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh Davies, 'Letters to the Editor – Early Reich', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 127, No. 1718, (1986), p.194.

<sup>7</sup> Schaeffer's piece has coincidental parallels with Reich's speech-based work. It uses features of 'needle-stuck-in-the-groove' music as some vinyl records make use of lock-grooves, meaning that the recording cycles continuously. It also consists entirely of recordings of railway locomotives, perhaps presaging their usage in *Different Trains*.

style to develop further through the splicing of magnetic tape to create montages consisting of isolated sonic events, juxtaposed in a manner capable of creating a timeline and narrative structure. *Musique concrète* therefore embraces the developing style of Epic and Absurdist theatre of the time: episodic; non-naturalistic; non-linear, and with a concern for challenging rather than reassuring its audience. Whilst the approach could be described as non-narrative, a more appropriate description might be 'non-linear narrativity' where specific events have narrative potential depending on the way in which the composer orders them.

The influence of experimental works for stage is also significant. Although minimalist music of the 1960s has often been linked with developments in the visual arts,<sup>8</sup> Arved Ashby's revisionist account proposes a different provenance as an offshoot of non-narrative, experimental theatre:

Emerging from and ultimately belonging to the stage, minimalist music is an offshoot of avant-garde New York theatre. The style has been traditionally associated with American pop culture and African and south Asian music, but just as important are the early minimalist composers' connections with the innovative theatrical figures of downtown Manhattan in the 1960s [ . . . ]. Pioneering among non-narrative collaborations in the city was the Living Theatre, founded in 1947 by anarchist free spirits Julian Beck and Judith Malina.<sup>9</sup>

This account easily fits the work of Phillip Glass, who was influenced by his close involvement with theatre practitioners such as those who went on to form the Mabou Mines Theatre; who has been readily identified as 'a composer with a

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<sup>8</sup> Strickland's influential reading, for example, sets out a threefold framework of paint, sound and space as a model for understanding the style. See Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Arved Ashby, 'Minimalist Opera', in Mervyn Cooke (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Opera*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.244.

passion for working in theatre';<sup>10</sup> and whose compositional career developed in New York. Aspects of Ashby's description apply equally well to Reich's output of the 1960s although much of this was produced in San Francisco rather than New York. Reich's speech-based music clearly grew out of his work with avant-garde theatre practitioners in San Francisco between 1963 and 1965, which makes the more curious his declaration that, 'I am not, like Glass, a theater composer. I don't carry the theater around inside me'.<sup>11</sup> Such diffidence may reflect a limited innate sense of theatricality or staging, but underplays the progressive work that he undertook with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Reich came into contact with the founder, R. G. Davis, during his final semester at Mills College, Oakland,<sup>12</sup> and his enthusiasm for the Troupe's approach is palpable, even thirty years later.

[The Mime Troupe] was a meeting place for a lot of interesting artists, principally William Wiley the painter, the filmmaker Robert Nelson who I did *The Plastic Haircut* with and *Oh Dem Watermelons*, and it was a kind of guerilla street theater before there was a such a thing. It was giving performances in Golden Gate Park and in other parks around the city, they would set up a portable stage and they would do commedia-style plays. They would have a pantalone, a dottore, but the themes were all political and contemporary. It had a wonderful free-wheeling feel to it. Occasionally they would do indoor things, theatrical events that were beginning to happen, light shows that were beginning to happen, and I became involved initially in '63, just when I was graduating from Mills, and it was perfect, it was just what I was looking for.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Maycock, *Glass: A Portrait*, London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2002, p.33.

<sup>11</sup> Robert K. Schwarz, *Minimalists*, London: Phaidon Press, 1996, p.103.

<sup>12</sup> Strickland, *Op. cit.*, p.183. Strickland also points to the significance of Reich's work with the Troupe in forcing him to make the psychological move from the world of the music conservatoire with its captive audiences to a professional environment where he had to work to establish interest in his music. This is expanded in Reich's interview with Schwarz *Op. cit.*, to include the types of musicians who would be listening: 'The audience at the Mime Troupe was other artists and the kind of people whom I'd always wanted to get to, not the people who were attending Composers' Forums at 4 in the afternoon at Mills. So I felt like I was finally on a path and in a community of artists that I wanted to enter into. That may explain why I gravitated towards the visual arts scene when I got to New York as well.'

<sup>13</sup> Schwarz, *Op. cit.*, pp.8-9.

Founded in 1959, the Troupe produced strongly physical, movement-based work, which also contained elements of visual art and music. Performances were often created around the stock characters and scenarios of *Commedia dell'Arte*, as the group transplanted the lampooning of authority figures from Renaissance Italy to the streets of 1960s San Francisco.<sup>14</sup> In so doing, its members courted controversy with the City authorities, not least on the grounds of scatological language and nudity in the shows. Ashby recognises that the Mime Troupe's work embodied the spirit of the most avant-garde forms of European theatre, especially Artaudian approaches to drama.<sup>15</sup>

Reich took as his ultimate goal a kind of realist experience that resembles Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. Insistent repetition of recognisable speech enables the composer to retain the emotional power of the locution 'while intensifying its melody and meaning through repetition and rhythm' (Reich 2002: 20). In short, tape allowed Reich a concentrated form of theatre - and much the same can be said of his later use of sampling in *Different Trains* (1988), *The Cave* (1992) and *Three Tales* (2002).<sup>16</sup>

A particular feature of much of the Troupe's work was its distinctive approach to dialogue, which was often non-functional and non-linear, allocating to words the same function they might have in a dream. A similarly non-narrative approach pervades the films of Robert Nelson, an independent filmmaker whose works share

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<sup>14</sup> R. G. Davis, *The San Francisco Mime Troupe – The First Ten Years*, Palo Alto: Ramparts Press, 1975, p.25.

<sup>15</sup> The specifically political nature of the Troupe meant that the theatrical context in which Reich began work mirrored to some extent the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen's association with the Orkest De Volharding ('Perseverance Orchestra'), a 'street ensemble' made up of jazz and classical musicians with an avowedly political mission. See Robert Adlington, *Louis Andriessen: De Staat*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, p.5. For a contemporary analysis of the Troupe's political influences and stance, see Sumanth Gopinath, 'Reich in Blackface: *Oh Dem Watermelons* and Radical Minstrelsy in the 1960s', *Journal of the Society for American Music* (2011), Vol. 5, No. 2, (2011), p.141. Reich refers to the work of the Troupe as being 'a very left-wing neo-Brechtian kind of street theater in San Francisco'. See Grimes, *Op. cit.*, p.16.

<sup>16</sup> Arved Ashby, 'Minimalist Opera', in Mervyn Cooke (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Opera*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.246.

the same spirit of wit and Absurdity that pervaded the performances of the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

## 2.2 *The Plastic Haircut*

Reich's first collaboration with Nelson was *The Plastic Haircut*,<sup>17</sup> a 15-minute experimental black-and-white film dating from January 1963 for which Reich produced a sound track, having begun experimentation with tape the previous year at Mills College.<sup>18</sup> The film features R G Davis and William T Wiley, performing among an Absurdist landscape of symmetrical forms in a 'mesmerizing, rapid-fire series of kooky visual images, including an actor in a wizard's cap, brief clips of a nude woman, geometric shapes, and several constructed objects, including a pyramid and a swinging eye'.<sup>19</sup>

The première of *The Plastic Haircut* took place on 25 January 1964 at the Mime Troupe's studio in Capp Street, the first film to be shown as part of the Troupe's programme.<sup>20</sup> Reich's monaural sound track consists of a sound collage, a manipulation of existing material taken from an LP entitled *The Greatest Moments in Sport*. Reich has been candid about the primitive nature of the collage he created.

It was very heavily edited, a cross between animation and live film. Somebody said he heard a sportscaster trying to narrate the action. So I got hold of a record called "The Greatest Moments in Sports" (a kind of old

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<sup>17</sup> The film is often referred to simply as *Plastic Haircut*. See, for example, Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.162.

<sup>18</sup> Strickland, *Op. cit.*, pp.184/5: '[Reich] had begun primitive experimentation with tape in 1962 but during the next year became more committed, in part through association with the San Francisco Tape Music Center, and began manipulating recordings he made of his fares and other San Franciscans. Working with a mono Wollensak, the first commercially available tape recorder in the United States, then a mono Viking, in late 1963 he completed his first piece, called *The Plastic Haircut*.'

<sup>19</sup> Obituary of Robert Nelson, *New York Times*, 21 January 2012: p. A24.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Vaneta Mason (ed.), *The San Francisco Mime Troupe Reader*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005, p.xii.

talkie LP which I had heard as a child) and made a collage of it in the most primitive of all ways. I'd record a bit, stop the tape, move the needle, and then start taping again, so there was hardly any splicing. Formally, it started very simple and turned into noise through over-dubbing with loops, rather like a surrealistic rondo with all kinds of elements recurring. The exciting thing was that the voices, used as sound, nevertheless have a residual meaning which was also very ambiguous – it could be sporting, or sexual, or political – and immediately seemed to me to be the solution to vocal music. So I went on this binge of working with tape, which came to a[n end] about two and a half years later when I felt that I'd had enough.<sup>21</sup>

Of greater importance than the musical content of *The Plastic Haircut* are the fundamental principles that emerge here, since they underpin Reich's enduring approach to creating sound collages. First, Reich functions as an auteur in editing the sound sources to create a narrative situated somewhere between linear story and cartoon strip, with the listener expected to fill in the missing gaps as required. Second, there are tensions between the well-fashioned design of the collage and the potential for individual snippets to craft a vocal fantasia where elements are less controlled. Third, there is a commitment to the preservation of the original meaning of individual snippets, irrespective of what happens to them as the collage moves along.<sup>22</sup> Most striking, though, is Reich's assertion that the use of speech gobblets offered 'the solution to vocal music', a claim that appears not to distinguish between their use in sound collages and phase pieces.

*The Plastic Haircut* is distinct from the other works under consideration in having been created as the soundtrack for a film. It functions as the starting point for all subsequent trials, however, in establishing the principles above and because

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Nyman, 'Steve Reich: An Interview With Michael Nyman', in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 112, No. 1537 (1971), p.230.

<sup>22</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, pp.162-163, suggests that Reich's interest in working with the natural sounds of *musique concrète* in undisguised form was because of the 'added emotional layer' that comes with the recognition of familiar sounds.

in practice the collage operates entirely independently of the film. Robert Nelson's inexperience as a film editor meant that Reich's sound track was inaccurately aligned with the film, resulting in its being played against a blank screen, therefore functioning to all intents as an independent sound collage. The film is in three sections, with the first and third being identical, each lasting for six minutes and consisting of a montage of bizarre images. The repeat of the opening section is accompanied by a satirical interview with Nelson as to the filmmaker's artistic intent. Reich's sound track accompanies the three-minute middle section during which time the screen is unintentionally blank.

Although Nelson had wanted Reich's collage to supplement the action of what became the first section, the soundtrack ended up on its own due to his insufficient technical knowledge: "at that point I didn't know how to do a mix once the quarter-inch stuff was transferred. Not being smart enough to know how to seek the solution, I put the film together in a way that put Steve's track over the black leader, not the image ... I was a completely untrained filmmaker." Reich's soundtrack therefore stands on its own as a kind of unexpected audio intermission, providing a prominent division between the initial silent montage and its reflective replay with comic voiceover.<sup>23</sup>

Examining this 'intermission' in more detail reveals a complex narrative framework, since the well-known recording chosen by Reich embodies a number of existing and familiar stories. *The Greatest Moments in Sport* was released as a Columbia Masterworks LP in 1955,<sup>24</sup> and features archival commentaries on the achievements of more than twenty-five highly eminent sports personalities, akin to a *Who's Who* of sporting success between 1920 and 1954, individual stories knitted

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<sup>23</sup> Ross Cole, "'Fun, Yes, but Music?' Steve Reich and the San Francisco Bay Area's Cultural Nexus, 1962-65', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, Vol.6, No.3, (2012), pp.326-327.

<sup>24</sup> At the time of the release of the record in 1955, Reich was about to enter his twenties and this is unlikely, therefore, to be the same recording he recalled having heard as a child.

together through the commentaries of four narrators that portray collectively a range of cultures and nationalities.<sup>25</sup> Despite their achievements, the sportsmen and women themselves have no agency save through the four narrators, each well-known voices – Mel Allen (1913-1996) as a baseball commentator; Don Dunphy (1908-1998) for his boxing reports; Marty Glickman (1917-2001) for track and sports coverage and veteran announcer Clem McCarthy (1882-1962) – who assume the role of distinct heterodiegetic narrators.

The sportspeople whose achievements form the basis of the reports are not identified on the recordings, although their names are printed on the liner notes. Baseball players form the largest group: Lou Gehrig (1903-1941); Al Gionfriddo (1922-2003); Carl Hubbell (1903-1988); Cookie Lavagetto (1912-1990); Connie Mack (1862-1956); Babe Ruth (1895-1948); Bobby Thomson (1923-2010) and Johnny Vandermeer (1914-1997). There are a number of eminent figures from the world of Boxing: Jack Dempsey (1895-1983), Tony Galento (1910-1979); Joe Louis (1914-1981), Gene Tunney (1897-1978); and Jess Willard (1881-1968). The LP presents four athletes renowned for their Olympic Track prowess: Roger Bannister (b. 1929), Glenn Cunningham (1909-1988); Jesse Owens (1913-1980), and Josy Barthel (1927-1992), as well as American footballers Roy Riegels (1908-1993) and Knute Rockne (1888-1931), with tennis champion, Helen Jacobs (1908-1997).

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<sup>25</sup> The Columbia recording AX-5000 was produced by Bud Greenspan and James Hammerstein and also included a 20-page souvenir booklet 'profusely illustrated with memorable photographs of these great moments and a special article by Red Smith'. A smaller 7" version of the record was also released exclusively for the Gillette Razor Company. Full details of the album are available at <http://keymancollectibles.com/records/greatmomentslg.htm>, accessed 28/12/12.

Reich functions as an auteur in creating the sound collage: an editor of existing material who has no personal connection with the voices he has selected,<sup>26</sup> whose method disregards the context in which the words of the elite sports performers were originally spoken. Divested of their identity and individuality, the voices from *The Greatest Moments in Sport* are manipulated and repurposed so that words intended for a specific purpose are taken out of context and used for a different function, potentially antithetical to the first. Fractured through the editing of the narrators' words, the sporting champions receive a new corporate identity as their voices blur in the resulting sound collage. In this depersonalised mass, testimonies resonant with historical and political significance are buried deep, such as Roger Bannister's pushing the limits of human endurance in running a mile in under four minutes, or Jesse Owens' effect on Hitler's view of the master race during the 1936 Olympics.<sup>27</sup>

In fusing different styles of speech, the soundtrack for *The Plastic Haircut* hovers somewhere between the timed structure of a boxing match – with its recurrent bells between rounds – and the breathless energy of a horse race. The opening section from 06:01 to 06:22 consists entirely of ambient crowd noise, with the sounds of cheering interspersed with the music of distant marching bands, reminiscent of the New England of Charles Ives. At 06:23 the first boxing bell rings and a section of composite dialogue begins. This is based initially on the announcement of the boxing world heavyweight champion, moving to 'riding at a gallop' with 'a horse in the lead' and leading to references to beating 'Joe with a

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<sup>26</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.* p. 10. Reich returns to this principle in *Different Trains* in the use of existing recordings of Holocaust survivors.

<sup>27</sup> A transcription of the sound collage from *The Plastic Haircut* is found in Appendix 1.

baseball bat' at 07:02. Geographical and national allusions are introduced at 07:12 as the 'wonderful Swede' is announced alongside the assertion that 'everyone in Germany has been very nice to me'.

The boxing bell at 07:40 serves to increase the pacing of the speech snippets, spurred on by a further bell at 07:49. Amid further references to 'the Swede' and 'seven times in succession', the collage rises to a climax at 08:16 with the assertion 'still the heavyweight champion of the world' and a final bell. The last section contains rapid switching between the background noise of crowds cheering and the bell sounding, with individual words and syllables – notably 'the Swede' – emerging from the cacophony.

Reich's collage amounts to an Artaudian bombardment of the senses confirming the composer's description that it 'turned into noise through over-dubbing with loops, rather like a surrealist rondo'.<sup>28</sup> *The Plastic Haircut* therefore anticipates Lucier's *I am Sitting in a Room* (1969), in which the repeated playback of the same re-recorded statement resonates with the room in which the recording takes place, to the point where words ultimately become unintelligible, ageless utterances incapable of temporal measurement.<sup>29</sup>

Though the textual fragments are short, one can make out the voices and what is being said. Near the end of the work, the fragments come at a rapidly accelerating pace, they are overlapped, and the sounds eventually degenerate into noise.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Nyman, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Strickland, *American Composers: Dialogues on Contemporary Music*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p.39. Reich claims that for him, the most important pieces of that period of electronic tape music were *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956) and *I am Sitting in a Room* (1969).

<sup>30</sup> Dean Paul Suzuki: *Minimal Music: Its Evolution as seen in the works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and LaMonte Young*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1991, pp.443-444.

Whilst Reich's intention in using speech was for the listener to 'hear what the original sounds were',<sup>31</sup> his success in achieving this is patchy. Although many stories are embodied within the speech samples, the editing of the dialogue creates an entirely new meaning and reflects the absurd nature of Davis's film, a parody of the type of experimental film of the period with the organization of the speech snippets creating some entertaining combinations:

Certain disjunct phrases follow each other for deliberate satiric effect ("beaten with a baseball bat/a national pastime"), whereas others are selected for their melodic or rhythmic profile and repeated ("still champion"/"a baseball bat"/"in succession"/"should've knocked 'em out"); the prominent phrase "the fabulous Swede" perhaps makes reference to Nelson himself.<sup>32</sup>

Reich's subsequent work with Nelson was similar in style. *Thick Pucker* and *Thick Pucker II* both use sound montages in the same way as *The Plastic Haircut* although in the later works they accompany images in the film. Earl Bodien describes Reich's soundtrack as consisting of 'little bits and pieces of talk, half-statement, much repetition (another theme), at one point accompanying a repetitious image of a man crossing a street'.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.3 *Livelihood*

The same compositional principles are evident in Reich's next sound collage, *Livelihood*. Produced as a tape collage in its own right, rather than as an accompaniment to film, the piece displays striking similarities of style and duration to *The Plastic Haircut*. Lasting a mere 2'41", it was first presented in November

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<sup>31</sup> Jason Goss, *Steve Reich: Early Tape Pieces: An Interview* <http://www.furious.com/perfect/ohm/index.html>, accessed 18/12/12.

<sup>32</sup> Cole, *Op. cit.*, pp.326-327.

<sup>33</sup> Earl Bodien, "The Films of Robert Nelson" in *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No 3 (1967), p.52.

1964 at the San Francisco Tape Music Centre, a venue perfectly suited to a composer with a developing expertise in recorded sound.<sup>34</sup> Reich subsequently withdrew the piece and set about bulk-erasing all existing copies of *Livelihood*,<sup>35</sup> although he has since recognised that copies continue to exist.

I thought (*Livelihood*) was destroyed, but Larry Polanksy tells me it's still lurking somewhere in the basement at Mills. If you want a copy, you can probably get a copy. It has its moments. It's only three minutes long!<sup>36</sup>

*Livelihood* represents a step change in the type of source materials used by Reich, and marks the point at which his own story begins to frame his music. Newly graduated from Mills College, Reich's need to make a living steered him towards a number of modest jobs, one of which was driving a cab around the streets of San Francisco.<sup>37</sup> Although tediously repetitive, taxi driving provided the composer with an opportunity to record speaking voices that would become the basis for *Livelihood*. Now rejecting the use of pre-recorded voices, he set out to record

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<sup>34</sup> The programme also included the soundtrack to *The Plastic Haircut*, two excerpts from the music for *Event III*, and *Brother Walter in Union Square* (described as a 'work in progress'). It is specifically mentioned that all tapes were 'composed on equipment in the composer's own studio or home', supporting Reich's claim: 'I never worked at the Tape Music Center at all, I worked at home always. My connection to the Center was that in 1965 they invited me to give a concert there of my own music, and of course I played in Terry Riley's concert there in 1964. Since I always worked at home, I worked with much simpler equipment.' (Interview with Schwarz, 18 July, 1994, p.7. *Op. cit.*). The Centre provided the setting for two further performances in January 1965 in 'A Program of Tapes by Steve Reich'. The fuzzy distinction between experimental theatre and tape music in the San Francisco of the early 1960s meant that through his involvement with the Mime Troupe, Reich found himself fully immersed in the city's alternative arts scene, particularly the San Francisco Tape Music Center, with which R. G. Davis had connections and where *The Plastic Haircut* was premiered. Although in existence for only five years from 1961, 'the Center provided an ideal environment for a significant interaction between the counterculture and the West Coast avant-garde' – see David Bernstein, (ed.), *The San Francisco Tape Music Center 1960s Counterculture and the Avant-Garde*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.163.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Alburger, 'Steve Reich: Early Phase', in *21<sup>st</sup> Century Music*, (2004), p.4. An MP3 file of the piece is available at <http://www.nakido.com/635BCC87335F3A8884E0C640793BCD7E372B2ECC>, accessed 28/12/12.

<sup>37</sup> By contrast, Reich has commented on his reluctance to take on such work when he subsequently returned to New York, deciding that 'it was much too dangerous'. See Schwarz Interview of 18 July 1994, p.11.

words spoken by the taxi passengers with whom he had passing contact, and for which he now had the necessary technical capability.<sup>38</sup>

The amount of tape material generated by the approach was extensive, requiring very significant editing in order to reduce it to something more manageable. Dean Suzuki suggests that 'about ten hours of such tapes were distilled into a three-minute, fast-cut, *musique concrète* collage'.<sup>39</sup> By implication, the narrative follows a sequence of events in an actual day – reminiscent of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) – a time-span that becomes the framing narrative for *Livelihood*.

Although the events in *Livelihood* start *in medias res* with no deictic indicators and little or no indication of what is being discussed, Reich's intention is clearly to reuse the events of several journeys so as to make them appear to have taken place in a single day. Such fracturing of the timeline of the 'real' events to create a new temporal order is central to the narrativity of the piece, with extracts from many conversational exchanges brought together to create an implicit agency where temporally discrete agents are used to construct a new narrative. The gaps

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<sup>38</sup> Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, pp.184-185. Strickland gives full details of Reich's expanded technical apparatus for making the recording, having 'acquired a Sony 770 in 1964, then a state-of-the-art stereo machine, and a Uher portable ... Reich ran a mike from the Uher, half the size of an attaché case, tucked under his driver's seat, up to the dome-light of his cab. He took the results of his bugging the cab and crafted them into a three-minute quick-cut collage of door-slams and the daily crises of his fares entitled *Livelihood*.' In the pre-data protection world of the early 1960s, Reich had considerable freedom to make clandestine recordings of his passengers whilst inadvertently recording a variety of other coincident sound events. The complex contemporary legal framework surrounding copyright, identity, the re-use of recorded material and the manner in which technology may be used make Reich's 1964 approach seem naïve. However, Reich's Introduction to Paul D. Miller (ed.), *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008, offers his own work as a lens through which to view such developments in copyright. In a highly significant chapter entitled 'The Musician as Thief: Digital Culture and Copyright Law', Daphne Keller outlines the complex relationship between source material and its compositional usage in a digital age.

<sup>39</sup> Suzuki, *Op. cit.*, p.445.

between the conversations in real life are closed in this constructed episode. The result, however, is an achronic structure where dateless moments (that have only the environment in which they were created in common with each other) are brought together in a new framework in which each event has an implicit agency.

All this creates a narrative framework in which Reich exercises complete agency: the characters to whom he gives voice are of his choosing, as is the arrangement of their speech, the implied narrative, the transitions between sections, the architecture of the piece and the start and end points. Whilst *Livelihood* is 'carefully constructed to evoke all the basic stages of a taxi ride',<sup>40</sup> the journey is one in which Reich is quite literally in the driving seat. In driving the taxi, he has control over the destination of the passenger(s) but nevertheless acts on their instructions. He is therefore able to control the physical destination of the journey in a way that is not possible later in *Different Trains*, where neither he – on the trains between East and West Coast America – nor the Jews being transported to the death camps have any control over their destination. In *Livelihood*, Reich operates as auteur whilst narrating as an anonymous first-person participant. Though his voice is seldom heard, Reich occupies a privileged position in making the decision to select his characters and present them in a particular sequence.

As with *The Plastic Haircut*, individual speakers are not identified in *Livelihood* and, with a few exceptions, individual identity is almost entirely erased. The ensemble exists through Reich's agency in bringing together this range of disparate voices. Whilst these are unidentified, and unattributed, they are strongly embodied in their (albeit transitory) geographical setting. Each of the characters operates in a

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<sup>40</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.164.

specific temporal and spatial location, the city of San Francisco in 1964, and in a closely defined environment, Reich's taxicab. There is therefore a strong sense of placefulness about the piece, a theme that returns in later speech-based pieces.

Writing about *City Life* (which falls outside the timespan of this thesis), Arnold Whittall draws attention to Reich's ability to create this sense of location through drawing on environmental sounds, a description that could apply equally to

*Livelihood*.

It has long been possible to evoke the everyday by creating a collage of real-life sounds, 'composition' being the process of manipulating materials through editing. Such documentary compilations are the closest music comes to photography, in that the specifics of what is being depicted and evoked are relatively precise and unambiguous. The relationship between work and world is therefore direct, even if the possibility of determining some associated narrative as the collage unfolds in time may still be left to the listener's imagination.<sup>41</sup>

The sense of placefulness is developed further in Reich's later works, especially *Vermont Counterpoint*, *The Desert Music* and *New York Counterpoint*, although in these instances Reich creates this through musical or textual means.<sup>42</sup> This echoes Rebecca Eaton's observation of the relationship that 'music may evoke a sense of time and place, point of view, or mood, and may interpret a narrative context'.<sup>43</sup>

The creation of narrative through the structure of a collage is central to the following analysis of *Livelihood*, which emphasises Reich's treatment of his source materials to create a story. Although the piece runs continuously, it is possible to identify aurally seven clear sections, some of which involve voices and others that

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<sup>41</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music: Tradition and Innovation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.6.

<sup>42</sup> This is developed at length by Denise Von Glahn, *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Eaton, *Op. cit.*, p.28.

do not. The sections identified are for analytical purposes and there are no transitions as such between them.<sup>44</sup>

Section 1	0:00 – 0:07	Introduction
Section 2	0:08 – 0:37	Stating the destination
Section 3	0:38 – 0:57	Departure sounds
Section 4	0:58 – 1:21	Journey conversations
Section 5	1:22 – 1:44	Sound manipulation
Section 6	1:45 – 2:09	‘Fare’-well words
Section 7	2:10 – 2:41	Voices ‘coda’

Table 3: Structure of *Livelihood* (1964)

Section One lasts only seven seconds and contains a fragment of conversation between the taxi driver, whom we infer to be Reich, and an unidentified customer. This establishes important principles that pertain to the entire piece concerning the role of the narrator and its relationship to other agents in the piece. Although Reich assumes the role of homodiegetic narrator, he is never identified in *Livelihood*. Without some knowledge of the background to the piece it would be impossible to know this and therefore discern either the means by which the story is narrated or the type of narratorial role assumed by Reich. The sense of placefulness is given equal prominence to the voices, which do not dominate here, the words themselves relatively indistinct against the streetcars and other traffic sounds. Almost drowned out by these, the taxi driver offers local insight to his clients, pointing out the historical San Francisco streetcars. Rather than making an obvious

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<sup>44</sup> A transcription of the piece is found in Appendix 2, catalogued by minute and second (insofar as the clarity of the original recording permits), and by section in the case of manipulated sound. The designations [m] or [f] in that transcription refer to male or female voices, and the words in bold indicate speech samples seemingly used more than once in the piece.

diegetic link through the tram bells, however, wailing sirens and traffic sounds are used for the short transition into Section Two.

Section Two lasts for 29 seconds and consists of speakers, the majority of them male, stating the destinations to which they wish to be driven. The first two voices act as antagonists in asserting their instruction, 'take me to'. The familiar landmark of the Fairmont Hotel with its commanding position on affluent Nob Hill is iterated three times and takes pride of place in the presentation of the speech snippets, mirroring the geographical situation of the hotel itself. The reference to going 'up' to the Fairmont indicates both the hill that needs to be climbed, and subliminally the compositional journey undertaken by Reich in aspiring to move from downtown taxi-driving activity to uptown professional composer.

Other destinations in San Francisco are named, juxtaposed in a manner that represents over twenty journeys, including the St Francis Hotel in Union Square (which would subsequently become the setting for *It's Gonna Rain*). Some destinations are indistinct, possibly as a result of the microphone being hidden in an obscure part of the taxi, perhaps intentionally on the part of the composer, calling into question the assertion that textual cognition is of primary importance.<sup>45</sup> The resulting sonic effect is more akin to John Rockwell's 'happy babble of overlapping dialogues', a description applied to *It's Gonna Rain*.<sup>46</sup> Among the babble, however, Reich's voice is not heard, thus creating a non-narrated narrative, with each of the characters having free direct speech. The paradox remains that they are not free

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<sup>45</sup> Suzuki, *Op. cit.*, p.445.

<sup>46</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.18.

agents since they have no real diegetic interaction either with each other or with Reich.

Section Three lasts for 19 seconds and functions as a non-speech based transition. It is based on a series of loops comprising contextual noises, predominantly the slamming of doors, as well as sounds of passengers breathing, sitting down, sighing, grunting, and occasionally even banging their heads on the cab door. The slamming of doors is used to generate rapid iteration of percussive sounds at the start of this section and builds rapidly into a series of brisk, repeated slams. In addition, there are engine sounds, traffic noises and the faint buzz of conversation outside the taxi. Here, the concern with establishing placefulness is at its most developed and the sound events serve as general isodiegetic indicators to the implicit narrative. This culminates in a six-second continuous extract of the engine noise of the cab as the vehicle begins its implied journey.

Section Four lasts for 23 seconds and introduces a new series of speech snippets taken from the passengers' general conversation with Reich (or perhaps with each other in cases where there was more than one passenger). None of them forms a complete sentence, and few of them even a phrase. Their agency in their original context is unknown, creating a tantalising sense of disconnection; they also lack the proxemic or geographic indicators of the first set of speech snippets. The section picks up where the voices of Section Two left off, with looped voices. This has the effect of creating a gap between the two sections in which the non-verbal sounds of Section Three serve to create the sense of moving the journey forward. The characters are now given voice again, but these voices may or may not be the same as the previous ones.

The selection of voices here is also for aural effect, with both the pitch and semantic content of individual snippets juxtaposed for maximum comedic impact. Examples include: the repeated 'oooooh!' at 1:01 and 1:05; and the high-pitched giggling laughter at 1:15/1:16. The hushed and breathy 'Deborah' (the only named character in the piece) adds an element of sexual intrigue to the words spoken in the back of the cab. The intensity of the pronunciation of 'delicious' at 1:11 strengthens the impression that the cab environment is a garden of delight as much as a functional means of transport. Such light-hearted intention is seldom found in Reich's output, with later narrative threads normally concerned with more weighty themes.<sup>47</sup> In the midst of all this, the voice of the cab radio acts as a reminder of the double focalisation of the story. Each voice expresses its own feeling and emotion, but the metanarrative is the journey of the cab, itself operating under the ultimate agency of the radio at the taxi headquarters.

There is a further chronological shift at the end of this section. Two seconds of traffic sounds at 1:17/1:18 introduce a codetta as the evening approaches and the passengers' comments express tiredness. This is the first such temporal indicator in the piece, and the narrative takes on a semblance of closure, the snippet at 1:19 ('I'm cold') implicitly spoken by someone waking from sleep on a car journey. All of the voices have been brought together and are now on the same aural journey so that whichever passenger is given voice speaks for all of them. They are all cold and tired on an undefined journey, providing Reich's livelihood.

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<sup>47</sup> The light-hearted nature of *Livelihood* is recognized in Richard D. Freed's review of the piece in the *New York Times*, 28 August 1965 in which it is described as "Dad-ish ... Fun, yes, but music?". Cole, *Op. cit.*, p.12, takes up this theme.

The sublimation of the individual into the crowd continues further in Section Five, which lasts 20 seconds. The voices once more become less distinct, and at 1:26 are re-enveloped and brought together with traffic sounds. In this urban setting, the individual becomes one with the environment such that the spoken words and the sounds of the street are both capable of agency as they work together in a single diegetic. At times words are present but indistinct, as between 1:26 and 1:32. At other times the street sounds take over and drown out the voices, as between 1:33 and 1:40, at which point the voices return to provide a transition into Section Six. Here, as elsewhere in the piece, voices surface and are submerged in the way that speakers in a crowd momentarily emerge before being lost in the general level of street noise.

Section Six starts at 1:45 and lasts for 24 seconds: the voices emerge clearly once again, and a loop of 'come on' (possibly a precursor to 'come out') begins the section. This end of the collective journey is approaching and a series of statements about the required fare are heard, the first four consisting of an altercation over the price. This includes a witty retort from Reich at 1:49 that the fare is displayed by the metre in the cab, the implication being that this has been disregarded, the passenger protesting his ability to read what is plainly there to see. This introduces a series of fares, itself a prelude to a number of voices saying farewell. The rapid interplay between the amounts five, twenty-five, forty-five and sixty-six (cents) prefigures the way in which the dates 1939, 1940 and 1941 are used in Part Two of *Different Trains* although the generally good-humoured banter and repartee of *Livelihood* contrasts with the more sombre tone of the war dates. The final selection of voices emphasises this difference with wishes of good evening,

reiterations of 'have fun/fun day/lots of fun', culminating with nine expressions of thanks between 2:05 and 2:09.

Section Seven forms the conclusion of the piece, consisting of an extended section from 2:10 to 2:41 in which the identity of the speakers is again lost. Rather than finishing with a clear arrival at a destination, the journey for each of them is indeterminate, with no clear point of ending, as indeed Reich's own musical ending was indeterminate at this stage in his career. This final section of the piece obliterates any remaining sense of semantic meaning, rather as described in the psalm text chosen later by Reich for *Tehillim*, 'without speech or words, yet their voice is heard'. The piece ends with a mirror of where it started, with voices becoming submerged into the overall sonic landscape rather than emerging from it.

*Livelihood* stands as an important staging post on Reich's narrative trails and develops several principles for working with human speech in sound collages. First, he collects the voices himself rather than relying on existing recordings, with the result that there is a direct relationship between Reich as narrator and the subjects whose voices he uses. Second, these voices are used with complete self-assurance, but (so far as can be discerned) without the permission of the people whose voices have been recorded. Third, the speech snippets chosen by Reich are subsequently edited, rearranged and manipulated through repetition, re-enveloping and looping, so that they fulfil a different narrative function from their original intention. Fourth, through this defamiliarisation, rounded characters become disembodied voices, incapable of complex, multi-dimensional and unpredictable actions or behaviour. In narrative terms, Reich uses the mimesis of showing their voices to create a new diegesis of his own creation. Fifth, Reich takes this selection of de-personalised and

unidentifiable voices on a journey of his choosing, bringing together many disparate voices as if they were a single voice, and reinforcing his own significance as narrator within the metanarrative of his working life.

In this montage, the meaning of the situation therefore derives not from the original context of the sounds but from their new juxtaposition. The handling of time and the pacing of the narrative speed are completely sublimated to Reich's overall framing narrative of the length of the journey within an implied portion of a day. Yet in another sense, the looped sounds create a sense of timelessness considered a feature of minimalist music:

One never feels that one has come to the end of it; it is inexhaustible... it is not at all clear that their endings are controlled by anything other than having run up against the limits of human perception. In a way, may be, they never do end.<sup>48</sup>

The narrative speed of the resulting piece is unclear: the voices contained in this framing narrative may have existed within it or have been brought into it merely by the composer's will. Whilst individual sound events are shaped and juxtaposed to create a new diegesis, the virtual absence of deictic locators means that little can be concluded other than some of the original journeys were (for example) for passengers who were arriving at a hotel, or were tired, or were in a humorous mood. Indeed, time in the piece exists as a polychronic narration, where extracts from original situations are ordered in a manner that defies analysis of the relationship between the actual 'clock' time in which events took place, and the 'stage' time through which they are now represented. The resulting narrative is one

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<sup>48</sup> Jonathan W. Bernard, 'The Minimalist Aesthetic in the Plastic Arts and in Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (1993), p.121.

in which time, space, and characterisation are all recreated in the context of the work such that the relationship between clock time and 'stage' time is fractured.

#### 2.4 *Conclusions*

Both *The Plastic Haircut* and *Livelihood* establish important principles in the composer's approach to creating narrative structures. Assuming the role of auteur, Reich selects recorded speech snippets, either from existing sources or of his own creation, in which the speakers themselves remain unidentified. These snippets are arranged to create extended structures, sometimes involving overlapping loops or contextual sounds. The resulting juxtaposition of speech material crafts a new narrative framework, constructing a new temporal setting and implying relationships between voices that originally had no interaction with each other.

There are also differences between the collages. For *The Plastic Haircut*, Reich took from an existing source the voices of well-known sports personalities whom he had not met. The selection of speech snippets was imprecise since the recording was a vinyl LP, making it difficult to isolate specific moments. The resulting collage does not attempt to establish a linear narrative, although it embodies the success stories of those celebrated in *The Greatest Moments in Sport*. The collage has little sense of the specific location where the voices are recorded. *Livelihood* consists of unidentified characters that travelled in Reich's taxi, whose voices he recorded himself. The resulting collage implies a defined period of time in which a selection of events takes place. The piece contains a strong sense of placefulness in San Francisco. Although assuming the role of auteur in both pieces, Reich operates as a

heterodiegetic narrator in *The Plastic Haircut*, whilst in *Livelihood* he functions as a homodiegetic narrator.



## Chapter 3 *It's Gonna Rain*

### 3.1 *Narrative trails in It's Gonna Rain*

Although knowledge of *The Plastic Haircut* and *Livelihood* remains sketchy even among Reich aficionados, *It's Gonna Rain* quickly achieved canonical status, becoming widely regarded as a minimalist masterpiece. There are two main reasons for such adulation of the work: its status as Reich's first composition using phased tape loops, and the strong emotional appeal of Brother Walter's apocalyptic preaching in Union Square, San Francisco. On this basis, *It's Gonna Rain* has entered history as a phase piece about the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> This chapter offers a new reading of the work that shifts the focus away from phasing and onto the complex narrative trails surrounding the composition.

The sources for *It's Gonna Rain* comprise the original tape recordings made by Reich in Union Square and his subsequent manuscript sketches. The initial narrative trail is set up by the composer's unedited recordings, which have not survived. Reich produced two edited 'composite' tapes from these field recordings, however, which still exist and have a total playing time of 36' 24". These tapes constitute a second narrative trail, demonstrating the composer's initial intention to create a linear sound collage rather than a cyclical phase piece.<sup>2</sup> This collage creates its own narrative trail, from which Reich later selects a very short extract of 47 seconds. He then transcribes the words, pitch shape and rhythm of some speech extracts, comprising a third narrative trail before the phasing principle is discovered, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Gabrielle Zuckerman, *An Interview with Steve Reich*, American Public Media, July 2002 [http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview\\_reich.html](http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview_reich.html), accessed on 12/2/13. 'You've got to remember that the Cuban Missile Crisis happened in 1963, and it was still very much on everybody's mind. It was clear that life hung by a thread and with one misstep--one miscalculated innuendo--we'd all be nuclear dust. And I was going through a divorce at the time. So put that all together in a jug and shake and, well, you get a piece about the end of the world. But what's important about the piece is that this repeating pattern is played against itself, and gradually slips out of sync with itself, and goes out of phase.'

<sup>2</sup> Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p.186.

final version of *It's Gonna Rain* takes shape. Although the original field recordings are not presently available, a study of the initial sound collage exposes new narrative roots in *It's Gonna Rain*, which complement the intricate social, political and cultural dimensions identified in the final piece through the detailed analytical work of Sumanth Gopinath and Martin Scherzinger.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2 *It's Gonna Rain*

The first performance of *It's Gonna Rain* took place at the San Francisco Tape Music Centre on 27 January 1965 in a concert entitled 'A Program of Tapes by Steve Reich'.<sup>4</sup> On the programme, the piece was listed as *Brother Walter in Union Square (a work in progress)*,<sup>5</sup> the performance including only the first part of the piece. Although complete, the second part of the piece was withdrawn by Reich from the programme because of his fragile mental state at the time.<sup>6</sup> Both parts of *It's Gonna Rain* are based on the words of Brother Walter, described by Reich as 'a

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<sup>3</sup> Sumanth S. Gopinath, *Contraband Children: The Politics of Race and Liberation in the Music of Steve Reich, 1965-1966*, PhD Thesis, Yale University, 2005; Martin Scherzinger, 'Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic: Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain*', *Current Musicology*, Nos. 79&80 (2005), pp.207-244. Gopinath offers an account of *It's Gonna Rain* that seeks to bring out the racial dimensions of the work. This presents a less celebratory picture, acknowledging the link between the biblical narrative of the Flood and the Black Liberation Movement but drawing an unflattering parallel between Brother Walter and Noah – both battling hopelessly against the spirit of their times, somewhat akin to Reich himself. He suggests additionally that Reich's own motivation resided in a search for religious authenticity, which was encapsulated in the African-American Christian experience.

<sup>4</sup> The concert was repeated two days later on 29 January 1965.

<sup>5</sup> The piece passed through a number of variations of title. In May 1966, a performance at The Park Place Gallery, 542 West Broadway, New York, was advertised as *It's Gonna Rain, or Meet Brother Walter in Union Square After Listening to Terry Riley (1/65)*. The same description was used in the programme for a performance at Fairleigh Dickinson University Art Gallery on 5 January 1967, and again on 14 January 1968 at The Phillips Exeter Academy, New Hampshire. Although the concert programme for New American Music and Film at Galerie Ricke, Köln on 15 March 1969 referred to the piece as *It's Gonna Rain*, the earlier title still appeared for a UK performance at the Lyons Concert Hall, University of York, on 30 October 1970.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Alburger, 'Steve Reich: Early Phase', *21<sup>st</sup> Century Music*, Vol.11, No.4, (2004), p.6; Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.176. Reich felt that Part Two was too bleak and disturbing to be included, since it reflected his personal situation in San Francisco at the time, which was far from happy. After he returned to New York, however, Reich decided the piece should henceforth be played complete.

young negro Pentecostal preacher who appeared occasionally on Sundays at Union Square in San Francisco'.<sup>7</sup>

Part One lasts for 7'46" and is based on a twelve-second snippet from Brother Walter's preaching: 'it's gonna rain'.<sup>8</sup> The phrase caricatures Noah's response to the supposed mocking calls from incredulous onlookers watching him build an immense ark at a time when there was no suggestion of imminent rain.<sup>9</sup> This first phase is straightforward in construction and is described by Reich as 'a literal embodiment of [the phasing] process. Two loops are lined up in unison, which gradually move completely out of phase with each other, and then back into unison.'<sup>10</sup> Although the phasing process distorts the clarity of the speaker's words, Reich seeks to create certain deliberate verbal relationships between the looped voices.<sup>11</sup>

Looped in this manner, an apparently simple phrase assumes a strong narrative function. The repetition creates a sense of a pseudo-iterative frequency, an eternal 'now' or at best a 'needle in-the-groove' situation, creating the impression of a frequently-to-be-repeated event. Yet the statement 'it's gonna rain' has no clear temporal locator apart from an imprecise future imperative, and

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<sup>7</sup> This description of Brother Walter appeared in the programme notes for the concert at Fairleigh Dickinson University Art Gallery on 5 January 1967.

<sup>8</sup> This 12-second goblet appears as Goblet 34 in the transcript of the sound collage in Appendix 3, starting at 06' 41".

<sup>9</sup> This constitutes poetic licence on Walter's part as there is no mention of these bystanders in the Biblical narrative in chapters 6 to 9 of the Genesis account. Walter takes their imagined words ('It ain't gonna rain') as a trigger for Noah's supposed reiterated response ('It's gonna rain'). This phrase does not appear in the biblical account, either, but becomes the subject for the phased repetition in Part One.

<sup>10</sup> Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.20.

<sup>11</sup> William Duckworth, *Op. cit.*, p.296. Alburger, *Op. cit.*, p.6 maps the approximate text relationships between tape loops.

is essentially achronic. Whilst the urgency of Brother Walter's delivery declares what is going to happen, there is nothing in the words to indicate whether this is an imminent event or something to be expected in the distant future.<sup>12</sup> The absence of a deictic allows the statement 'it's gonna rain' to exist in a timeless present, potentially a non-narrative.<sup>13</sup>

This allows little by way of agency. Brother Walter is essentially a one-dimensional character of whom we know nothing from the piece itself. He operates entirely within the limited parameters determined by Reich, as did the taxi passengers in *Livelihood*. Walter's words are clearly drawn from the biblical narrative of the Flood but, taken out of context and subjected to incessant repetition, a future event is inferred, a prophetic utterance that lies outside Walter's agency. Walter becomes part of this diegesis through his linking of historical prophecy to a future event, operating partially as an isodiegetic narrator.

Part Two lasts for 9' 45" and is based on a much longer extract from Walter's sermon, this time lasting 41 seconds.<sup>14</sup> It has a more apocalyptic tone and intersperses comments on the folly of the (imagined) bystanders with his (Walter's) outbursts of praise to God for the valuable lesson that will be taught in punishing

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<sup>12</sup> This reflects a biblical allusion to time. 2 Peter 3:8 refers to Noah's Flood and the unpredictability of the time of judgement, stating that 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day'.

<sup>13</sup> The relationship between Minimalist music and time is part of a much larger debate. Jonathan D. Kramer, *The Time of Music*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, puts forward the concept of a vertical music, which offers a possible framework for interpreting the temporal dimensions of *It's Gonna Rain*. Wim Mertens, *American Minimal Music*, London: Kahn & Averill, 1983, p.90, links the perception of time in Minimalist music with Stockhausen's concept of moment form, 'since each moment may be the beginning or the end, the listener can choose how long he wants to listen for, but he will never miss anything by not listening'. Richard L. Cohn, 'Transpositional Combination of Beat-Class Sets in Steve Reich's Phase-Shifting Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (1992), p.169, notes that there is no linear progression as 'the vertical, ateleological, static view of Reich's phase-shifting music focuses on extended use of repetition as a prolongational device, but ignores the progressive context in which these prolongations occur'. Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, p.52, takes the theme of timelessness further, describing Minimalist music as an art 'with no past tense'. This is not, however, the same as the permanent 'now' that Reich creates through repetition, since Brother Walter's words imply a contextual past and future even if the music on its own does not.

<sup>14</sup> This 41-second goblet appears in the transcript in Appendix 3 as Goblet 35, starting at 06'56".

such folly. Walter's midrash on the story dramatizes the episode as he imagines further details not found in the biblical narrative, such as the repeated emphasis on the beating on the door.<sup>15</sup> The phased loops are longer than in Part One, which means that the sentences degenerate more quickly and obviously than before, creating a texture of multiple interweaving lines.<sup>16</sup> This creates an extreme sense of narrative breakdown as a succession of short vocal phrases tumble over each other to form a terrifying parody of a sermon, eventually eradicating the words to the point where the effect borders on cacophony.

Had to see 'im Couldn't open the door Lord Lord They cried Could ya just open the door Couldn't open the door Well sure enough Glory to God God ... which is then summarily obliterated into noise via the use of multiple phase overlaps.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to voices, there are also contextual sounds that serve to locate the speech fragments in the setting of Union Square.<sup>18</sup> Reich has indicated the importance of these: the ambient traffic sounds, the pigeon whose wings sound 'like a beating drum' as they are repeated through the piece and the small bird cheeping immediately afterwards.<sup>19</sup> The presence of the birds calls to mind several possible links. Mark Alburger links the beating of the pigeon's wings with African-American musical structures suggesting that 'the background street noise in repetition results in a rhythmic, percussive underlay – a street rap accompaniment

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<sup>15</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, p.174, points to the alarm and desperation of the once mocking, now-panicked bystanders clamouring to get in the ark.

<sup>16</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, 'Steve Reich: Music as a Gradual Process Part I', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 19, (1980), p.385.

<sup>17</sup> Alburger, *Op. cit.*, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> Dean Paul Suzuki, *Minimal Music: Its Evolution as seen in the works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and LaMonte Young*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1991, p.450.

<sup>19</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.21.

before its time'.<sup>20</sup> The flapping of the bird's wings has possible overtones from the Noah trope, in which two birds are mentioned: a raven in Genesis 8:7 and a dove on three occasions – in Genesis 8:8, Genesis 8:10 and Genesis 8:12 – released from the ark in order to see whether the flood waters had receded. In contrast to the peaceful postdiluvian beating of the dove's wings, the pigeon's frantic flapping echoes the fists beating on the door of the ark, presaging a contemporary nuclear deluge.

### 3.3 *Narrative Trail 1: Union Square, June 1964?*

In contrast to *Livelihood*, the source materials for *It's Gonna Rain* were recorded openly with Reich taping various people, in addition to Walter, who happened to be in Union Square that day.<sup>21</sup> Reich's notes on the boxes for the tape reels indicate a date of 6/64, close to when *Livelihood* was being composed<sup>22</sup> and broadly contemporary with Reich's work for Robert Nelson's film *Thick Pucker*, based entirely on material recorded on the streets of San Francisco.<sup>23</sup> As Cole points out, however, Nelson was not the filmmaker who urged Reich to go to Union Square to record Brother Walter,<sup>24</sup> the composer referring to the forgotten filmmaker as a friend who had apparently never made a film<sup>25</sup> and who was thinking of making one but never did.

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<sup>20</sup> Alburger, *Op cit.*, p.5.

<sup>21</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, p.155, states that Reich made the recordings 'in front of the St Francis Hotel late in 1964'.

<sup>22</sup> This is earlier than previously thought. Strickland, *Op. cit.*, p.185 states that Brother Walter was recorded in Fall 1965; Potter, *Op. cit.*, p. 166, has the recordings being made in November 1964.

<sup>23</sup> Although that film is now lost, *Thick Pucker II* was created in the same year from outtakes of the original film. This film was shown most recently in January 2008 at the Los Angeles Film forum, <http://lafilmforum.wordpress.com/> accessed 25/1/11.

<sup>24</sup> Ross Cole, "'Fun, Yes, but Music?' Steve Reich and the San Francisco Bay Area's Cultural Nexus, 1962-65', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2012), p.333.

<sup>25</sup> Emily Wasserman, 'An Interview With Composer Steve Reich', *Artforum* (USA), Vol. 10, No. 9, (1972), p.44.

[*It's Gonna Rain*] was taken from a recording that I made at the suggestion of a filmmaker friend whose name I can no longer remember and for a film that never happened, of a black preacher, an itinerant preacher in Union Square in San Francisco on a Sunday who was preaching about the flood—Noah—and I had this tape for this movie which never happened and I began literally taking dictation from it. I would play it over and over again and try to write down in musical notation the notes because in black Pentecostal preaching you very often get a voice which hovers between speech and song.<sup>26</sup>

Having spent time collecting extensive recordings, Reich was faced with the problem of what to do with them. He had become increasingly expert in creating sound collages, but the challenge now facing him was to use the raw material in a way that did not diminish its natural power. In addition to creating a sound collage from the materials collected in Union Square, Reich also attempted musical transcription of Brother Walter's implied pitches – a technique he would not perfect until a quarter-century later in *Different Trains*.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.4     *Narrative Trail 2: Transcription and scoring*

Reich's sketches consist of fifteen pages of music manuscript.<sup>28</sup> The first three pages are a transcription of short extracts from Walter 'sermon',<sup>29</sup> where Reich

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Ev Grimes, no. 186 a-I OH V, tape and manuscript, Oral History of American Music, Yale University, tape 186-a. Transcript, p.16.

<sup>27</sup> Strickland, *Op cit.*, p.185.

<sup>28</sup> The fifteen pages of sketches made by Reich divide into two components: three pages of transcription of sections of Brother Walter's 'street sermon' (on Pacific Music Papers Hollywood Gold 715 MSS) and a further twelve pages of compositional drafts based on extracts from that sermon (on Belwin Inc. Parchment Brand No 19-24 lines MSS). The music notation is in ink and at various points the reverse of the paper has been used for drafts of another unidentified piece, possibly written for Mills College. The penultimate page of the sketches also has CUBA Si written on the third stave in capitals save for the final letter. This offers perhaps the most overt political comment in *It's Gonna Rain*, with its direct citation of the first part of the slogan Cuba Si! Yanqui Nol borne of the Cuban missile crisis, and identifying Reich with a pro-Cuban stance.

<sup>29</sup> In the transcription in Appendix 3, these correspond to Gobbets 32, 33, 34, 35 and 43. These are located on the first source tape between 06:11 to 07:38, and from 08:46 to 09:46.

underlays the preacher's words with musical notation. There are no bar lines as such, although the opening 'bar' carries the number 155 and the twelfth line of the second page bears the number 206. There is no indication as to what these numbers mean, however.<sup>30</sup> Tonal centres are indicated as far as 206, moving from D minor at the start, to E♭ at 'and they began to laugh at him', rising further to E at 'they didn't believe that it was gonna rain' and again to F on the repetition of those words. The section beyond 206 is not used in *It's Gonna Rain*.

The choice of sermon extract suggests a narrative intention. Walter is not introduced in the sermon transcription, and although his words start *in medias res*, the preacher immediately identifies himself with the story of salvation-history: 'God spoke to Noah just like I'm speaking to you'. This creates an isodiegetic relationship between Noah and Walter as both proclaim the same story of a covenant relationship between God and man in their respective antediluvian worlds. Noah, the person through whom God made the first covenant with mankind, becomes an analogue for Walter, whose allegorical warnings proclaim the new covenant in the face of impending nuclear disaster.

In addition to the transcription there are twelve pages of sketches, based predominantly on the opening phrase of the sermon transcription, 'and God said'. This snippet appears extensively, almost to the exclusion of any others, in ten of the twelve pages. Other snippets receive relatively scant attention, and the phrase that eventually forms the title of the piece – 'it's gonna rain' – receives a brief three-bar appearance. In contrast to the sermon, the snippets are adapted to fit a regular

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<sup>30</sup> There is a broad approximation to the number of speech snippets between these two numbers, but they could also refer to the tape counter on Reich's tape machine, a suggestion that has been made in a joint paper with Keith Potter, delivered at the Seventh Biennial International Conference on Music Since 1900, University of Lancaster, 28–31 July 2011: Keith Potter and John Pymm, *Steve Reich's It's Gonna Rain: New Light on its Source Materials*.

metre using bar lines and time signatures with Reich attempting a number of polyphonic workings of them. He takes the following nine speech extracts, which atomise Walter's 'sermon' into its constituent narrative parts.

- [A] and God spoke
- [B] like I'm speaking to you
- [C] people don't believe that
- [D] can speak to man
- [E] but I wanna say this evening
- [F] that God
- [G] speaking to man
- [H] it's gonna rain
- [I] they didn't believe that it was gonna rain

Table 4: Speech gobbets transcribed in MSS sources for *It's Gonna Rain*

There is little continuous narrative in the sketches and their disjointed treatment creates a series of aphorisms reminiscent of the style of the linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>31</sup> On the final page of the sketches, Reich juxtaposes five snippets to create a longer narrative unit: it's gonna rain/speak to man/and God spoke/but I wanna say this evening/they didn't believe that it was gonna rain. This creates a micro-narrative, moving from the impersonal rain to God's personal address to humanity, echoed in Walter's personal voice but set for rejection by the modern-day crowd who are no more likely to believe Walter than Noah's contemporaries believed him.

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<sup>31</sup> Alan Rich, 'Minimalism to the Max' in *LA Weekly*, November 5-11, 2004, p.47.

### 3.5 *Narrative Trail 3: Sound Collage/Proto-Version*

Reich's sound collage is archived (together with the manuscript sketches) at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland. Originally recorded on two 13-cm reel-to-reel spools, the tapes have been digitally transferred unedited by the Stiftung to two CD tracks.<sup>32</sup> Together, these tracks last for 36' 24",<sup>33</sup> the length of each track (18' 30" and 17' 54" respectively) possibly determined by the amount of space available on the original tape spools. Track One contains Gobbets 1-79; Track Two contains Gobbets 80-157. The two tracks are referred to in this chapter as 'Composite One' and 'Composite Two' respectively, with each constituent speech gobbet allocated a number. A full transcript of the collage is found in Appendix 3.

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Despite the apparently linear progression of the recorded events, there are frequent and uneven gaps between gobbits, some of which coincide with the original tape recorder being turned off and on. Reich's subsequent editing of the source tapes creates additional gaps and there are also instances where gobbits have been spliced together as well as moments where individual contributors are cut off abruptly. This makes it difficult to calculate either the overall timeframe of the recordings or the temporal and sequential relationships between the gobbits and the actual events in Union Square.

In constructing the collage, Reich assumes the role of auteur, setting up a narrative trail for the final version of *It's Gonna Rain*. Whilst this approach is reminiscent of *Livelihood* with a number of episodic events juxtaposed to create a

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<sup>32</sup> The recording is found on disc SR-CD 8, tracks 1 & 2. This archive disc also contains four other tracks from Reich's early works, including two live 1961 recordings of the composer's *Music for String Orchestra* and two performances of *Music for Piano and Tape*. The allocation of tracks to CD in the Stiftung has been governed primarily by the capacity of the discs themselves and, although broadly chronological, the grouping of works is not significant here.

<sup>33</sup> The resulting sound collage is longer than Reich's previous work in this style, the closest being the 25-minute soundtrack that Reich produced for Nelson's film *Thick Pucker II*.

linear narrative, the later collage is based on speech gobbets rather than speech snippets, which allows the material to unfold over a longer timeframe and to create a more recognizable scenario.<sup>34</sup> Reich's editing of the tapes creates a kinetic narrative, which is both continuous and discontinuous. Some gobbits appear to follow on naturally from their predecessors; elsewhere there is an obvious gap where time has passed, or where gobbits have been placed in a different order, thus blurring the relationship between narrative time and clock time.

The events take place within the framework of an actual day, which turns out to be Sunday [Gobbet 121]. The 'Fat Lady's insane believer girl' confirms that this is an iterative narrative and that her group comes to Union Square almost every Sunday. Although the collage starts in the morning, the 'sermon' itself does not begin until the early evening, as indicated in Gobbet 30 and confirmed by Walter's claim that the powerful agency of God will be revealed that evening. In Gobbits 32 and 68, Walter also refers to the time as evening, and the majority of the action therefore takes place towards the end of the day. There are few other indications of time passing, although some of the characters have clearly invested time in travelling to the events in the Square. In Gobbet 154, a 'miscellaneous woman' sitting on a bench says that she lives so far out that she has to catch four buses to get there. The same speaker refers to a men's class that has taken place during the morning.

In his notes on the tape spools/boxes, Reich gives brief details of the contents of the recordings. In addition to time and place, these include a skeleton scenario of the collage, including some details of the identity of speakers and events. Composite One is labelled 'Union Square, 6/1964' and lists ten sub-scenarios:

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<sup>34</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.21, has spoken of wanting people to hear the words rather than disguising them as in *musique concrète*, although this applies far less to the material once phased in *It's Gonna Rain*.

morning sounds; birds; Walter talking to me; other people on the benches; shoeshine; Walter preaching; Ray preaching; songs, fat Spanish Woman preaching; and Winos. Composite Two lists a further ten aspects: more Winos; Walter singing solo; other preachers (bits); Naomi; Interview bits from Ray; Fat Lady's insane believer girl; Mr. Sociology; Little more Walter; The Vegetarian; and a few miscellaneous people on benches.

Tape	Gobbet	Time reference	Description	
1	1	00 00	02 08	Contextual sounds
	2-24	02 09	05 03	Walter talking to Reich
	25	05 04	05 17	Contextual sounds
	26-29	05 17	05 40	People on benches
	30-61	05 40	12 15	Walter preaching
	62	12 15	12 34	Ray preaching
	63	12 34	12 53	Singing of gospel songs
	64-65	12 53	14 06	Walter preaching
	66	14 06	15 33	Singing/comments from bystanders
	67-70	15 33	16 51	Walter preaching
	71	16 51	17 26	Fat Spanish woman/winos
	72	17 26	17 43	Winos
	73	17 43	17 48	Children's voices
	74	17 48	17 58	Customer and shoe shine man
	75-79	17 58	18 30	Winos
2	80-86	00 00	01 19	Winos
	87	01 19	02 17	Walter singing
	88-98	02 17	05 15	Winos
	99-100	05 15	05 37	Ray
	101-104	05 38	06 05	Preacher 3
	105	06 05	06 10	Interjection
	106	06 10	06 28	Preacher 4, female, Hispanic
	107-113	06 28	10 00	Naomi
	114-116	10 00	10 54	Ray
	117-120	10 54	11 22	Three unidentified female voices
	121	11 22	12 37	Fat lady's insane believer girl
	122-129	12 37	14 01	Mr Sociology & unidentified man
	130-134	14 01	15 13	Walter
	135-136	15 13	15 37	Ray
	137-147	15 37	16 40	The vegetarian
	148-157	16 40	17 54	Miscellaneous people on benches

Table 5: Structure of the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*

Table 5 sets out a more detailed outline of the form of the collage based on Reich's character descriptions, locating the 157 gobblets within this framework. There are no gaps between gobblets, and the same speaker frequently continues from one gobblet to the next, although the gobblets themselves are of varying lengths. Many are of sufficient length to indicate their narrative direction while others recall the rapid-fire, short words and phrases of *Livelihood*, offering little in the way of narrative function.<sup>35</sup> The sound collage functions as a proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain*, setting out the range of sources from which Reich selected Walter's voice, and revealing the context in which the piece developed.

As in *Livelihood*, Reich's collage conjures up the placefulness of the city – the stillness of Union Square – with a deliberate contextualisation of the sounds of birdsong, and traffic, in advance of multiple urban voices being heard, as expressed in Lefebvre's description of the city:

There is the *utterance* of the city: what happens and takes place in the street, in the squares, in the voids, what is said there. There is the *language* of the city: particularities specific to each city which are expressed in discourses, gestures, clothing, in the words and use of words by the inhabitants. [...] Finally, there is the *writing* of the city: what is inscribed and prescribed on its walls, in the layout of places and their linkages, in brief, the use of time in the city by its inhabitants.<sup>36</sup>

These sounds are supplemented by the utterances of the various people in the square including open-air evangelistic singing, accompanied by untuned hand-held percussion, sung in a manner reminiscent of Ives' beloved amateur music-making occasions where musical accuracy is of less importance than the heartfelt nature of the delivery. Interspersed with the words and singing of the 'preachers' (and an

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<sup>35</sup> Three examples are: Gobblet 120; Gobblet 105, and – at its most extreme – Gobblet 40, which consists of a single breath.

<sup>36</sup> Henri Lefebvre, (tr. Kofman, E & Lebas, E.), *Writings on Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p.115.

unknown number of other Pentecostal Christians there in support) are the words of bystanders in the Square, some apparently pausing as they walk through, others sitting talking on benches. The words of these, and also of the winos for whom Union Square is their 'home', operate at various levels, most interestingly in providing a chorus-type commentary on the preaching of Walter and his friends.

### *3.6 Characterisation and agency*

There are three named characters, who do not speak directly to each other: Walter and Ray (who are both preachers) and Naomi, a member of the public. Four further unnamed characters are all referred to by less-than-flattering nicknames: 'Fat Spanish Woman'; 'Fat Lady's insane believer girl'; 'Mr. Sociology' and 'The Vegetarian'; a further character is identified only by his function as a 'shoe-shine man'. Additionally, there are comments from a small, unspecified number of winos, people sitting on the benches in Union Square, snippets of conversation from passers-by and the ambient city sounds already referred to, which add context, atmosphere and perspective to the recordings. The array of characters may be grouped into three broad categories to reflect their narrative purpose in the story: preachers, witnesses, and commentators, categories that correspond very broadly with the oratorio constituents of recitative, aria and chorus in terms of their function.

#### *Group 1: Preachers*

The function of the outdoor preacher is the public proclamation of the Christian message for evangelistic purposes rather than for the systematic expository teaching of Scripture. Four characters fall into this category: Walter, Ray, the 'Fat Spanish Lady', and the 'other preachers' constitute an evangelistic

group who, according to the 'Fat Lady's insane believer girl' come to Union Square virtually every Sunday [Gobbet 121]. The 'other preachers' to whom Reich refers have little narrative function within the recordings, however.

#### *Walter*

Walter is the most significant character in the piece and the only one whose voice makes it to the final version of *It's Gonna Rain*. He is the 'main' preacher, the protagonist whose reputation and gift for street preaching is the reason for Reich being attracted to the Square in the first place. Reich's inspiration for recording Brother Walter is greater than the content or style of his preaching, though. His motivation stems from his desire to 'set a human being'<sup>37</sup> expressed through the musicality of the preacher's voice and the political significance of the words themselves.<sup>38</sup>

In Gobbet 44 he mentions others referring to him as 'Brother Walter',<sup>39</sup> but he is never referred to as 'pastor', which might suggest an ordained ministry. The presence of other preachers and a number of singers hints strongly that Walter was part of a larger fellowship, in all probability a Pentecostal mission church based in

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<sup>37</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.21

<sup>38</sup> John Pym, *A Window to the Soul: Approaches to Text-Setting in Steve Reich's Tehillim*, MPhil thesis, University of London School of Advanced Study, 2004, pp.10-14. Whilst Reich has been unambiguous about his fascination with the qualities of human speech and their ability to offer a special insight into the personality of the speaker, the nature of this insight is inevitably subjective and depends as much on reception and interpretation as on the sonic qualities of the speech. The actual pitches themselves mean nothing, although Terry Riley has taken an alternative view, interpreting the similarities between the main speech extract 'It's Gonna Rain' and the notes of the first unit of his own *In C* as indicating an implicit *homage*, possibly even an intentional identification with the founding work of Minimalism. Strickland, *Op. cit.*, p.114: 'It's funny that if you listen to Brother Walter and hear. "It's goona RAIN! It's gonna RAIN!" it's like the first two notes of "In C". It's C and E. I don't know if it's C and E but it's major thirds.' Reich has not acknowledged this connection, and whilst the pitch shape is similar, the actual notes produced by the preacher's voice are E - D - D - F#, although the composer's own manuscript transcription of Walter's words renders the motif as D D D F#, which could be seen as creating a possible link, despite the obvious inaccuracy of this.

<sup>39</sup> The term 'Brother' is used by Pentecostal Christians to recognise the common priesthood of all believers as brother or sister in Christ. This familial relationship is in contrast to the perceived patriarchal authority created by the Roman Catholic use of the term 'father' to delineate a mediatory relationship between the priest and God.

downtown San Francisco, although there is no specific reference to Walter or his friends belonging to a particular church fellowship. The reference in Gobbet 155 to events at a men's class on a Sunday morning suggests an established organisation with easy access to buildings near Union Square. It is possible that Walter is an itinerant evangelist not attached to a church fellowship but this would not explain why his appearances in Union Square are limited to Sundays, and not every Sunday either. Walter says little about himself. He announces that he was saved when he was sixteen years old, a boy-David figure who went on to slay Goliath [Gobbet 131]. In Gobbet 119, an unidentified female speaker appears to be speaking about Walter in describing him as a twenty-two year-old who has made a strong Christian commitment and is therefore a role model for young African-Americans. Walter's open-air ministry would therefore have been in existence for a maximum of six years by the time of Reich's recordings.

Walter views his preaching as having social as well as spiritual impact as individual lives are transformed, and in Gobbet 132 declares himself on that basis to be dedicated to the society in which he lives. He is a keen watcher of social trends. In Gobbet 10 we learn that he is a regular reader not just of the Bible but also the daily newspaper and has a vision for the spiritual awakening of society, which is currently let and hindered by the stifling of the Christian voice in schools [Gobbits 2 and 3]. The Church is fettered and needs to be set free [Gobbet 16] but such fetters are of its own making [Gobbet 14]. Surprisingly for such an overtly evangelical preacher, Walter calls in Gobbet 11 for a united voice in opposition from a range of religious ministers, irrespective of their theological views: rabbis and clergymen such as himself, and priests. Whilst yearning for social renewal, Walter's view of contemporary society is intensely pessimistic. In Gobbet 56, he compares the city of San Francisco to the depraved cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed by God

for their wickedness, the only hope for deliverance being a collective and sustained change of the hearts of individuals in the modern city.

Walter demonstrates a sense of national identity and a concern for present-day America, which he calls to wake up to the race riots [Gobbet 23] and to stop claiming there is peace when there is no peace [Gobbet 4]. There are two references to keeping the stars and stripes flying for freedom [Gobbet 9 and Gobbet 20]. At first Walter appears politically motivated, calling in Gobbet 6 for concerted action to stand up for civil rights, stressing the urgency of this [Gobbet 12], and apocalyptically predicting a period of terrible unrest and bloodshed [Gobbet 21], a sentiment immediately repeated by Reich in Gobbet 22.

Walter does not condone the seeking of social justice through vengeful attacks on those in power, however. The reference to bloodshed in Gobbet 21 is prefaced by the reminder that vengeance belongs to God, not man, and that violence is the outcome of mankind fighting its own battles. Gobbet 44 shows Walter to be concerned less with the apocalyptic than with the Apocalypse, declaring his role to proclaim the need to get ready for the Second Coming rather than fighting human wars. The importance of the redeemed individual in changing society is stressed again in Gobbet 24, as Walter states that what matters is nothing to do with colour or race, but only the need for personal integrity of individuals [Gobbet 20]. This call to personal holiness rather than civil rights sets Walter on more familiar Pentecostal ground, distinct from other African-American Christian preachers of the time, most notably those with a less evangelical bias such as Martin Luther King.

Reich's final selection of material gives central position to the narrative of Noah's flood found in Genesis, *Bereshith* in Hebrew. It is not unclear what prominence this had in the original 'sermon': perhaps it was a theme to which Walter returned frequently; possibly it received scant attention as an allegory on

this occasion only. Its inclusion is potentially disruptive, creating a narrative discourse in which the Flood frames the entirety of Walter's comments. These begin in Gobbet 32 and provide a trope – a midrash in Jewish homiletic terms – on the biblical account, finishing abruptly at the end of Gobbet 36, and occupying just under two minutes' worth of the sermon. The whole of Walter's words in Gobnets 30 to 58 in fact account for only six minutes of the tapes, probably accounting for only a small proportion of what was preached that day.

In the collage, the start of the Noah trope is the point where Reich begins his transcription of Walter's speech into musical manuscript. Walter is more animated and, with a greater sense of oratory, now assumes the role of homodiegetic narrator: the preacher who speaks from his own conversion experience and appeals to others on the basis of it. This creates a dual focalisation, establishing a parallel narrative between the story of Noah's flood and the contemporary situation. This is primarily political rather than religious, focusing on parallels between God and Noah, and between God and Walter's listeners, as mediated through Walter's preaching. In contrast to the use of the story of Noah's flood in Liberation Theology and also in the civil rights movement, Walter does not focus on the redemption of a small, repressed minority downtrodden by a hostile majority. Instead, his focus is on judgement and destruction as a punishment for wickedness, stressing his recurrent call to holiness and responsibility. Gopinath suggests that Noah's character is embellished considerably.

Noah, a pious but somewhat anonymous figure chosen to repopulate the species in the original text, is transformed into a ridiculed loner, isolated from the crowd who he is trying to save (not unlike the figure of Jesus in the New Testament). As a figure with which the isolated, paranoid Reich might

have identified, Noah represents here the voice of conscience warning against impending misery.<sup>40</sup>

Theologically, Noah has been viewed as a type of Christ, but in this context, Noah is turned into a type of Walter, or possibly even of Reich. Although Noah is not presented as a rounded character, he has agency in a manner denied to the contemporary onlookers. Depersonalised, anonymous in both name and number, the crowd shouts out the reverse of the title of the piece: 'it ain't gonna rain'. This is entirely of Walter's invention, a dramatic device to highlight the significance of Noah's actions. The Genesis story focuses on the agency of God and the obedience of Noah, making no reference to the ridicule of the bystanders. The only reference to characters outside Noah's family is in Genesis 7.23:

And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

Walter's embellishments lend the narrative an apocalyptic quality amid the repetitious, quasi-liturgical repetition and restatement of short phrases: the mounting tension of the knocking on the door of the ark as the waters rise; the clamour of nameless and innumerable individuals banging in abject terror to be let in; Noah, powerless to open the door. Walter enters the diegesis almost as an additional character, a protagonist on behalf of Noah, able to hear – almost to revel in – the cries of the crowd. Walter's inarticulate sounds as he gasps for breath between phrases, together with his cries of Hallelujah all point to the utter futility of human agency, since the door of the ark 'had been sealed by the hand of God'.

There is further depiction of the reaction of the crowd, running to the top of the mountains or climbing trees before the Flood narrative finishes abruptly with

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<sup>40</sup> Gopinath 2005, *Op. cit.*, p.62. Gopinath also suggests that Reich's treatment of Walter creates a minstrel trope rather than a minstrel troupe.

the phrase ‘there came destruction’. There are two subsequent – albeit brief – references to the Flood narrative: the phrase ‘It’s Gonna Rain’ appears in Gobbet 42 as Walter appeals to his listeners to recommit themselves in view of the coming Apocalypse, and the knocking on the door theme also recurs in Gobbet 48.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the Flood trope, Walter’s sermon is drenched in Scripture, which is recognised by at least one of his listeners [Gobbet 151]. Yet Walter himself is modest about his abilities as a preacher, declaring himself to be inferior to Billy Graham but nevertheless just as sincere [Gobbet 43]. His passion is for those on the margins of society, particularly those who were once members of a church but are now backslidden in their faith. In Gobbet 43 he refers to more respected preachers who would, for example, have no interest in pastoring back to Church a believer who had become addicted to drink. Whilst the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan simply passed by the man in need, such ‘big shot’ preachers would be unlikely to be walking the pavements at all. By contrast, Walter rejoices that God has called him on to the streets to reach out to lost souls.

Walter’s knowledge of scripture is impressive. Verses are cited stirringly from memory and generally capture the essence of the text, although his quotation is not always precise. In Gobbet 57, Walter commends his listeners to search their bibles to confirm that what he says is scriptural, since his approach is based on a constant appeal to the authority of Scripture. Table 6 sets out the extent of Walter’s scriptural allusions, all of them taken from the 1611 King James translation,<sup>42</sup> the version commonly in use by Pentecostal preachers across the English-speaking world in the 1960s.

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<sup>41</sup> There is also a reference to the Genesis account of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gobbet 56.

<sup>42</sup> The 1611 translation of the Bible into English, authorised by King James I, is traditionally referred to as the ‘King James Version’ in the US and the ‘Authorised Version’ in Britain.

Gobbet 5	John 8: 32	Actual: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  Walter: If you tell the truth and the truth shall set them free
Gobbits 7&8	1 John 4:8	Actual: Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.  Walter: Love is something that is, if it's within you it's gonna come out, if it's not in there it can't come out, and God is nothing but love. ['love']
Gobbet 13	Matt 24:43 [paraphrase]	Actual: But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.  Walter: if you don't do anything about a burglar coming in your house, after a while he's gonna come in and steal everything
Gobbet 15	John 12:32	Actual: And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.  Walter: Go back to the scriptures, the scriptures said 'If I be lifted up I will draw all mens unto me'.
Gobbet 16	John 8: 32	Actual: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  Walter: The first thing we need to do today is to get the church set free.
Gobbet 17	Mark 8:36	Actual: What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?  Walter: And I mean what do it good er do you to profit to go out and do something over again you –
Gobbet 18	Luke 15: 11-31	Actual: Parable of the prodigal son  Walter: You gotta hog, a pig - I take on considerably I say it that way - you gotta pig. You clean him up, an after a while after you clean him up an you turn him loose again he gonna go right back again and geddin that mud pen again an he's gonna get filthy right up again. An what do, no, an what good do it do you to clean up yo/the pig, an he's gonna go right back and do it again.
Gobbet 21	Romans 12:19	Actual: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.  Walter: 'Vengeance is mine' said the Lord, 'and I will repay'.

Gobbet 23	Ephesians 5:14	Actual: Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.  Walter: America need to awake.
Gobbet 31	John 3:16	Actual: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.  Walter: He that believeth upon him shall not perish but have everlasting life.
Gobbet 32	Revelation 3:20	Actual: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.  Walter: He said behold I stand at the door and knock and if any man should let me in I shall come in and dine with him and he shall dine with me.
Gobbet 33	Genesis 6:17	Actual: And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.  Walter: The Lord spoke to Noah, said after a while I'm gonna destroy this wicked world.
Gobbet 36	Exodus 7:14	Actual: And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.  Walter: Just like ol' stubborn Pharaoh he had hardened his heart against the voice of God.
Gobbet 44	Luke 12:53	Actual: The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.  Walter: We are having war. Neighbour against neighbour, sons against mothers, mothers against daughters.
Gobbet 44	Ephesians 6:11	Actual: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.  Walter: And get the whole armour of God.
Gobbet 45	Philippians 2: 10-11	Actual: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.  Walter: Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess and every man will know that he is God.

Gobbet 49	2 Corinthians 6:2	Actual: Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation  Walter: Friends, this is your day, this is the hour, and this is the visitation of God.
Gobbet 56	Romans 6:23	Actual: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  Walter: Sin – the wages of sin is death.
Gobbet 56	Psalm 101:8	Actual: I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.  Walter: Psalmist says go about the wicked city I ever saw in my days.

Table 6: Scriptural allusion in Walter's preaching in the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*

### *Ray*

Ray is a fellow preacher known to Walter, who introduces him as someone able to deepen the spiritual experience of his listeners [Gobbet 58], duly handing over to him to preach [Gobbet 61]. Possibly the link between preachers was informally agreed or a second preacher might be at liberty to walk forward as he felt led, which would signal the time for the previous speaker to come to a conclusion. Ray has a more restrained manner than Walter. His voice is rich and mellifluous, often on a monotone, with little of the hovering 'between speaking and singing'<sup>43</sup> that appears to have attracted Reich to record Walter and which turns out to be an improper generalisation. Ray's first 'Amen' links what he is about to say with Walter's message, connecting them both as homodiegetic narrators and inviting the crowd to become part of their shared story.

Ray's initial contribution is confined to Gobbet 62. Later, in Gobbet 135, he is permitted to quote a verse in full, which raises the possibility that the editing of the tape has fractured the time line and that the narrative discourse runs in a different

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<sup>43</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.21.

sequence to the original order of events. Alternatively the inevitable restatement inherent in street preaching may simply have dictated that he returned frequently to his favourite texts. Ray's overall contribution is significantly shorter than Walter's, consisting of only three further snippets: Gobbets 99-100; Gobbets 114-116 and Gobbets 135-136. His message is more discursive, preaching health benefits for the individual, a theme taken up by "The Vegetarian" in Gobbet 147. Ray also develops Walter's theme of the way in which individuals and society face God's impending judgement. Gobbet 114 refers to an unidentified biblical prophecy that a third of the country – the US? – will fall to the sword, starvation, epidemic or siege. In Gobbet 136, Ray's voice is ultimately drowned out – as is Noah's – by the voice of the crowd. Within Reich's narrative in the final version of *It's Gonna Rain*, Ray's voice is completely absent.

Although Ray is less muscular in delivery, there are similarities with Walter's style. Walter's quasi-liturgical repetition of phrases such as 'after a while' or 'and they began to laugh at him/mock him/to say' in Gobbets 33 and 34 is reflected in Ray's style in Gobbet 62 with the repetition of 'he's the same Christ ..., clearly building towards a quotation from Hebrews 13:8, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever', although Reich cuts this brusquely before Ray is able to deliver the biblical quotation in its entirety.

### *Fat Spanish Woman*

The third preacher is unnamed, and referred to by Reich simply as 'Fat Spanish Woman'. Discussions of racial aspects of *It's Gonna Rain* have centred on the alienation of African-Americans on the East Coast, which overlooks the Hispanic experience of the same time. Reich's description of her is triply insulting: fat, Spanish and a woman; marginalised on all counts, and receiving little of the

sympathy afforded to Walter. Like Walter and Ray, she is an evangelical preacher appearing first in Gobbet 101, being joined in Gobbet 121 by her friend or colleague, referred to by Reich in even less flattering terms as 'Fat Lady's insane believer girl'. The Fat Spanish Woman makes less impact than either Walter or Ray and her preaching is sliced into small sections, which reduces its ability to deliver a continuous narrative flow. She speaks English with a Hispanic accent, which becomes more pronounced as she preaches with increasing energy and passion.

Gobbet 106	James 4:7	Actual: Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.  Fat Spanish Woman: 'to overcome sin, and overcome the devil'  'the Bible says, 'resist the devil, and he will flee from you'.
Gobbet 106	Hebrews 5:9	Actual: And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.  Fat Spanish Woman: the author of eternal life and the author of power, power to overcome sin...

Table 7: Scriptural allusion in the Fat Spanish Woman's preaching in the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*

Apart from minor interjections such as Gobbet 105, she has a long continuous sermon lasting almost four minutes, through to Gobbet 109, a section significantly longer than Walter's preaching on Noah. The homiletic transition from Ray to her is abrupt and she appears without introduction, apparently picking up where Ray – or perhaps another preacher – has just left off. She develops Walter's theme of personal holiness in her admonition to 'overcome sin and the devil', and this is backed up with references to the Day of Judgement and God's commands being unchanging. There are only two direct references to Scripture, and also a number

of points where ‘the Bible says’ emerge through the subsequent interviewing of Naomi in Gobbet 107.

### *Group 2: Witnesses*

The second group of characters in the sound collage are witnesses, whose testimonial narrative builds on the agency of the preachers. There are five characters whose function is to bear witness to their particular worldview and communicate it on an individual basis to either Reich or another agent in the narrative. These are: ‘Fat Lady’s insane believer girl’; miscellaneous woman; Naomi; ‘The Vegetarian’ and ‘Mr Sociology’. Each functions as a homodiegetic narrator within his or her own story: divergent voices, incapable of being harmonised into a meta-narrative. They are discussed here in terms of their relationship to the message of the preachers, whose message is proclaimed as a meta-narrative through the call to their listeners to redefine their own stories in this salvation-narrative framework. Of these five characters, two bear direct witness to the message proclaimed by the preachers: the ‘Fat Lady’s insane believer girl’, and the miscellaneous woman. The third of these, Naomi, also bears partial witness to their message but disagrees with the method of its proclamation. Two further witnesses, ‘The Vegetarian’; and ‘Mr Sociology’ offer contrasting views: the first a sectarian Christian view, the second, a sociological interpretation.

#### *Fat Lady’s Insane Believer Girl*

The first witness is the ‘Fat Lady’s insane believer girl’. It seems likely that the ‘fat lady’ refers to the Spanish preacher, although it is possible that the ‘Fat Spanish woman’ is someone other than the ‘Fat Lady’, and that obesity was a common feature of female members of Pentecostal churches in San Francisco at that time. If

the 'Fat Lady' is not the 'Fat Spanish woman', she is anonymous and her voice is not heard. Whatever the case, Reich's description of the young woman is unflattering, defining her only in relationship to another character, and calling into question her sanity as well as the credibility and authenticity of what she says. She is hereafter referred to simply as 'believer girl'. The believer girl's dialogue is underscored throughout by Walter's excited but indistinct preaching, suggesting that she is standing at some distance from him, perhaps with the specific intention of engaging passers-by in conversation with a view to engaging them in evangelistic conversation. Her words are contained entirely within Gobbet 121, her contribution lasting for 1' 15" of continuous speaking.

Although not a preacher, her conversation is as drenched in Scriptural allusions as Walter's proclamation. The frequent and sustained reference to biblical sources shapes what she says to the extent that her narrative is essentially a loose stringing together of a number of phrases from five Biblical passages, some quoted accurately, others merely alluded to. Although she demonstrates a higher level of accuracy than Walter in quoting Scripture, the juxtaposition of the verses she chooses produces a disjointed narrative.

Her tightly-packed mini-homily is delivered with little expectation of a response, perhaps because of her anxiousness to get through a number of key themes. Such intense delivery may have shaped Reich's opinion of the girl's sanity, irrespective of whether her words were directed to him or a passer-by. As a witness, her themes mirror those of the preachers: we need to be saved; we need to love or we cannot know the creator God who has made us; to recover the wonder of this creation we need to become holy and Christ-like. Once away from the biblical quotations, though, the girl is considerably less fluent, eventually reaching a faltering conclusion [Gobbet 121].

Gobbet 121	1 Timothy 4:10	Actual: We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.  Believer Girl: That the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all mankind ...and that ... of all who will receive Him.
Gobbet 121	1 John 4:8	Actual: He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.  Believer Girl: And the fact that God is love.
Gobbet 121	Genesis 1:31	Actual: And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.  Believer Girl: He said He saw that His creation was very good.
Gobbet 121	Psalm 139:14	Actual: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.  Believer Girl: And of course we're part of that creation, we're fearfully and wonderfully made.
Gobbet 121	Ephesians 4:25	Actual: Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.  Believer Girl: And all part one of another, er, so we don't realise how close we are, one to another, but we're all necessary one to the other.

Table 8: Scriptural allusion in the Believer Girl's contributions to the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*

#### *Miscellaneous women*

The miscellaneous women sitting on benches around Union Square bring the collage to a conclusion [Gobbits 148-157]. Some of these appear to be members of the fellowship, sharing their stories with other people in the Square. From Gobbet 150, we learn that, having finished her church activities, one unnamed woman is relaxing feeding the pigeons and having something to eat. Her comments are addressed to someone she does not know, which accounts for the level of detail she provides to introduce the reason she is there.

Whilst the preacher's excited voice can be heard behind her, she is physically distant yet within the same diegesis, functioning as a witness to what is taking

place. In Gobbets 154 to 156 the woman provides helpful contextual information about the activities in Union Square: she tries to come every Sunday (although the believer girl has hinted that there may be some Sundays when there is no-one there); that she lives some distance away and needs to catch four different buses in order to get to Union Square; there is a structured method of instruction in the Christian faith to the extent there is a men's group to which an unnamed man (her husband?) has been that morning, and this makes worthwhile the considerable effort in travelling the distance there.

### *Naomi*

The longest uninterrupted section in the collage is allocated to Naomi, who turns out to be the most significant of the witnesses. She is a woman of late middle age who lives nearby and often takes a walk through Union Square. Naomi is introduced at the end of Goblet 106, and speaks until the end of Goblet 113, the longest continuous narrative section in the sound collage. She is the only named character apart from Walter and Ray, and we learn her name through self-reference in Goblet 107. Unlike the members of the congregation who reside at a distance, she lives nearby Union Square, near to Cinnamon House, San Francisco,<sup>44</sup> which she refers to in the expectation that the place will be familiar to the young men who are attempting to share their faith with her. Her voice has the timbre and emphasis of a mature woman, both in tone, in her claim to be fond of young people, and in her views concerning racial integration, which might well have been shared by a number of white Americans of varying ages in 1964.<sup>45</sup> No relatives are mentioned,

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<sup>44</sup> The location of Cinnamon House is unclear. One possibility is that it was the (now closed) VIP Bathrooms in the Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

<sup>45</sup> Naomi's views of race prefigure those of Reich's governess Virginia Mitchell, as revealed in his later interviews with her.

and she recognises herself as an oddity who attracts cranks, recognising herself as the most extreme example and providing an ironic comment on the eccentric collection of voices gathered by Reich in Union Square that day [Gobbet 107].

She refers to Union Square as the 'park' [Gobbet 107], appropriately reflecting the greater amount of greenery present in the 1960s. She is a regular walker there, and greets another passer-by, Bob, whom she knows by name. The identity of the 'boys' is unclear, although they appear to be attempting to engage passers-by on behalf of Walter and his friends, rather than winos asking for money. The background voice of the excited preacher gives perspective to Naomi's comment about not wanting to 'preach up a storm' and she is clearly used to being challenged by evangelists as she walks through the Square, citing an example of her affable but robust pushing of someone who had challenged her into the bushes. In Gobbet 109 she asserts forcefully that living her faith is more important to her than talking about it. Naomi is therefore a detached witness: she has no disagreement with the preacher's message, but shuns such public proclamation.

Despite her claim about the importance of living her faith practically, Gobbet 108 reveals a quite different – and alarming – side to Naomi's character as her Supremacist views surface, replacing her previous light-hearted teasing. This alienates her from Walter's message, setting her apart as a detached homodiegetic narrator. It is possible that the young men who stopped Naomi were African Americans, thus prompting issues of race to emerge, although her subsequent use of 'they' implies some Other who are not the same as the people with whom she is talking. However the issue arose, the narrative culminates in Gobbet 113 with Naomi's assertion of being a rebel against everything that she does not like, which she uses as a justification for her fiercely partisan standpoint. Naomi expands on her racial perception of a specific organisation by referring to the man in charge of

it as being married to an African-American woman. The organisation of which this white man is in charge is not identified, and he is not given a voice except through her.

Naomi's reference to the Sheraton Palace Demonstration brings the matter to a head, the protest being a key event in October 1963 at the start of the Berkeley Riots.<sup>46</sup> Her response to the significance of the demonstration is startling: to take a placard announcing that African Americans should be sent 'home', deported to a supposed homeland other than the US. Reich structures the collage so that Naomi's deportation call is followed by Ray's prophetic assertion that the US is liable to fall by the sword [Gobbet 114], especially if – by implication – white Americans heed Naomi's appeal. In Gobbet 112, she offers a comparison between the situation of Jews in the US and that of the African-American community, which she claims is no comparison at all. This offers an interesting parallel with the political situation that would subsequently inspire the creation of *Come Out*: a Jewish shopkeeper allegedly murdered by African-American youths.

### *The Vegetarian*

Gobbets 137 to 147 introduce an unnamed man whom Reich refers to as 'The Vegetarian' because of his forceful promotion of vegetarianism in Gobbets 138, 145 and 146. He uses a biblical quotation in Gobbet 146 to support his view of the health benefits of vegetarianism, indicating that he may a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.<sup>47</sup> We learn that has given up a financially successful career as a marine electrician [Gobbet 139], witnessing to the better life he now leads, and

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.jofreeman.com/sixtiesprotest/baycivil.htm>, accessed 20/2/2011. The hotel, situated in close proximity to Union Square, had clear discriminatory employment policies leading to a protest by around 4000 people, many of whom occupied the inside of the hotel. The majority of the protestors were students.

<sup>47</sup> Since the 1860s Adventists had gained a reputation for a healthy lifestyle based on Vegetarianism and abstinence from certain foods, particularly alcohol and tobacco.

in so doing echoing Walter's conversion testimony [Gobbet 131]. Although broadly orthodox in Christian belief, the Vegetarian is passionate to emphasise differences rather than similarities between his religious standpoint and that of Walter and his friends, thus establishing him as a heterodiegetic narrator. His quotation of scripture is more precise than Walter's, although its relevance is not always clear. For example, Deuteronomy 7:15 is cited in Gobbet 138 in support of the health benefits of the vegetarian diet though its relevance is doubtful: 'And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee'.

The Vegetarian moves speedily to promote an even more distinctive doctrine of Adventism, the observance of Saturday as the true Sabbath [Gobbet 137, 141 and 142]. He cites Ezekiel 46:1 in support of his argument: 'Thus saith the Lord GOD; the gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened'. The Vegetarian's purpose in Union Square is to proselytise as aggressively as the Pentecostal preachers, especially since Walter's message is by implication being declared on the 'wrong' day of the week. The Square therefore functions as a kind of religious supermarket, reminiscent of St Paul's debating with the Athenians at the Areopagus in Acts 17 with each protagonist peddling his religious philosophy to passers-by. Finally, The Vegetarian hands over a tract designed specifically to convince Jewish readers that Jesus is the Messiah foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. The reference to the possibility that the recipient may be a Hebrew suggests this may have been spoken directly to Reich [Gobbet 143].

### *Mr Sociology*

Mr Sociology is a Hispanic witness who also assumes the role of heterodiegetic narrator [Gobbets 122 to 129]. He is locked in an awkward debate with an unknown and unnamed protagonist, who shares Naomi's Supremacist views on race [Gobbets 126, 127 and 128]. Mr Sociology attempts the role of antagonist in putting forward a more liberal worldview. The hesitancy of his replies suggests, however, that rather than leading the dialogue he is responding to a more powerful protagonist, who puts forward three extreme points on the relationship between 'whites' and 'negroes'.

The first concerns the perceived characteristics of Negroes, whom the protagonist takes to be a single homogenous group. Mr Sociology retorts [Gobbet 124] that anyone living in conditions of social deprivation, experiencing restriction of their civil liberties, would be likely to behave in a manner that challenges the status quo, and also that a large minority of whites also demonstrate very similar characteristics. The second assertion [Gobbets 126 and 127] concerns genetic makeup and the extent to which 'negro' ancestry and heritage are present in every white person. This leads to a peculiar discussion about intermarriage, especially in India [Gobbet 129].

The third – and most extreme – assertion is that 'negroes' somehow failed to behave properly once emancipated from slavery and, having abused their newfound freedom, do not deserve the right to continue free [Gobbet 128]. This exchange forms a striking contrast with Walter's repeated references to freedom, functioning as a commentary on the relationship between Walter and his hearers. Walter speaks of the flag flying for freedom, using it as a metaphor for liberty through the message of Christ. The freedom proclaimed by Walter is based on

grace and undeserved merit in contrast to the protagonist's view of the implicitly undeserved emancipation of African Americans.

### *Group 3: Commentators*

The third group of voices is that of the commentators, with two types of commentary embodied in the narrative discourse. The first of these comprises the words spoken by the winos and the bystanders, which operate broadly outside of, and function as a critique to, the salvation diegesis; the second is the use of songs to operate within this diegesis similar to the manner in which the chorus functions in an oratorio.

#### *Winos*

The winos' voices occupy three sections: Gobbets 71 (indistinctly) and 72; Gobbets 75 to 86; and Gobbets 88 to 97. These take place in a truncated timeframe, suggesting that Reich had moved his microphone to near where they were sitting, perhaps on the benches within earshot of the (often animated) preaching.<sup>48</sup> The consistency of vocal timbre on the recordings suggests that it is the same two winos talking throughout, although in Gobbet 76 they both offer a greeting of 'good morning' apparently to someone other than themselves. The voices of the winos create an intertextual commentary on what is taking place around them. As in *The Plastic Haircut* and *Livelihood*, Reich's juxtaposition of speech extracts creates a humorous commentary. Here, the views of the winos contrast with Walter's preaching in a manner analogous to Jerry Statler and Conrad Waldorf in *The Muppet Show*. For example, in Gobbet 78 one of the winos

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<sup>48</sup> In a brief conversation with the author on 6.3.13, Reich indicated that when recording Walter he sat opposite him. It is possible that during the course of the day some of the other speakers recorded by Reich were also seated nearby.

comments ironically to the other on Reich's activity in making tape recordings, and there is the possibly that Gobbel 75 contains a direct question to Reich about the type of microphone he is using.

Reich does not create individual, identifiable personas for the winos although there is a single reference to the name Makita [Gobbel 72]. In Gobbel 83, Wino 1 reveals that although he is now concerned only with wine, jazz, and chess, he has formerly been a musician, a drummer, thus providing a musical link with Reich's own experience as a percussionist [Gobbel 80]. Whilst the wino does not consider his own musical standards to be high, he has performed with some impressive (but unnamed) performers, before wine took precedence over jazz. The winos are not destitute, however, and there is no indication that either of them sleeps in the square overnight. One speaks of 'not spending money on cigarettes' and requests cigarettes from a passer-by [Gobbel 89].

The conversation turns to religious belief. One wino declares himself to be a Roman Catholic [Gobbel 77] and, although religious commitment does appear uppermost in his thinking, questions the other as to his beliefs. There is a notable lack of empathy with Walter, who is dismissed as a fanatic [Gobbel 84], although there is a poignant acknowledgment by the winos that theirs is a hopeless case because of their dependency on alcohol [Gobbel 88].<sup>49</sup>

Despite such apparent religious indifference, a strong moral theme emerges. Almost as soon as Walter has announced to his listeners his intention to inform them of all the things they have been doing wrong [Gobbel 70], Wino 1 speaks of plying the avenue between right and wrong [Gobbel 71]. He later recounts the

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<sup>49</sup> This creates an intertextual comment on the Pentecostal's preaching of being filled with the Holy Spirit and the accusation levelled at the first apostles on the Day of Pentecost that they were all drunk as they spoke in tongues (Acts 2:13). Walter's previous example of the big-shot preacher with no time for a drunken backslidden believer is also appropriate [Gobbel 43].

story of the theft of his raincoat, which has been stolen by another wino who knew that in it were cigarette butts and possibly a pen [Gobbet 85]. Initially resigned to the loss [Gobbet 86], the wino's language becomes more scatological [Gobbet 90] as he sets the theft against his own generosity in helping out other winos in need, especially as it is one such beneficiary who has perpetrated the theft [Gobbet 96].

This culminates in Gobbet 97 with the wino offering a highly nuanced definition of what it means to be a Christian, essentially a retributive form of violence to teach the offending wino a lesson. Gobbits 91 and 92 set in stark contrast the wino's 'eye-for-an-eye' morality with Walter's preaching of forgiveness and acceptance. Gobbet 92 brings to a head the contrast between the self-seeking blood of the wino and the self-sacrificial blood of Jesus of which the preachers spoke: 'When you steal from a wino, you steal blood'.

### *Bystanders*

In contrast to the winos, the bystanders are neither drunk nor marginalised from society. In Gobbits 26 to 29 they are engaged in a conversation about the perceived high quality of the work of the shoeshine merchant, but pick up a theme introduced by the winos, as to what would happen if the client chose not to pay for the work undertaken.

### *Songs*

The background Gospel songs provide the final level of commentary from the outdoor worshippers. These songs function in a manner akin to the chorus in an oratorio, providing third-person homodiegetic commentary on the narrative. There are four main songs in the collage with snippets of others audible in the background

at various points. None of the songs are in regular use in Pentecostal worship half a century later.

Song 1 – That's all right	Gobbet 63	I feel the Spirit move, but that's all right
Song 2 – If you want the Holy Ghost	Gobbet 66	If you want the Holy Ghost, Tell Him what you are.  If you want salvation, tell him what you are.
Song 3 – On that great day	Gobbet 69	Won't you let Him get you ready for that great day?
Song 4 – I'm so glad I know Him	Gobbet 87	I'm so glad I know Him I'm so glad I know Him I'm so glad that I know Jesus.  I'm so glad He came into my heart, I'm so glad that He set me free, I'm so glad that He came into my heart.  I say 'He's comin' back again, I say 'He's comin' back again, I say 'He's comin', He's comin' back again'.  You may say, 'He'll never come', Hallelujah!  You may say, 'He'll never come', But I wanna say, that He said He's comin' back again.

Table 9: Gospel songs used in the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*

### 3.7 Conclusions

Although the narrative trails in *It's Gonna Rain* are more complex than in *The Plastic Haircut* or *Livelihood*, all three pieces are founded on the same principle of editing recorded speech to produce a non-linear sound collage. Reich develops this approach further in *It's Gonna Rain*, firstly by transcribing Walter's sermon from the sound collage into music manuscript, subsequently isolating a snippet short enough to be used in a tape loop, which becomes the final composition. This process sets up four narrative trails, with some overlap between the creation of the sound collage and the transcription of Walter's sermon.

The wide range of characters and conversations indicates Reich's extended time in the Square, capturing the religious debate in its context. Rather than relying on pre-existing sources, Reich makes the sound recordings himself and these vary in style. The interview with Walter is conducted directly by Reich; whereas the remainder of the recordings eavesdrop the conversations of others, who were possibly unaware they were being recorded. The broader sense of placefulness is captured by the incorporation of environmental sounds such as birdsong alongside the urban sounds of streetcars and other traffic. The identification of the characters is similar to that in *The Plastic Haircut* where names are given only on the LP liner notes. In *It's Gonna Rain*, some of the characters in the sound collage are listed in Reich's notes on the tape box as to who they are, but not subsequently identified in the piece.

In the absence of the original sound recordings, the sound collage plays a primary role in establishing a framework for the events in Union Square. As previously, Reich assumes the role of auteur, editing and assembling the speech gobbets to create this narrative. As with *Livelihood*, the assemblage indicates the passing of time during the day, with Walter's sermon being delivered in the

evening. The collage is much lengthier than before, incorporating a number of larger speech gobbets and considerable variation in the relative length of gobbets.

The sound collage allows a number of themes to emerge through the extensive range of voices. Religious belief and experience operates as a framing narrative, with Reich sketching a religious marketplace in Union Square. Preachers and witnesses function as homodiegetic narrators, seeking to proclaim and persuade, whilst commentators adopt a reflective heterodiegetic stance. The extensive number of biblical quotations link the voices heard in the piece to ancient narrative paths, especially through the Noah trope, but also through the sustained use of scriptural allusion. From this emerges a tangled story of religious belief, racial and political tensions, poverty and destitution in the centre of a rich city, all brought together by Reich in the defining narrative of impending disaster through possible nuclear war. This turmoil is captured in the final version of *It's Gonna Rain*, especially in the second part, which was omitted at the first performance as a result of the mental and emotional turmoil then being experienced by the composer.



## Chapter 4 *Come Out*

### 4.1 *Narrative Trails in Come Out*

*It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out* have been commonly regarded as textbook examples of Reich's approach to phase-music composition. The reasons for this are easily identified: the selection of the voice of a wrongfully-accused male African-American as sole protagonist; the looping of a snippet of his speech to play against itself; the creation of a phasing structure where the loops move in and out of synchronisation; and the social and political overtones of mid-1960s Harlem. An equally important similarity – the nature of the source materials of *Come Out* – has been almost entirely ignored, since access to them was restricted and because of the widespread scholarly enchantment with phasing as a new musical language.<sup>1</sup>

This is a weighty omission. The narrative trails identified in *It's Gonna Rain* are essentially paralleled in *Come Out*, with Reich's preliminary sound collages steering the course of the narrative in both instances. This chapter seeks to remedy the deficiency, not by unpicking narrative threads within *Come Out*, but by tracing the narrative trails that emerge through Reich's selection and treatment of the piece's source materials. These sources are threefold: Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers* (1964); Reich's sound collage, *Harlem's Six Condemned* (1966), the 'other' work that he wrote for the Benefit event, which has remained almost entirely absent from scholarly accounts; and, Woodie King Jnr's 1980 film of Nelson's book, *The Torture of Mothers*.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, K. Robert Schwarz, 'Steve Reich: Music as a Gradual Process Part I' in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 19, (1980), p.385.

#### 4.2 *Come Out*

Steve Reich met filmmaker Truman Nelson (1911-1987)<sup>2</sup> after returning to New York in September 1965,<sup>3</sup> and *Come Out* is the product of their collaboration. Nelson, a Marxist civil rights activist and writer remembered particularly for his biography of militant abolitionist, John Brown (1800-1859),<sup>4</sup> had heard of Reich's San Francisco tape works and set out to persuade him to create a sound collage for a forthcoming public event. The particular occasion was a Benefit concert Nelson was planning for Town Hall, New York, aimed at raising money for the retrial of a group of young African-American men known collectively as the Harlem Six, who had been wrongly convicted of murder and were serving life sentences in prison. In his interview with Ev Grimes in December 1987, Reich recalled his discussions with Nelson about the proposed commission.

It turned out [Nelson] had ten reels of reel to reel tape of interview with the police, mothers of six black kids, the six black kids, all of which concerned the murder of a white woman in I guess it was the Bronx in 1964, which murder happened, but for which six black kids were arrested ... The point of the benefit was to have a re-trial. The first trial happened with court-appointed attorneys and all six were serving time for it. What they wanted to do was to have a retrial with a lawyer of their own choice ... and so they wanted to do a benefit at Town Hall and as one of the little details on the program, they wanted me to edit these tapes down to some sort of little scenario that Truman Nelson gave me so that it could be used as a dramatic sound collage. I explained to him that this was not my stock in trade, but that I would do it on one condition, and the condition was that if I found something in all this mass of tape that I wanted to make a piece out of, he

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<sup>2</sup> Despite the interesting coincidence of names, Truman Nelson was unrelated to filmmaker Robert Nelson with whom Reich had worked in San Francisco.

<sup>3</sup> This date is proposed by William Duckworth, *Talking Music*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1995, p.299, although in an unpublished interview of 18 July 1994 with K. Robert Schwarz (transcript, p.11), Reich puts the move a month later, in October 1965. Irrespective of the exact date, Reich's return to New York was approximately eighteen months after the events that had led to the imprisonment of the Harlem Six.

<sup>4</sup> Extracts from *The Old Man: John Brown at Harper's Ferry* (1973) and Nelson's other main writings are reproduced in William J. Schafer, (ed.), *The Truman Nelson Reader*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.

would let me do that. He said, "What do you mean, a piece?" I said, "Take a listen to this." I played him *It's Gonna Rain* and good civil rights activist that he was, he really liked it. I think he felt it had something to do with John Brown, but he didn't know what. In any event, I did the editing as requested and did find this one little phrase through all this mountain of material where Daniel Hamm, who was one of the kids who, it turns out, did not do it, said, "I had to like open a bruise up and let the blood come out to show them I was bleeding".<sup>5</sup>

By this stage Reich was evidently a little sketchy on several details: he was unable to recall exactly when the murder took place; whether the location was Harlem or the Bronx; the name of the person who had been murdered; or the significance that Nelson clearly attached to his desired sound collage as the mainstay of the Benefit event, which was considerably greater than suggested by its description as 'one of the little details on the program'. Reich's abiding memory of composing *Come Out* is framed by his overriding hope – possibly reflected in his offer to create the sound collage free of charge – of finding a speech snippet with the same musical potential as Brother Walter's, capable of functioning as the basis of a phase piece.

Reich's suggestion that at this point in his career sound collages were not his 'stock-in-trade' seems particularly dubious.<sup>6</sup> As has been noted in previous chapters, Reich had by this stage composed at least three such collages: *The Plastic Haircut*, a collage of sounds taken from a well-known LP; *Livelihood*, a collage of sounds assembled from recordings made in his taxi; and the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain*, also based on his own recordings and which functions as a sound

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ev Grimes, number 186 a-1 OH V, tape and transcript, Oral History of American Music, Yale University, tape 186-b, transcript, p.21.

<sup>6</sup> It is conceivable that Reich saw the role of tape editor as somehow dissimilar from his previous work in creating sound collages, although the only significant difference would seem to be that Nelson, rather than Reich, created the dramatic scenario.

collage of a day in Union Square. Preference for the newfound phasing technique may explain Reich's lack of enthusiasm for yet another sound collage. This was eclipsed only by his disappointment at the limited impact subsequently made by *Come Out* at its première,<sup>7</sup> the Benefit Concert at Town Hall, New York on the evening of Sunday 17 April 1966.<sup>8</sup> As the final item of the evening, the piece was played whilst a collection was taken to help fund independent lawyers for the retrial of the Harlem Six.<sup>9</sup>

The piece's compositional material is modest in the extreme, consisting entirely of an eight-second speech snippet: 'I had to, like, open the bruise up and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them'. Spoken by one of the Harlem Six, Daniel Hamm, the words refer to the sustained beating he and his fellow-

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<sup>7</sup> This would explain Reich's mordant remark that *Come Out* functioned merely as 'pass-the-hat' music at the end of the evening. See Gabrielle Zuckerman, *An Interview with Steve Reich*, American Public Media, July 2002, [http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview\\_reich.html](http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview_reich.html), accessed 14/2/13.

<sup>8</sup> This was not Reich's first experience of producing work for a Benefit Concert to raise money for a political cause. The performance of the composer's *Event III* on 27 February 1964 was a benefit for 'Civil Rights activists seeking to integrate the workforce of San Francisco's Sheraton-Palace Hotel'. See Ross Cole, "Fun, Yes, But Music: Steve Reich and the San Francisco Bay Area's Cultural Nexus, 1962-65", in *Journal of the Society for American Music*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2012), p.324. In later writings, however, Reich has expressed strong doubts as to the power of art generally – and music specifically – to effect political transformation. In the context of large-scale political situations, for example, Reich expressed strong opinions to K. Robert Schwarz. Interview with Steve Reich: "Steve Reich on Kurt Weill", in *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, Volume 10, No. 2, (1992), p.13.

I can't think of any major political changes in the world that were effected by a change in art. Picasso's *Guernica* is an overwhelming masterpiece, but it still didn't stop aerial bombing for two seconds! So I'd say, show me, where is the political art that has made the slightest difference? These are just private preoccupations of musicians. I don't see that the political history of the world has been influenced by the arts of any given time. I think the opposite: that the arts reflect the political reality around them. They are the unconscious mirror of that.

Reich's agreement to participate in the Town Hall Benefit nevertheless indicates a measure of belief in the potential of the event – if not the music – to influence politically the situation of the Harlem Six, and in subsequent interviews Reich has been very positive as to the success of the Benefit in effecting change. See Edward Strickland, *American Composers: Dialogues on Contemporary Music*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p.40, and Zuckerman, *Op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, Indiana University Press, 1993, p.190. *Come Out* lasts for 13' 36", which would probably have provided enough time for several collecting hats to be passed around the mainly occupied 1500 seats of Town Hall, New York.

accused received at the hands of the Harlem police during the night of Friday 17 April 1964, a date exactly two years prior to the Benefit event. Recognising the severity of the injuries they had inflicted, the police sent those who were visibly bleeding to hospital for X-rays. Although badly bruised, Hamm was not bleeding but resourcefully, and no doubt painfully, opened up one of his bruises to make it bleed as a means of effecting temporary release from the police station. From Hamm's words – played in full at the start of *Come Out* – Reich creates a two-second loop based on the phrase 'come out to show them'.

The phasing process used in *Come Out* is a refinement of that used in *It's Gonna Rain*. Reich has described the piece as being 'composed of a single loop recorded on both channels. At first the loop is in union with itself but as it begins to go out of phase a slowly increasing reverberation is heard. This gradually passes into a canon or round for two voices, then four voices and finally eight.'<sup>10</sup> The narrative significance of *Come Out* is less easily resolved. Reich's selection was based on the melodic interest in the way the words were spoken – 'raw speech material that really had musical content'<sup>11</sup> – although he has spoken subsequently of the political dimensions of the words and their original context.<sup>12</sup> Scholarly attention has duly been directed as to what stories might lie embedded in the piece, focusing variously on the semantic dimensions of the words, and the social, economic, ethnic and political context that gave rise to them. Keith Potter recognises the significance of both phonic and phonemic aspects, laying the

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<sup>10</sup> Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.22.

<sup>11</sup> Duckworth, *Op. cit.*, p.297.

<sup>12</sup> Zuckerman, *Op. cit.*

foundations for further investigation of what stories might be present in the work.<sup>13</sup>

Mitchell Morris pursues issues of identity, referring to Hamm's voice 'in all its grainy individuality, with its accent and idiosyncrasies of pace and pronunciation intact ... describing a specific assault not only on his bodily integrity but also and more importantly on his claims to dignity'. By the end of the piece, 'we are hearing an audible representation of the bruise blood itself'.<sup>14</sup> Lloyd Whitesell develops these issues of identity, drawing attention to the imbalance between Reich's authorial voice as a white narrator and the actual mouthpiece through whom the words are heard, a young black man. By the end of the piece, the narrative journey has taken us from 'black voices [which] are melodious and expressive, occupying the position of dramatic subjects' to a point where all distinctive character has been 'drained from the voice objects' and Hamm's voice has all but dissolved into 'an aural condensation of whiteness' so that Reich's voice speaks powerfully over – rather than through – Hamm's words.<sup>15</sup>

Sumanth Gopinath offers an even more developed interpretation of *Come Out*, seeking to comb out a tangled mass of narrative strands, which he finds densely

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<sup>13</sup> Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.177-179. In conversation with Edward Strickland, Reich stated clearly that '*Come Out* is a civil rights piece'. See Strickland, *Op. cit.*, p.40. Suzuki also points out that Reich believed that any political content to be secondary to the musical content. See Dean Paul Suzuki, *Minimal Music: Its Evolution as seen in the works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and LaMonte Young*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1991, p.461.

<sup>14</sup> Mitchell Morris, "Musical Virtues" in Anthony Dell'Antonio: *Beyond Structural Listening?: Postmodern Modes of Hearing*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004, pp.62-64. The phrase 'bruise blood' is adopted by choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh as the title for her 2009 dance piece that uses *Come Out* as its soundtrack, and which conveys physically the emotion of the words through angular and anguished movement. *The Guardian* review of 25 October 2009 describes how dancers 'move in ways that subtly but aggressively isolate parts of their bodies – hips, chests, buttocks, hair – interspersing them with slicing kicks and gestures as sharp as the ripping of a page. The more dense and abstract the music becomes, so Jeyasingh condenses the violence of her movement into more complex configurations'. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/oct/25/shobana-jeyasingh-review>, accessed 19/1/13.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd Whitesell, 'White Noise: Race and Erasure in the Cultural Avant-Garde', *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (2001), p.177.

woven into the fabric of the piece: 'encompassing leftist photo-documentary and Jewish identity, 60s-era artistic representations of violence, representations of black urban uprisings, sexualised and exoticised depictions of black otherness and appropriations of musical Africanisms, fantasies of black and white paranoia, and the racial economic politics of incarceration'.<sup>16</sup> Given such knotty complexity, Gopinath establishes three principles to ensure the detailed analysis he offers is immune to possible charges of narrativisation: a primary focus on sonic particularities before moving to consideration of aesthetic utterance; a consideration of the historical framework of the *Harlem Six* case as a means of interpreting the work; and an understanding of the piece as a political work of art on the basis that Reich himself has referred to it as such, whilst recognising that it is the way the piece is used is as significant as its content.<sup>17</sup>

Whitesell, Morris and Gopinath focus virtually exclusively on *Come Out*, but disregard *Harlem's Six Condemned*, the sound collage based on Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers* that comprised the original commission for the Benefit.

Gopinath suggests that 'Reich has not described his work on the dramatic sound

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<sup>16</sup> Sumanth S Gopinath, *Contraband Children: The Politics of Race and Liberation in the Music of Steve Reich, 1965-1966*, PhD Thesis, Yale University, 2005, p.195.

<sup>17</sup> The reception of the work by the listeners is potentially significant, since the particular style of a phased piece would be unlikely to engage all members of an audience, let alone persuade them to give money for a political cause. Although the audience for *Come Out* was considerably larger than was the case with *It's Gonna Rain*, only a handful would have recognised the style of the piece. This was a continuing challenge with some later performances of the piece. Hilmar Grondahl's review in *The Sunday Oregonian*, April 12, 1967, for example, described *Come Out* as 'an offensive pollution of sound, in which the words "come out" are reiterated for 10-15 minutes with an additional five for the words to phase out. It has no place on a program supposedly devoted to music, and substantively justifies the logical complaint against much taped sound, that it is overly repetitious and monotonous. One could sympathize with the couple who left the hall midway through the piece to preserve peace of mind for what might hopefully be worth listening to later on. And the flutter of applause that came at the conclusion was more for gratitude that it was over than for any pleasure it gave.'

collage in detail,<sup>18</sup> though in reality, Reich has hardly mentioned it at all, and never by the title of *Harlem's Six Condemned*.<sup>19</sup> The meagre 327 words devoted to *Come Out* in the composer's *Writings* make no reference even to the existence of a sound collage, let alone its content.<sup>20</sup> Recognition of the importance of the sound collage produced for the Benefit event is therefore long overdue. The remainder of this chapter considers it as one of five narrative trails surrounding *Come Out*: the events surrounding the Harlem Six case, starting in April 1964; the benefit concert at Town Hall, New York in April 1966; Truman Nelson's book, *The Torture of Mothers*; Reich's sound collage *Harlem's Six Condemned*, and Woodie King Jr's film, *The Torture of Mothers* (1980).

#### 4.3     *Narrative Trail 1: The Case of the Harlem Six*

The narrative begins in April 1964 with the events leading to the wrongful imprisonment of a group of African-American youths, who quickly became known collectively as the Harlem Six.<sup>21</sup> The following summary is assembled from details provided by the main historical sources, (alphabetically): James Baldwin, Sumanth

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<sup>18</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, p.200.

<sup>19</sup> The source recording for the work, archived at the Paul Sacher Stiftung under SR CD-3 Track 5, is entitled *Harlem's Six Condemned*. This is the version of the title used throughout this thesis.

<sup>20</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.22. Strickland, *op. cit.*, p.189 recognizes that the source tapes 'contained assorted statements and narratives of all concerned', but offers little indication as to what these might be.

<sup>21</sup> As already noted, this was approximately eighteen months before Reich moved from California back to New York and three months before he recorded Brother Walter. This sequence of events effectively creates a parallel diegesis with Reich's personal story between April 1964, when he was active with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and April 1966 when *Come Out* was first performed.

Gopinath, William Kunstler, Conrad J Lynn, Truman Nelson, and Annette T.

Rubinstein.<sup>22</sup>

On Friday 17 April 1964, a series of apparently insignificant events in the street at 368 Lenox Avenue, near 128th Street, quickly escalated into a riot. At 3.30pm, a twelve-year-old African-American schoolgirl on her way home from school with her friends brushed against a crate of grapefruit, causing some of the fruit to fall off. The children threw the fruit around as a game, playfully catching grapefruit and watermelons. In the heat of the moment the owner of the store, Edward DeLuca, blew his whistle for help, unaware this would result in the speedy emergence of heavily-armed tactical patrol police, who 'had been stationed in various basements throughout the community to offset what Mayor Robert Wagner believed was going to be "a Long Hot Summer".<sup>23</sup> The police attacked the frightened children with blackjacks and clubs. As the tension escalated rapidly, a group of passing teenage boys from a karate club positioned themselves between the police and the children, urging the crowd to fight back.

During the furore, Frank Stafford, a 31-year old black hosiery salesman who had been passing by, drew police attention to himself by intervening and was beaten violently by a police officer, which led to his eventually losing an eye.

Fecundo Acion, a 47-year old Puerto Rican seaman, was also caught up in the mêlée

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<sup>22</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, pp. 215-218, also assembles a fulsome account of the details of the case. Whilst acknowledging the significance of Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers*, Boston: Beacon, 1965/1968, Gopinath's account also draws extensively on a variety of newspaper reports and four other main sources: James Baldwin, "A Report From Occupied Territory", *The Nation*, July 11, 1966; William Kunstler's *My Life as a Radical Lawyer*, New York: Birch Lane Press, 1994, pp. 172-174; Conrad Lynn, *There is a Fountain: The Autobiography of Conrad Lynn*, New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1979, pp. 3-33; and, Annette T. Rubinstein, "The Not-So-Strange Case of the Harlem Six," *Rights and Review: A Publication of Harlem CORE*, Fall-Winter 1967-68, pp. 21-25. Additional details have since been published in Herb Boyd's *Baldwin's Harlem: A Biography of James Baldwin*, New York: Atria Books, 2008, pp. 87-101.

<sup>23</sup> Boyd, *Op. cit.*, p.88.

and had his nose broken by a policeman. Both men were arrested along with three teenage black boys from the karate club, Wallace Baker (19), Daniel Hamm (18), and Frederick Frazier, (16). The five were taken to the 28th Precinct Police Station – a place known as The Meat Grinder – and beaten severely all through the night.<sup>24</sup>

The following day, the teenagers were released and a public meeting was held at Friendship Baptist Community Centre on 30th Street, where Hamm and Baker had an opportunity to relate their experience of sustained police brutality.

Notwithstanding the impact of these shocking accounts, the troubled streets of Harlem might have returned to their former uneasy peace had it not been for a more heinous crime eleven days later. On Wednesday 29th April 1964, a murder took place at Eva and Pete's Used Clothing Store on 125th Street and Fifth Avenue.

The Jewish owners<sup>25</sup> – Frank and Margit Sugar – had moved to Harlem some years earlier as Hungarian refugees from the 1956 uprising. A number of youths entered the store apparently looking for suits for a Malcolm X rally. On being told by Mrs Sugar that there was nothing in his size, one of the youths attacked and killed her, stabbing her in the heart thirteen times. Attempting unsuccessfully to assist his wife, Mr Sugar was also stabbed but recovered following emergency treatment by a team of surgeons at Harlem Hospital.

In addition to their basement-level surveillance of the area, police attention had also been focused on the rooftop tenements of Harlem where a group of six

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<sup>24</sup> Nelson links this police station with jailhouse beatings of African-Americans dating back to the 1930s. See Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.18.

<sup>25</sup> Similar tensions have been noted in the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain* through Reich's inclusion of Naomi's Supremacist views. Gopinath *Op. cit.*, p.223 emphasises the racial tensions between Harlem's established Jews and Italians – whom he describes as having 'assumed the mantle of whiteness' (p.210) – and the more recently arrived African-American communities. He also makes reference to the surfacing of such tensions in the first trial as a result of the Jewish heritage of the judge, the victim and five members of the jury.

African-American youths (some of whom were also in the karate club) ran a pigeon club.<sup>26</sup> Apparently searching for a coat stolen from the clothing store at the time of the murder, the police decided to take the Six forcibly into custody and beat them to extract confessions: Wallace Baker, William Craig, Robert Felder, Daniel Hamm, Robert Rice and Walter Thomas. Baker and Hamm had been beaten previously; Frazier was not arrested on the second occasion. Under extreme coercion, Hamm and Rice both signed admissions of guilt, and on 8 September 1965 all six teenagers – having received inadequate legal representation – were sentenced to life imprisonment, thus providing the impetus for the Benefit to raise money for a lawyer of the mothers' choosing for a retrial, rather than the Legal Aid lawyer provided by the Court.

#### 4.4 *Narrative Trail 2: The Benefit Concert*

The Benefit on Sunday 17 April 1966 was clearly a major political undertaking, as indicated by the size of venue hired for the evening. Financial backing was sought in advance of the occasion, which would become – together with the retiring collection and sponsorship from the Charter Group for a Pledge of Conscience – the principal means of raising money<sup>27</sup> for the desired re-trial of the Six:

Sponsors of the April 17 meeting include attorney Howard N. Meyer; authors Nat Hentoff and Maxwell Geismar; Professors Staughton Lynd, Dan Dodson, and Eleanor Leacock; playwright Howard da Silva; and a number of

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<sup>26</sup> The boys were training pigeons to come back to Harlem, a geographical focus for the unfolding narrative. The pigeons themselves become agents in the story in drawing the boys to a place where few wished to be. They also provide a further contextual link to *It's Gonna Rain* where the flapping of a pigeon's wings is heard alongside Brother Walter's voice.

<sup>27</sup> Nelson *Op. cit.*, p.88 indicates that various means of raising money (and awareness) were adopted, with the mothers themselves collecting on the streets of Harlem to pay for lawyers of their choosing.

other academic and professional people. Most of those named above are also members of the Charter Group for a Pledge of Conscience.<sup>28</sup>

Advance promotion of the event drew attention to the reputation of those scheduled to perform live on stage. Under the banner, 'New York Meetings Slated To Defend Harlem Victims', *The Militant*, a Socialist newspaper 'published in the interests of working people', attempted to attract interest on the basis of the involvement of well-known names associated with the Civil Rights struggle:

NEW YORK – Dick Gregory, Ossie Davis, and William Stringfellow will appear at Town Hall Sunday, April 17, at a public meeting to protest the conviction of the so-called Harlem Six and to raise funds for their appeal. The program, to begin at 8 p.m., will include a dramatization of *The Torture of Mothers* by Truman Nelson, narrated by Davis with a cast of 50 and including tape recordings testifying to instances of police brutality occurring in Harlem in the Spring of 1964.<sup>29</sup>

Ossie Davis (1917-2005) was an eminent actor, director and playwright. Dick Gregory (born 1932) acted as MC for the evening, a comedian who, like Davis, was well known as a social activist. Although less prominent as a campaigner than the other two, William Stringfellow (1928-1985) also spoke as a representative of the Charter Group, the main sponsors of the Benefit. An attorney and author, Stringfellow was a Harvard Law School Graduate and subsequently radical

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<sup>28</sup> *The Militant*, Vol.30, No. 16, p.4 <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/themilitant/1966/v30n16-apr-18-1966-mil.pdf>, accessed 29 August 2012. The inside page of the programme for the event also contains a statement from novelist, playwright and social critic James Baldwin (1924-1987): 'I WAS BORN IN HARLEM AND RAISED THERE. I have been in the hands of the police more than once and I know them to be unbelievably brutal and corrupt. They have to be because, in fact, the society has hired them to do exactly what they are doing: to cow a demoralized population. If the entire country, from churches to labor unions, treats the Negro people as we know it does then it would be miraculous indeed if the guardians of this order were to be more humane than the interests they protect. I confess it makes me ill to the point of incoherence when people urge that Negroes respect the law. How can I possibly respect a law, which has no respect for me? It's a point of honor, then, to despise such a law, to repudiate it, and to insist that it be changed. Every time I hear the Negro soldier praised for his valor in the jungles of Southeast Asia, I think of the jungle of Harlem and of how many men I knew perished before my eyes there; how that very same soldier, for that very same valor, is murdered on the streets of Mississippi and beaten in the streets of New York. Well, before we free the Southeast Asians, let's free the Harlem Six.'

<sup>29</sup> *The Militant*, Vol. 30, No. 16, p.4.

theologian who had made his home in a slum tenement in Harlem.

It is plain from the poster publicising the event that the dramatisation of *The Torture of Mothers* took pride of place on the programme whilst *Come Out* receives no mention at all. Couched in Nelson's characteristic style, the announcement provides further details of the purpose of the Benefit, including a slightly adapted title of Reich's dramatic sound collage, *Harlem's Condemned 6*:

One Night Only. Harlem's Condemned 6. A Dramatization of the Book: *The Torture of Mothers* by Truman Nelson.... with Dick Gregory and Ossie Davis. Benefit production to appeal the conviction of six youths guilty of the crime of being black: Daniel Hamm, 19, now in Auburn State Prison.... Wallace Baker, 20 now in Greenhaven State Prison, ... Walter Thomas, 19 now in Greenhaven State Prison, Willie Craig, 18 now in Dannemora State Prison, Ronald Felder, ... 19 now in Great Meadow State Prison serving life sentences for murder. Sponsored by the Charter Group for a Pledge of Conscience ... Box 346, Cathedral Station, New York 10025 N.Y. ... Spokesman William Stringfellow.

The Benefit attracted some press interest. On 18 April 1966, the day after the performance, *The New York Times* – the earlier subject of Nelson's wrath – carried a brief review entitled, 'Benefit Aids Appeal of 6 Convicted of Harlem Killing'. A more extensive report by Herman Porter was published in *The Militant* on Monday 25 April 1966. Under the headline, 'Benefit in New York Aids Legal Defense of Harlem 6', Porter supplies helpful additional information about the proceedings at Town Hall. During the dramatisation of *The Torture of Mothers*, the mothers sat on the stage whilst the young men's story was relayed through their own voices on tape; this was interspersed with Davis' narration. Civil rights attorney Conrad Lynn spoke, explaining how he had become involved in the case and how the youths had been denied legal representation of their own choosing. Another speaker was Nathan Schwerner, a retired wig maker whose son, Michael, was one of three civil rights

workers who had been murdered by members of the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi in summer 1964. Truman Nelson, who was apparently seated in the audience rather than on stage, was introduced and also said a few words; and finally, in addition to functioning as MC, Dick Gregory capped the evening with a comedic performance.<sup>30</sup>

Porter notes that in addition to the speech-based elements of the evening, there was a significant amount of music. Civil Rights activist, vocalist and songwriter Abbey Lincoln (1930-2010) and her drummer husband, bebop pioneer Max Roach (1924-2007), performed a selection from 'The Freedom Now Suite'. *We Insist! Freedom Now* was a jazz album recorded between August 31 and September 6, 1960, by Candid Records and contained tracks assembled ultimately for the 1963 centenary of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The album is an avowedly political work consisting of five songs: 'Driva Man'; 'Freedom Day'; 'Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace'; 'All Africa', and 'Tears for Johannesburg', each written by Max Roach with lyrics by Oscar Brown (1926-2005). Although the studio recordings on the LP employed a total of nine musicians, the unspecified selection chosen for the Town Hall Benefit was performed by husband-and-wife duo Roach and Lincoln, appropriately, since they were the only artists to perform on all five of the recorded tracks. Keith Potter suggests that the prominence of this more familiar style of protest music in the programme accounts for the extremely limited impact made in the Benefit by *Come Out*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *The Militant*, Vol. 30, No. 16, p.4. <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspaper/themilitant/1966/v30n17-apr-25-1966-mil.pdf>, accessed 29 August 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, pp.178-179.

The success of the Town Hall Benefit in raising money for the retrial of the Six has possibly been over-estimated, therefore. Reich's view of the event was that its stated aim was achieved because in the fullness of time there was a retrial.<sup>32</sup> This adds a quasi fairy-tale ending to the case that ignores the extended period of time taken before the youths were released,<sup>33</sup> and also fails to recognise that the Benefit at Town Hall was not an isolated event.<sup>34</sup>

Reich has tended to underplay his own personal commitment to the cause of the Harlem Six, which went far beyond the Benefit. His lack of public comment has been interpreted as lack of interest in the case, even to the extent of suggesting that Reich's only interest was personal advancement. Gopinath's observes that, 'it is worth comparing Nelson's approach to the income from his efforts, which went to the cause of the Six, whereas Reich made no such arrangement'.<sup>35</sup> This must be set in the light of correspondence between the composer, Daniel Hamm and his mother, however. Facilitated by the legal offices of Conrad J Lynn, Reich set in place

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<sup>32</sup> See Reich's interview with Gabrielle Zuckermann, *Op. cit.* Strickland *Op. cit.*, p.40, also notes Reich's stated belief that *Come Out* was a political piece, and his satisfaction that the event led to the retrial of the Six.

<sup>33</sup> It was not until 1967 that the appeal led by Conrad Lynn came to court. Whilst successful in achieving a retrial, the outcome was that two of the six were found guilty and immediately began lengthy custodial sentences, with the other four not being re-tried until 1971. However, it was not until the summer of 1974 that Daniel Hamm – Reich's principal protagonist – was freed from prison. The case of Robert Rice continued into the 1980s.

<sup>34</sup> Boyd *Op. cit.*, p.95 makes reference to an apparently much larger event in August 1967 at the Village Theater in Lower Manhattan, which attracted an audience of 2,000 people. On this occasion Ossie Davies acted as MC with music provided by singer Richie Havens. James Baldwin delivered an impassioned speech demanding – in support of the Harlem Six – an economic boycott, focused particularly on African-Americans not buying cars from General Motors. The event had a broader scope in its civil rights aspirations than the Harlem Six, however, and in addition raised money for civil rights work in South Carolina.

<sup>35</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, p.202, footnote. Reich's correspondence with Conrad J Lynn during 1967 reveals the extent to which the composer went to ensure that Daniel Hamm received a fair payment from the royalties received by Reich for his voice being used in the CBS recording, to the extent that Reich negotiated an additional one-off fee for Hamm as a 'performer' in *Come Out*. Reich's contact with Lynn seems to have continued well beyond 1967, with an entry in his diary for September 1987 to remind himself to call Lynn. Daniel Hamm wrote to Reich in 1968 to express his gratitude to Reich for his actions.

a legal contract committing to pay a share of royalties for the use of the boy's voice in the Columbia recording of *Come Out*.<sup>36</sup> There has been further question as to whether Reich had any right to royalties from the work in the first place.<sup>37</sup> Gopinath suggests that the favourable reception of the piece via the recording is primarily about Reich's success as a composer: the 'selling' of *Come Out* mirroring Reich's 'selling' of himself.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> It is unclear how this relates to concert performances, of which the piece received many. In the May 1966 Park Place Gallery concert programme: *Come Out to Show Them* (4/66) – as it was still called – is described as being '...composed as part of a dramatization of Truman Nelson's book, *The Torture of Mothers*, which was presented at Town Hall in April of 1966 as a benefit for the retrial—with lawyers of their own choosing—of the six boys arrested for murder during the Harlem 'Fruit Stand Riots' of 1964. The voice is that of Daniel Hamm, 19, one of the six now serving a life sentence. He is describing a beating he took in the Harlem 28th precinct. The police were about to take the boys to Harlem Hospital to get them 'cleaned up' and were only taking those that were visibly bleeding. Since Hamm had no actual open bleeding he proceeded to squeeze open a bruise on his leg so that he would be taken to the hospital. —"I had to like open the bruise up and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them." By the time of a performance at Fairleigh-Dickinson University in January 1967, the concert program contained a description of *Come Out* (4/66 – tape) – as it was known by then – which precise description recurs in programmes for several years afterwards: 'Composed as part of a benefit, presented at Town Hall, for the re-trial, with lawyers of their own choosing, of the six boys arrested for murder during the Harlem riots of 1964. The voice is that of Daniel Hamm, then 19, describing a beating he took in the Harlem 28th precinct. The police were about to take the boys out to be 'cleaned up' and were only taking those who were visibly bleeding. Since Hamm had no actual open bleeding he proceeded to squeeze open a bruise on his leg so that he would be taken to the hospital: "I had to like open the bruise up and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them." By this stage, all reference to Truman Nelson and *The Torture of Mothers* had been removed.

<sup>37</sup> *Come Out* was the first of Reich's pieces to be commercially recorded. Released on CBS Odyssey LP #32 160160 in November 1967, the LP seems to have transformed the composer's view of himself in moving from the experimental musical fringe to a recording artist with an international record label. It also allowed some tentative first steps towards financial independence, as royalties would subsequently be due. Reich's correspondence in 1967/8 makes frequent reference to the commercial recording of *Come Out*. Immediately following the first performance in April 1967 he sent a copy to Oliver Daniel together with his application to join Broadcast Music Inc.. In June 1967, Reich tracked down A M Jones, a long-admired ethnomusicologist hero, and sent him a tape copy. He made reference to *Come Out* when writing (separately) to James Fleming and Sam Antar of the American Broadcasting Company in September 1967. In the same month he sent a tape copy to Manfred Schroder at Bell Laboratories followed by a copy of the CBS recording in January 1968 to James Flanagan, also at Bell Laboratories. Finally, in April 1968 Reich sent a copy to Dr Bernard Gold at Lincoln Laboratory. The income from these pieces formed a major part of Reich's income, as was pointed out in correspondence with Richard Place, who had used *Come Out* as the soundtrack for a film competition at Yale without seeking permission to do so.

<sup>38</sup> Reich quickly sought to expand his new status as a recording artist. On 3 December 1968, for example, he mentions to Oliver Selfridge of Lincoln Laboratory that Columbia Records have contracted him to do two [further] full LP records. The success of *Come Out* may be further gauged by a letter of 13 Dec 1968 from John McClure (Director of Masterworks at CBS Records) who writes to say that in his opinion *Come Out* is the most appealing in the company's series of records entitled *Music of our Time*.

#### 4.5 *Narrative Trail 3: Truman Nelson's The Torture of Mothers*

Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers* is the most widely-known account of the case of the Harlem Six.<sup>39</sup> Comprising a modest 122 pages – twenty of which consist of explanatory notes – the book contains transcriptions of speech of the mothers of the six boys, the boys themselves, and others involved in the events, interspersed between Nelson's often-impassioned commentary. The narrative is spread over five chapters, punctuated with photographs of the mothers of the Harlem Six when each is first presented: Mrs Baker (page 10); Mrs Hamm (page 16); Mrs Rice (page 27); Mrs Craig (page 31); Mrs Thomas (page 35); and Ronald Felder's aunt, Mrs Chancy (page 44).<sup>40</sup> All of the photographs are full-page in black-and-white, with a comment from Nelson that their purpose is to 'characterise these women further'.<sup>41</sup>

*The Torture of Mothers* is a polemical work that seeks to arouse strong feelings in its readers concerning racist police brutality; the injustice of the legal system experienced by African-Americans; and the biased portrayal of events by print journalists. An outraged and omnipresent narrative voice throughout the book, Nelson's pent-up frustration is palpable from the opening paragraph:

How can I make you believe this? This is what is blocking the long outcry in my throat, impacting the anger and frustration until I become too dumb and

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<sup>39</sup> References throughout this thesis are to the Beacon Press edition, published in 1968. The publisher's note to this edition traces the book's faltering steps to publication from its production in Autumn 1964, some six months after the events that it narrates. As a result of difficulty in finding a publisher, Nelson initially published the book privately through his own Garrison Press. Following the Benefit Concert at Town Hall, selections of *The Torture of Mothers* were published in the July 1966 issue of *Ramparts Magazine*, coinciding with James Baldwin's seminal article in *The Nation* of 11 July 1966, *A Report from Occupied Territory*. An abridged version was also published in William J. Schafer (ed), *The Truman Nelson Reader*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989, pp.230-238.

<sup>40</sup> Mrs Chancy is captioned on her picture as Mrs Felder.

<sup>41</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.34. There is also a picture of Conrad Lynn on page 80, the only man to be depicted.

sick with the gorge and glut of my own indigestible fury. Even keeping my voice down, even speaking to you in a whisper, my breath staggers and halts under the weight of this monstrous wrong.<sup>42</sup>

Ahead of detailing the injustices experienced by the accused boys and their families, Nelson rounds on the press for inflaming the situation among its largely white readership through the manner in which events are reported. Ten newspaper articles are discussed, eight of them from the *New York Times*, all cited – albeit with occasional inaccuracies – in the endnotes to the book.

Date	Newspaper	Article
April 19, 1964	New York Times	Lawyer for Five tells Court Police Roughed up Clients.
May 1, 1964	New York Times	3 Youths Seized in Harlem Killing. A Racial Motive in Recent assaults is Investigated.
May 5, 1964	New York Times	Suspect Gives up in Harlem Death. Negro Youth is 3rd Accused in Shopkeeper's Murder.
May 11, 1964	New York Times	Article unspecified.
May 26, 1964	Daily News	Indict 6 Teens in Knife Death.
May 26, 1964	New York Herald Tribune	6 Youths Indicted in Killing of Woman.
May 26, 1964	New York Times	6 Youths Indicted in Harlem Slaying.
May 29, 1964	New York Times	Harlem: The Tension Underneath Youths Study Karate, Police Keep Watch, and People Worry by Junius Griffin.
August 8, 1964	New York Times	Article unspecified.
January 13, 1965	New York Times	Police Lieutenant is Guilty of Selling Bogus \$20 Bills.

Table 10: Newspaper sources used in Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers*

Although dismissive of the press as a whole, the *New York Times* is Nelson's main target of disapproval, particularly the journalistic contributions of Junius Griffin, an African-American who is portrayed as a traitor to his own people. In Nelson's view, Griffin's articles serve only to create anxiety and spread panic among the white residents of Harlem by spreading the view that the Six were part of a Brotherhood intent on their murder. Even those instinctively supportive of Nelson's

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<sup>42</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.1.

views, such as June Meyer, recognise the barriers created by the way they are expressed. While admiring the quality of his poetic editing and presentation of speech transcriptions, Meyer is troubled by Nelson's lack of balance in reporting.

*The Torture of Mothers* ... condemns the *New York Times* as a manipulator of public opinion, and thus of the jury's point of view in the spring of 1964. ... Nelson's accusations against the *New York Times* seem idiosyncratic. Presumably he means to raise the issue of press responsibility, or courtroom partiality consequent to the climate of public opinion. However, it is as though only *The New York Times* went to press that spring. ... It is as though Nelson had blocked out all the "stories of the week" ... At times, the impact of the trial itself dims before Nelson's single-minded obsession with the role of the *Times*.

The issue of press responsibility is surely relevant to the question of a fair trial for "The Harlem Six". But an inquiry commensurate with the implications of press irresponsibility should be characterized by thorough impartiality. Mr. Nelson's is not.<sup>43</sup>

Notwithstanding such stinging criticism of the press, the enduring appeal of *The Torture of Mothers* lies in Nelson's ability to fashion a persuasive narrative through his selection, transcription and presentation of audio sources, which are laid out on the printed page with poetic sensitivity.

The source recordings themselves were recorded on three separate occasions. The first set of tapes was made by a social worker, Willie Jones, for Harlem Youth Unlimited (HARYOU) – a community self-help organisation – at the Friendship Baptist Community Center in the immediate aftermath of the police beatings. The other two tape sources comprise recordings of the mothers made subsequently, one by Nelson himself and a further set of recordings produced independently by Willie Jones. Almost half of the speech material was therefore recorded – and to some extent shaped – by Jones, whom Nelson portrays as more than an impartial

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<sup>43</sup> June Meyer, "Sons and Mothers: The Harlem Six," *The Nation*, April 25, 1966, pp.497-498. Gopinath has also accepted Meyer's view that Nelson's presentation of his material is lopsided and his grandiloquent prose overbearing, but is prepared to make some allowance for this in the context of the book's polemical intent.

sound recordist, or journalist, suggesting that his innate musicality directed his ear in making the recordings. Nelson describes Jones as

...a professional interviewer, but more than that an artist, a musician of surpassing talent, who uses the sensitivity with which he reveals the form and pulse of a musical work of art to probe, and in the kindest sense, to play on the outraged sensibilities of the people of Harlem until the deep sad horror of their daily existence rises in a kind of monochromatic lacrimosa of bewilderment and hurt.<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding this rosy view of Jones' talents, Nelson draws primarily on recordings he made himself. Of the forty-one tape transcriptions in *The Torture of Mothers*, twenty-one are taken from recordings of interviews he conducted himself, with sixteen taken from the HARYOU tapes, two made later by Willie Jones, and two unreferenced. It is not known whether, or to what extent, Nelson edited the tapes.

Nelson's transliteration shapes the presentation of the spoken material, but does not seek to transcribe African-American dialect into written format, thus avoiding the controversial 'faux-Negro' dialect representation adopted by Reich in rendering Brother Walter's speech in *It's Gonna Rain*. The bravura style of Nelson's commentary infuses the speech transcriptions with a sense of epic prose, creating a heightened manner of language containing few features of Black American speech, and appearing in written format more like poetry or perhaps verse drama. As Gopinath observes:

Setting the quotations in bold type and separating sentences and even phrases from each other (as opposed to collecting them in paragraphs), the testimony reads like a kind of post-war American poetry instead of transcribed testimony or interviews. Moreover, the black vernacular English represented in these transcriptions – one whose "Southern" aspects were becoming slowly, but by no means completely, "Northernized" – is rendered without the exaggerations of black dialect caricatures or even

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<sup>44</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.55.

black cultural nationalist poetry. The result is a dignified, possibly smoothed-out but non-caricatured rendering...<sup>45</sup>

However, it is the arrangement of the interviews in *The Torture of Mothers* that creates a new narrative framework, which stands within Nelson's text as a type of verbatim theatre.

Nelson sets up an authorial narrative situation, relating a story in which he is not a participant but over which he takes control. Although seemingly comprehensive in his portrayal of events, characters are selected carefully and their agency controlled through Nelson's arrangement of the transcriptions. The words of thirteen characters are transcribed, all of them African Americans. This includes: all six mothers of the accused boys; three of the boys themselves (the other three are absent); and four others caught up in the situation – Frank Stafford, a door-to-door salesman; Herbert Paine, an unemployed cook; an unnamed businessman; and Robert Barnes, who turns out to be a specious witness for the prosecution.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Gopinath, *Op. cit.*, pp.225-226.

<sup>46</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, pp.61-62. Nelson does not give Ollie Roe, a second spurious witness called by the police against the Six, a voice.

Chapter	Pages	Mothers	Harlem Six	Others	Source
Chapter 1	4-9			Frank Stafford	HARYOU
	9-11		Wallace Baker		HARYOU
	11-13	Mrs Baker			Truman Nelson
	13-15		Daniel Hamm		HARYOU
	15-18	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
	18-20			Herbert Paine	HARYOU
	20-21			Businessman	HARYOU
	21-22		Robert Rice		HARYOU
	22			Robert Barnes	HARYOU
Chapter 2	23-25	Mrs Hamm			HARYOU
	26-30	Mrs Rice			Truman Nelson
	30-33	Mrs Craig			Truman Nelson
	34-38	Mrs Thomas			Truman Nelson
	39-43	Mrs Baker			Unreferenced
	45-48	Mrs Chancy			Willie Jones
Chapter 3	50	Mrs Rice			Unreferenced
	51	Mrs Chancy			Truman Nelson
	60		Robert Rice		HARYOU
	61		Wallace Baker		HARYOU
	61		Robert Rice		HARYOU
	61-62			Robert Barnes	HARYOU
	62		Wallace Baker		HARYOU
	62		Daniel Hamm		HARYOU
	62-63		Robert Rice		HARYOU
	63		Daniel Hamm		HARYOU
Chapter 4	64			<i>Oedipus</i>	
	65			<i>Creon</i>	
	70	Mrs Craig			Truman Nelson
	72	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
	72-73	Mrs Rice			Truman Nelson
	73-75	Mrs Chancy			Willie Jones
	75	Mrs Thomas			Truman Nelson
	75	Mrs Craig			Truman Nelson
	75	Mrs Baker			Truman Nelson
	75	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
Chapter 5	75	Mrs Rice			Truman Nelson
	76	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
	77	Mrs Baker			Truman Nelson
	96	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
	96	Mrs Craig			Truman Nelson
	96-97	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson
	97	Mrs Craig			Truman Nelson
	97-98	Mrs Hamm			Truman Nelson

Table 11: Arrangement of tape transcriptions in Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers*

Other characters exist only through the words of these thirteen. They include: Fecundo Acion, the Puerto Rican seaman arrested along with Frank Stafford; Edward DeLuca, the proprietor of the fruit stall at the centre of the April 17 incident; members of the Harlem police force, particularly Lieutenant Satriano and Detective Sergeant Conner; Judge Calkins; Mr Senna and Bill Epton, both lawyers; Mrs Watson, the district leader; and the doctors in Harlem hospital. There are also relatives of the Harlem Six: Fred Frazier's mother; Daniel Hamm's elder brother, Teddy; Willy Craig's unnamed sister; Walter Thomas' unnamed sister; Earl Baker, Wallace Baker's older brother; Mrs Baker's three grandchildren; James Felder, 12-year-old brother of Ronald; Mrs Rice's mother; and Mrs Rice's unnamed husband. Frank Sugar, survivor of the attack that killed his wife at Eve and Pete's used clothing store 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, is absent.

Chapter One focuses on the fruit stand incident, thus locating the events firmly within Harlem and lending spatio-temporal orientation to the narrative. Nine characters are given voice, all finding themselves in a situation created by the agency of the children who started the fruit riot, and more aggressively by the police, none of whose voices we hear. The focus of the chapter derives from the agency of the police in inflicting beatings on those arrested and taken to the Meat Grinder.<sup>47</sup> Although the voices of the six mothers emerge in the course of the book, male voices dominate the chapter, particularly that of Frank Stafford.<sup>48</sup> Though less prominent, Herbert Paine, an unemployed passer-by and an unnamed businessman

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<sup>47</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.18.

<sup>48</sup> Nelson references Stafford's interview as having taken place the day after the beatings but this would have been impossible since Stafford was hospitalised for at least two weeks as a result of his eye injury.

provide three further witness statements in condemning the behaviour of the police.

Chapter Two begins ten days later, so creating a gap in the narrative. The focus is now on the mothers' voices, describing the police treatment in the 28<sup>th</sup> Precinct police station and the subsequent rounding-up of the six boys. This genders the account, presenting the treatment of the young men entirely through the words of their mothers. The portrayal of the mothers is unapologetically empathetic such as, for example, the description of Mrs Craig as 'soft, as deeply soft and plangent, as all the mothers in the world'.<sup>49</sup> Nelson presents all six mothers here, beginning with Mrs Hamm. Her 640 words form the shortest of the mothers' contributions, standing in contrast to the 1003 words spoken by Mrs Baker. Mrs Baker's contribution relates the events described to the murder of Mrs Sugar at the used clothing store, especially the way that the police were searching for an old coat that might have been stolen from the store.

Chapter Three opens with a dual focalisation. Mrs Rice continues the story of how her house was searched by Lieutenant Satriano; Mrs Chancy recounts the way her younger son was panicked into betraying his brother by the police. This is followed by an analepsis as Wallace Baker, Daniel Hamm and Robert Rice contribute short gobbets that flashback to the events of the Fruit Stall Riot. Hamm also introduces the theme of the World's Fair of 1964 and the City authority's attempts to make the area appear respectable. Robert Barnes is again given preference over the three absent members of the Six – William Craig, Walter Thomas and Ronald Felder – as he comments on the treatment of Fecundo Acion. Barnes' inclusion is

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<sup>49</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.30.

curious as it identifies him with the accused, whereas in the subsequent retrials, Barnes functioned as a prime prosecution witness. Conrad Lynn's writings make it clear that Barnes was probably himself implicated in the murder of Margit Sugar.<sup>50</sup> Towards the end of this chapter, Nelson introduces a parallel narrative trail, sketching Harlem in classical terms and introducing as commentary the voices of Oedipus and Creon. In this extended section (pp. 63-66), Nelson personifies contemporary New York as ancient Thebes and *The New York Times* as Oedipus.

Chapter Four opens with Nelson's comment, 'The boys I have never seen'.<sup>51</sup> This sharpens the focus on the emotional turmoil of the mothers and reinforces Nelson's gendering of the narrative, the male characters operating through the words and agency of the female ones. Attention moves to the courtroom, and the struggle of the mothers to achieve satisfactory representation for their sons. Mrs Hamm tells of her friend who was poorly served by a Legal Aid lawyer. Mrs Rice speaks of her dismissive treatment by Mrs Watson, a district leader, aggravated by Judge Calkins who told them not to waste their money on a lawyer.<sup>52</sup> Mrs Baker introduces into the narrative Bill Epton, Head of the Harlem Defense Council; the voices of the mothers are then silenced as Nelson includes a ten-page tribute to the work of Conrad Lynn. An African-American Civil Rights lawyer, Lynn was recommended to the mothers by Epton, but appears here only through their words.

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<sup>50</sup> Sumanth Gopinath, "The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's *Come Out*", in Robert Adlington, *Sound Commitments: Avant-garde Music and the Sixties*, Oxford: OUP, 2009, p.126.

<sup>51</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.69.

<sup>52</sup> Calkins subsequently claimed at the eventual retrial in January 1969 – in the presence of each of the Six and their mothers – that the Six 'wouldn't know a good lawyer from a good watermelon'. The image calls back memories of racist images of watermelons in Reich's satirical take on minstrelsy with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, *Oh Dem Watermelons*. See Conrad Lynn, *There is a Fountain: The Autobiography of a Civil Rights Lawyer*, Lawrence Hill & Co, Westport, Connecticut, p.14.

Nelson's prose reaches new heights of emotion in describing Lynn, who is portrayed in quasi-messianic terms, his style and manner effusively described as the best hope of the Six.

Chapter Five acts as a coda and contains few speech gobbets. Following a detailed summary of the political situation in Harlem, snippets from Mrs Hamm and Mrs Craig are juxtaposed as if to create a dialogue discussing their sons' hopes, particularly the enjoyment they had derived from their shared love of keeping pigeons. By contrast with this homely discussion, Nelson brings the chapter (and the book) to a conclusion with a grandiloquent discourse on the significance of American Independence and the importance of the Bill of Rights.

#### 4.6 *Narrative Trail 4: Harlem's Six Condemned.*

*Harlem's Six Condemned* lasts for 26' 46", indicating that very little of the source tapes are used in the final sound collage. Reich draws on the three tape sources listed above, although it is not known if Nelson had already transcribed them and if so, whether Reich was given a copy of the transcripts he made. The structure of *Harlem's Six Condemned* is summarised in Table 11 below, and a full transcript is given in Appendix 5.

Gobbet	Mothers	Harlem Six	Others	<i>The Torture of Mothers</i>
1			Fruit stall holder	Referred to on page 20
			4-second gap	
2			Herbert Paine	Pages 18 & 19
3			Unidentified businessman	Page 20
4		Daniel Hamm		Pages 13 & 14
5		Wallace Baker		Pages 9 & 11
6			Frank Stafford	Pages 4 & 5
			10-second gap	
7		Daniel Hamm		Page 14
			3-second gap	
8			Frank Stafford	Page 5
			16-second gap	
9		Daniel Hamm		Page 14
			16-second gap	
10			Frank Stafford	Page 6
			4-second gap	
11		Daniel Hamm		Page 14
			4-second gap	
12	Mrs Baker			Page 11
13			Frank Stafford	Page 7
14		Daniel Hamm		Pages 14 & 15
15	Mrs Baker			Page 11 & 12
[duologue]	Mrs Hamm			Page 15
			7-second gap	
16		Daniel Hamm		Page 15
17			Frank Stafford	Pages 8 & 9
			9-second gap	
18	Mary Hamm			Pages 23 & 24
			3-second gap	
19	Mrs Thomas			Pages 34 & 36
20	Mrs Baker			Pages 39 & 40
			11-second gap	
21	Unidentified mother			
			8-second gap	
22	Mrs Hamm			Pages 97 & 98
23	Unidentified mother			
			3-second pause	
24	Mrs Craig			Page 70
			3-second pause	
25	Mrs Hamm			Page 72
26	Mrs Rice			Pages 72 & 73
27	Mrs Hamm			Page 76
28	Mrs Baker			Page 76
	Mrs Thomas			
29		Daniel Hamm		Page 63

Table 12: Arrangement of tape transcriptions in Steve Reich's *Harlem's Six Condemned*

The layout of material resembles that in Nelson's book, confirming that the scenario given to Reich must have been very similar to *The Torture of Mothers*. This is borne out by the publicity poster's description of the piece as 'a dramatisation of the book *The Torture of Mothers* by Truman Nelson'. It explains why Reich selects almost identical source recordings to Nelson despite having an apparently extensive collection of tape material from which to draw, the result being that all but three gobbets – 1, 21 and 23 – are found transcribed in *The Torture of Mothers*. Consequently, Reich's editing of the source tapes appears to have been light-touch, with his enthusiasm for identifying new material quite possibly fading rapidly once Daniel Hamm's voice was discovered.

*Harlem's Six Condemned* adopts a similar principle to the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain*, with Reich assuming the role of auteur, shaping and refining material from which he is effectively separate.<sup>53</sup> Reich now works with fewer, longer gobbits than before, however. *Harlem's Six Condemned* consists of twenty-nine speech gobbits – the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain* has 157 – each containing a single voice, with the exception of Gobbets 15 and 28, which both have two voices. The gobbits are separated by fourteen gaps in total, which are irregularly positioned and vary in length between three seconds and sixteen seconds. The main exceptions are between Gobbets 8 and 9, and between Gobbets 9 and 10, which are each punctuated by a gap of 16 seconds, a pattern repeated between Gobbets 10 and 11, and between Gobbets 11 and 12, where there is a shorter, but equally regular, gap of 4 seconds each. The purpose of the gaps is not identified.

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<sup>53</sup> Since Reich did not create the source recordings for the piece, and neither had he met the people whose voices he was to edit, a situation reminiscent of his earlier work on the soundtrack for *The Plastic Haircut*.

They may have served a narrative function in allowing space for the MC, Dick Gregory, to introduce the names of the speakers on the tape, although there is insufficient space for this to have been carried out consistently. Alternatively, they may have been intended for dramatic effect with the mothers sat in silence on the stage, listening to the voices of their sons.

The narrative focus of *Harlem's Six Condemned* is changed from that of *The Torture of Mothers*, however, since Reich's storyline is differently gendered. Reich frames his narrative with the voices of men rather than women, a narrative shift reflected in the title of the piece, which focuses on the fate of the Harlem Six rather than the anguish of their mothers. Each of the mothers is given a voice by Reich,<sup>54</sup> whereas only the voices of Wallace Baker and Danny Hamm represent the entire plight of the Harlem Six.<sup>55</sup>

*Harlem's Six Condemned* follows the pattern of the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain* in establishing three types of participants. Identified in the former work as preachers, witnesses and commentators, the characters in *Harlem's Six Condemned* might be grouped as: members of the Harlem Six; the mothers of the Harlem Six; and other participants in the events of April 1964. Table 13 sets out the amount of time allocated to each of these groups in *Harlem's Six Condemned*, while Table 14

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<sup>54</sup> The difficulties in identifying two of the sections make it impossible to say with complete certainty whether Mrs. Chancy, Ronald Felder's Aunt, is actually presented.

<sup>55</sup> Little is discernible of the identity of the voices in *Harlem's Six Condemned*. Without reference to Nelson's book, the narrative would be largely disembodied and generic, differentiated only through vocal timbre. Reich leaves in some identifying features that Nelson removes, however, such as the introductions by themselves of Herbert Paine, Wallace Baker and Daniel Hamm. The unidentifiable characters in Reich's tape are those where he uses material that does not appear in *The Torture of Mothers*. Speculation cannot be avoided as to how identification was achieved in the original performance. There is no record of the audience having been given a transcript of the tapes, or a copy of Nelson's book that had by that stage been published privately. The boys themselves were in prison and would have been unable to be present and, since the mothers sat for the performance of the tape collage, linking the particular boys' voices on the tape with each individual's mother on the stage would have been beyond the audience's capability.

shows the number of words allocated to them in *The Torture of Mothers*. A strict comparison is clearly problematic since there is no easy means of relating the time assigned to each character in Reich's tape piece with the word count allocated to each participant in Nelson's book since the speed of talking varies considerably between characters.

Witnesses – total number of appearances & total time allocation			The Harlem Six – total number of appearances & total time allocation			The Mothers – total number of appearances & total time allocation		
Edward DeLuca	1	0' 52"	Daniel Hamm	7	4' 10"	Mrs Baker	4	3' 49"
Herbert Paine	1	1' 41"	Wallace Baker	1	0' 58"	Mrs Hamm	5	3' 26"
Unnamed Businessman	1	1' 20"				Mrs Thomas	2	2' 37"
Frank Stafford	5	4' 29"				Mrs Craig	1	0' 36"
						Mrs Rice	1	0' 54
						Unnamed [Mrs Felder?]	2	1' 54
	8	8' 22"		8	5' 08"		14	13' 16"

Table 13: Time allocations in Steve Reich's *Harlem's Six Condemned*

Witnesses – total number of appearances & total words			The Harlem Six - total number of appearances & total words			The Mothers – total number of appearances & total words		
Frank Stafford	1	1355	Wallace Baker	3	239	Mrs Baker	3	1715
Herbert Paine	1	414	Daniel Hamm	3	745	Mrs Hamm	8	1706
Unnamed businessman	1	205	Robert Rice	4	462	Mrs Rice	4	1096
Robert Barnes	2	108				Mrs Craig	5	988
						Mrs Thomas	2	930
						Mrs Chancy	3	1623
	3	2082		12	1660		25	8058

Table 14: Word allocations in Truman Nelson's *The Torture of Mothers*

On a simple percentage basis, Nelson allocates the voices of the Mothers about two-thirds of the total space, comprising twenty-five of the forty contributions, (8058 words of the transcription total of 11800), leaving the male voices to account for the other one-third. This is divided fairly equally between the witnesses (2082 words, or 18% of the transcription total), and the three members of the Harlem Six (1660 words, or 14% of the total). In contrast, slightly more than

half of Reich's collage – 13' 30" in comparison with 13'16" – is allocated to male voices. Additionally, male voices are heard continuously for the first eleven minutes of Reich's collage, as far as Gobbet 12 and – notwithstanding a continuous passage of the mothers' voices lasting almost twelve minutes between Gobbets 18 and 28 – Reich gives the last word to Daniel Hamm. Hamm's voice, together with that of Frank Stafford, occupies twelve of the twenty-nine gobbets, and dominates the collage as far as Gobbet 17.

#### 4.6.1 *Witnesses*

There are four witnesses, two of whom are named: Frank Stafford and Herbert Paine. Two others are anonymous: the fruit stall holder and a second, unnamed businessman. In total, the witnesses account for eight of the twenty-nine gobbets of the piece and are grouped in the first half between Gobbet 1 and Gobbet 17. The voice of Frank Stafford is dominant among these four, in Gobbets 6, 8, 10, 13 and 17. The others – Edward DeLuca, Herbert Paine and the unnamed businessman – are each heard only once, in Gobbets 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

#### *Fruit stallholder*

Edward DeLuca is the proprietor of the fruit stall on Lennox Avenue where the riot occurred on 17 April 1964. It is DeLuca's blowing of his whistle to attract police that initiates their activity, a single action that heralds the frenzied activity in the street. DeLuca can therefore be viewed as the prime agent in the narrative: had he not attracted police intervention, the sequence of events would not have unfolded as it did. Yet he remains one-dimensional and unidentified in his single 52-second

appearance in Gobbet 1, although some details emerge through what he says.<sup>56</sup>

The fruit stall is on the street outside a larger fruit shop – he is not an itinerant street seller – and DeLuca was in the back of the shop when one of his employees alerted him to what was happening outside. Although the newspaper reports referred to the riot being started by the antics of children, DeLuca's account is gendered: they are 'a mob of young fellows' and it was 'these boys', who DeLuca thought were not indigenous to Harlem. Probably of Italian descent, DeLuca has lived in Harlem for thirty-five years, believing himself to be well known and respected in the neighbourhood.

#### *Herbert Paine*

Herbert Paine is also a witness to the fruit stall riot, becoming caught up in the commotion on the street. His voice heard only in Gobbet 2, he follows DeLuca after a four-second gap. Paine's words pinpoint the action in 129<sup>th</sup> Street and he speaks with animation of dodging the police as they began to attack the youths. Paine relates how the youths are hit around the face by the police and, in particular, of how one of them fights back against a policeman. This results in a further two officers teaming up to beat that boy around the head. The identity of this individual is not revealed, but the injuries sustained by Frank Stafford are commensurate with such a beating, although it is uncertain whether Stafford, aged 31, would have been described as a 'boy'.

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<sup>56</sup> With the exception of four lines in *The Torture of Mothers*, DeLuca's voice is absent from Nelson's original account but without this reference, it would be impossible to identify him in Reich's piece.

### *Unnamed businessman*

The unnamed businessman follows on directly from the voice of Herbert Paine with only a momentary blip in the tape separating them. As with all four witnesses, he has seen the injustices take place but starts by affirming the right of the police to enforce the rule of law. Walking through a block in the area near the fruit stall, he sees the police attacking the youths and, fearful that it could have been him, accentuates the need for humour and sensitivity in patrolling the area. As with Herbert Paine, he refers to police brutality in beating the youths around the head and causing bloody injuries. His comments suggest that he is also of African-American heritage.

### *Frank Stafford*

Frank Stafford is central to Reich's diegesis, a dominant and defining voice among the witnesses in *Harlem's Six Condemned*. Reich allocates him 4' 29", greater exposure than any other character, his words counting for five of the twenty-nine sections of the collage. This is a greater degree of prominence than he is afforded in *The Torture of Mothers* although here, too, he is of central importance as a victim of police brutality. Reich does not name Stafford, but Nelson's description of him is:

an American prototype, thirty-one years old, a family man with two kids and a non-working wife, plays a good game of basketball on Sunday; a salesman, hits the sidewalks of Harlem with a neat attache [sic] case and a peddlers [sic] license; goes in and out of houses, stores, beauty parlors, offering ladies' hosiery, mens' [sic] socks and shorts, flowers in the springtime, horns and favors at New Year's time, anything to decently support his family . . . an American prototype, except that he's black.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.4.

Caught up in the crowds, Stafford's involvement in the events of 17 April 1964 was unanticipated. He speaks in Gobbet 6 of being attacked by three policemen and being hit in the eye, quickly recognised by a passer-by who urged him to cooperate with the police as his eye was in need of emergency treatment. Instead of being taken to hospital, Stafford is taken to the 28<sup>th</sup> Precinct police station and abused further, with Gobbet 8 describing how the police continued beating him, smashing oranges in his already injured face. Labelled by the police as a 'cop fighter' [Gobbet 10], Stafford is further punched in the jaw and the chest before being taken to Harlem hospital, where Wallace Baker would also be taken, and where Frank Sugar had a life-saving operation after being stabbed in his used clothing store. For Stafford it was to be a pointless journey since specialist medical attention was not available there.

Subsequently taken to Bellevue Hospital in South Manhattan, Stafford recounts in Gobbet 13 a two-week period during which surgeons attempted to save his eye. This was to no avail, however, and in Gobbet 17 Stafford alludes to a second operation to remove his eye. He does not name specific police officers, but speaks of the continuing level of suspicion on him as he now wears an eye patch whilst working as a street seller. Given the period of Stafford's hospitalisation, the taped interview with him must have been recorded some weeks after the fruit stall riot. Nelson's references to Stafford's contributions coming from the Harlem Youth Tapes recorded at the Friendship Baptist Community Center, suggest that the recordings were not all made the day after the riot since Stafford was at that point still in hospital, unable to participate.

#### 4.6.2 *The Harlem Six*

Of the imprisoned boys, only Daniel Hamm and Wallace Baker are given voice in *Harlem's Six Condemned*. Whilst Wallace Baker is allotted only one gobbet, Reich demonstrates a veritable fascination with Hamm's voice. This is possibly fuelled by the composer's selection of the boy's words as the basis for *Come Out*, which eventually leads to a monologic narrative in that piece. Whether the result of the musicality of the boy's voice or compassion for his plight in having to injure himself further in order to be allowed to go to hospital, Reich gives solo agency to Hamm in speaking for all six boys.

##### *Daniel Hamm*

There is a dual focalisation on Hamm. He is both a member of the Harlem Six and also an archetypal abused victim of racism. This elevates his significance in the collage, although audience members at the Town Hall would have been unlikely to make the connection between the use of Hamm's voice in both pieces as the speaker in *Come Out* is not identified. Hamm is heard seven times in *Harlem's Six Condemned*, making him the most prevalent voice in the collage, as well as the final speaker in the piece. He lives on 26<sup>th</sup> West on 31<sup>st</sup> Street, about a mile from the scene of the Fruit Stall riot, and describes himself as unemployed. He is seeking employment with the assistance of a nearby adult education centre, which is helping him to find work. In a previous generation, Hamm might have been a

candidate for employment with the Pullman Company, but Hamm is no latter-day Lawrence Davies.<sup>58</sup>

In Gobbet 4, Hamm describes hearing a police siren, seeing a police officer waving his billy and brandishing a gun at some children, becoming caught up himself in events. The police tackle him and he is taken handcuffed to the patrol car, where his friend Wallace Baker is also taken. Reich uses Hamm's voice in Gobbets 7 and 9 to progress the narrative and relate events at the 28<sup>th</sup> Precinct police station, where they are handcuffed and systematically beaten by gangs of up to twelve police officers. After some four hours of merciless beatings Hamm recalls – in Gobbet 11 – the police decision to take boys who were bleeding to the hospital. Since Hamm was not bleeding, he opened up a large bruise on his leg where he had been beaten. The phrase describing these actions – 'I had to, like, open the bruise up and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them that I was bleeding' – receives central prominence and appears near the mid-point of the collage, between 12' 26" and 12' 31".

There is an analepsis in Gobbet 16 as Hamm returns to the description of events at the police station, recounting the police becoming weary with beating the boys, spitting at them and even walking over them. Daniel Hamm's voice is then used to end the piece with his observation of the police desire for the area to be rid of African-American youths. Hamm reflects on the careful preparation of New York's image for the World's Fair, which opened on 22 April 1964, just five days after the Fruit Stall Riot. His words speak for all African-Americans in Harlem: the

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<sup>58</sup> Lawrence "Happy" Davies is the African-American Pullman Porter subsequently recorded by Reich in a 1986 interview for *Different Trains*. The Pullman Company's policy of exclusively employing African-American men is discussed in detail in Chapter Six, below.

Fair's success depends on Black citizens undertaking menial, 'penny-ante' jobs as a means of making their presence in the City more palatable. His emphatic, 'and that's it', brings the collage sharply to an end.

#### *Wallace Baker*

As already noted, Baker is the only other member of the Harlem Six to be given a voice. His contribution adds little to the narrative direction of the piece, although his vocal pitch is distinctly lower than Hamm's, providing some timbral contrast. His words reinforce Hamm's story of the rapid move from witnessing the events at the fruit stand to being handcuffed and taken to the police car and the precinct.

#### *4.6.3 The Mothers*

Reich's decision, possibly intuitive, to use Hamm's voice to frame the narrative results in the relegation of the voices of the mothers to later in the piece. The voices of all six are present, however, unlike the voices of their sons.

#### *Mrs Baker*

Although Wallace Baker is given scant exposure, his mother is the first to appear, and is allocated four gobbets: 12, 15, 20 and 28. Her story starts with her being called to Harlem Hospital to sign for her son – whose voice has already been heard in Gobbet 5 – so he can be given an X-Ray. Her memory is of Wallace being unable to walk, and his neck being jolted to one side. This is reiterated in Gobbet 15, where she is apparently in conversation with Daniel Hamm's mother, although closer examination reveals the tapes to have been merely juxtaposed, with no actual exchange between them. She speaks of Wallace wearing a patch over one

eye, prefiguring Frank Stafford's need to wear a patch after losing an eye in the Fruit Stall riot.

In Gobbet 20, Mrs Baker introduces Lieutenant Satriano into the narrative. Leading a crowd of some thirty policemen, the detective (whom she had seen in the newspaper as a result of a corruption case against him) enters her house without a search warrant, ostensibly looking for a coat stolen from the shop where Mrs Margit Sugar was been attacked and killed. She describes in graphic, quasi-dramatic terms, the invasive search by the detectives, snatching the bedclothes, her young grandchildren thrown on top of each other. Despite suffering the indignity of Satriano refusing to leave the room while she got dressed to go to the Precinct, Mrs Baker becomes a champion for justice in the penultimate section of the collage where, in conversation with Mrs Mildred Thomas, she refers to Bill Epton, whom Mrs Thomas has discovered.

#### *Mrs Hamm*

Mary Hamm is a prominent voice in Nelson's book, but is overshadowed in Reich's piece by her son's contribution. Her voice is heard in five gobblets – the same as Frank Stafford – yet this occupies less time than her son Daniel, Frank Stafford or Mrs Baker. Her words are first heard in Gobbet 15, apparently in conversation with Mrs Baker, a genuine dialogue rather than the splicing together of two voices to create a semblance of conversation. She speaks of her incredulity that a policeman could have beaten her son but with a stoic recognition that the law is always right and the African-American is always in the wrong. In Gobbet 18 Mrs Hamm describes her experience of the police visiting her house and taking

Danny for questioning as part of their rounding up of the boys after the clothing shop murder on 29 April 1964.

In Gobbet 22, there is a shift in the narrative as she turns to the boys' hobby of keeping pigeons on the tenement roofs of Harlem. Nelson tells how the boys ran a pigeon club where, 'ironically, they love to train homing pigeons, train them to fly away a little, and then come back to Harlem'.<sup>59</sup> This is the only reference to the pigeons in Reich's piece, although Nelson develops the theme in more detail, both through the words of the mothers and also through the boys' own words as we learn that Danny aspires to be a veterinarian.<sup>60</sup> In Reich's hands, Mrs Hamm's story moves quickly to the police crowding on the roof to arrest the boys and take them to the precinct. Her final contribution to Reich's narrative is in Gobbets 25 and 27 where she speaks of not wanting her son to be represented by a Legal Aid lawyer, having seen how unsatisfactory this has worked out for one her friend's sons. She speaks also of the lawyers' attempts to confuse the boys to get them to confess to the murder, her reference to their fast-talking presaging Reich's treatment of Daniel's voice in *Come Out*.

#### *Mrs Thomas*

Although her voice is presented in two gobbets, Walter Thomas' mother Mildred makes her main contribution in Gobbet 19. The detectives raid her house, searching for the coat stolen from the clothing shop, grabbing Walter and trying to handcuff him. Initially assuming it to be boisterousness from his friends, the

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<sup>59</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.85.

<sup>60</sup> There is no record of Hamm subsequently entering the veterinary profession, and Alburger is alone in claiming that, following his acquittal, Hamm went to Columbia University. See Mark Alburger, 'Steve Reich: Early Phase', *21<sup>st</sup> Century Music*, Vol.11, No.4, (2004), p.7.

realisation of what is taking place only dawns on her when ten or eleven detectives try to arrest her son. Once again Lieutenant Satriano is at the centre of the investigation, focusing on an old coat that Mrs Thomas had put ready to be thrown out, which is assumed by the police to be the one stolen from the used clothing store. As noted above, Mrs Thomas was the mother who made contact with Bill Epton, an African-American and Head of the Harlem Defense Council. Epton was also a central figure in the Progressive Labour Party, based at 336, Lennox Avenue, New York, close to the events of the Fruit Stall Riot.

#### *Mrs Craig*

Nelson's sympathetic treatment of Mrs Craig has already been noted.<sup>61</sup> However, her voice is heard only towards the end of the collage, in Gobbet 24, where she describes visiting her son Willie, and how she had to talk to him through a telephone link because he was being held in a cage. His only reported request to his mother is for her to get him a lawyer, a request that becomes the *raison d'être* for the Benefit.

#### *Mrs Rice*

Mrs Rice's voice is also heard only once, in Gobbet 26, where she takes up the theme of wanting an independent lawyer to represent her son. Nelson describes Mrs Rice and her husband as being 'a little more prosperous than the others'<sup>62</sup> but her husband's encounter with Judge Calkins serves only to quash the family's aspirations of independence as Calkins attempts to impose on them lawyers of the

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<sup>61</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.30.

<sup>62</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.85.

court's choosing. Nelson's commentary points to the additional difficulty that Rice had 'implicated himself on the tape, saying openly that during the riot he had picked up a garbage can to defend himself.<sup>63</sup>

#### *Unidentified mother [Mrs Clancy?]*

Reich does not identify Mrs Clancy – Ronald Felder's Aunt – and it cannot be said for certain that she is the unidentified mother, since her words in Gobbets 21 and 23 are not included in *The Torture of Mothers*. In Gobbet 21 she describes seeing her son, bloodstains on his trousers, crying as she enters, knowing that the police had extracted a confession from him for killing Mrs Sugar. 'Mrs Rice' has an additional short speech extract in Gobbet 23.

#### *Absent voices*

In addition to the four members of the Harlem Six whose voices do not appear in Reich's collage, there are other characters who have agency through the words and references of others. Most notable is Lieutenant Satriano, whose alleged laundering of counterfeit money has been widely reported in the newspapers, and whose agency in *The Torture of Mothers* is to inflict suffering on the mothers through their sons. In Reich's collage, the mothers reveal Satriano's dealings with the boys to be as dishonest as his financial behaviour.

Also absent is Fecundo Acio, who suffered injuries alongside Frank Stafford during the fruit stall riot. As the only white man who suffers at the hands of the police, he also appears old before his time, referred to in piteous terms by Stafford in Nelson's version:

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<sup>63</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.26.

There was this old man they were beating back in the street,  
He said his age was forty-seven years old when we got into the station,  
Like they beat me they beat the other kids and the elderly fellow.  
They throw him almost through one of the radiators.  
Two of them pick him up and throw him into the wall.  
I thought he was dead over there.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.8 *Narrative Trail 5: Woodie King's Film: The Torture of Mothers*

There is no record of Nelson's assessment of the success of the Benefit event or the reception of its programme. Neither is it known whether he believed *Harlem's Six Condemned* to have fulfilled the commission he had set Reich. It is probable that obtaining justice for the Six was of greater importance to Nelson than preserving or perpetuating the artistic content of the Benefit, and that he simply pressed forward with further activity to achieve that aim. Nevertheless, the prospect of creating a more permanent record than could be achieved by a single performance proved to be an abiding attraction, eventually taking shape fourteen years later in a film version of *The Torture of Mothers*. Whilst this film has received no attention in scholarly writing about *Come Out*, it creates a new, and final narrative trail, leading *Come Out* from the 1960s into the changed circumstances of the Reagan era.

Viewed retrospectively, Reich's *Harlem's Six Condemned* functions both as a proto-version of *Come Out* and also the 1980 film *The Torture of Mothers: The Case of the Harlem Six*.<sup>65</sup> Lasting for 52 minutes, the film is almost twice the length of *Harlem's Six Condemned*, the screenplay being the result of collaboration between

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<sup>64</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.6.

<sup>65</sup> Essenay Entertainment released the film on VHS video in 1991 as part of its "Independent Treasures Collection", films produced by independent filmmakers. It was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Council for the Arts, the New York Council for the Humanities, and Henry Street Settlement.

Truman Nelson and the film's producer Woodie King (born 1937), an almost exact contemporary of Steve Reich.<sup>66</sup> The film was first broadcast in 1982 on Public Broadcasting System, WNET-TV, New York. In contrast to the ten hours of tape from which Reich assembled his sound collage, King's film is based on 'around 25 hours of audio tape recorded by the mothers during their heroic effort'.<sup>67</sup> There is no evidence of Reich's involvement with, or awareness of, King's film or even that Reich attempted to maintain contact with Truman Nelson.

As in *Harlem's Six Condemned*, the characters are identified almost entirely through contextual references to each other. In this film version the roles are all played by actors, with the exception of Conrad J Lynn, who appears as himself. The film's narration is by Adolph Caesar (1933-1986), famous for his subsequent role in Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple* (1985). The star of the film, Ruby Dee (b.1924) was already known for her performance in the 1961 film version of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and was married to Ossie Davies, who had played an important part in the 1966 Town Hall Benefit, so it is inconceivable there was no awareness of Reich's sound collage. The film additionally features Clarice Taylor, Louise Stubbs, Novella Nelson, Starletta DuPois, and Juanita Clarke as the mothers, with Ronald Barnes, Ronald Buchannan, Kenneth Green, W. Geoffrey King, Jimmy Taylor and Britt Williams, as the sons.<sup>68</sup> The use of actors means that, unlike the

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<sup>66</sup> Woodie King was born in Alabama and worked as an engineer for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit but moved into theatre as a result of his dissatisfaction with the low number of roles available for Black actors. A pioneer of the Black Theatre movement, he went on to found the New Federal Theatre in New York in 1970. See <http://newfederaltheatre.org/content.cfm?cntid=2>, accessed 5 September 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Notes printed on the VHS video sleeve for the 1991 Essenay Entertainment version of the film.

<sup>68</sup> Starletta DuPois (b. 1941) went on to appear in the 1989 TV version of *A Raisin in the Sun* and Clarice Taylor (1917-2011) subsequently became known in the 1980s for her appearances in *The Cosby Show*, a sitcom based

sound collage, the film operates in the realm of diegesis rather than mimesis – telling rather than showing – since the actual voices of the participants in the events (with the exception of Lynn) are not employed in King's film.

The film follows broadly the layout of Nelson's book, progressing from the Fruit Stall Riot to the murder of Mrs Sugar, to the testimony of the mothers. As already noted, there is an additional section at the end by Conrad Lynn, who provides an update on the case from the standpoint of 1980. The structure and narrative line of this film is outlined in Table 15.

Location	Time	Content [Page references are to <i>The Torture of Mothers</i> ].
Harlem – the Fruit Stand riot of 17 April, 1964	00 00	Opening Scene dramatizing the Fruit Stand Riot and the police beating of Frank Stafford.
	01 43	<i>New York Times</i> report of 19 April – '75 in Harlem Throw Fruit at Policemen'. Text taken verbatim from pp. 2-3.
	02 39	Introduction to Junius Griffin's article in <i>The New York Times</i> of May 29, 1964 and assertion that its claims have no basis in fact.
	03 15	Movie trailer and credits.
A meeting of around 40 people in the Friendship Community Baptist Centre.	04 22	Herbert Paine [pp. 18-20].
	05 44	Daniel Hamm [p.13].
	06 07	Robert Rice [p.21].
	06 15	Frank Stafford [pp. 4&5].
	06 55	Daniel Hamm [p.13].
	07 12	Wallace Baker [p.11].
	07 24	Daniel Hamm [p.14].
	07 35	Mrs Hamm [p 15].
The Hamm's house, Daniel talks to his mother.	08 43	Daniel Hamm [p.15].
Barber's shop.	09 22	Frank Stafford, [p.6].

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on an affluent African-American family. Lesser-known actors included Novella Nelson (b. 1939), who was no relation to Truman Nelson.

Friendship Community Baptist Centre.	09 45	Mrs Baker, [p.11].
	10 00	Frank Stafford, [p.6].
Friendship Community Baptist Centre.	10 40	Mrs Baker, [p.12].
	11 04	Mrs Hamm, [p.17].
	11 55	Mrs Baker, [p.13].
Images of police on streets, police station at precinct.	12 12	Narrator, [p.18].
Friendship Community Baptist Centre.	12 47	Frank Stafford, [pp.7&8].
	14 06	Wallace Baker, [p.61].
	14 30	Daniel Hamm, [p.63].
Images of the 1964 New York World's Fair.	14 45	Narrator takes over Hamm's words in this speech, moving into his own words.
Friendship Community Baptist Centre.	15 50	One woman stands up and says 'we want the whole world to hear this case'. Narrator continues [pp. 63-64].
In the kitchen of the Craig family home	17 28	Mrs Craig with her son in the kitchen, talking about him keeping pigeons, [p.96].
Rooftops of Harlem – the police and the pigeons	17 50	Mrs Hamm, outside, talking about Daniel using his lunch allowance to buy pigeons, [pp.96-98].
	19 15	Mrs Baker talking about the rooftops of Harlem being kept under constant surveillance. Not in book.
	19 34	Mrs Hamm, [p.96].
The Hamms' house	19 57	Narrator, [p.23].
	20 24	Mrs Hamm, [p.23].
Inside, then rooftops	21 03	Mrs Baker, [p.42].
The arrests Various, homes, cut to police coming into houses en masse.	21 35	Mrs Craig, [p.30].
	22.50	Mrs Rice, [p.26].
	23.21	Mrs Chancy, [p.45].
	23.35	Mrs Baker, [pp.39-40].
	25.18	Mrs Thomas, [pp. 34,36].
	27.11	Mrs Craig, [p.32].
	27.32	Mrs Baker, [p.41].
	28 20	Mrs Chancy, [p.47].
Blackout		
Events at the police station – various scenes	29 02	Mrs Rice, [p.29].
	29 16	Mrs Hamm, [p.24].
	29 34	Mrs Thomas, [p.37].
	29 50	Mrs Hamm, [p.24].
	30 10	Mrs Rice, [p.28].
	30 25	Mrs Thomas, [p.38].
	30 32	Mrs Hamm, [p.25].
	30 58	Mrs Rice, [p.29].
	31 10	Mrs Hamm, [p.25].
The killing of Mrs Sugar	31 58	Mrs Thomas, [p.38].
	31 12	Narrator, [p.38].
Voice-over stills of each boy.	33 02	Narrator, [p.43].

The boys in prison	33 32	Mrs Chancy, [p.47].
	34 29	Narrator, [pp.37/38].
	34 57	Mrs Rice, [p.50].
	35 46	Narrator, [p.49].
	36 01	Short clips from three mothers.
	36 24	Narrator, [p.50].
	36 45	Mrs Chancy, [p.51].
	38 31	Unidentified female narrator, [p.53].
	39 17	Narrator, [p.66].
	39 58	Unidentified female, not in book.
	40 11	Narrator, [p.69].
	40 19	Mrs Craig, [p.70].
The courtroom	41 14	Narrator, [pp.70-71].
Getting the lawyer the mothers want	42 02	Mrs Hamm, [p.72].
	42 30	Mrs Rice, [p.73].
	43 12	Mrs Hamm, [p.76].
	43 48	Mrs Baker, [p.76].
	44 06	Conrad Lynn, [pp. 72&81].
	45 42	Narrator, [p.82].
Shooting of James Powell by Lieutenant Detective Gilligan	46 30	Narrator, [pp. 88-89].
The summing up.	49 24	Conrad Lynn's update on the case. Five of the Harlem Six were released in 1972 Robert Rice was still in jail at the time of making the film.

Table 15: Structure of Woodie King Jnr's film *The Torture of Mothers*.

The film portrays all six mothers and all six sons. Whilst *Harlem's Six Condemned* had the actual mothers seated on stage while the tape was played, King's film shows glimpses of geographical locations around Harlem, with the screenplay differing both in timeline and place from Nelson's book. In the film, the mothers are first seen addressing the meeting whilst seated within the body of the room and then later talking in their own homes. Nelson's printed transcriptions ironed out some of the distinctive features of African-American speech and the speech used in the screenplay is further edited to enable the narrative to flow more easily, or perhaps to create a more cinematic experience for its audience. For example, Mrs Baker's short speech on page 76 of *The Torture of Mothers* forms a peripeteia as the bewildered mothers, who have no idea to whom they can turn,

stumble across Bill Epton, which eventually leads to Conrad Lynn assembling a new defence team for the Six. In the film version, Mrs Baker goes directly to Conrad J Lynn.

The actors do not attempt to imitate the actual voices of the participants<sup>69</sup> and at times the presentation of the characters seems almost at odds with the source recordings selected by Reich. For example, his choice of Daniel Hamm's voice for *Come Out* was based on the musical properties of the boy's voice, whereas in the film version the phrase loses its musicality as it is changed to: 'I had this big bruise on my leg from the beating. I had to like, open up the bruise, let some of the blood come out, come out to show them I was bleeding. I felt as if I hadn't have shown them this I wouldn't have went to the hospital at all'.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, Daniel Hamm appears to be saying these words to his mother rather than the interviewer, his voice stripped of its inherent tonal shape and delivered in a manner undistinguished from the actor's other words.

The film also creates inconsistencies. The opening scene shows Frank Stafford, the 31-year old door-to-door salesman, being brutally blinded by a police truncheon in the events surrounding the Fruit Stall riot. Stafford describes himself as 'the only fellow on the street wearing an eye patch right now'<sup>71</sup> but there is no evidence of an eye patch in his subsequent appearances in the film, and at points in the public

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<sup>69</sup> The use of the tape recorder in the film is idiosyncratic. In the opening scenes, ostensibly at the Friendship Community Baptist Centre, Frank Stafford addresses the audience from the front of the room with the tape recorder running at his side. In several of the sections where the mothers are speaking to camera, a Wollensak reel-to-reel tape recorder (the same brand as used by Reich in recording the sources for *It's Gonna Rain*) appears in full view as if the cameraman were filming the participants being recorded.

<sup>70</sup> This loses the semantic ambiguities of 'bruise blood', a phrase that Hamm stumbles over in the recorded version, pronouncing it as something more akin to 'blues blood'.

<sup>71</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.8.

meeting – that happened in any case while he was in hospital – he wears spectacles.

Whilst his voice on the tape recordings is relaxed, and ‘his deep timbre blurs the

words softly’,<sup>72</sup> the film presents him as highly traumatised by the events. At 9’ 22”

his words to the barber cutting his hair have an alarming, almost feverish quality,

which engenders mirth between the two waiting customers seated behind his back.

Such examples of cinematic license notwithstanding, the material in King’s film

follows the broad layout of the book and its main contribution to the discussion of

narrative trails lies in it offering a visual dimension to material that to this point had

been purely aural.

#### 4.9 *Conclusions*

*Come Out* and *It’s Gonna Rain* exhibit a strong family resemblance: both have

human speech extracts as their source material and use phased loops of these

speech extracts to create a compositional structure. The sibling likeness goes much

deeper than this, though, extending beyond the pieces themselves to the sound

collages that preceded them. In both cases, the collages Reich created are of

similar length and are composed of gobbets of human speech edited and

juxtaposed to create a narrative structure. These function as proto-versions of the

final piece and provide important clues in understanding the narrative dimensions

of those pieces.

Yet the two pieces are far from identical twins and the differences between

them are as important as their similarities. Ultimately, *Come Out* follows a more

complicated narrative trail than Reich’s previous pieces, with the overall diegesis

emerging from five narrative trails. The principle of working from sound source to

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<sup>72</sup> Nelson, *Op. cit.*, p.9.

sound collage, and then creating a phase piece is a feature of Reich's work dating back to *The Plastic Haircut*, but there are a number of notable differences in *Come Out*, which collectively make such narrative trails more complex.

In *Come Out*, Reich did not himself record the taped source material, which places the events outside his own diegesis and channels him towards an authorial narrative situation; although the tapes are the only surviving witness accounts of what actually took place, they had been recorded on at least three different occasions and subsequently edited by Truman Nelson;<sup>73</sup> Reich did not know and – at the point of creating the sound collage and *Come Out* – had not met the people with whose voices he was working;<sup>74</sup> he was a reluctant recruit to working with this material in the first place since – whatever the evidence might suggest – he did not see himself as a creator of sound collages; Reich agreed to create the required sound collage only because it provided an opportunity for obtaining new, high-profile material for his next phase piece; he had no say over the intended scenario for the sound collage; he disregarded the narrative significance of the finished sound collage in favour of the phase piece, only then to suggest much later that *Come Out* was charged with contextual meaning; and, finally, the original source materials used in the sound collage were subsequently re-worked independently of Reich in a film version, fourteen years later.

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<sup>73</sup> See June Meyer, "Sons and Mothers: The Harlem Six," *The Nation*, April 25, 1966, p.497. Despite some strongly-voiced criticisms, Meyer suggests that Nelson's greatest contribution lay in the way he gathered and edited his source materials while remaining faithful to each speaker's voice.

<sup>74</sup> Kyle Gann is alone in suggesting that Daniel Hamm told his story directly to Reich. See Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, p.198: '*Come Out* was drawn from an interview with a victim of a police beating, who told Reich, "I had to, like, let some of the bruise blood come out to show them."

Notwithstanding such labyrinthine twists and turns, it is possible to map out a narrative trail for *Come Out* that traces clear progression through the journey. The initial stage is concerned with the editing and arrangement of the source material by Truman Nelson in *The Torture of Mothers*, a publication specifically intended to create political impact by raising awareness of the injustices of police brutality and wrongful imprisonment suffered by the Harlem Six. This is followed by a second stage of narrative shaping as Reich works with the source recordings underlying *The Torture of Mothers* to create a dramatic sound collage for the Benefit concert. Here there is a bifurcation in the road, with Reich agreeing to produce the collage while simultaneously creating a phase piece from a sonically attractive speech snippet. As a result, in the third stage both the sound collage – *Harlem's Six Condemned* – and the phase piece – *Come Out* – become constituent parts of the Benefit, both framed by the content and context of that event. A fourth stage is reached in the subsequent reception of *Come Out* and its interpretation in music scholarship. Finally, there is the significance of *Come Out* in Reich's career as a composer, and the way in which his identity is shaped by the popularity and commercial success of the recording. The 1980 film version of *The Torture of Mothers* stands as a self-contained development in offering a new dramatisation of Nelson's book, completely independent of Reich's *Harlem's Six Condemned*.

## Chapter 5 Bye Bye, Art: 1967 and all that

### 5.1 *Narrative trails beyond Come Out*

Following the success of *Come Out* in 1966, Reich's interest in speech-based material began to wane, principally because he realised the limitations of the technology of the time and wished to compose music that could be performed live. It was these considerations, rather than an outright rejection of speech-based material, that led to his change of focus in 1967 with *Piano Phase* and *Violin Phase*, both for live instrumentalists. Reich had experimented using sounds of acoustic instruments in his 1966 phase piece, *Melodica*, but quickly came to realise that this was no more than an instrumental piece recorded on tape.<sup>1</sup> Although 1967 did not mark the end of Reich's work with recorded speech, therefore, his output became dominated by instrumental compositions.

Nevertheless, Reich also continued to work on further speech-based pieces at the same time. This led to two pieces, *Buy Art*, *Buy Art* and *My Name Is*, both of which sought to exploit the power of speech-based material, although neither would achieve the narrative power of either *Come Out* or *It's Gonna Rain*. *Buy Art*, *Buy Art* was disowned by the composer almost immediately following its première and barely referred to afterwards. By contrast, Reich devotes 382 words in his *Writings to My Name Is*,<sup>2</sup> signposting this as a possible direction in which his speech-based music might subsequently develop. Although Reich has reworked the piece on several occasions, however, *My Name Is* has made little lasting impact among his speech-based compositions, except – as will be seen – as a source of

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<sup>1</sup> Reich refers to *Melodica* as 'the last purely tape piece I made'. Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.22.

<sup>2</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

some dispute. Yet these two works cannot be cast aside quite so readily since a close reading of them through their – inevitably obscure – source materials reveals a new narrative trail that helps to explain Reich's withdrawal from speech-based music at this stage in his compositional career.

This is framed by the theme of money, which surfaces regularly in Reich's archival material from 1966 and 1967. Although not a new concern, the success of *Come Out*, particularly following its commercial release in 1967, marked a turning point for Reich as it appeared to vindicate his decision to make his living as a professional composer,<sup>3</sup> having moved from San Francisco in September 1965 in the belief that New York held more opportunities for this.<sup>4</sup> Despite Reich's seemingly privileged background,<sup>5</sup> he had worked in California with artists whose financial resources had been as scarce as his had become, with much of their output existing on a shoestring. Funding requests were made with characteristic ease by the San Francisco Mime Troupe, such as the following appeal at the performance of *Ruzzante's Maneuvers* on August 23, 1963.

We need help. We need actors, helpers, carpenters, friends, workers and money. If you would like to help, please call at 2-7462. Our next production will be Alfred Jarry's play, UBU ROI'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Reich's letters from this period indicate a desire to be commercially successful as a composer, which included being strict about being paid promptly. For instance, his correspondence with Prof. Charles Whittenberg of the Music Department at The University of Connecticut, Stoors, in October 1968 points out that having to wait six months to be paid for a concert would not be viable for him.

<sup>4</sup> Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.170.

<sup>5</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, *Minimalists*, London: Phaidon Press, 1996, p.51.

<sup>6</sup> Concert programmes for the Mime Troupe's performances show general admission prices to be \$2.00 (with a reduced price of \$1.75 for students), although the income of the performers must have added resonance to their political stance, as evinced by a personal call to patronage from the Troupe's founder, R.G. Davis in the programme for *Along Came A Spider and Event III (Coffee Break)* in February 1964:

To keep up this work of biting and screaming, laughing and hurting, we need money to pay our bills and some of our people. For those interested in the facts of theatre, we pay the large sum of 50 cents a performance, and in exchange ask for professional standards -- that is work, skill, and some professional night work as well. Our principle has been "little for materials and as much as possible

Lest such overt financial pleading might seem at odds with the Establishment critique of the subject-matter of many of the Troupe's works, R. G. Davis ends with a lighthearted quip: 'For those who feel we will be corrupted by money – try it!'. The financial climate at the San Francisco Tape Centre was possibly healthier, but this did not discourage the Centre from seeking to raise money from its patrons. The publicity brochure for the 1964-1965 season contains the statement that 'The San Francisco Tape Music Center is a non-profit corporation developed and maintained by a group of composers and creatively oriented sound engineers' together with the subscription plea elsewhere in the booklet:

Such a diverse program cannot be financed solely from concert receipts. We depend on the support of individuals in the community who are aware of the value of the Center as a focal point for new experiments in music and the allied arts.

A \$25.00 contribution will entitle you to admission to six events during the coming year, and will help to make possible the continued growth of the Center. The attached form should be mailed to us with your check. For further information call MArket 6-6145.

Reich appears to have seen no tension between creating and selling music, even if its political motivation might at times have been at odds with the aspirations of some of the audience members most able to afford it. As already noted, the purpose of *Come Out* was to raise money for the retrial of the Harlem Six and, whilst the general admission price for unreserved seating was set at \$2.00 (the same as the Mime Troupe performances), reserved seats went for \$10.00 with patron box seats priced at \$25.00, more than ten times the cost of unreserved seats.

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for people," but in actual fact, PG&E, Pacific Telephone, the landlord and the newspapers get the bulk of our income. If you would like to see this pattern change – send a donation and tell your ten friends to come to the theatre.

Although there can be no doubt that the intended ‘benefit’ of the première of *Come Out* on 17 April 1966 at Town Hall, New York was entirely for the Harlem Six, the additional, and possibly unexpected, benefit of the work for Reich’s reputation in New York was considerable. As Reich’s name would have been unfamiliar to most of the Town Hall audience, however, a secure financial income could not be guaranteed from this. The subsequent CBS recording of *Come Out* was a budget-priced recording, and repeat concert performances of the piece were unlikely to generate audiences of a size comparable with the Town Hall première.<sup>7</sup> The receipt of a commission in early 1967 for a new piece therefore provided the composer with an unexpected opportunity to build on his previous work with visual artists. Broadly coinciding with his March 1967 residency at the Park Place Gallery, the commission from Audrey Sabol was for a piece to accompany a major commercial art exhibition in Philadelphia involving a wide range of contemporary artists. Despite his waning enthusiasm for working with recorded speech, Reich set to work.

### 5.1 *Buy Art, Buy Art*

The tape composition created in response to Sabol’s commission was *Buy Art*, *Buy Art*, a piece that has attracted next to no scholarly attention and of which Reich

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<sup>7</sup> *Come Out to Show Them* (as it was still called at that point) was performed a further three times on 27, 28 & 29 May, 1966 at The Park Place Gallery, without the dramatisation of Nelson’s *The Torture of Mothers*. On each occasion, the programme included *Music for Piano and Tape*, *Melodica*, and *It’s Gonna Rain* alongside *Come Out*, which encouraged the linking of the two pieces in the minds of New York audiences. Performing works by the San Francisco Mime Troupe in New York without the Mime Troupe being present was clearly problematic. The performance by Steve Reich and Art Murphy of *Two Variations on a Watermelon* in concerts at Fairleigh Dickinson University (January 5, 1967) and The Park Place Gallery (17, 18 & 19 March 1967) went some way towards healing this compositional rupture. Reich was also ‘in residency’ at the Gallery between 5 and 30 March 1967, his music being used to accompany visual works by Dean Fleming, Charles Ross and Jerry Foyster. Reich’s concert total for the eleven months following the Town Hall Benefit therefore comprises only five concerts and an Instillation.

makes no mention in his *Writings*. Keith Potter's succinct account, based on an original interview with Reich, comprises the only description of the piece.

In the Spring of [1967], the art patroness Audrey Sable [sic] mounted an exhibition in Philadelphia consisting of small editions of prints and reproducible sculptures, which were then offered for sale at a reasonable price. For this, Reich made a piece using cheap cartridge cassette machines. This was based on a tape of the voices of various art contributors to the show saying 'Buy art, buy art'; Andy Warhol was among those whom he persuaded to record for him. He then made three identical copies of a cartridge containing an ordered version of these snippets, and let them run simultaneously. The cassette machines soon ran wildly out of synchronisation, and the result – entitled, rather inevitably, *Buy Art, Buy Art* – was an uncontrolled phasing process, producing 'a tacky overlay on the whole show'.<sup>8</sup>

Reich's rejection of the piece amounts to a denial of this narrative trail in his compositional journey, dismissing as a failure a composition that used materials and techniques he believed were the basis of his musical language, his so-called 'solution to vocal music'.<sup>9</sup> It also calls into question the effectiveness of his interaction with the visual arts community in Philadelphia as he felt that his music added nothing of value to the artistic experience of those attending the exhibition. Other contemporary accounts, though, indicate that the event itself was a great success.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, Reich's dismissal of his contribution to the exhibition cries out for reassessment when set in this broader critical context.

Potter's description of Audrey Sabol as an 'art patroness' paints her as a wealthy, detached, almost dilettante figure, an image that does not reflect her

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<sup>8</sup> Potter, *Op. cit.*, p.173.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Nyman, 'Steve Reich: An Interview With Michael Nyman', in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 112, No. 1537, (1971), p.230.

<sup>10</sup> A letter from Cynthia Richter to the organiser, Audrey Sabol, says that 'from all reports it was a great success'. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/images/detail/cynthia-richter-new-york-ny-to-audrey-sabol-villanova-pa-1872> (accessed 11/4/12).

significance in the art world of the early 1960s. Born in 1922, she is described in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art as a 'Curator and Art administrator of Philadelphia, Pa'. Her papers between 1962 and 1967, lodged with the Smithsonian, show the extent of her impact. This was largely through her association with the Arts Council, a volunteer organisation supported by the Young Men's/Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM/YWHA) of Philadelphia. Formed originally in 1955, the purpose of the Arts Council was to transform the perception of the city as a safe artistic backwater by bringing 'new and important cultural events to Philadelphia that were not being undertaken by any of the other institutions in town'.<sup>11</sup> Audrey Sabol was joint creative director together with Joan Kron, whose papers from the period are also archived in the Smithsonian. Although Audrey Sabol's relationship with the Arts Council had been turbulent, she was nevertheless involved to a greater or lesser extent with six exhibitions it mounted between 1962 and 1967: *Art 1963/A New Vocabulary* (October 1962); *Banner Art* (1964); *Dial 'Y' for Sculpture* (1964); *Multiples* (1966), and *A Wild West Show or How The West Has Done* (1966). The exhibition for which Reich contributed *Buy Art, Buy Art* was held in 1967 and was called *Museum of Merchandise*.

The *Museum of Merchandise* ran from 11 to 28 May 1967 and presented artworks for sale. This was unashamed promotion of art as consumer objects/experiences that could be commodified and sold in contrast to the showing of art objects to be relished regardless of their commercial potential. Monetary considerations were clearly uppermost in the minds of the exhibition's organisers since finance was an ongoing problem for the Arts Council. The 1966 exhibition *A Wild West Show or How The West Has Done* had generated income of \$318.50 but

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<sup>11</sup> Marina Pacini, 'Who but the Arts Council?', *American Art Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4, (1987), p.9.

in so doing had run up expenditure of over \$3000, which explains the clear remit of the *Museum of Merchandise* to sell its stock. The message to the punters was simple: buy art, buy art. New York counter-cultural artist Lil Picard's description of the forthcoming event left no doubts:

The Museum of Merchandise opens May 11 in Philadelphia with consumer goods designed and adapted by artists for the collector. Contact Audrey Sabol, 800 Eagle Farm Road, Villanova, Pa., 19085, phone, 215-LA 5 7535. Quote: "Lest there be any confusion we are not tuned in, switched on, hip, groovy, psychedelic, nor even mixed media, but hopefully we are ecological L.S.I. ... (large scale integration), probing the interfaced situation...with body packaging show and communications, shakers, art and fashion, sports, and merchandises by artists like Larry Zox, Watts, Jason Seeley, Rauschenberg (bathroom tiles) Lichtenstein, Trova, Kaprow, Dine, June Hildebrand (vinyl-nude-ties), and many others.<sup>12</sup>

Some objects were one-offs, such as the 'storefront' (which functioned as the entrance to the exhibition) and the 'wedding dress', both by Christo. The primary focus was on selling smaller mass-produced items designed by artists, with production largely overseen by Audrey Sabol.<sup>13</sup> Despite the unashamed commercialism of the *Museum of Merchandise*, however, the exhibition eventually ran \$1800 over budget.<sup>14</sup>

The impressive array of twenty-eight artists included some of the most enduring names of the period, incorporating a variety of disciplines and styles: illustrators (e.g. Irwin Fleminger); printmakers (e.g. Allan d'Archangelo, Lawrence

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<sup>12</sup> *East Village Other* – Vol. 2 No. 11, May 1-15, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> The merchandise was diverse: a cup-and-saucer by Roy Lichtenstein, a yellow fragrance punningly called 'You're-In' by Andy Warhol and window shades with sky designs by Geoffrey Hendricks, subsequently featured (with many other objects) in the *New York Times* and *Home Furnishings Daily*. Several letters concerning the manufacture of the items are found at <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/images/collection/audrey-sabol-papers-5593> [accessed 11/4/12].

<sup>14</sup> Pacini, *Op. cit.*, p.17.

Zox); sculptors (e.g. Nancy Graves, Peter Forakis, Preston McClanahan, Richard Serra); and representatives of major movements such as Pop Art (Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein) and Fluxus (Bici and Geoff Hendricks). All twenty-eight recorded their voices for Reich's *Buy Art, Buy Art*, perhaps in the hope that the direct appeal of their own voices might encourage a good level of retail activity in the exhibition.

It is not known when or how Steve Reich first came into contact with Audrey Sabol. It could have been through the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, although Reich was at that time a secular Jew; or through Reich's longstanding friend and collaborator William T. Wiley, who clearly knew Sabol well enough to write to her in December 1965 with a very familiar tone; or again through Les Levine, another long-term collaborator of Reich.<sup>15</sup> A draft of a letter dated 2 September 1966 expresses Reich's eagerness to meet up<sup>16</sup> and he wrote formally to Sabol on 5 February 1967, as preparations for the exhibition were well under way, at this stage implying that the words to be spoken were left to the discretion on individual contributors, rather than each saying, 'Buy Art, Buy Art'.

I just recently received a phone call from Les Levine who was the first to contact me about doing a tape. He wanted to make a 'telephone commercial' and to accommodate him I bought a phone pick up to run into my recorder. The sound of the recorded phone voice is limited in high and low frequencies and is of fairly low volume – perfect for background music. After considering this I want to use Les's idea as my means of acquiring tape from everybody. This will give a chance to speak to each other, set up a

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<sup>15</sup> Both were involved in projects as recently as the 2005 films, *Refuge* (57 minutes) and *Talking with the Dalai Lama* (27 minutes). Produced and directed by John Halpern, Les Levine wrote and narrated the film, with music being provided by Steve Reich. Released by MDS Productions, the films explore how increasing numbers of Westerners are drawn to Buddhism. See, <http://www.refugefilm.com/page.htm>, accessed 24/1/13. In e-mail correspondence with the author, John Halpern confirmed that he created a collage sanctioned by Reich based on extracts from four existing pieces, including *Different Trains* and *Clapping Music*.

<sup>16</sup> This 'letter' is drafted on the reverse of an undated copy of a letter to Bernard Stollman at ESP Disk Ltd concerning discussions about commercial recording of Reich's work. Handwritten at the end of the letter is a note to credit Les Levine for coming up with the idea. The correspondence is archived at the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

pleasant and constant context for all the source tapes and give the finished product a uniform sound.

Could you please make up a brief mailing to the effect that I want everyone interested to call me and I'll record them from the phone? Obviously everyone will be free to say (or read) whatever they like – though this format will most likely solve the problem of overlong source tapes. I'd appreciate your making the mailing up soon to prevent people from sending me tapes of their own which at this point I don't think I want at all.<sup>17</sup>

A question was raised subsequently as to the legality of the recordings themselves. As he had indicated to Audrey Sabol, Reich recorded the participants' voices from telephone conversations but did not use the beep sound that was at that time required by law for taping of voices from a phone.<sup>18</sup>

*Buy Art, Buy Art* is considerably longer than any of Reich's previous tape pieces, lasting for 71' 03" in total. Track 1 lasts for 40' 15" and Track 2 for 30' 48", although the division into tracks is determined by the length of the original tape cartridges.<sup>19</sup> Since the composition was based on the three tapes being identical, the construction of the cartridge loops can be inferred from this single archived tape. It is difficult to identify the twenty-eight speakers from the recording alone, and each voice becomes an anonymous narrator with the simple message to 'buy art'. Reich's notes, however, provide a catalogue of the speakers, arranged in alphabetical order, which stands as something of an A to Z of contemporary artists. Reich's recorded each participant delivering two statements of the phrase, 'Buy Art,

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/images/detail/steve-reich-to-audrey-sabol-1865>, accessed 18/2/12.

<sup>18</sup> Pacini, *Op. cit.*, p.17, refers to how Joan Kron's notes for an appearance on the Johnny Carson Show of 1/6/67 indicate that a lawyer in Philadelphia had raised this as an issue at the time.

<sup>19</sup> The recording is archived at the Paul Sacher Stiftung and consists of two tracks on CD SR-CD-2. The three recordings used in the actual performance were on continuous loop cartridges rather than reel-to-reel tape. In a letter to Hugh Davis of April 24, 1967, Reich indicates that the cartridges were to be played on Audio Repeater machines.

'Buy Art', which is then repeated as many times as necessary to fill the space available.

The tape is carefully assembled: the voices are presented in alphabetical order of surname, and each contributor is allocated approximately thirty seconds. The overall length of the resulting loop is therefore more than sufficient to allow the voices to move out of phase, and should have served to regulate the phasing of the loops. However, because of wide variations in accent, pacing and stress, the number of times that each person says, 'buy art, but art' differs considerably. This probably accounts for the chaotic effect of the phasing process to which Reich alludes, contrasting with *Come Out* where the voice of the same speaker was phased against itself.

1	William Accorsi [M]	15	Roy Lichtenstein [M]
2	Stephen Antanakos [M]	16	Jean Linder [F]
3	Arman [M]	17	Marcia Marcus [F]
4	Christo [M]	18	Preston McClanahan [M]
5	Allan d'Archangelo [M]	19	James Melchert [F]
6	Dean Fleming [M]	20	Charles Ross [M]
7	Irwin Fleminger [M]	21	Richard Serra [M]
8	Peter Forakis [M]	22	Betty Thompson [F]
9	Nancy Graves [F]	23	Frank Viner [M]
10	Bici Forbes Hendricks [F]	24	Andy Warhol [M]
11	Geoff Hendricks [M]	25	Robert Watts [M]
12	June Hildebrand [F]	26	William T Willey [M]
13	Robert Indiana [M]	27	Phyllis Yampolsky [F]
14	Will Insley [M]	28	Laurence Zox [M]

Table 16: Arrangement of speakers' voices in *Buy Art, Buy Art*

Table 16 lists the artists whose voices are heard in the recording. Voices 1 to 16 are contained on Track 1 on the Sacher tape; voices 17 to 28 are on Track 2 although there is no suggestion the piece is intended to have an interval between these two tracks. Of the twenty-eight voices recorded, twenty of them are male and, in stark contrast to *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, no African-American voices are included. The speakers are arranged on the tape in alphabetical order of surname and the performance tape is transcribed in full in Appendix 8.

There are significant differences between the speakers in terms of pacing, inflection, accent and emphasis.<sup>20</sup> The pacing particularly affects the number of repetitions that take place within the 30 seconds allocated by Reich to each voice. William Accorsi's delivery, for example, is slow, his 23 repetitions contrasting greatly with those of Charles Ross whose rapid-fire articulation allows 170 repetitions within his allotted time. The speed of Dean Fleming's 73 repetitions blurs the meaning of the words, which sound increasingly akin to 'buy you out' as they are repeated.

There is a wide variation of speech inflection between those whose voice pitch is uniform and those with inherent musical shape. For example, Robert Watts' delivery is measured and has very little tonal variation, both of his statements of 'buy art' having very similar pitch and rhythm. Nancy Grace's style is also matter-of-fact with little distinctive rhythmic shaping, and Jean Linder's mechanistic delivery has hardly any inflection. Bici Forbes Hendricks has a slight lilt to the phrasing whereas her husband, Geoff Hendricks, has a melodic inflection on the word 'art' so that it receives two pitches, a falling perfect 4th the first time, and a falling major 3rd the second time. Irwin Fleminger creates more sense of melodic balance

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<sup>20</sup> There are also some slight glitches in the recording quality, which would have been more evident with sustained repetition.

between the two statements with a falling major third being balanced by a falling minor third a tone lower. Andy Warhol's inflections contain some triadic pitch shapes, although Phyllis Yampolsky has the widest tonal range; a major sixth.

Accent and pronunciation also differentiate the speakers. Christo's pronunciation is regular, with a faintly rolled 'r' on his first 'buy art', whereas Arman's distinctive French accent changes the phrase into 'buy heart, buy art'. Stephen Antanakos has a strident tone with a lengthened 'buy' and a clipped staccato 'art', in contrast to Preston McClanahan's mellow, lilting minor-key delivery. Others are grainy, such as Richard Serra's irregular and unsettled timing between the repetitions. Frank Viner's pronunciation of the word 'art' has a plosive at the end, particularly the first one, which could function musically as a percussive attack, similar to that of Laurence Zox. By contrast, William Wiley's pronunciation is indistinct, and sounds more like 'my art, my art' throughout. Even where there is no distinctive accent there are differing emphases of metre and emphasis. At one extreme, William Accorsi has little regularity to his delivery and Marcia Marcus is even more distinctive in her irregularity. Charles Ross generates a rapid, 'dotted-rhythm' motif whilst Dean Fleming instinctively adopts a triple metre. Robert Indiana also gives the phrase a lilting quality in a regular triple metre, whilst Phyllis Yampolsky speaks the phrase with an implicit 6/8 rhythm.

In all, the imperative to 'buy art, buy art' is stated 1,571 times, which amounts to a level of product promotion seldom encountered in a musical composition. This assumes that visitors to the event will read the exhibition notes and therefore identify individual voices within this hotchpotch, collectively speaking with one voice that the art works for sale are beloved of everyone in the art world: so buy them! *Buy Art, Buy Art* therefore exemplifies Robert Fink's view of Minimalist music as 'both the sonic analogue and, at times, a sonorous constituent of a characteristic

repetitive experience of self in mass-media consumer society'.<sup>21</sup> Since the avowed purpose of the exhibition was indeed to sell merchandise, the exhortation to buy art – for those who could pick out what was being said – must have seemed completely natural.

Reich is an absent narrator in *Buy Art, Buy Art* and, as in his previous sound collages, assumes the role of auteur, controlling the length of time and the order in which the voices sound. As separate agents within the composition, each artist brings his or her individual narrative trail to the piece, and as with each of his speech-based pieces, the composer's voice is only heard through their words. Although reliant on Audrey Sabol as convenor of the project,<sup>22</sup> Reich was already well acquainted with several of the people whose voices he recorded. As noted above, William T Wiley was a long-standing collaborator, who spans Reich's own story between West and East Coast. The two had worked together on the San Francisco Mime Troupe's December 1963 production of *Ubu Roi* for which Wiley was the designer,<sup>23</sup> and would do so again in the 1968 experimental piece *Over Evident Falls*, which inspired Reich's *Pendulum Music* in the same year. Reich had also worked with Dean Fleming and Charles Ross and was involved in a gallery project with both artists at the Park Place Gallery in Lower Manhattan, New York at the time of composing *Buy Art, Buy Art*. Running from 5-30 March 1967, Fleming's *Primal Panels* were exhibited alongside Charles Ross' *Prisms and Lenses* and Jerry

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<sup>21</sup> Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> James Melchert, for example, wrote to Reich on February 16 1967 to apologise for having missed whatever deadline Sabol had given, indicating that she had contacted at least some of the participants to arrange for their voices to be recorded by Reich. He also wrote to a number of other exhibitors such as Nancy Graces and Phyllis Yampolsky following the exhibition.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p.183.

Foyster's *Mirrors*, whilst continuous tape music by Reich played in the background all the time that the exhibition was open.<sup>24</sup>

Reich's assessment of the *Museum of Merchandise* was clouded by his concerns about the disarray caused by the phasing process not working as he had intended, which he saw as tainting the whole exhibition. Yet the reaction of the Press was positive, with Victoria Donohoe writing in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* of 21 May – a week before the end of the exhibition – that 'few shows ever swept aside the old rigid boundaries separating art from craftwork with the dramatic flair that this one has, and few local shows ever got as much diversified national publicity'. The impact of the exhibition almost forty years later can be gauged further by its revival in April 2003 by Cheryl Harper, curator of the Gershman Y, the new name for the Y.M./Y.W.H.A. Many of the exhibits and artefacts of the 1967 exhibition were brought back as was Reich's original recording of *Buy Art, Buy Art*, described as 'a work of chanting and chattering voices that he wrote and recorded for the 1967 show where it was played continuously'.<sup>25</sup> There is no reference to multiple tape players or phasing and the assumption is that on this occasion the performance was supplied by one tape only, which would have considerably increased the audibility of the voices on the tape.

While working towards the *Museum of Merchandise* Reich was actively pursuing his next speech-based tape piece. He had already discussed preliminary

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<sup>24</sup> For the Park Place Gallery, Reich chose a purely instrumental piece, *Melodica*, a score of which was on public display while the music was playing, together with the programme note that 'a limited number of duplicate tapes of *Melodica*, signed and complete with score are available for purchase'. In addition to the exhibition, the Gallery mounted a series of three evening concerts on 17, 18, 19 March entitled 'Three Evenings of Music by Steve Reich', each of which included *Come Out* on the programme.

<sup>25</sup> A full account of the April 2003 revival of the *Museum of Merchandise* may be found in Rita Reif's article 'How Much Is That Storefront in the Window?' in *The New York Times* of 18 May, 2003.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/18/arts/art-architecture-how-much-is-that-storefront-in-the-window.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>, (Accessed 10/4/12).

ideas with Phyllis Yampolsky, whose voice he chose to record for *Buy Art, Buy Art* (her husband Peter Forakis also being a contributor to the piece). By 1967 Yampolsky, who had been active in the Judson Gallery in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s and in 1967, was New York's Park Department's artist-in-residence and an influential figure in promoting participatory arts in the City's parks.<sup>26</sup> Reich wrote to Yampolsky in April 1967 with an outline for a piece entitled *Any Loops Phase – My Name Is*. Whilst there is no record of this piece having been performed in New York's parks, Reich describes his ideas for recording members of the audience speaking their names, and then making loops from these tapes that might run for anywhere between thirty minutes and two hours. This idea was duly carried forward in a new speech-based piece with the shortened title *My Name Is*.

## 5.2 *My Name Is*

In contrast to *Buy Art, Buy Art*, where narrative trails are tightly focused on a specific art exhibition and the partially-revealed identities of the twenty-eight speakers associated with it, *My Name Is* relies on the pseudo-anonymity of the particular audience members whose voices are recorded. As befits such a site-specific work, the participants are unique to the given occasion and the composition is inevitably shaped by the circumstances in which it is performed. *My Name Is* has gone through a number of distinct versions over a period of almost two decades, each of which creates a narrative trail, starting with the first performance of 1967 for which an archival recording is available.<sup>27</sup> A second narrative trail is created as

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<sup>26</sup> These were known as 'Hoving Happenings': large-scale public participatory artistic events in the New York City parks, named after Thomas Hoving (1931-2009) who had been appointed Commissioner of Parks in 1965 and moved the following year to be Director of the Metropolitan Opera on the strength of his reputation in promoting community arts.

<sup>27</sup> This is referred to as Performance 2 in the following discussion.

the work is reshaped in the 1980s for the ensembles that performed it, both Reich's own ensemble and the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum. A third distinct trail is created as the piece form the inspiration for the soundtrack to the film *My Name is Oona*, although in chronological terms this predates the 1980s work.

### 5.2.1 *First narrative trail: recording the audience*

*My Name Is* grew from Reich's correspondence with Phyllis Yampolsky, emerging in May 1967 at almost exactly the same time as *Buy Art, Buy Art*, which may explain why it was not abandoned following the composer's dispiriting experience with the *Museum of Merchandise*. The composer's description of the piece sets it in the context of experimental electronic music.

*My Name Is ...* was done in '67 against a context of what was then called live electronic music – Cage, Stockhausen, and so on, – and the idea was, instead of playing tapes in a dark hall, we'd twist dials in a lighted hall. So someone from the group stands at the door as people are coming into the hall and says: "Will you please say my name is – and then your first name." So you record: "My name is X." "My name is Y." And then you take your tape backstage during the first half of the concert, and while the concert is going on you're in the back editing out five, six, seven names that you think are particularly interesting melodically and making three identical tape loops of each of those names.<sup>28</sup>

Although demonstrating a characteristic interest in the melodic qualities of human speech and the potential phase relationships of the particular set of names he recorded, Reich also hints that the way the participants might speak their names could reveal something about their personalities.

Musically, you'd be accepting whatever the phase relationships were. Psychologically the result was interesting because usually people said their names in a very offhand way, because it was a funny thing to do when you walked into the hall. They'd been through the first half of the concert and now they were sitting quietly ready for the second half, and so their

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<sup>28</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.29.

perception of the whole thing was reflecting on themselves and how they were no longer in that state of mind. And also hearing your name in that way tends to get to people – it's sort of like doing a sketch of people at the door and it was very suited to doing at concerts where pieces like *Pendulum Music* might also be performed.<sup>29</sup>

The original version of Reich's handwritten score is archived at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, and is also reproduced by Dean Suzuki<sup>30</sup> and Georg Sachse:<sup>31</sup> a copy is included in Appendix 9. Additionally, the Stiftung has three archive performances of *My Name Is*, which – in the absence of any commercially produced recordings – provide unique insights into the work, its performance situation, and the individual and collective identity of the participants. The recordings are referred to in the following discussion as Performance 1, Performance 2 and Performance 3, a numbering that reflects their arrangement in the Sacher archive rather than their chronological order. Each performance represents a slightly different narrative path within this first trail.

Performance 1 consists of a single track lasting for 13' 32", recorded on Sacher disk CD-SR 18, track 2. This comprises an incomplete, undated and unattributed performance of *My Name Is*, but identifiable as that given at UC Berkeley University Museum on November 7, 1970.<sup>32</sup> As the voice of the eighteenth candidate is recorded before the start of the concert, musicians are heard in the background

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<sup>29</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.30.

<sup>30</sup> Dean Suzuki, *Minimal Music: Its Evolution as seen in the works of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and LaMonte Young*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1991, p.469.

<sup>31</sup> Georg Sachse, *Sprechmelodien, Mischklänge, Atemzüge: Phonetische Aspekte im Vokalwerk Steve Reichs*, Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 2004, p.116.

<sup>32</sup> This means that Performance 1 is three years later than Performance 2, which is clearly labelled as 1967. For full details of the performance see <http://archive.org/details/ReichBerkeleyMuseum>, (accessed 11/4/12), which contains a live performance of four works by Steve Reich: *Four Organs*, *My Name Is*, *Piano Phase*, and *Phase Patterns*. The commentary states that, 'the resonant acoustics of the University of California at Berkeley Museum's concrete interior were especially appropriate for "Four Organs", with its long additive sustained chords over a maraca pulse. The capacity crowd occupied every conceivable area of the interior space, including walkway ramps suspended over gallery spaces. It was an electrifying evening!'

playing short snippets from *Four Organs* (completed in January 1970 and the first piece on the programme that evening). The recording of the names is of barely adequate quality, and there is distortion on some names as well as significant reverberation in the hall in which the recording takes place. Consequently, several names are indistinct and their identity partially masked before the phasing process gets under way.

The recording of the names of audience members before the concert seems formal, perhaps slightly tense, and there is a limited sense of interaction between the participants and the interviewer. This unidentified interviewer – possibly Reich himself - becomes the principal agent in creating the narrative vehicle by which the composer's voice is heard and is heard directly in four of the participants' encounters. His manner on each occasion is matter-of-fact. With Participant 12, his manner is no-nonsense ('one more time please'); he is equally forthright in asking Participant 14, 'what's your name'. The instruction to Participant 15 conveys a sense of hectoring, 'Can you say it again, please: *My name is ...* One more time, please', whilst the exchange with Participant 21 is peremptory: 'Just say your name in there'. Some respondents clearly interpreted his manner as brusque. Participant 18 responds to his request with, 'I'll tell you if you tell me why you're asking', whilst Participant 19 retorts with a simple 'why?'. Underlying the presumed willingness of audience members to participate, there is a sense of forced narration bordering on a looting of individual identity for purely musical means as names are extracted perfunctorily from the participants.<sup>33</sup> The selection of voices is heterogeneous, embracing a range of ages, accents and timbres. Female voices dominate the

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<sup>33</sup> Reich's apparent fixation on extracting particular information from his interviewees reemerges in his tenacious extraction of times and dates in his interviews for *Different Trains* with Virginia and Lawrence Davis. See Chapter 6 below.

recording, with only seven of the twenty-one participants being male. The numbers in Table 17 indicates the order in which the voices are heard.

Female voices	Louise [1] Mimi [2] Berich [4] Joy [5] Carol [6] Brenda [7] Anne [8] Deborah [9] Meryl [11] Nurea [16] Vera [18] Reka [20] Wilma [21] <i>Indistinct</i> [22]	Male Voices	Borscht [3] Charles [10] Jack [13] Roshan [14] Kenneth [15] Darius [17] Laurie [19]
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Table 17: Arrangement of speakers' voices in *My Name Is* [Performance 1]

Six of these twenty-two voices are used in the final piece, of which two are male and four are female; there is none of African-American heritage.<sup>34</sup> Reich makes no attempt to pair similar timbres between the male and female voices, the final order being female, female, male, female, male, female. These appear in a different order to that in which they were recorded with no apparent correlation between the two, the final sequence of participants being 7 – 6 – 14 – 8 – 10 – 5. Participant 6 – who originally announced ‘My name is Carol’ – is now introduced by another speaker with, ‘Her name is Carol’, which does not appear in the opening recordings. This changes the relationships in the piece as Carol is now ‘introduced’

<sup>34</sup> By contrast, Gobbet 4 of *Harlem's Six Condemned* starts with the words ‘My name is Daniel Hamm’. The apparent evaporation of colour between this piece and *My Name Is* within a year perhaps supports the view that the speech patterns of the Harlem Six became diluted in a wash of whiteness. This view of the tension of racial identity is reflected in Loren Kajikawa’s analysis of Eminem’s *My Name Is*, which is seen as a re-articulation of whiteness using forms of Black cultural identity. See Loren Kajikawa, “Eminem’s *My Name Is*: Signifying Whiteness, Rearticulating Race” in *Journal of the Society for American Music*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (2009), p.341.

by someone whose identity we do not know, leaving her as neither protagonist nor antagonist, but merely a passive agent in the piece.

The other participants become protagonists in *My Name Is* as their voices are looped; firstly against themselves to create a phasing effect, and secondly overlapped so that the names merge into one another. The loops themselves move rapidly out of phase, which renders the names indistinct very quickly; the identity of the speakers is clarified only when the loops return to synchronicity. In each case, the introduction of a new looped name creates an implicit antagonist who quickly assumes the role of protagonist as the previous voice fades.<sup>35</sup>

1 44 – 4 32	Phased loop based on speaker 7: My name is Brenda <i>Phase length: 2' 48</i>
3 32 – 7 01	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 6: Her name is Carol. <i>Phase length: 3' 29". Overlap with previous speaker: 60"</i>
6 10 – 9 23	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 14: My name is Roshan. <i>Phase length: 3' 13". Overlap with previous speaker: 51"</i>
8 28 – 11 52	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 8: My name is Anne. <i>Phase length: 3' 24". Overlap with previous speaker: 55"</i>
10 40 - end	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 10: My name is Charles. <i>Phase length: 2' 52". Overlap with previous speaker: 72"</i>
13 23 - end	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 5: My name is Joy. <i>Phase length: 9". Overlap with previous speaker: 9"</i>

Table 18: Phase relationships in *My Name Is* [Performance 1]

This establishes a broad principle rather than a precise structure as there is no regularity to either the phasing period for each voice, or the overlap time between

<sup>35</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, 'Steve Reich: Music as a Gradual Process Part II', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 20, (1981), p.261 has drawn attention to the rapidity with which the phase loops move in and out with each other in comparison with the way the process occurs in *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*.

that voice and its predecessor. Despite this irregularity, a listener could perceive these lengths as similar, since each voice phases for approximately three to three-and-a-half minutes with each of the overlapping periods lasting for approximately one minute. The final two voices do not overlap in the same way as the others since both finish the piece together, meaning that the final voice – Joy – does not have a sole phasing section, but speaks for only nine seconds alongside the previous speaker, Charles.

Dean Suzuki points to the irregularity of the phase relationships as being a significant irritant to Reich, and it is the difficulties presented by these, rather than disenchantment with the use of speech-based music, that drove the composer away from this more experimental form of it:

Since the work involves live performance with tape recorders, it is not possible to determine the phase relationships of all three voices at all times and often the loops did not begin in unison, except at the outset of the piece. Reich even states, “Sometimes it was in unison and we would press the pause button to get it out.” Also, unlike his other compositions, different patterns or phrases were overlapped with one another. In all previous works ... only one pattern is heard at a time. The aesthetic of the work was not altogether pleasing to Reich, who eventually dropped the piece from his performing repertoire. The composer says, “Ultimately, I lost interest in it because the phase relationships were not worked out.”<sup>36</sup>

Performance 2 of *My Name Is* lasts in total for 35' 11", almost three times the length of Performance 1.<sup>37</sup> Recorded at Temple University, Philadelphia, on 12 May

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<sup>36</sup> Suzuki, *Op. cit.*, pp.469-470.

<sup>37</sup> This performance is recorded on CD28 at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. The grouping of the performance on two separate tracks appears to have no significance: track one ends at 14' 44" and the timeline starts again for track two, although the second track runs directly on from the first and there is no interruption in the recording. There is a note on the recording of Part 1 that the ‘engineer missed beginning of piece on original recording, tape ran out before completion of dubbing’. Reich’s correspondence in July 1967 with Don Wilson, the Program Director of an Educational/Community Broadcasting Channel called WHYY-TV, which had studios and offices in both Delaware and Pennsylvania, indicates that the Temple University performance was actually the première of the piece. Reich requests a dub of the performance to be sent and this recording is almost certainly the dub of that performance.

1967, this performance took place six months before the 'première' on Saturday 11 November 1967 at the School of Visual Arts in New York.<sup>38</sup> During the first 2' 49", forty-nine members of the audience announce their names to the tape recorder, more than double that in Performance 1 although it is not possible to know what percentage of the audience either accounted for. The gender balance is more evenly spread in Performance 2, with twenty-three of the participants being male and twenty-six of them female.

Most voices sound youthful and were probably students at the University; they are largely undifferentiated by ethnicity. Throughout the recording of the names at the start there are sounds of people gathering prior to the concert.<sup>39</sup> The female interviewer has an engaging and reassuring manner and her tone is welcoming and friendly throughout, contrasting with her counterpart in Performance 1. Those who need additional help and encouragement are given it, such as Participant 43 (Dick), and Participant 44 (Joan). She offers several positive framing comments: simple greetings; giving thanks to the participants; suggesting helpful instructions, sharing an empathetic chuckle over unusual names such as Participant 17 (JC), Participant 20 (Mouse) and Participant 23 (Dotty). In the case of speakers 45 and 47, the interviewer uses the person's name, thus creating an implicit relationship.

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<sup>38</sup> The programme for the November performance indicates a series of concerts on six dates between 10 and 19 November 1967, referred to as 'Fall Gallery Concerts'. *My Name Is* was performed on two of these occasions (Saturday and Sunday 11 & 12 November). The patrons of the event included Audrey Sabol, who commissioned *Buy Art, Buy Art*. Reich's attempts to obtain the recording of the concert is documented in his correspondence starting on 7 July 1967 with Don Wilson. Although Wilson left his job at the station in August 1967, he sent the recording to Reich on 2 December 1967.

<sup>39</sup> There are also sounds of the audience talking during the performance, which are more intrusive than simply the contextual sounds on the source recordings (to the extent that a scream is heard at 07' 37").

Female voices	Gail [3] Joanne [6] Anne [15] Alla [16] Elyse [19] Mouse [20] Johanna [22] Dotty [23] Linda [24] June [25] Rhona [27] Anne [28] Hannah [29] Ellen [30] Beverley [31] Janice [32] Lynne [33] Kee Jo Lee [34] Betty [36] Rodanne [39] Laylani [40] Anita [42] Joan [44] Sue [46] Linda [48] Lauren [49]	Male Voices	Jonathan [1] Arno [2] David [4] Dave [5] John [7] Stuart [8] Jack [9] Terry [11] Dennis [12] Harry [13] George [14] JC [17] John [18] Jack [21] Joe [26] Sam [35] Terry [37] Norman [38] Hubert [41] Dick [43] Henry [45] Mike [47]
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Table 19: Arrangement of speakers' voices in *My Name Is* [Performance 2]

From this selection,<sup>40</sup> Reich selects eleven voices of which only two are female – participant 16 (Alla) and participant 15 (Anne) – so that when the female voices are introduced they are paired and drowned out by the final male voice.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Some names appear more than once in the introduction. There are two women named Anne [numbers 15 and 28] and two women named Linda [numbers 24 and 48]. There are three pairs of men's names: John [numbers 7 and 18], Jack [numbers 9 and 21], and Terry [numbers 11 and 37]. It is not possible with these five pairings to be certain which person has been granted the role of protagonist in the actual performance.

<sup>41</sup> Although there is nothing to suggest that Reich's selection was based by anything other than aural considerations, it is possible that it reveals a natural inclination by Reich – at least in earlier works – to use male rather than female voices, or towards monotimbral approaches, or even a patriarchal disposition towards the role of man in giving names to all living. See Genesis 2:20-23, where Adam is invited by God to give names to all living creatures, culminating in his naming of 'woman' as she was taken out of 'man'.

<b>TRACK ONE</b>	2 52 – 6 01	Phased loop based on speaker 1: My name is Jonathan <i>Phase length: 3' 07"</i>
	5 06 – 8 50	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 2: My name is Arno <i>Phase length: 3' 44". Overlap with previous speaker: 55"</i>
	8 13 – 12 07	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 17: My name is JC <i>Phase length: 3' 54". Overlap with previous speaker: 37"</i>
	11 06 – 0 58 [on Track 2]	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 4: My name is David <i>Phase length: 3' 44". Overlap with previous speaker: 61"</i>

<b>TRACK TWO</b>	0 00 – 4 05	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 8: My name is Stuart <i>Phase length: 4' 05". Overlap with previous speaker: 58"</i>
	3 00 – 7 20	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 9 or 21: My name is Jack <i>Phase length: 4' 20". Overlap with previous speaker: 65"</i>
	6 51 – 11 46	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 5: My name is Dave <i>Phase length: 4' 54". Overlap with previous speaker: 29"</i>
	10 30 – 13 59	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 37: My name is Terry <i>Phase length: 4' 20". Overlap with previous speaker: 65"</i>
	12 50 – 16 46	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 16: My name is Alla <i>Phase length: 3' 56". Overlap with previous speaker: 69"</i>
	15 45 – 20 24	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 15 or 28: My name is Anne <i>Phase length: 4' 40". Overlap with previous speaker: 61"</i>
	18 28 – 20 24	Starts to fade in - phased loop based on speaker 14: My name is George <i>Phase length: 3' 56". Overlap with previous speaker: 116"</i>
The recording stops abruptly at 20 24.		

Table 20: Phase relationships in *My Name Is* [Performance 2]

Performance 3 was taped in January 1973<sup>42</sup> as a short recorded version for use in a project funded by the General Learning Corporation with Children.<sup>43</sup> It is considerably shorter than either of the other two, and the recording contains two identical performances of the piece. The first performance lasts from 0:10 to 4:30 with a total playing time of 4:20. The piece is then repeated at 4:48 and plays again until 9:09, giving an identical total playing time of 4:20. The performance has only three voices – Michael, Marisa and Jim – two male and one female and there appears to have been no selection from a larger number of names recorded before the performance. Michael has what sounds like a child's voice, whereas Jim is an adult with a bass voice. The female, Marisa, has an alto range and is softly spoken. It is conceivable that Jim is the teacher in the school who is working alongside two pupils to produce the performance.

1	Male	My name is Michael  looped between 0: 10 and 1:56, total = 1:46  looped between 4: 49 and 6:37, total = 1:46
2	Female	My name is Marisa  looped between 1 41 and 3:16, total = 1:35, overlap 15.5"  looped between 6 21 and 7:56, total = 1:35, overlap 15.5"
3	Male	My name is Jim  looped between 3 01 to 4 30, total = 1:29, overlap 15.5"  looped between 7 30 to 9 09, total = 1:29, overlap 15.5"

Table 21: Phase relationships in *My Name Is* [Performance 3]

<sup>42</sup> Reich's annotations indicate this date. The recording is archived on Disc SR-CD 48 Track 5 at the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

<sup>43</sup> The General Learning Corporation was formed in 1965 as an alliance between General Electric, *Time* magazine, and Silver Burdett (who had been producing professional support and development materials for teachers for almost a century). The Paul Sacher Stiftung contains correspondence between Reich and the General Learning Corporation.

During the first ten seconds, the three voices announce their identity, the performance then consisting of phased loops of each protagonist, each introduced in turn. As with the other performances, each voice fades away slowly after the next protagonist is brought in, and there is a short overlap where both phased voices are heard. The tape loops themselves are short and the phasing of each voice each is completed during the overlap period.

### 5.2.2 *Second narrative trail: recording the ensemble*

*My Name Is* held an abiding fascination for Reich. In a September 1975 essay *Videotape and a Composer*,<sup>44</sup> he puts forward the imminent possibility of the piece being remade as a video work so that ‘the identical sound and image loop plays on three or more monitors simultaneously and, due to minute differences in motor speed, tape imperfections, and so on, the tapes begin to gradually move in and out of phase with each other, producing audio-visual canons, or rounds’. Reich also outlines his ideas for a second, closely related piece for which he proposed the title *Portraits*. As with *My Name Is* (Video), three or more participants would be filmed but would say words or make sounds that would give ‘a direct intuitive insight into who they are’.

Had they reached fruition, the two proposed pieces would have formed an obvious transition between the speech-based work of the 1960s and the video-documentary approach of *The Cave* and *Three Tales*. Rather than developing into proto-video operas, however, Reich’s ideas took a further five years to culminate in little more than a fresh expression of the same speech-based music. The video concept finally reached fruition over a decade later in *The Cave* (1990), and while

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<sup>44</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, pp.83-84. This essay, subsequently reprinted in Reich’s *Writings*, comprises his first published work with his future wife, Beryl Korot, and outlines what became their shared vision for video opera.

*Portraits* was not developed at all, *My Name Is* re-emerged in an adapted format for a concert at the Whitney Museum of American Art on 6 January 1981.<sup>45</sup> Now entitled *My Name Is: Ensemble Portrait*, the new version presented, quite literally, a vocal snapshot of Reich's ensemble since the voices of the performers themselves, rather than those of the audience, formed the basis of the piece. The 1981 performance was programmed alongside *Octet*, the eight performers being Bob Becker, Virgil Blackwell, Chris Finckel, Shem Guibbory, Edmund Niemann, Ruth Siegler, Mort Silver and Nurit Tilles, that line-up being different from the ensemble's previous concert at the Whitney.

There is no extant recording from that occasion, but K. Robert Schwarz's description of the event enables the details of the performance to be pieced together. The piece begins with the performers introducing themselves in the order: Ed; Nurit; Shem; Bob; Mort; Virgil; Chris; Ruth with each of these voices being phased in the same order on the performance tape. Since the protagonists were well known to Reich before the evening of the concert, it was possible for him to be much more precise in both his arrangement of the voices and his organisation of the phase relationships, which could be worked out well in advance. In contrast to the earlier versions, there is therefore no selection from the range of available voices since all ensemble members are included, although the compositional process is the same as before.

A voice fades in, introducing the first name, but rapidly shifts out of phase and into a lengthy section of coloristic patterning. A second voice eventually also fades in, introducing the next name, and rapidly shifts out of phase; simultaneously, the first voice moves back into phase unison and fades out.

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<sup>45</sup> Reich had performed at the Whitney on two previous occasions. On 27 May 1969, the programme consisted of Reich's more experimental pieces: *Four Log Drums*, *Pulse Music*, *Pendulum Music*, and *Violin Phase*. On 29 January 1978 the programme – then performed by Steve Reich and Musicians, as they were known from 1971 – consisted of *Music for Crotalines*, *Music for Mallet Instruments*, *Voices and Organ*, and *Music for 18 Musicians*.

This overlapping of phasing processes is repeated for all eight of the names used in the composition.<sup>46</sup>

In terms of narrative function, the ensemble portrait approach operates on a number of different levels to the audience-based performances of the 1960s. The identity of the protagonists is clear from the outset. In place of the random, unpredictable attendees at a concert of experimental music, the protagonists are agents whose function at the performance is to receive payment for the professional rendition of a number of performance pieces, of which this is merely one. The audience – amateurs not involved in the diegesis of professional music making – receive no voice, reinforcing the sense of difference between performer and audience, a shifting powerbase in which the performer takes back control in the piece.

Once more, Reich retains the auteur's privilege in shaping the narrative through organising the sequence of voices and the speed at which they emerge and fade away. Although he does not permit himself an audible voice in the ensemble, he operates as an implicit diegetic narrator. Despite his voice not being heard, the ensemble is his – Steve Reich and Musicians – and the performers act as protagonists on his behalf. Although the Musicians speak individually to the phrase 'My name is', they are the collective embodiment of Reich's own voice. In some deep narrative way Ed; Nurit; Shem; Bob; Mort; Virgil; Chris; Ruth become members of Reich's musical persona so that their individual contribution becomes 'My Name Is Part of Reich's Ensemble'.

Schwarz suggests that at the time of the 1981 performance Reich still harboured plans to develop *My Name Is* as a video piece. By that stage, his ideas

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<sup>46</sup> Schwarz, *Op. cit.*, p.261.

had extended beyond using speech snippets from either audience or performers to using highly recognisable voices who would carry a perceived greater level of authority, if not respect, as they would be seen speaking on film. Candidates for this authorial narrative role included Roosevelt, Truman or Hitler. This would introduce the possibility of retrospective agency, since each of the proposed candidates had already framed the lives of the piece's audience through decisions and actions a generation earlier. In addition to simple phasing techniques, Reich also saw the potential to realise a long-held desire to slow down recorded human speech without changing its pitch, a quest that he had pursued since his work at Bell Laboratories at approximately the same time as the first version of *My Name Is*.

*Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)* exists as a parallel work to *My Name Is: Ensemble Portrait* and was composed for the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum, an ensemble devoted to performance of avant-garde works, founded in 1960 by Clytus Gottwald.<sup>47</sup> Despite the work's lack of scholarly attention, no doubt engendered by its obscurity, this trope of *My Name Is* in German is highly significant in Reich's output as it establishes a narrative trail for the composer in Germany.<sup>48</sup> The country of his mother's family, and the same country that features subsequently in *Achtung!* (1981) and *Different Trains* (1987), this geographical

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<sup>47</sup> As indicated at the opening of this thesis, Gottwald's polemical views of Reich's music generated public correspondence with the composer in 1975 through the pages of *Melos/Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. His criticisms of Reich's music relate specifically to *Drumming*, which he referred to as 'assembly line' or 'conveyor belt' music in "Signale zwischen Exotik und Industrie: Steve Reich auf der Suche nach einer neuen Identität von Klang und Struktur," *Melos/Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 1, no. 1 (1975): 6. Reich responded equally robustly through the same journal later that year: Steve Reich, "Steve Reich Schreibt an Clytus Gottwald," *Melos/Zeitschrift für Neue Musik* 1, no. 3 (1975): 200. Both articles were written in German, Reich's being translated. Reich met Gottwald in Stuttgart in 1979 at which stage Reich had decided on Peter Eötvös as the conductor for the première of *Tehillim* and it was Eötvös rather than Gottwald who appears to have generated the impetus for *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)*, although Gottwald is one of the names recorded.

<sup>48</sup> Scholarly consideration of this work is completely absent in English. Discussion of the piece is confined to Georg Sachse's *Sprechmelodien, Mischklänge, Atemzüge: Phonetische Aspekte im Vokalwerk, Steve Reichs* (2004).

repositioning of the narrative places it on dangerous ground for a composer deeply troubled by the impact of the Holocaust on European Jewry.

*Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)* survives in only one recording of 18 May, 1983, and full details of this recording are given in Appendix 3.<sup>49</sup> Lasting for 13' 18", the piece commences with each of the sixteen participants plus the conductor, Clytus Gottwald, speaking their names. There is no interviewer, and each recording is clear and of good quality. There is a balance of eight female and eight male voices in the ensemble, with the additional male voice of the ensemble director.<sup>50</sup>

Female voices	Hannah (1) Ingrid (3) Barbara (7) Monika (9) Hildegard (11) Elisabeth (14) Dietborg (15) Gisela (17)	Male Voices	Clytus (2) Ewald (4) Lionel (5) Mannfred (6) Richard (8) Paul (10) Karl (12) Wolfgang (13) Ulrich (16)
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Table 22: Arrangement of speakers' voices in *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)*

Georg Sachse's account of the piece indicates that, as with *My Name Is: Ensemble Portrait*, the Schola Cantorum version included the voices of all members of the ensemble, although Reich reduced these to seven for the phased sections of the piece.

<sup>49</sup> The recording is on Disc 5, Track 4 of part of a ten-disc collection of a wide selection of works performed by the Atelier Schola Cantorum. The collection was released in 1993 by Bayer Records (CAD 800 895 Germany). The CD is now deleted, but the recording is found at <http://www.frequency.com/video/steve-reich-mein-name-ist-1981/4800648>, (accessed 5.4.12).

<sup>50</sup> Georg Sachse, *Sprechmelodien, Mischklänge, Atemzüge: Phonetische Aspekte im Vokalwerk Steve Reichs*, Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 2004, p.119. Although he subsequently directed the recorded version of the piece, Peter Eötvös was not involved in the concert performance of *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)*. Sachse suggests, however, that the première of the piece did not take place until 1985 at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

As well as *My Name Is – Ensemble Portrait*, Reich made a tape recording consisting of sixteen male and female voices as well as the head of the Schola Cantorum who then introduced the first name in the form of a sentence 'Mein name ist...'. From this raw material, he selected seven names that were then used for the actual composition and further processed.<sup>51</sup>

The voices selected by Reich are (in the order they appear in the phased sections): Ingrid (3); Hanna (1); Karl (12); Elisabeth (14); Richard (8); Monika (9), and Paul (10). The most significant difference between *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)* and the earlier versions of the piece was Reich's decision to include instruments as well as voices. The liner notes to the CD of the piece include a score of the work, suggesting that Reich selected the voices in order to produce an SATB texture gathered around the note A as a tonal centre, rather than through allowing the words of the performers to create identities of themselves as discrete agents. The limited technology available to Reich at this stage meant that voices had to be selected for their actual pitch to suit the desired chord since it was at that point technically impossible to manipulate speech to fit a pre-existing tonal or harmonic centre.<sup>52</sup>

Sachse transcribes each of the seven voices in musical notation and provides a sonogram of each one, as well as reproducing the score of the first 8'06" of the piece in order to demonstrate how the orchestral ensemble interjects between the phased words of the performers.<sup>53</sup> The phasing of the piece itself is denser as a result of the instrumental textures, and these have the effect of swamping the voices. The piece is structured around eighteen chords, which punctuate the vocal

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<sup>51</sup> Sachse, *Op. cit.*, p.121.

<sup>52</sup> As previously noted, Reich's quest to change the pitch of sounds without altering their speed had begun with his work at Bell Laboratories in the late 1960s. It was still a real concern for him when in 1980 he visited IRCAM in Paris to undertake research into matching up shifting phases with live instruments.

<sup>53</sup> Sachse, *Op. cit.*, p.120.

phases at irregular intervals, although the chordal sections themselves are of broadly similar length. The general pause at 6'57" creates a sense that the piece is in two sections with the ending of the first section culminating on a rapid crescendo that stops suddenly, the second part finishing with a rapid fading-away of a vocal phase.

Part One	00:02 – 00:54	Mein Name Ist Hannah [2] Mein Name Ist Clytus Mein Name Ist Ingrid [1] Mein Name Ist Ewald Mein Name Ist Lionel Mein Name Ist Manfred Mein Name Ist Barbara Mein Name Ist Richard [5] Mein Name Ist Monika [6] Mein Name Ist Paul [7] Mein Name Ist Hildegard Mein Name Ist Karl [3] Mein Name Ist Wolfgang Mein Name Ist Elisabeth [4] Mein Name Ist Dietborg Mein Name Ist Ulrich Mein Name Ist Gisela
	00:55	Phase, based on the voices of Ingrid, Hannah and Karl
	02:45 – 03:07	Chords 1 & 2, built up from Ingrid, Hannah, Karl
		Phase develops, based on the voices of voices Ingrid and Hannah
	03:14 – 03:40	Chords 3 & 4, built up from Ingrid, Hannah
		Phase develops based on the voices of Elisabeth and Richard
	05:43 – 06:02	Chords 5 & 6, built up from Elisabeth and Richard
		Phase develops, based on the voice of Elisabeth
	06:08 – 06:33	Chords 7 & 8, built up from Elisabeth
		Fifth phase, rises to a climax and stops suddenly at 06:57, followed by a two-second general pause.

<b>Part Two</b>	06:59	Phase based on the voices of Monika and Paul
	08:08 – 08:32	Chords 9 & 10, built up from Monika and Paul
		Phase develops, based on the voices of Monika and Paul
	08:38 – 09:02	Chords 9 & 10, built up from Monika and Paul
		Phase develops, based on the voices of Monika, Ingrid and Paul
	11:45 – 12:04	Chords 13 & 14, built up from Monika, Ingrid, Karl
		Phase develops, based on the voices of Monika and Ingrid
	12:10 – 12:32	Chords 15 & 16, built up from Monika and Ingrid
		Phase develops, based on the voice of Ingrid
	12:44 – 13:10	Chords 17 & 18, built up from Ingrid
		Rapid fade-away of vocal phasing, piece ends at 13:15.

Table 23: Phase relationships in *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)*

Part 1 presents five of the seven protagonists. The chordal sections are built up from whichever phased voices are sounding at the point that the chord begins, and eight of the eighteen chords appear in this section. Because of the density of the phasing, the entries of the individual voices within the phasing sections are often indistinct. Thus in Table 23 the chord entries have been used as the basis for delineation of sections. Part 2 of the piece follows the same pattern as Part 1, but with the chordal entries more closely situated towards the end of the piece.

Monika, whose voice has been absent in the first part, now becomes the dominant voice for most of the section.

Sachse's account of his correspondence with Steve Reich brings discussion of this piece to a sudden conclusion and *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)* appears to have dissuaded the composer from further speech-

based work until *Different Trains* and permanently from working with the German language. His categorical statement, 'This piece I have totally rejected. It is not part of my work. Forget this piece, I have', leaves no room for further discussion.

Reich's stated reasons for this are concerned with issues of linguistic identity: 'Since English is the only language which I speak, and understand fluently, I have decided that in all my compositions in which I use recordings of speech, I will use American English'.<sup>54</sup>

### 5.2.3 *Third narrative trail: filming the individual*

As with *Come Out*, the narrative trails surrounding *My Name Is* conclude with a film. Although this thesis specifically excludes Reich's work for film, two exceptions have already been discussed – *The Plastic Haircut* and *The Torture of Mothers*. A third film, *My Name is Oona* (1969)<sup>55</sup> plays a part in the narrative trails considered in this chapter since it takes its stimulus from Reich's *My Name Is*, and therefore demands some comment in this chapter. *My name is Oona* was produced in 1969 by Gunvor Grundel Nelson (b. 1931), a female Swedish filmmaker who moved to California in the 1950s and who subsequently held a professorship at the San Francisco Art Institute. Gunvor Grundel met Robert Nelson whilst at the Art Institute. In due course they married and moved to Mills College; Oona was their daughter.

The film follows the style of Robert Nelson's earlier collaboration with Reich, *Oh Dem Watermelons* (1965) in the way that non-narrative images are aligned with the soundtrack, although the images in *My Name is Oona* do not contain any

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<sup>54</sup> Although *Tehillim* dates from the same year and makes exclusive use of Biblical Hebrew, it does not make use of recorded speech.

<sup>55</sup> The film may be seen in its entirety at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pe8O5h9EEs>, (Accessed 5.4.12).

element of political satire. The film lasts for 9' 12", the sound being produced by both Steve Reich and Patrick Gleeson, who had previously worked together at the San Francisco Tape Centre. The structure of the piece is outlined in Table 24.

Time	Description
00:00 – 00:12	Opening title
00:13	Single statement of Oona saying 'My name is Oona', followed by only the name 'Oona' being looped and gradually phased against itself. Images of walking through trees and bushes with Oona emerging from time to time. A second child appears at 02:48 This morphs into a night scene with Oona running along.
03:09	Oona is heard speaking the days of the week and this is overlaid above the phasing of the name. At 03:30 Oona is seen leading a horse then a male voice is heard apparently encouraging Oona. The name Oona is repeated but not phased.
04:37	A number of different statements of My Name is Oona are cycled and these underscore further annunciation of the days of the week. Images of Oona riding a horse. The various statements of 'My Name is Oona' are now cycled and phased with greater density than thus far. Oona continues to ride on the horse. As the horse slows down, the phasing becomes even denser and the energy levels of each are in opposition to each other.
08:12	From the darkness, Oona remerges on the horse, riding slowly. Another voice is heard singing a song in the style of a nursery rhyme as Oona begins to play again as the phasing becomes ever busier and fades away.
08:48	Closing title sequence, in which Gleeson is listed above Reich. Nursery rhyme only as Oona looks at camera. Sound fades away.

Table 24: Structure of *My Name is Oona*

The film explores issues of identity central to the earliest version of *My Name Is*. Yet the focus on a central character removes the sense of agency in the ensemble versions as the voices phase against one another, producing a tangled narrative. In an interview with Scott MacDonald, Nelson outlines some detail as to the creation of the film:

Nelson's evocation of the experience of girlhood, as she remembered it from childhood in Sweden and as her daughter Oona (the child of Gunvor Nelson's marriage to Robert Nelson) was experiencing it in the late 1960s. Nelson's use of multilayered superimposition of both sound and image locates the innocence of childhood within a mythic context: Oona seems both real child and goddess.<sup>56</sup>

Linking this with Reich's music, Nelson outlines the inspiration for the music, especially the way in which Reich had earlier filmed Oona saying the days of the week.

Nelson: And then I went to a Steve Reich concert where, as people came into the gallery, he would have them say their names. He had maybe twenty tape recorders set up and he would make a tape out of "My name is Gunvor." And loop it and play it on a tape recorder. All the tapes were playing simultaneously. It was all very smooth and very complex and I was taken with the piece. Later, when I was doing my soundtrack, I had Oona say, "My name is Oona" in many different ways. When Steve Reich heard I was doing this, he sent me a tape he had done with Oona a while before, saying the days of the week . . .

MacDonald: Which is in the middle of the film. . .

Nelson: Yes. Then I decided how long the film was going to be, and together with Patrick Gleeson, I finished my track. I sent the result to Steve to see if he approved of my using his idea, and he said he liked it a lot, so I made the fine cut.

### 5.3 *Other narrative trails in 1967*

To return finally to 1967, Reich toyed with an idea for a third tape piece, although this was never realised. On 10 September 1967, two months before the 'official' première of *My Name Is* at the Fall Gallery Concerts, ABC Television screened James Fleming's four-hour \$2m documentary *Africa*, which was narrated by Gregory Peck. Clearly inspired by the power of the documentary, Reich wrote

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<sup>56</sup> Scott MacDonald *A Critical Cinema 3: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p.183.

the following day to the producer of the programme, James Fleming,<sup>57</sup> to request a short snippet of a young girl in a classroom in Ghana saying the words 'My shoes are new – my shoes are new', which he proposed using as the basis for a new tape piece.

In subsequent correspondence with Sam Antar, Vice-President for Law and Regulation at ABC, Reich indicates that it is only the audio track in which he is interested, in the light of the work he intended to undertake at Bell Laboratories in terms of elongating speech whilst retaining its pitch. This is outlined further in a letter to Bernard Gold at MIT Lincoln Laboratory in April 1968 in which Reich indicates his intention to slow the snippet to half speed whilst preserving the pitch and quality of the recording. The project foundered because of the limitations of technology at that stage, and with it waned Reich's interest in speech as a source for musical composition. With the exceptions of the variations of *My Name Is*, there was to be a twenty-year ellipsis in the narrative before Reich would next employ human speech as his compositional source material.

#### 5.4 *Conclusions*

*Buy Art, Buy Art* and *My Name Is* are significant in mapping the narrative trails in Reich's speech music. Both demonstrate his developing role as auteur in the creation and selection of speech-based material, sometimes in collage-type structures but equally in phase relationships. The ability to control and shape these relationships was more straightforward in *My Name Is*, whereas the chaotic non-structure of *Buy Art, Buy Art* was Reich's main reason for rejecting it. Both pieces mark a significant shift from the previous speech-based pieces in identifying the

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<sup>57</sup> The Sacher archive contains letters from Reich to James Fleming, dated 11 September 1967, to Sam Antar dated 20 September 1967, and to Bernard Gold, dated 9 April 1968.

name of each of the speakers, and in linking these voices with a strong sense of placefulness: those who have paid to attend the exhibition for *Buy Art, Buy Art* and the particular members of the audience whose voices are recorded for *My Name Is*.

Reich's identity as auteur in these pieces derives variously from his ability to choose who should be recorded, which was not entirely within his control for the *Museum of Merchandise* exhibition but became so for the subsequent tape (but not film) versions of *My Name Is*. In recording his own ensemble, Reich reinforces his role as music director through assuming the additional role of auteur. This proved difficult to translate to an ensemble directed by another conductor and the tensions between Gottwald and Reich as leaders of their own ensembles is mirrored by Reich's rejection of the German language as a vehicle for composition. At the same time as seeking to sustain his own compositional identity, however, Reich's involvement with the commodification of art for profit-making purposes reflects his own search for financial stability as a commercially successful composer.

## Chapter 6 *Different Trains*

### 6.1 *Narrative Trails in Different Trains*

Following the 1981 ensemble versions of *My Name Is*, seven years passed before Reich next used speech-based material in his music. Once more, this was not the result of disenchantment with the properties of the human voice, but rather with the limited technology available to handle it in the way that he wished. Since the mid-1960s, Reich had cherished hopes of being able to manipulate speech sounds in two ways: by sustaining the human voice for a very long time; and by altering vocal pitch whilst keeping the speed the same. This is summed up in his 1967 'concept' score for *Slow Motion Sound*, which consists only of the direction to 'very gradually slow down a recorded piece to many times its original length without changing its pitch or timbre at all'.<sup>1</sup> Attempting to realise these intentions, Reich worked unsuccessfully in September 1967 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a vocoder,<sup>2</sup> trying to apply these principles to a speech snippet of a young Ghanaian girl saying the phrase 'my shoes are new'. Fazed by the technical impossibility of achieving this, he turned his compositional attention to instrumental pieces, which offered the potential to work on aspects of his musical language that were more easily developed.

*Different Trains* became possible as a result of the invention of the sampling keyboard in the mid-1980s,<sup>3</sup> enabling Reich to revisit his 1967 ambitions after a gap

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Reich, (ed. Hillier, Paul), *Writings on Music 1965-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.28.

<sup>2</sup> The technological basis for this is discussed in Michael J. Prerau, *Slow Motion Sound: Implementing Time Expansion/Compression with a Phase Vocoder* <http://www.music.columbia.edu/~mike/publications/PhaseVocoder.pdf>, (Accessed 25/1/13).

<sup>3</sup> Reich used a 1985 Casio SZ-1 sampling keyboard when composing *Different Trains*.

of twenty years. Had the technology been sufficiently developed earlier, it is possible that the journey between *My Name Is* and *Different Trains* would have been much shorter. Although sampling technology enabled a new level of manipulation of the human voice, Reich's narrative trails remained broadly similar to before. His own religious identity, however, had undergone very considerable shifts during that period as a result of the awakening of his Jewish faith in the mid-1970s. *Different Trains* brings together religious narrative, personal reminiscence and reflections on the Holocaust and in so doing creates a story of greater power and complexity than in Reich's earlier speech-based music.

This has been recognised in the reception of the piece. From the standpoint of almost twenty-five years distance, Amy Lynn Włodarski noted that *Different Trains* was on a fast track to canonical status from the outset.<sup>4</sup> Within a decade of its 1988 premiere, Richard Taruskin announced that the work 'went the full distance and earned [Reich] his place among the great composers of the century'.<sup>5</sup> To justify such a bold claim, Taruskin branded *Different Trains* as 'the only adequate musical response—one of the few adequate artistic responses in any medium—to the Holocaust'. Other scholarly opinion has reinforced the piece's canonicity on three counts: its authenticity of commentary on the Holocaust; its autobiographical resonance for Steve Reich; and its use of speech material to create melodies that generate instrumental lines.

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<sup>4</sup> Amy Lyn Włodarski, 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 63, No. 1, (2010), pp.99-142.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Taruskin, "A Sturdy Musical Bridge to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", reproduced in Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, p.101, cited in Włodarski, *Ibid.*, p.102.

Reich's notes in the score link the musical significance of *Different Trains* with the 1960s speech-based pieces *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966), asserting that 'the basic idea is that carefully chosen speech recordings generate the musical materials for musical instruments'.<sup>6</sup> Christopher Fox's description of the piece as 'almost certainly unique amongst new works for string quartet'<sup>7</sup> reflects the bringing together of speech-based material with the conventional forces of the string quartet (both live and recorded) as well as selected sounds from the concrete world.<sup>8</sup> Reich gives more prominence, however, to the autobiographical 'idea for the piece', inspired by the points of connection between his own story and that of European Jews at the time of his childhood. The 'different trains' of the title become a narrative device for relating two stories on parallel tracks: the four-day train journeys made across America by the boy Reich – a secular Jew travelling between the homes of his divorced parents – and the train journeys of the oppressed and persecuted European Jews during the Holocaust.

This chapter offers a new reading of *Different Trains*, based not on Reich's description in the score, but on archival recordings of the source materials for the piece, recognising that the composition is essentially a sound collage in the same tradition as Reich's 1960s speech-based pieces. The following discussion pursues four narrative trails: Reich's family situation and his journeys on the Pullman trains; the proto-version of the piece created by Reich; the interviews that Reich

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<sup>6</sup> Steve Reich, *Different Trains*, Hendon Music, Boosey and Hawkes, (1989), HPS 1168.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Fox, 'Steve Reich's *Different Trains*', *Tempo*, No. 172, (1990), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Sounds from the concrete world (such as a pigeon flapping its wings) are also present in *It's Gonna Rain* but their recording was coincidental rather than deliberate. By contrast, in the first interview with his governess Virginia Mitchell, Reich specifically asks to have the window closed so that no unintentional traffic noise is recorded [1.33].

conducted with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence “Happy” Davis; and the final version of *Different Trains*. These four narrative trails call for a re-assessment of previous readings of the piece that have been framed primarily by the composer’s own view of the work.

## 6.2 *Narrative Trail 1: Reich’s childhood and the Pullman Trains*

The first narrative trail in *Different Trains* begins with events that took place almost fifty years earlier during Reich’s early childhood, especially the journeys on the Pullman trains on which was accompanied by his governess Virginia. This immediately creates a greater temporal distance between historical events and their compositional usage than in Reich’s previous speech-based works.

The events of the Holocaust constitute the foundational narrative for the piece: the sustained Nazi persecution that resulted by 1945 in the wholesale annihilation of six million Jews, about two-thirds of the European Jewish population. The atrocities were carried out at the 20,000 concentration camps, of which Auschwitz became the most notorious<sup>9</sup> and from which few survived. Although Reich selects the voices of three survivors from the period in *Different Trains*, they were unknown to him personally at the time the events were taking place.<sup>10</sup> His upbringing as a secular Jew in America dislocated him completely from the Holocaust and his childhood experience of Judaism was at best nominal. In his

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<sup>9</sup> Others included *Dachau*, which in 1974 became the subject of a 24-minute four-channel video film by Beryl Korot, Reich’s third wife.

<sup>10</sup> Reich does not specifically state in the score that the interviews with the Holocaust survivors are archival. His description (using only first names) leaves open the possibility that these people might have been known to him as they are described in relation to the composer’s own age and geographical location: ‘all about my age and then living in America’.

Bar Mitzvah, Reich was given transliterations (rather than Hebrew script) from the Torah to read<sup>11</sup> and he had no direct understanding of the sacred text he was reading.<sup>12</sup> Rather than being shaped by religious experience, Reich's abiding childhood memories became dominated by the punishing train journeys he undertook for four years between the East and West coasts of the United States, staying alternately with his divorced parents.<sup>13</sup> His recollection of these four-day excursions becomes the inspiration for *Different Trains* as they mirror the journeys of thousands of European Jews forced onto trains against their will, destined for the concentration camps of Germany and Poland and mass extermination. Reich summarises the autobiographical framework of the piece in his *Writings*.

The idea for the piece comes from my childhood. When I was one year old, my parents separated. My mother moved to Los Angeles and my father stayed in New York. Since they arranged divided custody, I travelled back and forth by train frequently between New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942, accompanied by my governess. While these trips were exciting and romantic at the time, I now look back and think that, if I had been in Europe during this period, as a Jew I would have had to ride on very different trains. With this in mind, I wanted to make a piece that would accurately reflect the whole situation.<sup>14</sup>

There is no mention of the family's obvious wealth; or the struggle by each parent to retain custody of the young Reich whilst pursuing a successful career during the

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<sup>11</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.107.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Mitchell recounts details of Reich's Bar Mitzvah in her second interview with Reich [Gobbets 2.230-2.240]. She mentions nothing of the ceremony itself, but recounts considerable details of the way Leonard Reich (the composer's father) was keen to marginalize her during the event. In the years immediately before this, he had prevented Virginia from having contact with his son and she reflects on her hurt at being ignored by Reich at his Bar Mitzvah. The Rabbi's comments about the Reich family focused on Reich's mother's success in bringing up Steve so successfully; no reference was made to Virginia's part in this. The composer suggests to Virginia that his father had told him what to say. [Gobbel 2.231].

<sup>13</sup> The divorce settlement between Reich's parents was that he spent six months equally with each one, on either side of the US [Gobbel 1.44].

<sup>14</sup> Reich, *Op. cit.*, p.151.

challenging period of the Great Depression, his mother as a lyricist and singer in Los Angeles, his father as a lawyer in New York. Financial insecurity was not, apparently, a feature of Reich's boyhood experience. Although separated, his parents could afford a full-time Governess, Virginia Mitchell, to bring him up until school age, as well as the lavish expense of cross-country rail fares on the Pullman trains.

The luxury of the Pullman trains inspired a highly romanticised view of railroad travel in the United States and the social history of the trains is well documented.<sup>15</sup> In an era before air travel became commonplace, the trains epitomised stylish long-distance transportation across America. The peak year of the business was 1928, eleven years prior to the start of Reich's journeys, but during the succeeding decade The Pullman Company was still one of the most profitable in the world. The transportation choice of rich and successful movie stars,<sup>16</sup> the trains were as different as could be imagined from the cattle wagons that ran their weary course to the Nazi concentration camps. The most famous of the Pullman trains was the *Twentieth Century Limited*, which exuded pure opulence, meals in the restaurant car being priced at \$1.75 at a time when annual per capita professional income averaged \$1700.

The *Twentieth Century Limited* was a repository of the coming and goings – of the rich, tycoons and stars – their habits of dress or drinking, their minds and their manners. The *Century* was operated like a private club and the lengthy dining car aptly named the *Century Club*. To businessmen, the

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<sup>15</sup> The official history of the company is summarised on The Pullman State Historic Site, <http://www.pullman-museum.org> (Accessed 28/1/13).

<sup>16</sup> This glamorous lifestyle was reinforced in movies of the time. For example, Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint appeared in Alfred Hitchcock's *North By Northwest* dining in the Century Club with views of the Hudson River in the background.

*Century* was a symbol of the immutable fulfillment of a scheduled pattern; to luxury travelers it was the last word in conservative opulence.<sup>17</sup>

The Pullman Company was known for exclusively employing African-American porters, capitalising on a widespread view of happy minstrelsy in America at the time. Whilst this policy afforded black American men opportunities for travel and interaction with a stratum of society with which they would otherwise have had little contact, the conditions experienced by the Pullman porters were often poor. The impact of this employment on the lives of thousands of Black Americans and the establishment for them of unionised labour has been the subject of several social histories of the Pullman Company.<sup>18</sup> Such was the experience of Lawrence Davis and the porters who served Reich and Virginia.

### 6.3 *Narrative Trail 2: The Proto-Version*

Reich's aural sketches for *Different Trains* consist of a recording of him speaking to tape, immediately conferring on himself the status of homodiegetic narrator. This sets up a narrative trail, which frames the creation of subsequent interviews as well as the selection of voices for the final version of the piece. It cannot be said with certainty whether Reich is reading from a document, or whether he is improvising, the latter suggested by the number of hesitations and pauses in the recording.

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<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/node/225401/print>, (Accessed 28/1/13).

<sup>18</sup> The following accounts offer a detailed insight into the porters' experience: Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Colour: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001; Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America: 1925-1945*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001; Lyn Hughes, *An Anthology of Respect: The Pullman Porters National Historic Registry of African-American Railroad Employees*, Chicago: Lyn Hughes, 2009; Johnnie F. Kirvin, *Hey Boy! Hey George! The Pullman Porter – A Memoir*. Los Angeles: Carla S Kirvin, 2009; Jack Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991; Larry Tye, *Rising From the Rails: Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class*, New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2004.

Although undated, the recording is assumed here to have preceded the interviews with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis, since Reich's questions to them are designed to elicit these or similar phrases in response, irrespective of whatever else might emerge. This assumption is borne out by the remarkable similarity between the phrases in the proto-version and the speech extracts selected by Reich from the interviews themselves.<sup>19</sup> This being the case, the recording stands as a 'proto-version' of *Different Trains*, similar in principle to those that preceded *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out* but in this instance using only Reich's own voice. The recording has a playing time of 12' 27" and is archived in the Paul Sacher Stiftung on SR-CD 11 Track 3. A full transcription is included in Appendix 13.

The proto-version consists of ten 'gobbets', each delineated by Reich starting and stopping the tape. Although there is little to suggest an intentional denary structure, the number and order of statements creates its own narrative framework. It is possible that the composer's initial intention was for the proto-version to shape the form of *Different Trains*, particularly the first and third movements where speech snippets of Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis are incorporated. However, there is no indication as to how the proto-version relates to the inclusion of the voices of Holocaust survivors, suggesting the possibility of them being a later addition to the piece.

Each gobbet consists of phrases repeated several times, often with modifications that extend or truncate the original statement. Reich varies his pitch and speech inflections as he talks, indicating an attempt to introduce differentiation

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<sup>19</sup> This assumption is based on the relative improbability of Reich recording himself saying these statements if he already had them recorded by others whose voices he wished to include in *Different Trains*.

and potential musical contrast. In some instances, there is a clear attempt to refine the sound of a particular phrase as it is repeated.<sup>20</sup> More importantly, the content and arrangement of the gobblets create a number of narrative threads, some of which are woven into the final piece.

The statements themselves consist chiefly of geographical and temporal identifiers. Some of these are replicated exactly in *Different Trains*; some are adapted, while others do not appear at all in the piece. Although there is broad similarity between the proto- and final versions of *Different Trains*, there are also numerous minor differences. The key locations of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles are present throughout, grouped in various combinations, although the references to taking the train a) from Grand Central Station and b) across the country are subsequently discarded. The temporal span is broader in the proto-version, with the references to 1942 being eventually abandoned.<sup>21</sup>

Goblet 1 consists of eight constituents, the first being repeated ten times. G1C1 establishes a dual homodiegetic standpoint, quite dissimilar from that of *Different Trains*. The use of 'we' suggests Reich's initial intention was for Virginia to be present through his own words, a narratorial standpoint subsequently reversed for the final version.<sup>22</sup> The goblet is entirely based on geographical locators; with

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<sup>20</sup> The following convention is adopted for referring to constituent phrases in the proto-version. Goblet 1, Constituent 1 is referred to as G1C1, with the same principle being applied to subsequent phrases. **Bold** type is used to highlight constituent phrases that are incorporated exactly into the final version of *Different Trains*. Each constituent is heard on the tape only once unless identified otherwise [in square parentheses] as receiving a number of iterations.

<sup>21</sup> In the notes to the score, Reich indicates that the journeys themselves took place between 1939 and 1942 and the original intention may therefore have been for the timeframe of the piece to have exactly coincided with the dates of his journeys.

<sup>22</sup> Reich's interviews with Virginia indicate that his parents also travelled on at least one journey each. [Goblets 1.52, 1.55, 1.68, 1.80, 2.36, 2.76].

G1C1 and G1C2 both used as recurring motifs in later gobbets, referred to below as 'journey frame' constituents. G1C1 also introduces the train as the means of transport across the country, as well as a vehicle for telling the story. The identity of the 'country' is unspecified, leaving open the possibility that the 'we' might include the unnamed Jews forced to take the Nazi death trains in Europe. G1C2 immediately quashes this possibility, however, through its reference to return excursions, the 'back and forth' contrasting with the one-way journeys to the concentration camps.

G1C3 specifically locates the train journeys in America, making reference to the totality of the route between Los Angeles and New York. The return journey is stated in G1C4, as spoken in the final piece by Lawrence Davis. G1C5 suggests an itinerary unlikely to have taken place since it would have had the young Reich returning to New York halfway through the journey, having got only as far as Chicago.<sup>23</sup> G1C6 and G1C7 both indicate Chicago as a place where the journey was broken rather than aborted. Despite this, the second half of G1C5 is used for the opening statement of *Different Trains*, as spoken by Virginia. Collectively, G1C3 through to G1C8 allude to all of the constituent parts of the return journey between New York to Los Angeles, with a change of trains at Chicago.<sup>24</sup>

Gobbet 2 consists of seventeen constituents, some repeated exactly from Gobbet 1 whilst others are slightly modified. G1C1 is restated entirely as G2C12, G2C14 and G2C15 and is incorporated in G2C11 and G2C16. G1C2 is restated as

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<sup>23</sup> No reference is made in the interviews with Virginia to aborted journeys, or occasions on which they had to turn back.

<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Davis confirms to Reich that Chicago was the major interchange for changing trains [3.06].

G2C10 and incorporated into G2C11. The geographical locators for the journey – G1C3 to GC18 – form the basis for G2C2 to G2C8 as well as G2C17. Temporal locators are introduced in this gobbet and outline a four-year narrative timeframe. This becomes truncated in *Different Trains* from four to three years, the possibility being mooted in G2C1 with its ‘from about’, which is made specific in G2C9. G2C16 and G2C17 link temporal and geographic locators to conclude the gobbet.

Gobbet 3 consists of seven constituents. The most significant narrative function of the gobbet is to introduce Grand Central Station, New York, which becomes a focus in G3C1, G3C2 and G3C4. As revealed by Reich’s interviews with Virginia, the fastest trains to which Lawrence Davis subsequently refers, such as the *Twentieth Century Limited*, departed from Grand Central rather than Penn Station.<sup>25</sup> As already noted, continuous journeys from Grand Central Station to Los Angeles, as implied by G3C2, were not possible before World War 2, as a change of trains at Chicago was always required; this is expanded in G3C4.<sup>26</sup> The ‘journey frame’ constituents, G1C1 and G1C2, reappear in the composite G3C5, and the temporal framework outlined in G2C9 is restated in G3C6 and G3C7.

Gobbet 4 contains 19 constituents, each of them developed from the first three gobnets. These fall into three types: time; place; and displacement.<sup>27</sup> In terms of time, Reich’s fascination with the specific period between 1939 and 1942 is

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<sup>25</sup> There was also a less impressive, slower, service from Penn Station that was used on at least one occasion when Reich’s father was present, and who described it as having wooden wheels.

<sup>26</sup> The change of train in Chicago often took several hours. Virginia refers to spending a whole morning waiting for the afternoon train onwards to California, anxious on the first occasion when his mother absconded with him that Reich’s father would pursue them and catch them up [Gobbet 1.28]. Lawrence Davis refers to the post-War introduction of a cross-country service that required no changes. It is this to which he refers in the phrase ‘From New York to Los Angeles’ [3.172].

<sup>27</sup> ‘Displacement’ is a term used frequently in travel literature to signify actual movement from one place to another, whereas ‘journeying’ might suggest a mental or emotional state.

developed further in the ten constituents from G4C8 to G4C17. He experiments with shortening the dates in G4C17, a practise continued in later gobnets, although such abbreviations are not used in *Different Trains*.<sup>28</sup> More significantly, Reich attempts to map the musical dimensions of his speech, both melodically and harmonically. This suggests he considered the possibility of using his own voice in the piece, since it is unlikely any other speaker would have naturally produced similar pitch or melodic shape. The dates themselves appear arbitrary, although it is possible that G4C8 and G4C17 are intended to frame the ten temporal constituents of the gobnet. In terms of place, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York are each present, functioning as geographic locators in G4C1 and again between G4C3 and G4C7; there is no reference to Grand Central Station. The journey frame constituents G1C1 and G1C2 are again developed and reformulated in this gobnet, with G1C2 being dominant in G4C1, G4C2 and G4C19, although the last of these is followed by the ringing of the telephone in Reich's studio, bringing the gobnet to an abrupt end.

Gobnet 5 consists of twenty constituents, covering time, location and displacement. The first twelve constituents, G5C1 to G5C12, repeat the approach taken in G4C10 to G4C16, restating each of the years from 1939 to 1942, although there are only two references, G5C10 and G5C20, to the year 1942. The year 1940 attracts particular attention, being restated in G5C1, G5C4 (twice), G5C6, G5C8 and G5C11 and forming part of a dual focalisation in G5C12 where the years 1940 and 1941 are both stated; this approach is not used in *Different Trains*.

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<sup>28</sup> One of Reich's obvious challenges in the interviews with Virginia is her tendency to abbreviate dates of years.

Reich attempts to map the musicality of his speech in the geographical locators in this gobbet. G5C16 to G5C18 restate the destinations from New York to Los Angeles with the second repetition mapped melodically and harmonically, a phrase eventually delivered in *Different Trains* by Lawrence Davis. Of the two journey-frame constituents, only G1C1 is present, restated here as G5C13 (stated twice). The absence of the 'back-and-forth' dimension of G1C2 is reflected in the direction of G5C15 to G5C20 from New York towards Los Angeles, with only a brief, abortive reference to the reverse journey in G5C14. In *Different Trains* the journeys in both directions are accorded equal significance, but in the proto-version there is a heavy emphasis on the direction from New York to Los Angeles, that is, Reich's journey away from his father and towards seeing his mother who, of his parents, would have been the more predisposed to his subsequent career as a composer.<sup>29</sup>

Gobbet 6 has only eight constituents, the content of which is all re-cycled from previous gobbets. There is no new constituent material, but the usage of previous constituents reveals a developing narrative. The journey-frame constituents G1C1 and G1C2 are both present. G1C1 is quoted exactly in G6C5 and forms the basis for G6C1 and G6C3, with G1C2 being restated exactly as G6C4. Despite the repetition of 'back-and-forth', however, the journeys of G6C1, G6C2 and G6C7 (four iterations) are all headed from New York to Los Angeles, continuing the approach of Gobbet 5. The abortive G6C6 does not get as far even as G5C14, however, stating only 'Los'. The emergence of 1940, established in the previous gobbet as a dominant temporal

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<sup>29</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, Transcript of Interview with Reich, 18 July 1994, p.1. Reich's mother, June Reich, whose stage name was June Carroll following her re-marriage to Sidney Carroll, was a singer and lyricist best known for her words to the 1930s song *Love is a Simple Thing*. The inclination towards spending time with his mother bears out the image of Reich's father as a controlling presence, with firm views on a range of issues, as confirmed by the subsequent interviews with Virginia.

focus, is now consolidated and is the only year named in Gobbet 6. It is stated on its own in G6C8, as well as being added to the journey-frame constituent in G6C2. This suggests that 1940 was the main year in which Reich's journeys took place, however, which was not the case.

Gobbet 7 consists of a single constituent stated eight times. On the third iteration, Reich plays two notes on the piano to replicate the pitch of his own speech. The significance of this single constituent lies in the way it again reinforces 1940 as the prime temporal focus. Although this may not have been a conscious decision, 1940 gains primacy through a gradual process of removing the other years referred to in Gobbits 4, 5 and 6. In *Different Trains*, each of the years 1939, 1940 and 1941 is spoken by two different voices, thereby creating a sense of temporal democracy. Yet 1940 assumes a prime narrative function since it is the only date mentioned in Part II of the final work, and therefore (through the voice of Rachella) becomes a framing temporal signifier for the narrative of the Holocaust survivors.

Gobbet 8 bears a close similarity to Gobbet 7 in its focus on a sole temporal locator. G8C1 has the same words as are subsequently used by Reich in Part I of *Different Trains*, taken from his interviews with Virginia. The time line between gobbits is now fractured and, having identified 1940 as the prime temporal locator, there is an analepsis as the focus reverts to the previous year.

Gobbet 9 brings to a conclusion the sections of the proto-version in which Reich himself speaks. It consists of four constituents, grouped in a symmetrical arrangement. This reiterates both of the constituents in Gobbet 8 with G8C1 restated in both G9C2 and G9C4; and G8C2 restated in G9C1 and G9C3. The narrative significance of 1939 lies in its being the year in which Reich's journeys

commenced. The date is also musically interesting as being the only one of the four years mentioned to have a repeated 'nine'.

Gobbet 10 is distinct from the preceding gobbits in containing no speech snippets at all. Although included on the same tape as the previous gobbits, it is unclear what it has to do with the composition of *Different Trains* since it consists of [Reich?] playing a sequence of four chords on the piano, each with a functioning bass line and the final two chords comprising a perfect cadence. This sequence is repeated three times, with embellishment, which makes for a strong dominant/tonic progression, itself atypical of Reich's approach to harmony.

The proto-version of *Different Trains* is significant in establishing a distinctive narrative trail. Most significant here is the identity of the narratorial voice, which is Reich's own as protagonist. In contrast to the proto-versions of *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, Reich acts as author, generating his own speech material, rather than as auteur, shaping and directing the words and agency of others. The only acknowledgement of any other agent here is the plural 'we' in the journey-frame motif G1C1 and variants. The proto-version fulfils the important function of establishing the temporal and geographical framework of *Different Trains*, but the implied plurality of experience demands voices other than Reich's own.

#### 6.4 *Narrative Trail 3: Interviews with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis*

Following the creation of the proto-version, Reich made three important decisions: to remove himself from the piece and to live the journeys through the voices of others; to record interviews with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis; and to select extracts from interviews with Holocaust survivors using archival

sources. The selection of recordings of Holocaust survivors was inevitably governed by what was available in the collections used by Reich: the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale Holocaust Archive, and the Wiener Oral History Library at New York Public Library.<sup>30</sup> As well as spending time in these archives, Reich also acquired copies of those interviews from which he considered taking extracts. The Sacher Stiftung contains five CDs containing source interviews with seven Holocaust survivors: Marika Frank Adams; Rachella Velt Meekoms; Claude Cassirer; Shari B; Zazette L; Rachel G, and Paul Davidowitz. Of these, Reich selected only three, identified in *Different Trains* simply as Rachella, Rachel and Paul.<sup>31</sup>

Amy Lynn Włodarski has discussed in detail the relationship between these recordings and Reich's usage of them in *Different Trains*. She concludes that the 'testimonial aesthetics' of *Different Trains* have been shaped both by questioning of the original interviewers and yet further by the manner in which Reich uses them. In suggesting that 'Reich has emphasised the absence of any emotional or narrative program in the work by stressing that he merely transcribed the survivors' speech melodies',<sup>32</sup> the charge is clear: the composer's use of the voices of the Holocaust survivors has in some way distorted their original story, with important aspects remaining 'hidden' in what was originally said by Rachella, Rachel and Paul. In this view, what is presented as documentary turns out on closer examination to be a

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<sup>30</sup> Although copies of the Survivors' interviews are stored in the archives at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, they are not analysed here as the focus is only on the sources that Reich selected for *Different Trains*.

<sup>31</sup> The sound recordings for these interviews are archived at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland as CD9, tracks 1-4; CD10, tracks 1-3; CD11, tracks 1-3.

<sup>32</sup> Amy Lynn Włodarski, 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 63, No. 1, (2010), p.103.

dramatisation more akin to 'a theatre of the mind', a 'virtual opera' in which the narrative gaps are filled in by the listener.<sup>33</sup>

Although not dealt with in her article, Włodarski's approach is easily applied to Reich's use of the interviews he recorded with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis. This creates a new narrative trail that brings to light a considerable amount of detail not immediately apparent in *Different Trains*. Indeed, it is an approach endorsed by the composer himself, who has recognised the narrative gap between interview material and musical composition. In an unidentified radio interview archived in the Sacher Stiftung, Reich tells how his selection of extracts of the Holocaust survivors brought to light a large number of 'hidden' stories, which influenced both his selection of source material and shaped the story it tells in context of the finished piece. Rachella shares one such story with Reich.

The Dutch woman, Rachella, who mentions, who's the one, the longest voice, who was in Holland. And she tells the story that after she got out of Auschwitz, she was put on various trains and shunted around, and finally they get out they don't even know where, turns out it's in Denmark. And some guy's at the door of the car and says to her as she gets out, 'You're very beautiful', and she says, 'I'm not beautiful, I'm...'. You know, she knows she's like a corpse. He says, 'To me, you look very beautiful'. And later they all get out and they ask, 'Who was this guy?', and this guy was the King of Denmark.<sup>34</sup>

The significance of these hidden narratives is not lost on Reich, who asserts that 'when you hear about these stories, it supercharges the atmosphere and so what is presented ... lives in the light of what is not presented'. Reference has been made

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<sup>33</sup> This idea is developed in detail in David Nicholls, 'Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 129, No. 1, (2004), pp.100-142.

<sup>34</sup> This unattributed public radio interview is archived at the Sacher Stiftung on SR-CD11, Track 4.

at the outset of this thesis to the fundamental importance of this in framing the present methodology.

Reich does not appear to apply the same principle to his use of interview material, however, and makes no reference to the voices that he recorded himself. Analysis of these interviews reveals that a considerable amount of reshaping has occurred between them and the stories that emerge in *Different Trains*. Whilst this may have not have been Reich's avowed intention, there are deeply personal stories that surface in the original interviews, which are subsequently lost in the noise of the trains but which allow a richer understanding of the piece. Reich's interviews with Virginia Mitchell and Lawrence Davis offer a new insight into how their stories also live 'in the light of what is not presented'. If *Different Trains* is indeed canonical, these interviews function as the Dead Sea Scrolls, calling for a reassessment of the work's complex narrative.<sup>35</sup>

### 6.3.1 Virginia Mitchell

The two interviews conducted by Reich with his former Governess present a fulsome picture of Virginia Mitchell, which creates a narrative context for the 32 words she speaks in the final version of *Different Trains*. In the first interview with Virginia,<sup>36</sup> Reich is brusque, almost anxious, steering the conversation from the outset to make her say particular dates in a certain way that will be of use in his

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<sup>35</sup> The following convention is adopted for referring to the interviews. The first interview with Virginia Mitchell is Interview 1, with each constituent portion given an identifying number (1.1, etc). The second interview follows the same convention, using the sequence 2.1 etc. The interview with Lawrence Davis uses the classification 3.1 etc.

<sup>36</sup> The first interview with Virginia was conducted on 15 December 1987 but did not yield the desired results in terms of usable speech objects. As a result, Reich conducted a second interview two months later on 11 February 1988, Reich having interviewed Lawrence Davis in the meantime. Both interviews took place at her home in Queens, Pennsylvania, in what he describes as a 'sleepy old part of town'.

composition. This anxiety permeates Reich's questioning for a significant part of the interview, almost to the point where he appears to have little interest in Virginia's answers beyond whether she has said the specific words he is looking for.<sup>37</sup> Although Reich tells Virginia that he will take only a few words from the final tape [1.2, 1.4], she seems unaware of the purpose of his questioning and drives the discussion down many side tracks from where Reich attempts to steer the conversation back to his own interest in dates and places.

Notwithstanding her nervousness about being recorded, and the sense that these stories had possibly been told to Reich on several occasions previously, Virginia assumes an air of confidentiality as she describes how his mother plotted to abscond with him as a baby [1.18]. Anxious about saying things that she feels might subsequently be heard by Leonard Reich, the composer's father [1.22], she is assured that there is no intention to quote her at length in the final piece [1.23]. In response, Virginia describes how Reich's mother broke the agreement about not taking the young Reich out of New York State. Reich quickly responds, however, with a question about the destination of the trains, between New York and Chicago [1.25]. Here, and at several points subsequently, the result is that Virginia simply agrees with what Reich has said rather than actually saying either the place, name or date that he wants. After an awkward – and extended – *pas-de-deux*, Virginia finally gives Reich a quotation he can use, which includes the phrase 'from Chicago to New York' [1.80]. Subsequently used for the opening of *Different Trains*, the reference was originally to a journey undertaken not by Reich but by his father, an

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<sup>37</sup> This reflects Reich's approach almost twenty years earlier in steering participants when recording names for *My Name Is*, as discussed previously.

act of voluntary displacement that stands in contrast to the journeys imposed on his son or enforced on the European Jews as they journeyed to the death camps.

Given such lack of success in coaxing Virginia to articulate clearly the individual years between 1939 and 1941, Reich begins the second interview by prompting Virginia to say the years as he needs them to be said [2.01-2.08] and despite being obviously flustered, she is on this occasion more forthcoming. Having asked him to tell her exactly what he wants her to say [2.08], Virginia questions why Reich does not direct his questions at his mother, his response being that he did not associate her with the train journeys [2.18]. A surrogate narrator<sup>38</sup> and the only agent in *Different Trains* known personally to Reich, Virginia is clearly regarded by Reich as a surrogate mother. Despite Reich's nervous questioning, there is obvious warmth between them, and a sense of a continuing maternal bond borne of frequent and sustained contact over a long period of time.

Virginia was born in 1910 and was Reich's governess between 1936 and 1946; she would therefore have been aged between 29 and 32 when they were taking the train between New York and Los Angeles. She was born in Bell Plains, Philadelphia and (like Reich) had periods of time growing up on a farm [1.148, 1.149]. Her family moved around [1.134, 1.140] but lived in New Jersey for some time, and at Fishers Island, New York.<sup>39</sup> She mentions going back to Philadelphia but avoids repeating the names of the places where Reich suggests she may have lived or visited. She reveals that she always travelled by train in those days [1.141, 1.142], although this

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<sup>38</sup> The role of the governess-narrator is often associated with Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), but there is no indication that Reich consciously modelled Virginia's role on James's model.

<sup>39</sup> The population of Fishers Island in 2000 consisted of only 289 people. However, from the turn of the twentieth century, it had been a popular destination sought after by wealthy New York families for summer vacations.

was possibly the only option open to her. Her father worked on the railroad in a position of some authority as a night inspector [1.130] on the Subway [1.128], ensuring that maintenance work was being carried out correctly. He died in 1938 when Virginia was only 28 years old [2.130], but in the months before his death was taken with the child Reich, whom he regarded as something of a surrogate grandson.<sup>40</sup> Virginia had two siblings, Jack and Craven, and she was especially close to Jack. Both brothers were in the armed forces: Jack in the Army; Craven in the Navy [2.143, 2.144]. All three siblings used to travel by train with their mother in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Granted the right to vote in the US in 1920, Virginia was amongst the first pink-collar workers in a growing range of jobs that opened up for women in the after World War 1. Her story is that of the increasingly powerful voice of women in American society: she is a professional governess serving affluent families in New York, and she mentions two others for whom she worked. The first was Mr Admiral, near Connecticut, who was a lawyer [1.120] as was Reich's father, but does not specify whether this was before or after the ten years when she was Reich's governess. After ceasing employment with the Reich family in 1946, Virginia worked for the Beale family, acting as a governess to their daughter [2.210].

Virginia's relationship with Reich's parents, especially with his father, was difficult. During her time as Reich's governess, there was much hostility between her and Leonard Reich, which culminated in her being frozen out at Reich's Bar

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<sup>40</sup> Virginia's own marital status is never touched upon but the assumption throughout is that she is unmarried and childless.

Mitzvah in 1950.<sup>41</sup> As the governess of a young child whose parents were going through a divorce, the diplomatic responsibilities incumbent upon Virginia were as onerous as the parental and educational duties associated with the role. The divorce settlement between Reich's parents determined that the boy Reich would spend six months with each only on the condition that Virginia would accompany him on the journeys. In the interviews, all of Virginia's stories refer to New York and feature Reich's father, indicating that these emphasising these as being the most dramatic points of the narrative.

Virginia builds up a picture of Reich's father, Leonard, as an irascible, headstrong man [1.82], anxious to exercise considerable control over his son's upbringing, in order to ensure his lasting influence on it.<sup>42</sup> By way of example, Virginia recalls his displeasure on one train journey where he complained of an exceptionally bumpy ride [2.87] and when the breakfast provision fell short of his expectations with the staff unable to boil an egg as he wished [2.80]. Acknowledging the negative influence of such behaviour on Virginia, Reich nonetheless appears grateful for the continuing contact with his father beyond the divorce of his parents [2.187], asserting that this closeness became an important model for his own fatherhood of his son Ezra [2.199].<sup>43</sup> Reich makes no mention of his oldest son Michael (born 1 September 1962) from his first marriage to Joyce

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<sup>41</sup> As has already been noted, Virginia was invited to the event but ignored by Reich's parents, and apparently, Reich himself [2.230].

<sup>42</sup> Virginia recounts being thrown out of the household on one memorable occasion by Reich's irate father [2.224].

<sup>43</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, Interview with Steve Reich: 18/7/94. Reich indicates that his reason for leaving New York to go to Mills College in 1961 was to elope, his relationship with his father having 'become non-existent, and his presence in New York City even in absentia was somewhat uncomfortable'.

Barkett, although his diaries indicate a continuing relationship with Michael, who was living in Albuquerque.<sup>44</sup>

After Virginia finished as his governess, Reich's father forbade her to have any further contact with the young Reich [2.212], a prohibition apparently borne out of fear that his son would reject his new stepmother in favour of Virginia [2.221]. This emotional derailment caused her severe depression. Reich reveals that he, too, suffered emotionally as a result of not being allowed to see her and was sick after his breakfast each day for about a year [2.213]. Virginia's relationship with Reich's paternal grandmother was, if anything, worse. One occasion on which the grandmother was aggressive towards her led to a full-blown altercation in which Virginia threw bacon and eggs at her [2.250].<sup>45</sup> As a further indicator of the dysfunctionality of the family, Virginia recalls that his Mother's dog, Sharmus, did not care for either her or Reich but shared the Pullman compartment with the three of them on the first lengthy journey to Los Angeles [1.62]. Apart from the absconding tale [1.20-1.26], little reference is made to Reich's mother, inferring she had significantly less influence on Reich's upbringing following her remarriage in Los Angeles, although Virginia is unable to remember exactly which year in the early 1940s [2.237-2.44]. Virginia refers to the contrast between Reich and his younger half-brother, David, who she describes as a 'holy terror', ironically pointing to how the mother was concerned that Virginia did not discipline the well-behaved Reich enough [2.224].

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<sup>44</sup> Regular visits by Michael to his father in New York are noted, often around Christmas in the 1970s and 1980s, and he was occasionally taken to dinner with Virginia whilst in town. Reich moved away from using a paper diary in 1992, but one of the few entries in that year's volume was Michael's thirtieth birthday.

<sup>45</sup> The references to bacon in a Jewish household indicate the disconnection between the family and their religious heritage, but also the level of offence intended by Virginia in throwing pork meat at a Jewish woman.

The discussion about the trains is detailed and wide-ranging and it is clear that these journeys imbued Reich with a love of train travel.<sup>46</sup> Trains are named and discussed by Reich and Virginia with the enthusiasm of trainspotters: *City of Los Angeles, Challenger, Golden Gate, Black Diamond Limited, Chief, Super Chief, Jacksonville*, and the *Arrow* are all mentioned in addition to the flagship of the Pullman fleet, the *Twentieth Century Limited*. There is also discussion of individual routes, such as the Lackawanna or the Pennsylvania railroad. Virginia was not, however, a good train traveller at high speed, however, and did not relish the pace at which the Pullman trains moved, especially when she was seated in a rear coach where the swaying was more pronounced. The constant lurching of the *City of Los Angeles* at speeds of over 100mph made her sick and she reminisces how the clam broth sold in the restaurant was the one thing that settled her stomach [1.28]. The *Challenger* and the *Golden Gate* were slower trains, which she preferred.<sup>47</sup>

The *City of Los Angeles*, however, is mentioned as being 'one of the fastest trains' [1.28], a statement used in *Different Trains* as an all-encompassing term for the speed of train travel, whatever the locomotive. Virginia was unable to sleep on the *City of Los Angeles*, unintentionally linking her story to that of the Pullman porters who were not provided with sleeping accommodation as they were required to be awake at all times to serve the passengers. Reich, by contrast, spent his time on at least one of the journeys reading the story of *Ferdinand the Bull*

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<sup>46</sup> Reich went on to take the train in 1953, possibly overnight, when he first went to Cornell. At the time of the interview in 1987, he was considering making another train trip to his rural home in Vermont so that his son Ezra could share his father's love of train travel [1.203].

<sup>47</sup> Virginia appears to have had some choice as to which train to catch home and chose slower ones for the return journey such as the *Challenger* or the *Golden Gate*. These were presumably paid for by the Reich family, but must have been cheaper than the Pullman fares. This detail also suggests that Virginia did not stay with Reich for the whole time he was at his Mother's house in Los Angeles.

[1.98], which had been published in 1936, three years before the first train journey, and subsequently made into a short animated film by Walt Disney in 1938.

There is detailed reminiscence of the sumptuous eating and sleeping arrangements on the trains themselves. As a governess to the children of wealthy clients, Virginia would have been no stranger to such opulent surroundings. On the night in January or February 1939 when Reich's mother tried to abscond with her 15-month old baby and her dog, all three were staying at the Hotel Elysée in New York,<sup>48</sup> a hotel whose grandeur was mirrored perfectly by the magnificence of the Pullman trains. Reich and Virginia shared a compartment on the train (that slept three), which Virginia indicates was very nice [1.58], a description that hardly does justice to the luxury of the mode of transport.

The dining arrangements on board the Pullman trains were equally lavish, although there were variations between individual trains. On the *City of Los Angeles*, there were two dining cars; one less expensive than the other, and it was also possible to have a meal served in the compartment by the porter [1.64]. The quality of food on the trains was of the highest standard and Virginia particularly enjoyed travelling on the *Lackawanna* because of the magnificence of the dining car, especially the trout (the Pennsylvania 'dare') [1.88]. She recalls that the food was not expensive [2.86],<sup>49</sup> that there was a children's menu as well, and also that

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<sup>48</sup> 'Built in the 1920s, the Hotel Elysée in New York City is famed for one of the finest French Restaurants of that era. Once the playground for the rich and famous, Hotel Elysée has been home to movie stars, artists, writers, and intellectuals. Luxurious yet intimate, the New York City Hotel Elysée is located on East 54<sup>th</sup> Street between Park and Madison Avenues. Among all hotels close to Central Park, New York Hotel Elysée is an oasis of luxury, elegance and calm in bustling Midtown Manhattan.' <http://www.elyseehotel.com>, (accessed 14/1/12).

<sup>49</sup> Priced at \$1.75, the menu in the restaurant cost the equivalent of several hours' work of the Pullman porters, indicating that Virginia's means were less modest, and probably that her subsistence was taken care of by the Reich family.

Reich had the space and luxury to play with other children on the train. In contrast to her memories of the plentiful supply of food on the trains, Virginia's understanding of the effect of food shortages across Europe at that period is severely limited. Discussing her experience of food rationing, she remembers with disdain having to wait in line at the shops for her allotted amount of food [2.164]. Reich points out that, although this was irritating, it was considerably better than the experience of many Europeans, who had no food at all [2.167] a statement followed immediately by Virginia's opining on the lack of paper bags in the food shops [2.168].

The dining arrangements for the well-healed Pullman passengers contrast starkly with those provided for the Pullman porters, who were forced to eat their food in the lavatory. Virginia complains that they would eat oranges and bananas in there, and the smell of this would make her feel sick when she went to the toilet [1.210].<sup>50</sup> Virginia's view of the Pullman porters is stereotypical, perhaps reflecting the effectiveness of the company's 'miles of smiles' slogan as a means of creating a benevolent public image [1.191-1.201]. Reich suggests to her that they were well paid, and whilst Virginia does not share this opinion, she is convinced that they were happy in their work. In descriptions subconsciously framed by minstrelsy, Reich suggests that all the porters were black and always smiling, clearly enjoying their jobs [1.191, 1.193, 1.195]. Virginia agrees but recalls that many of the conductors and train drivers were white. Apparently oblivious to her privileged

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<sup>50</sup> Davis refers to this as being 'the smoke room' [3.54]. Although the porters were at a later date allowed to sleep in a berth, they had to use a specially marked blue blanket to differentiate them from the passengers who were given beige blankets [3.62].

position, she remembers that when the trains went through Georgia they would see the poor quality of the housing occupied by African-Americans [1.212].

Having spent her career among wealthy white people, Virginia's worldview is far removed from the experience of Lawrence Davis [1.212]. Reich's interview with Davis took place in-between his two interviews with Virginia but there is no subsequent reference by either of them to the conditions in which the porters worked. Both Virginia and Reich mourn the passing of the railroad [1.115] a theme taken up in much greater detail in Reich's interview with Lawrence Davis. The death of the railroad unites both Virginia and Lawrence and represents an unspoken death: the demise of the opulent Pullman service that transported white Americans across the United States, served at the hands of African-American porters. This is, however, a death that spawns the birth of the Civil Rights movement as the opportunities for at least some of Lawrence Davis' descendants emerged only after the passing of the railroad.<sup>51</sup>

### 6.3.2 *Lawrence Davis*

Davis is an African-American, who stands in Reich's music in a tradition of African-American men: Brother Walter, Brother Ray, Daniel Hamm and the other 'hidden' voices in *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*. Born in 1907 [3.107], Lawrence Davis is a retired Pullman porter aged 81 and living alone, when interviewed by Reich on 27 January 1988. The two men had apparently not met beforehand

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<sup>51</sup> Opportunities for African American men were yet to extend to the streets of Harlem, which had presented Reich with a very different view of the Black American experience. There is no indication that he made any connection between his boyhood recollection of the Pullman porters and his work for justice for the Harlem Six.

although Reich mentions speaking on the phone previously [3.01].<sup>52</sup> Davis' voice is chosen by Reich to represent the thousands of voices of porters who would have been riding the railroad at the same time as Reich and Virginia, a lone voice speaking for hundreds of porters working out of each district,<sup>53</sup> with Chicago alone having five districts [3.18].

Reich's attempts to contact a representative black porter to feature in *Different Trains* were fuelled by Paul Wagner's and Jack Santino's 1983 film *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle*, and contact with Lawrence Davis came about through following up on the film. Lasting 58 minutes, the film offers a documentary insight into the work of the Pullman porters who formed America's first black labour union, the history of the Pullman Company being well documented in the annals of American industrial relations.<sup>54</sup> In the interview with Reich, Davis implies that the phrase 'miles of smiles' was of his invention and speaks of having had fun in the making of the film. Lawrence Davis has in fact become a celebrity, referring to Paul Wagner and Jack Santino as keeping close company with him [3.135], and Wagner using him as a key speaker for the history of the company [3.139]. He tells of how he has also made a tape for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) [3.243]. By the time of the interview with Reich, however, he has donated all of the Pullman memorabilia from his 48 years of service to the Smithsonian Institute [3.204]

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<sup>52</sup> Lyn Hughes, *An Anthology of Respect: The Pullman Porters National Historic Registry of African-American Railroad Employees*, Chicago: Lyn Hughes, 2009. Hughes lists two porters by the name of Lawrence Davis, numbered 1021 and 1023. Lawrence "Happy" Davis is number 1023 and is catalogued as residing in Washington D.C., having worked for the C&O B&O Railroad. This includes 48 years for Pullman and a further four years, until 1973 for C&O B&O, running out of Washington D.C.

<sup>53</sup> Hughes, *Op. cit.* lists 5002 porters in her *Anthology of Respect: The Pullman Porters National Historic Registry of African American Railroad Employees*.

<sup>54</sup> *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle* draws heavily on the reminiscences of six retired porters, of whom Davis is one.

although, in a confidential section towards the end of the interview, it emerges that he has lost some money through a questionable deal with another party [3.210, 3.212, 3.214].

In contrast to Virginia, Davis obligingly says his words to order, with phrases such as 'the crack train from New York' [3.02] and the various dates sought by Reich, all appearing quite early on in the interview. When asked by Reich about what he was doing in 1939, his response helpfully starts, 'In 1939...'. Reich immediately relaxes and adopts a calmer tone with Davis than Virginia and the interview gently weaves together a number of narrative threads, which collectively offer a trope on the repression of African Americans in pre-civil rights United States.

Davis exudes tremendous pride in his work and in his employers. His standard of service was exemplary and he describes the Pullman Company as being the greatest of all time. Pullman exclusively hired black men for this role and although the pay was exceptionally poor, it was better than other jobs that might have been available to African Americans at that time. Yet when away from home, porters frequently had to resort to staying in flophouses [3.40], having had no option but to sleep in the toilet on the train itself. Despite these conditions, Davis displays no resentment about the luxurious conditions provided for paying passengers, but takes delight in the opportunity he was given to meet a range of people, although given the fares charged on the trains this must inevitably have been quite a narrow range.<sup>55</sup> Near the start of the interview, Davis points out that it was possible to take a bath or have clothes pressed on board the *Twentieth Century Limited* [3.04].

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<sup>55</sup> During World War II, Davis hints that the soldiers they transported proved quite challenging, as they were rougher than the clientele the porters were used to. This required a good deal of psychology on the part of the Pullman porters to get them onside [3.125].

Beneath the apparent luxury of the Pullman trains, however, there lurked a struggle for the heart of the company, which was played out through the need for collective industrial bargaining for better money and conditions for its porters.

Davis makes extensive reference to the achievements of A. Phillip Randolph, a civil rights leader who was elected as the first President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925, the same year that Davis himself was taken on by the Pullman Company. Davis recalls with some fondness the recognition of the Brotherhood in the 1937 Roosevelt Wagner Act [3.97] following a twelve-year struggle, and the granting in 1939 to the Brotherhood of the right to bargain collectively [3.40]<sup>56</sup>.

Davis' memory is of earning little by way of salary – a mere 29 cents an hour when he started in 1925 [3.36] – and being highly dependent on tips from passengers. He was clearly very successful at this, exaggerating to Reich that he 'made a million' [3.36] but irrespective of the veracity of the claim, the impact of the Brotherhood on wages for porters was such that by the start of World War II the salary had increased to '75, 80 cents an hour' [3.99] and by the time Davis finished in 1973 [3.210] the salary was over three dollars an hour [3.99]. The work also had the enviable advantage of allowing African-American men to see a good deal of America, which they otherwise would not have done. Davis claims to have 'run on every train in the United States at some time or other' [3.22].

Known as Lawrence "Happy" Davis, he sees himself as a model employee among the porters' fraternity, in the face of so many who were sacked for apparently minor breaches of customer courtesy. He is realistic that not all his

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<sup>56</sup> The sleeve notes for *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle* claim that the Brotherhood became 'a training ground for Black leaders – from World War II to the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott to the 1963 March on Washington'.

colleagues were as dedicated to delivering high levels of customer service, with some shirking their duties [3.30], and others being fired for 'dereliction of duty' [3.151]. The Pullman Company employed 'spotters' to report any perceived miscreancy among the porters, the porters themselves suspecting that it was often the Pullman conductor that fulfilled the role [3.69]. Generally white men, the conductors proved more difficult for the Company to supervise and using them as spotters was a way of bringing them on board since, whilst their conditions were also poor, they were better than those of the African-American porters [3.71, 3.73]. There were also opportunities for the conductor to undertake additional work through moonlighting, especially on the southern routes [3.85 – 3.89]. Whilst not availing himself of such lucrative opportunities, Davis nevertheless had a good War, buying candy and cigarettes for the soldiers who needed them [3.161].

Lawrence Davis' pleasure in working for the Pullman Company is replicated in his obvious desire to assist the national effort in the difficult times of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Franklyn D Roosevelt is singled out for praise at 'putting America to work'<sup>57</sup> [3.93] and the role of the railroad in assisting some of the largest companies of the day to move around the country is held up in admiration.<sup>58</sup> He is also clear as to the vital part played by the railways in promoting the country's war effort and recalls travelling on 7 December 1941 from Atlanta, Georgia, picking up congressmen greatly exercised on revenge and retaliation against the Japanese for

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<sup>57</sup> Roosevelt is also praised for introducing Social Security in 1936, the year of Reich's birth. Reich light-heartedly refers to himself as 'a Roosevelt baby' [3.223]. Davis sees Roosevelt as a defining figure in his life, recalling himself to have been on the train when he heard that Roosevelt had died [3.237].

<sup>58</sup> The range of organisations transported by the Pullman Company was clearly diverse. Davis refers to the Citizens' Surveying Corps (CCC), the American Red Cross and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company as being clients of the railroad.

attacking Pearl Harbour [3.111]. Davis subsequently rode trains that went to many army camps [3.113], with a specific focus on the West Coast and the particular difficulties in running to San Francisco as there were no rail tracks, the crew having to be ferried on pontoons as required [3.113].

Davis alludes to the emotional intelligence required to satisfy the company's discerning customers and the need for a winning smile, although passengers often interpreted this in a demeaning racial manner. Whilst Davis dismisses as unimportant the humiliating manner of calling every porter 'George' – as if each one were George Pullman's 'boy' with his master's name – the porters were expected to have a ready smile and the Pullman experience became, ironically, 'miles of smiles'.<sup>59</sup> All this contrasts starkly with Reich's anti-racist work with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, especially his collaboration on the film *Oh Dem Watermelons* with its debunking of racist stereotypes. The inclusion of the Pullman porter here carries with it the popular depiction as an object of ridicule, its worst excesses being in the labelling of porters as 'Uncle Toms'. Davis refers to rampant segregation in the 1950s, giving a particular example from Columbus in 1956 [3.165].

Lawrence Davis' story barely surfaces in *Different Trains*. Although there is no evidence that Reich sought to suppress the struggle of the Pullman porters, it does not emerge in the assembling of the voices in the final piece, reflecting Włodarski's critique of Reich's approach to the use of testimony. This is based on his extracting arbitrary portions of his witnesses' stories in a manner that 'transforms highly

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<sup>59</sup> Lawrence Davis refers to the use of name badges by porters to ensure porters were called by their name rather than 'George' or 'boy' [3.206].

subjective survivor testimonies into a historical discourse in which their witness is lifted out of its emotional context and made to serve as fact rather than memory.<sup>60</sup> Reich takes a similar approach with the interviews of both Virginia and Lawrence Davis, with the use of random snippets essentially violates the emotional complexity of the stories they embody.

#### 6.4 *Narrative Trail 4: Different Trains*

*Different Trains* is a collage in the tradition of *The Plastic Haircut, Livelihood*, the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain* and *Harlem's Six Condemned*. The fourth – and final – narrative trail considers the stories embedded in the finished piece as Reich now moves from the role of author in the proto-version to the position of auteur here, crafting and shaping a new narrative from the sources he has assembled.

##### 6.4.1 *Movement I: America – before the war*

The first movement carries the title 'America – before the war', although the headings of movements are not printed in the score. It divides into two unequal parts: sections 1-7 [measures 1-295] and sections 8-12 [measures 296-385]. The first part has two additional recorded parts on the CD; the second part is differentiated in Sections 8 – 12 by the use of three recorded string quartets. Each of the twelve sections contains a single sequence based on one speech sample. The speech samples are taken entirely from Virginia and Lawrence Davis. The sequence establishes the geographical reach of Reich's story across the whole of America, the timeframe in which these journeys took place and the speed and mechanical efficiency of the trains themselves. Virginia's voice is dominant throughout the

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<sup>60</sup> Włodarski, *Op. cit.*, p.103.

section and is used to establish the significance of Reich's journey in *Different Trains*. Mr Davis<sup>61</sup> helps to locate these journeys in the three years they took place, contrasting with Virginia's less precise memories of 1941 for the journeys.

The narrative begins in 1939 and covers the three-year period until 1941, the so-called 'Phoney War' before fighting began in earnest in Europe, and the period before the US entered the global conflict. As discussed above, these years broadly coincide with the time of Reich's journeys across America, although there is no reference to specific dates during these three years, suggesting deliberate vagueness. There are no actual events in this movement: the reference to the impressive mechanical engineering feature of the trains is more specific than the period during which they ran. Such reminiscence is typical of childhood memory and is used to reinforce Reich's memory of the train as being simply enormous.

Section	Measures	Speech	Speaker	Tempo	Key Signature
1.1	1 – 28			J= 94.2	b
1.2	29 – 76	"from Chicago to New York"	Virginia	J= 108	bbbbb
1.3	77 – 136	"one of the fastest trains"	Virginia	J= 97	bbbb
1.4	137 – 182	"the crack train from New York"	Mr Davis	J= 84	
1.5	183 – 216	"from New York to Los Angeles"	Mr Davis	J= 69	bbbbb
1.6	217 – 255	"different trains every time"	Virginia	J= 76	bbbbbb
1.7	256 – 295	"from Chicago to New York"	Virginia	J= 108	bbbbb
1.8	296 – 324	"in 1939"	Virginia	J= 130	bbb
1.9	325 – 338	"1939"	Mr Davis	J= 126	####
1.10	339 – 350	"1940"	Mr Davis	J= 126	####
1.11	351 – 369	"1941"	Mr Davis	J= 126	bbbb
1.12	370 – 385	"1941 I guess it must've been"	Virginia	J= 99	bbb

Table 25: *Different Trains*, 1<sup>st</sup> Movement

<sup>61</sup> Reich generally refers to Lawrence Davis as 'Mr. Davis'.

In spite of his longstanding desire to be able to manipulate human speech, Reich changed neither the tempo nor the pitch of any of his vocal sources for *Different Trains*. This was partly a result of the limitations of the sampling technology, but also reinforces the authenticity of the speaking voices. This incorporation of the actual pitch and speed of the speech samples required frequently changing time and key signatures and each section is thus differentiated in the score. The tempo of each section is a function of the speed of the speech melodies and accounts for the similarities in tempo between sections 2 and 7, for example, where the same speech sample is used, or between sections 9, 10 and 11, which are sub-divisions of the same speech sample.

### *Section 1.1*

There is no use of speech melody in this section, the music evoking the sound of a 1930s railway locomotive. This is reminiscent of Honegger's *Pacific 231* (1923) and Vivian Ellis's *Coronation Scot* (1938), although Reich incorporates the actual sound of the railway locomotive in *Different Trains* rather than merely attempting musical mimesis. Although not indicated on the score, the steam engine sounds coincide with sustained chords played by the strings. The interlocking paradiddle rhythms played by the other strings further attempt to mimic the systematic movement of the beam on the wheels of the locomotive moving backwards and forwards.

### *Section 1.2*

The first speech sample is from Reich's governess Virginia who functions as Reich's mouthpiece. Her words provide orientation for the narrative, the spatiotemporal context in which these events take place, and the geographical

setting for at least part of Reich's journey, the final leg on the way home between Chicago and New York. The repetition of the phrase implies an iterative narrative through its level of re-statement, a function of Reich's repetitive style, leaving it open as to whether the journey was made once or many times. Essentially a piece of achrony, the journey is introduced as a dateless event with no immediate temporal connection. There is no deictic locator and the journey takes place, by implication, in a timeless present. *Different Trains* therefore starts *in media res* with an assumption that the narrative will eventually make reference to a beginning point that will set everything in context.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>From Chicago</i>	33
<i>From Chicago</i>	37
<i>From Chicago</i>	41
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	45
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	51
<i>From Chicago</i>	55
<i>From Chicago</i>	59
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	61
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	65
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	69
<i>From Chicago</i>	71
<i>From Chicago to New York From Chicago</i>	73

The stem 'from Chicago' remains constant in each of the twelve uses of the sample, Reich's treatment of it calling to mind the augmentation canons used extensively in his work of the 1990s. The augmentation here is not canonic, however, and neither is the treatment of the sample; the extended stem is removed after the fifth sample but added again for the eighth, ninth and tenth samples. Like the train itself, the final sample moves between Chicago, New York and back again. As a structural device this is not necessarily significant, although in the journeys themselves Chicago was a central focus. The statement here focuses

the narrative on Reich's return journey to East Coast America, where he would have stayed had his parents not divorced.

### Section 1.3

Speech sample	Measure
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	84
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	88
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	92
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	95
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	99
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	103
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	107
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	110
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	114
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	118
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	122
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	125
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	129
<i>One of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	133

Having identified the geographical context of the journey, the trains themselves are introduced, also by Virginia. Unlike the slow, moribund trains crawling towards the concentration camps, the trans-continental trains of Reich's youth speed on their way, although Reich's enduring childhood memory would have been dominated by the seemingly interminable nature of the journey. The treatment of this sample is through a simple augmentation: four statements of 'one of the fastest trains', three statements with an extension 'one of the fastest trains fastest trains' and seven statements of a double sample 'one of the fastest trains one of the fastest trains'.

### Section 1.4

Lawrence "Happy" Davis is introduced into the narrative for the first time. Set adjacent to Virginia, the suggestion is created that they journeyed together, rather than on different trains. Yet they are not in conversation and this is merely the

outcome of Reich's narratorial privilege as auteur. Davis' focus is on the train rather than the journey and he takes pride in the 'crack train from New York', 'crack' being used in the sense of a 'crack' shot, substantiating Virginia's statement that these trains were the fastest and the best of their time: an advanced feat of inter-war engineering. Mr Davis' words also provide a geographical locator: the best engineering originates in New York from whence Reich's own journeys started. The natural rising motif of Mr Davis' speech links him with fellow African-American Brother Walter in *It's Gonna Rain*, whose rising voice warns of the nuclear holocaust to come.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>The crack train from New York</i>	143
<i>The crack train from New York</i>	146
<i>The crack train from New York</i>	149
<i>The crack train from New York from New York</i>	152
<i>The crack train from New York from New York</i>	155
<i>The crack train from New York from New York</i>	158
<i>The crack train from New York from New York the crack train from New York</i>	162
<i>The crack train from New York from New York the crack train from New York</i>	166
<i>The crack train from New York from New York the crack train from New York</i>	170
<i>The crack train from New York from New York the crack train from New York</i>	174
<i>The crack train from New York from New York the crack train from New York</i>	178

Davis' words, like Virginia's, are augmented during the section. Three initial statements develop into a further three repetitions, each extended through a reiteration of the final two words 'from New York'. This is followed by five further statements with the initial sample now appended to the structure of the previous augmentation.

### Section 1.5

The geographical perspective is broadened to encompass the entire United States as Mr Davis speaks of the length of journey upon which the 'crack' train will embark.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	187
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	189
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	191
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	193
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	195
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	197
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	199
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	201
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	203
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	205
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	207
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	209
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	211
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	213
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	215

The method of augmentation is similar to Sections 3 and 4, building up from three statements of the original sample, through a further five with ‘from New York’ appended, to six more with ‘from New York’ appended twice. This emphasises Reich’s own links with the city, being indeed ‘from New York’; this affinity is also captured in his *New York Counterpoint*, a title that also aptly describes of the weaving lines of the train journeys across the country.

#### Section 1.6

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Different trains every time</i>	224
<i>Different trains</i>	226
<i>Different trains every time different trains</i>	228
<i>Different trains every time</i>	231
<i>Different trains</i>	233
<i>Different trains every time</i>	235
<i>Different trains</i>	237
<i>Different trains every time different trains</i>	239
<i>Different trains every time</i>	242
<i>Different trains</i>	244
<i>Different trains every time different trains</i>	246
<i>Different trains every time</i>	249
<i>Different trains</i>	251
<i>Different trains every time different trains</i>	253

Virginia's voice returns, her words providing the title of the piece itself. Her references, however, are not to the plight of the European Jews and the mention of 'different trains every time' is simply an acknowledgement that many trains were needed to run the route with each journey potentially on a different locomotive. This introduces the double focalisation of the narrative and presents for the first time the central motif of the 'Different Trains'. The structure of the speech samples changes to reflect the words, differently structured every time: 'Different trains', 'Different Trains every time', and 'Different trains every time different trains'.

#### *Section 1.7*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>From Chicago</i>	256
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	264
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	270
<i>From Chicago</i>	274
<i>From Chicago</i>	278
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	280
<i>From Chicago to New York</i>	284
<i>From Chicago to New York from Chicago</i>	288
<i>From Chicago to New York from Chicago</i>	292

Section 7 forms a codetta to the first part of the movement. It is a re-statement of Virginia's words in Section 2 with the same three treatments of the sample but with different numbers of repetitions. This provides narrative closure to Reich's exposition of the geographical context of his childhood experience; the restatement of the locomotives serves to reinforce this closure.

#### *Section 1.8*

Sections 8-12 establish the chronological parallel between the US and Europe that forms the context for the voices of the Holocaust survivors in Movement 2. The string texture is increased to include three recorded quartets, with Virginia's voice continuing from the previous section.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine</i>	296
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine</i>	300
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine</i>	302
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine</i>	304
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine</i>	306
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	308
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	310
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	312
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	315
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine in nineteen thirty-nine</i>	318
<i>In nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine in nineteen thirty-nine in nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine in nineteen thirty-nine</i>	321

A new sequence begins, now concerned with the temporal setting of the journeys already referred to, the sample consisting solely of the date 1939. These sustained references could be considered as an extended analepsis, but in the context of the framework of the movement they now locate the narrative in a specific point in history.

#### Section 1.9

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine</i>	325
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine</i>	327
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	329
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine</i>	331
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine nineteen thirty-nine</i>	333
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine nineteen thirty-nine</i>	335
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine nineteen thirty-nine</i>	336
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine nineteen thirty-nine</i>	337
<i>Nineteen thirty-nine thirty-nine nineteen thirty-nine</i>	338

Sections 9, 10 and 11 comprise a single sample, subdivided into three, the tempo of each remaining the same. Mr Davis' voice is heard again, which fulfils a similar function as in Section 4 in confirming and supporting Virginia's reminiscence of the date. The year 1939 is hammered home as being the starting point for the narrative, no longer *in medias res*.

### Section 1.10

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	339
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	341
<i>Nineteen forty forty</i>	342
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	343
<i>Nineteen forty forty</i>	344
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	345
<i>Nineteen forty forty</i>	346
<i>Nineteen forty forty</i>	347
<i>Nineteen forty forty nineteen forty</i>	348
<i>Nineteen forty forty nineteen forty</i>	349

Mr Davis becomes the agent for establishing the timeframe for the entire action of the piece, the means by which the action is moved through from 1939 to 1941. The pattern of repetition uses both expansion and contraction of the speech sample, but with no regular pattern of so doing.

### Section 1.11

<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	351
<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	355
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one</i>	357
<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	359
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one</i>	361
<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	363
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one</i>	365
<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	367
<i>Nineteen forty-one</i>	369

A similar pattern of repetition and re-statement recurs here as Mr Davis' words are used to establish the third year, 1941. In contrast to sections 8, 9 and 10, however, the sequence does not build up by expanding the re-statement of the year. The contraction of the snippet back to its original length instead prepares the way for Virginia's voice to confirm that she and Lawrence Davis are indeed referring to the same year.

## Section 1.12

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Nineteen forty-one I guess it must have been</i>	370
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one I guess it must have been</i>	374
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one I guess it must have been nineteen forty-one I guess it must have been</i>	378
<i>Nineteen forty-one forty-one I guess it must have been nineteen forty-one I guess it must have been</i>	383

Rather than offering chronological certainty, however, Virginia introduces a note of hesitation. Having provided a sound confirmation of the year 1939, she can now only guess it must have been 1941. Reich does not indicate what the 'it' is that must have been in 1941 – the US entrance into the war; a correction to her belief as to which year the journeys took place; or the year when she first heard news of the Holocaust. Despite this ambiguity, Reich uses parallel voices to reinforce the authenticity of the historical context from two perspectives in bringing the movement to an end, moving immediately into the second movement.

### 6.4.2 Movement 2 – Europe – during the war

The second movement is shorter by approximately 90 seconds than the first movement but contains significantly more speech-based material. The shortest of the three movements in terms of performance-length, it is based on the speech extracts of three Holocaust survivors, Rachel, Rachella and Paul. These first-person participants are now introduced as characters that have survived the Nazi atrocities across Europe during the 1930s. The amount of speech of each character varies considerably. Rachella's commentary dominates the movement with 283 measures, compared with 63 measures derived from Paul's speech samples and 23 measures of Rachel's speech. The greater amount of speech-based material in this movement also generates a larger number of sequences than in the first

movement. As before, each sequence forms a self-contained section and is delineated from other sections by a change in tempo or key signature or both.

Section	Measures	Speech	Speaker	Tempo	Key Signature
2.1	1 – 16	“1940”	Rachella	$J = 104$	bbbb
2.2	17 – 28	“on my birthday”	Rachella	$J = 74$	#####
2.3	29 – 38	“The Germans walked in” “walked into Holland”	Rachella	$J = 71$	#####
2.4	39 – 50	“Germans invaded Hungary”	Paul	$J = 122$	#####
2.5	51 – 62	“I was in second grade”	Paul	$J = 129$	#####
2.6	63 – 72	“I had a teacher”	Paul	$J = 136$	bb
2.7	73 – 88	“a very tall man, his hair was concretely plastered smooth”	Paul	$J = 97$	bbb
2.8	89 – 102	“He said ‘Black Crows invaded our country many years ago’ ”	Paul	$J = 98$	###
2.9	103 – 114	“and he pointed right at me”	Paul	$J = 86$	bbb
2.10	115 – 122	“No more school”	Rachel	$J = 81$	
2.11	123 – 138	“You must go away”	Rachel	$J = 100$	bbb
2.12	139 – 152	“and she said ‘Quick, go!’ ”	Rachella	$J = 102$	#
2.13	153 – 184	“and he said, ‘Don’t breathe! ’ ”	Rachella	$J = 158$	b
2.14	185 – 200	“into those cattle wagons”	Rachella	$J = 98$	#
2.15	201 – 212	“for four days and four nights”	Rachella	$J = 95$	
2.16	213 – 231	“and then we went through these strange sounding names”	Rachella	$J = 99$	bbbb
2.17	232 – 247	“Polish names”	Rachella	$J = 102$	#####
2.18	248 – 268	“Lots of cattle wagons there”	Rachella	$J = 86$	b
2.19	269 – 286	“They were loaded with people”	Rachella	$J = 98$	##
2.20	287 – 302	“They shaved us”	Rachella	$J = 86$	bbbbb
2.21	303 – 318	“They tattooed a number on our arm”	Rachella	$J = 70$	bbbbbb
2.22	319 – 384	“Flames going up to the sky – it was smoking”	Rachella	$J = 130$	bb

Table 26: *Different Trains*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement

The movement falls into two parts, each consisting of eleven sections. The first part is dominated by descriptions of the survivors' personal reminiscence of Nazi invasion. Measures 1 – 3 consist of Rachella's experience of the Germans invading Holland; measures 4 – 8 are based on Paul's recollection of the Germans

invading Hungary and measures 10 and 11 recount Rachel's experience of being evacuated to safety. There is anisochrony between the narrative speed of this part of the movement and Rachella's detailed reminiscence of aspects of life in the concentration camp in sections 12 – 22. The musical construction of each sequence is less repetitive than in the first movement. The voice of each protagonist is permitted to emerge through statement and restatement of the whole of each speech sample, rather than through the type of additive and subtractive sampling procedures applied to the words of Virginia and Mr Davis.

### Section 2.1

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	1
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	3
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	6
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	8
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	11
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	13
<i>Nineteen forty</i>	15

The movement follows on directly from the first movement, and the speech sample of the year occurs seven times without modification. Although there is a geographical gap between Rachella's travelling and Reich's journeys, there is no chronological gap between them. Rachella's bald assertion of the year locates the movement in the mid-point of the three years cited by Mr Davis.

### Section 2.2

Speech sample	Measure
<i>On my birthday</i>	17

The poignancy of Rachella's story is that the events took place on her birthday in 1940, a speech sample used only once here but reused as the movement progresses. Rachella's personal history is elevated above the generic experience of her people, reflecting a Biblical tradition for Jewish stories to work from the

individual to the nation. This principle is exemplified in *It's Gonna Rain*, where Noah becomes the individual through whom God works to save the whole earth.

### Section 2.3

Speech sample	Measure
<i>The Germans walked in</i>	29
<i>Walked into Holland</i>	36

Both speech samples are used once without modification. This is the first mention of the antagonists, the Nazis, the agents inflicting suffering on Rachella and her people. They are referred to as 'the Germans' rather than the Nazis, and the subsequent reference to 'Holland' emphasises the geographical proximity of persecutor and persecuted. The reference to 'the Germans' reflects Reich's own chequered experience with the nation.<sup>62</sup>

### Section 2.4

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Germans invaded Hungary</i>	39

The second protagonist, Paul, picks up the story, making a parallel statement about the invasion of Hungary. The single iteration of the speech sample is understated and the experience of an entire nation is reduced to three simple words.

### Section 2.5

Speech sample	Measure
<i>I was in second grade</i>	51

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<sup>62</sup> Reich's attitude to Germany is ambivalent. A frequent visitor to the country with his ensemble, Reich's trips there can be traced back to 23 January 1972, when *Steve Reich and Musicians* undertook a one-week concert tour of five German cities: Bremen; Hamburg; Cologne; Düren, and Dusseldorf, with Hamburg and Stuttgart following in January of the following year. Reich's keen awareness of the history of Judaism in Germany explains his sensitivity to residual Nazi attitudes among a new generation of Germans, as evinced by *Achtung! Political Statement* (11/3/82), reproduced in Appendix 16. As previously noted, he also disowned the German piece, *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)*.

Reich uses a single detail of Paul's testimony to anchor his reminiscence chronologically. Rather than being focused on a specific day, Paul's recollection is of the school year he was in. This detail, as with Rachella's memory of her birthday, is a helpful deictic and reinforces the function of the three survivors as protagonists for the millions of Jews who did not survive.

#### *Section 2.6*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>I had a teacher</i>	66
<i>I had a teacher</i>	72

A new character is introduced through Paul's words: one of his teachers. Here, we are given no identifying features, Reich simply using Paul's words to state the man's existence. The speech sample is stated twice, the second time on the final measure of the sequence, thus enabling an easy segue into the following sequence, which offers further details of his appearance.

#### *Section 2.7*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>A very tall man</i>	73
<i>His hair was concretely plastered smooth</i>	75
<i>A very tall man</i>	79
<i>His hair was concretely plastered smooth</i>	83
<i>A very tall man</i>	87

An agent in Paul's early life, the teacher encapsulates the type of authority figure who fostered and disseminated prejudice against Jews across Europe. Reich emphasises Paul's description of the domineering physical stature of the teacher, his height being stated three times. His other identifying feature is his hairstyle, which implies a strong resemblance to familiar images of Hitler.

### Section 2.8

Speech sample	Measure
<i>He said black crows</i>	89
<i>Black crows he said</i>	92
<i>Black crows invaded our country</i>	94
<i>He said black crows</i>	98
<i>Invaded our country many years ago</i>	100

The teacher is quickly established as an antagonist to the Jews. He views their presence in Hungary as an invasion, which is now being rebalanced by Hitler's Final Solution. The four racist references to 'Black Crows' pile up the reiterated resentment of the teacher as a 'type' of Nazi attitudes towards Jews. The fifth and final sample includes a deictic that locates the blame for this perceived invasion 'many years ago', implicitly citing this as the cause for the modern woes of Hungary.

### Section 2.9

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And he pointed right at me</i>	103
<i>Pointed right at me</i>	104

The image of the teacher visibly blaming the young Paul for the perceived wrongs of his entire race carries a terrible poignancy. He is pointed out in front of his classmates, as if to identify him as being in some way culpable for the imagined sins of his fathers. By implication, it is his fault rather than Hitler's that the present troubles are developing.

### Section 2.10

Speech sample	Measure
<i>No more school</i>	115
<i>No more school</i>	118
<i>No more school</i>	119
<i>No more school</i>	122

The pattern changes now in favour of the simple restatement of a single phrase. Rachel makes her contribution to the scenario: there will be no more

school, no more opportunity for these children of Jewish parents to develop their learning.

### Section 2.11

Speech sample	Measure
<i>You must go away</i>	123
<i>You must go away</i>	127
<i>You must go away</i>	133

The irony of the words 'you must go away' is not wasted on Reich. The Jews are to go away to the concentration camps and the children of Jews are also to go away, just as Pharaoh banished the Children of Israel. The three-fold emphasis serves as a personal instruction to each of the three survivors in the narrative.

### Section 2.12

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And she said "Quick, go!"</i>	139
<i>And she said "Quick!"</i>	145
<i>And she said "Quick! and she said "Quick, go!"</i>	148
<i>"Quick, go"</i>	152

We are not told by whose agency it is that Rachel is given the command to leave. It is no longer an imperative to leave the school, however, but a command to enter the cattle wagons on the death-train to the concentration camp. The instruction to leave quickly is given only once, but as with the previous sequence it is used to create an implicit pseudo-iterative dimension. The emphasis on leaving quickly also generates a quickening of pace in the narrative.

### Section 2.13

This command is from a different agent, as evidenced by the reference to 'he said'. The instruction prefaces a series of sequences, by implication from the Nazi guards, which form a continuous narrative from this point until the end of the movement.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	154
<i>And he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	162
<i>And he said "Don't" he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	166
<i>And he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	170
<i>And he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	178
<i>And he said "Don't" he said "Don't breathe!"</i>	182

Grouped into two equal sets of repetitions, the eight-fold repetition of the instruction of the command for Rachel not to breathe gives the instruction itself some breathlessness in delivery and lends the music a heightened level of intensity.

#### Section 2.14

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Into those cattle wagons</i>	185
<i>Into those cattle wagons</i>	198

This is the first direct reference to the 'different trains' that run to the concentration camps. Here, dehumanised, the wagons are vessels fit only for animal transportation. The description is not put on the lips of the Nazis themselves, however, and they remain as silent antagonists throughout.

#### Section 2.15

Speech sample	Measure
<i>For four days and four nights</i>	201
<i>For four days and four nights</i>	210

The duration of the journey captures the sad, slow progress of the cattle wagons; contrasted with the 'crack train from New York' that covers the whole of America in a shorter period of time.

#### Section 2.16

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And then we went through these strange sounding names</i>	213
<i>And then we went through these</i>	228
<i>Strange sounding names</i>	229

At the end of the four days, Rachella's reminiscence is of the strangeness of the place names. The splitting of the speech sample in its repetition creates a pause for those journeying on the death trains to come to terms with the peculiarity of these names.

#### *Section 2.17*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Polish</i>	239
<i>Polish names</i>	247

The name Auschwitz is never quoted directly, but it is implicit through the contextual reference to Polish names.

#### *Section 2.18*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Lots of cattle wagons there</i>	249
<i>Lots of cattle wagons</i>	255
<i>Lots of cattle wagons there</i>	268

By implication the journey is over, and the train has arrived at its destination, typified by the number of similar trains, all of these pulling degraded cattle wagons.

#### *Section 2.19*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>They were loaded with people</i>	269
<i>They were loaded with people</i>	285

Whilst the trains are not referred to in a manner that would identify them as worthy of human habitation, they are nevertheless densely populated with the Nazis' victims.

#### *Section 2.20*

Speech sample	Measure
<i>They shaved us</i>	287
<i>They shaved us</i>	293

The Nazis appear again by implication, their initial act being to depersonalise each of the thousands of Jews in the same debased manner as the trains

themselves. Just as the Nazis themselves operated *en masse*, so their prisoners were to have their distinguishing characteristics reduced as far as possible.

### Section 2.21

Speech sample	Measure
<i>They tattooed a number on our arm</i>	306
<i>They tattooed a number on our arm</i>	317

This stripping of identity is followed by a further replacement of each person's individual identity with a number. The numbers were chosen by the Nazis, conferring on themselves the status associated with those who have the power to name others. This is a complete reversal of Reich's *My Name Is*, into the Nazis' 'your number is'. In this heavily unbalanced power relationship, neither the Nazis nor their victims are complex characters; both are reduced to a one-dimensional existence.

### Section 2.22

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Flames going up in the sky flames</i>	319
<i>Going up in the sky it was smoking</i>	326
<i>It was smoking going up in the sky</i>	333
<i>Flames</i>	339
<i>Going up in the sky it was smoking it was smoking</i>	341
<i>Going up in the sky it was smoking it was smoking</i>	349

The movement ends with the terrifying spectacle of the burning of the bodies of Jews in the death camps. This is not narrated explicitly and there is no attempt to stir up any emotional response through graphic description of what the Nazis did. The final reminiscence is simply of the flames, the ending of the music being as drawn out as the smoke and flames themselves.

### 6.4.3 Movement 3 – After the war

The third movement forms the *dénouement* of the piece, blending the voices of two of the three Holocaust survivors with those of Virginia and Lawrence Davis. This creates a multiple focalisation for the narrative as Reich blends different voices to relocate the piece to an unspecified present. The resulting polychronic narration is set clearly in the America of ‘today’, an eternal ‘now’. In this context ‘now’ could be taken to mean any unspecified period at the end of the War, from 1945 to the present day. In actual fact, the precise chronological location makes little difference and this points to the nature of the time in the piece having no obvious end point.

Section	Measures	Speech	Speaker	Tempo	Key Signature
3.1	1 - 57	“And the war was over”	Paul	J = 110	b
3.2	58 – 100	“Are you sure?” “The war is over”	Rachella	J = 124	##
3.3	101 – 169	“going to America”	Rachella	J = 111	####
3.4	170 - 187	“to Los Angeles”	Rachella	J = 90	
3.5	188 – 222	“to New York”	Rachella	J = 136	##
3.6	223 – 282	“from New York to Los Angeles”	Mr Davis	J = 138	bbbb
3.7	283 – 432	“one of the fastest trains”	Virginia	J = 194	bbb
3.8	433 - 521	“but today, they’re all gone”	Mr Davis	J = 174	b
3.9	522 - 563	“There was one girl, who had a beautiful voice”	Rachella	J = 131	b
3.10	564 - 590	“and they loved to listen to the singing, the Germans”	Rachella	J = 100	b
3.11	591 – 670	“and when she stopped singing they said, ‘More, more’ and they applauded”	Rachella	J = 92	bbbb

Table 27: *Different Trains*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement

#### Section 3.1

In discourse time, there is an unspecified gap between the end of the previous movement with its elongated references to the smoke and flames and Paul’s single contribution at the opening of this movement.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And the war was over</i>	28
<i>And the war was over</i>	33
<i>Over</i>	34
<i>And the war was over</i>	38
<i>And the war was over</i>	43
<i>Over</i>	44
<i>And the war was over</i>	48
<i>And the war was over</i>	53
<i>Over</i>	54
<i>Over</i>	57

The sample is treated in an iterative manner such that each double repetition of the statement ‘and the war was over’ is sealed with a repetition of the word ‘over’, this pattern being repeated threefold with a final additional statement of ‘over’. It also reflects the displacement of the survivors, who are going ‘over’ to America.

### Section 3.2

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Are you sure?</i>	66
<i>Are you sure?</i>	76
<i>The war is over</i>	83
<i>The war is over</i>	90
<i>Over</i>	98

Through this juxtaposition, Rachella appears to question Paul’s assertion, capturing the sense of disbelief that such stark suffering could ever be brought to an end. Juxtaposing two speech samples, Reich is able to use Rachella’s voice to answer her own question, the pattern of the last three lines mirroring the treatment of Paul’s words in the previous section.

### Section 3.3

The use of the word *America* gives a geographic focus for the survivors and a new sense of hope and future. The repeated reference here conjures associations with other musical uses, most notably the songs of the same name from Bernstein’s

musical *West Side Story* (1957) and from Simon and Garfunkel's album *Bookends*, as well as the Supertramp LP *Breakfast in America* (1979).

Speech sample	Measure
<i>Going to America America going to America</i>	131
<i>America going to America going to America</i>	147
<i>America going to America going to America</i>	165

The voices of the survivors are moving towards the same location as the narrator, Reich himself. This has clear, if unintended, overtones of the supremacy of America as a place where oppression is overcome and freedom won.

#### Section 3.4

Speech sample	Measure
<i>To Los Angeles</i>	172
<i>To Los Angeles</i>	174
<i>To Los Angeles Los Angeles to Los Angeles</i>	184

Reich introduces cross-characterisation between Rachella and Mr Davis as she picks up his words from the opening of the first movement. At the time of recording, Rachella was living in Seattle rather than Los Angeles, but nevertheless on the West Coast of the new country she would come to call home.

#### Section 3.5

Speech sample	Measure
<i>To New York New York</i>	191
<i>To New York</i>	202
<i>To New York New York</i>	207
<i>To New York</i>	218
<i>New York to New York</i>	220

It is not clear why Rachella mentions New York, except possibly as the gateway to America from Europe. In contrast to Virginia's 'from Chicago to New York', her journey is from Auschwitz to New York. The eight iterations of New York are presented in the sequence 2:1:2:1:2, giving the section an internal symmetry.

### Section 3.6

Speech sample	Measure
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	223
<i>From New York to Los Angeles</i>	235
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	247
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	263
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York from New York</i>	275
<i>From New York to Los Angeles from New York</i>	279

Mr Davis' restated words from the opening of the first movement pick up the theme of Rachella's previous sequences. The same speech sample is now set in a key signature of four flats and transcribed in notes of twice the length. Given the doubling of the pulse as well, however, the effect of the speech sample is similar to before.

### Section 3.7

Speech sample	Measure
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	283
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	305
<i>One of the fastest trains</i>	313
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	320
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	328
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	335
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	343
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	350
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	358
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	365
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	373
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	380
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	388
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	395
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	403
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains fastest trains</i>	410
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	418
<i>One of the fastest trains fastest trains one of the fastest trains</i>	425

A similar treatment is given to Virginia's speech sample from the first movement, now doubling both note values and pulse. The sequence is extended further, perhaps reflecting the point that the journey itself for these Holocaust survivors has been extended from Europe to America, and also emphasising the

potential for speedy travel in comparison with their previous experience on the death trains.

### Section 3.8

Speech sample	Measure
<i>But today</i>	433
<i>But today</i>	441
<i>But today today</i>	449
<i>But today they're all gone</i>	457
<i>They're all gone</i>	471
<i>But today today</i>	477
<i>But today they're all gone all gone</i>	485
<i>But today they're all gone</i>	513

This section forms a transitional sequence and gives the piece a new orientation: today, a word pronounced nine times in the sequence. In the context of the war being over, Mr Davis' words operate at several levels. It is true that the trains he rode as a porter in America have gone, as have the trains in Europe. But the Nazis have also gone, along with the suffering and death they imposed; most significantly, millions of European Jews are departed forever. They are a poignant 'elegy for the millions of people who died between 1933 and 1945'.<sup>63</sup>

### Section 3.9

Speech sample	Measure
<i>There was one girl</i>	530
<i>There was one girl</i>	533
<i>There was one girl who had a beautiful voice</i>	536
<i>There was one girl who had a beautiful voice</i>	542
<i>There was one girl who had a beautiful voice</i>	560

Reich uses Rachella's voice as a coda to the work. The war is over, the trains have all gone, and the reminiscences of the Jewish experience in Europe have been presented in harrowing detail. The piece concludes with a new hope as Rachella recalls that in between the harsh Polish names, the shaved heads and the tattooed arms, there was one girl who sang in the depths of despair of the concentration

<sup>63</sup> Fox, *Op. cit.*, p.2.

camp. As Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz puts it in *Dolly*, 'every creature has a song' and here the beauty of this girl's singing becomes an abiding memory despite the unspeakable suffering around her. She is the final character to receive a voice in *Different Trains* and the beauty of her voice lives on in the words and memories of Rachella and others.

### Section 3.10

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And they loved</i>	564
<i>To listen to the singing</i>	565
<i>And they loved to listen to the singing the Germans</i>	570
<i>The Germans</i>	575
<i>They loved to listen to the singing</i>	588

Even the antagonists, the Nazis, are transformed by the memory of this girl's singing. As in Movement 2, they are given the title 'Germans' rather than Nazis. The repetition of the effect of the girl's singing converts the antagonists into allies: her singing was such that 'loved' is the word used by Rachella three times to describe the emotion they showed in a context where love was in exceedingly short supply. However, Włodarski proposes the notion that Reich misheard the recording when transcribing the extract, perhaps because he was working only from an audio recording with no means of matching Rachel's words with her facial gestures. She offers a comparison of Reich's libretto and what Rachella actually says on tape.<sup>64</sup>

Rachella:

*And there was one girl, who had a beautiful voice  
and it [sic] would sing all these English songs.  
And they laughed to listen to listen to the singing,  
The Germans who were in charge of us.  
And when she stopped singing, they said "More,  
More," and they applauded.*

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<sup>64</sup> Włodarski, *Op. cit.*, p.132.

Reich's libretto:

*There was one girl, who had  
A beautiful voice.  
And they loved to listen to the singing, the Germans.  
And when she stopped singing,  
they said, "More, More," and they applauded.*

The difference between the two readings is significant. In Reich's version, the Nazi persecutors are won over by the charm and innocence of the girl's voice, their cold hearts melted as they call for encores. In this version of the narrative, her agency is to achieve something that international diplomacy had failed to do: to bring friend and foe together through the means of music.

Włodarski wryly observes that this sentimentalised message is the one Reich wishes his audience to take away: 'Instead of "They loved to listen to the singing, the Germans," the audience's ovation might assert, "We loved to listen to the singing, the audience"'. In the alternative reading, the Nazi persecutors are made worse by the experience of the singing as they cruelly mock it, tormenting the singer with jeering and false applause. Since it is unlikely that Reich would have deliberately wished to improve his audience's perceptions of the Nazis guards, such a mistake can only be based on a mishearing. If correct, the phrase 'laughed to listen' sounds unnatural, even artificial, from someone whose English does not sound stilted at any other point in the piece. Since neither can be proven, both must be allowed to stand here as parallel – and contradictory – narrative threads.

### *Section 3.11*

On the basis of Reich's transcription, the narrative of *Different Trains* ends on a note of optimism rather than suffering. Despite the levels of cruelty and inhumanity that permeate the survivors' reminiscences, the war is now over, and

there is reconciliation through the single abiding memory of the beauty of music with its power to transform and heal. The antagonists, the Germans, demand more of the singing, their applause suggesting that despite the corrupt power of the depraved Nazi regime, the officers are cultured men who could respond to beauty when they experienced it. Twelve statements of their request for more singing appear in Reich's final sequence.

Speech sample	Measure
<i>And when she stopped singing they said "More, More"</i>	591
<i>And when she stopped singing they said "More, More", and they applauded</i>	596
<i>"More, More"</i>	610
<i>"More, More"</i>	613
<i>"More, More" and they applauded</i>	616
<i>"More, More"</i>	631

If Włodarski's transcription is adopted, however, the piece ends on an altogether different note as the Nazis are given a voice through Rachel, the incessant, jeering taunt that the 'girl with the beautiful voice' should sing through her tears of sorrow as her listeners mock her sincerity. Rather than reconciliation through music, the two sides are drawn further apart and the movement ends on a note of scornful derision.

### 6.5 *Conclusions*

The narrative trails surrounding *Different Trains* bring to light a number of important strands lying to one side of the final work: recurring themes of the relationships between the members of the Reich family; the family's financial success; the opulence that framed their experience of train travel despite the dysfunctionality of the family itself; Virginia's continuing relationship with Steve

Reich; the view of African-Americans and the perception of the role of porters by white Americans as being little better than slaves.

Lawrence Davis's words convey a sense of pride and dignity in having had the opportunity to work for the Pullman Company, which despite its paternalistic employment practices created opportunities for African Americans that did not exist elsewhere. In referring to the demise of the trains, he is noticeably said that 'today they're all gone' [3.10], a phrase used later with some ambiguity to refer to the end of the War and the overthrow of the Nazis. The conditions for porters, more punishing than Reich's experience of the train journeys as a passenger, were considerably better than those experienced by many other black Americans at the time. Reich does not explore the contrasts between the experience of the white passengers and the black porters and this creates a sub-narrative mirroring to some extent the overt contrasts drawn between American and European Jews.

The decline of the railroad forms a framing narrative, which becomes a metaphor for the extermination of the Jewish people through the Nazi pogrom. However, Davis also draws a reverse parallel in which the European railways survive whilst the American railroad dies [3.191]. He cites the lack of maintenance as a key element in this decline. In contrast to Virginia's father, who was overseeing the maintenance of the subway trains, the railroad track was allowed to degenerate to the point where journeys were no longer comfortable. It was ultimately, however, the curtailing of journeys across the whole country that sounded the death knell for the long-distance train routes of America [3.200].



## Chapter 7     Conclusions

Steve Reich is firmly of the opinion that his music does not tell stories, allowing no exceptions even for his speech-based compositions. He has conceded, though, that their documentary source material has implications for how audiences understand these pieces. These implications have been drawn out in the preceding chapters, which present a detailed examination of the sources for Reich's speech-based works composed between 1964 and 1988. This extensive collection of material has not previously been available for scholarly consideration, and analysis of it here has uncovered a series of narrative trails. From these emerge a landscape more rugged than previously assumed, which challenges the composer's estimation of his speech-based music as non-narrative.

Consequently, the present thesis has argued that – contrary to the composer's own view – Reich's speech-based pieces do indeed tell stories. The way in which they achieve this is through the setting up of complex narrative trails between source material and final composition, with particular importance attached to the creation of sound collages. Reich's view consistently fails either to recognise the fundamental significance of these collages, or to credit the narratives embedded within the source material as a whole.

In creating sound collages, Reich assumes the role of *auteur*; selecting, editing, refining and subsequently juxtaposing gobbets of recorded speech. The resulting structures each establish a narrative framework, which affords Reich complete authority over the voices he manipulates, enabling him to arrange material to suggest direction and causality, and to foreground narrative aspects of his choosing.

In the case of *The Plastic Haircut*, *Livelihood*, *Buy Art, Buy Art, My Name Is* and *Different Trains*, the collage constitutes the final work. With *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, the collages function as proto-versions, creating a scenario, setting out the voices used in the final piece and exploring narrative structures through the juxtaposition of speech, sounds and situations. Uniquely, in *Different Trains*, Reich creates a proto-version using only his own voice, trying out possible phrases that he hoped to record others saying in subsequent interviews.

The style of Reich's collages is more accurately described as non-linear rather than non-narrative since, although not conveying a linear story, they are heavily reliant on narrative elements. Individual speech gobbets are self-contained, but their juxtaposition creates narrative gaps to be filled in by the listener in the manner one might mentally complete the story between the pictures in a cartoon strip. This approach dates back to Reich's earliest professional work with the non-narrative theatre of the San Francisco Mime Troupe and the similarly episodic work of experimental filmmakers such as Michael Snow and Robert Nelson, the latter of whom offered the composer his first opportunity to produce a non-linear sound collage. This collaboration reinforced, rather than reduced, Reich's role as auteur since *The Plastic Haircut* sets up no diegetic relationship between soundtrack and image. Here, as with each of the subsequent speech-based compositions, Reich worked autonomously to shape his material.

Despite his 1966 statement to Truman Nelson that sound collages were not his stock-in-trade, Reich therefore emerges as something of an expert both in their technical creation, and in appreciating their potential to provide a vehicle through which stories may be told. As auteur, he establishes narrative through the creation

and selection of recorded material, and through the structure of the resulting sound collages. These reveal stories about people, placefulness and temporality; some of them developing narrative trails established previously, others setting up new paths to be explored.

The collages are based entirely on the principle of mimesis rather than diegesis: the showing of characters through their own words, rather than an authorial third-person telling of their stories. The source recordings are mostly created by Reich, but with three instances of him using existing material: *The Plastic Haircut*, *Come Out*, and *Different Trains*. The speech recordings for *The Plastic Haircut* are taken from a commercially-produced LP, *The Greatest Moments in Sport*, Reich's supposed connection being his fond childhood memory of it. This seems improbable, as he was aged 19 when the record was released, and has demonstrated little subsequent enthusiasm for discussing sporting achievements. With *Come Out*, Reich accepted a significant amount of tape material from Truman Nelson for a sound collage, hoping to stumble across a speech snippet that might be used for a phase piece. Having found a suitable voice, that of Daniel Hamm, Reich's interest in the remainder of the tapes quickly faded. With *Different Trains*, however, his search for archival recordings of Holocaust survivors was highly motivated by his personal religious commitment, involving a meticulous search for speech gobbets that could be used alongside material of his own creation.

Reich produced his own source tapes for *Different Trains* and four other compositions: *Livelihood*; *It's Gonna Rain*; *My Name Is* and *Buy Art, Buy Art*. His approach to the creation of these recordings varied greatly. In *Livelihood*, the tapes were made secretly without the knowledge – or permission – of the taxi passengers

whose voices were being taped. Reich's approach in *It's Gonna Rain* was more transparent as his recording equipment was inevitably conspicuous as he was taping in Union Square. However, the majority of the individuals recorded did not address Reich directly and their voices were probably captured without their awareness of what was taking place. With the exception of three characters, subsequent identification of the voices in the collage is dependent on Reich's notes on the tape box.

This approach changed with *Buy Art, Buy Art* and *My Name Is*, as the identity of the speaker assumed a new degree of importance, thus allowing a more personalized narrative. In the former piece, Reich used voices of eminent visual artists to promote sales of their work in the Museum of Merchandise exhibition. Listeners would, however, have been unaware of the identity of the voices, which were listed only in the exhibition notes. The combination of the uncontrolled tape phasing – and the ambient noise of the exhibition space – served to obscure further the aural identity of the speakers. *My Name Is* marks the first occasion on which Reich considered the names of the participants to be an important component of the piece. The voices chosen are specific to each performance but would be recognised by one or more members of the audience.

Reich's selection of voices for *Different Trains* is distinctively personal. Virginia Mitchell was essentially his surrogate mother and her voice anchors Reich's boyhood experience of train travel with his emotional dependency on his Governess. Lawrence Davis was not known at the time to either Reich or Virginia, but is set as a parallel voice from that period. Reich was initially unable to meet the Holocaust survivors whose voices he used, but personally recorded Davis' voice. The decision

to conduct face-to-face interviews with both Davis and Virginia allowed Reich to formulate questions designed to elicit particular words and phrases, to the point where this takes precedence over the narrative significance of what was actually said.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the source recordings, many of the voices chosen by Reich are defined by ethnicity: African-American men (Brother Walter, Daniel Hamm and Lawrence Davis); Jewish Holocaust survivors (Paul, Rachel and Rachella), and Hispanics (Fat Spanish Lady and Fat Lady's Insane Believer Girl). However, *My Name Is* represents an attempt to employ a more comprehensive range of voices (in age, gender, ethnicity and accent), by recording members of the concert audience. This principle also allowed Reich to explore the sonic identity of his own performance ensemble in *My Name Is: Ensemble Portrait*. The approach was repeated, but quickly rejected, for *Mein Name Ist ... (Portrait der Schola Cantorum, 1981)* the recording of the names of the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum clarifying in Reich's mind that he should henceforth use only voices of American English speakers.

Reich's tendency not to identify voices in his collages diminishes the possibility of creating a linear narrative. These anonymous speech gobbets become the building blocks from which an episodic structure – and thus a non-linear narrative – is formed. The edited words of the speakers vary in length from speech snippets of a few words to extended speech gobbets of several minutes' duration. In *The Plastic Haircut* and *Livelihood*, the speech snippets are short, creating a semblance of energetic activity and fast-moving pace. *Different Trains* also draws on relatively short speech snippets, but these are subjected to extensive repetition in a manner

untypical of the earlier collages, foregrounding through reiteration aspects of the narrative framework. The proto-versions of *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out* both make use of extended speech gobbets that allow some characters to emerge as complex multi-dimensional individuals, rather than the single-dimensional sketches that appear in the final versions of these pieces.

As auteur, Reich fashions narrative structures from this diverse range of voices. The stories told are complex, some of them introducing themes that complicate or even call into question previous interpretations of the pieces themselves. These stories have been set out in the discussion of individual works including, *inter alia*, Reich's wealthy upbringing and subsequent search for commercial success as a composer; his encounter with competing claims for religious truth; and unacknowledged stories of racial tension.

The child of wealthy parents, Reich's upbringing offered him little experience of the racial oppression and social injustice experienced by many of his characters. However, the luxury of the Pullman trains and the opulence of the hotels in which they stayed must be set against the family's dysfunctionality, with financial resources used as a means of exerting power over the destiny of the young Reich as he travelled across America. Virginia is presented as a unifying factor in *Different Trains* but Reich's interviews with her open up stories outside of the intended diegesis in which family rivalry and the struggle for control function as analogues for World War II. This contrasts with the serenity of Lawrence Davis's narrative, his experience as a Pullman porter being far removed from the privileged displacement of Reich and Virginia. Required to be constantly at the call of his well-heeled passengers, porters such as Davis ate their own food – and snatched sleep as they

were able – in the train's lavatories. Such stories are entirely absent from *Different Trains*, as is the social impact of the decline of the American railroad in the 1940s and the alienation of a generation of African-Americans in the era beyond the trains.

Diverse religious stories emerge through these pieces. Although by that stage an active believer, Reich makes no reference in *Different Trains* to Jewish religious practice, the focus being on racial persecution rather than religious identity.

Previously disconnected from his spiritual roots, however, Reich was ill equipped to recognise, let alone interpret, the assortment of religious perspectives he encountered in Union Square. The proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain* reveals intense debate for the soul of 1960s America as the Square is drenched in Scriptural proclamation and allusion, most of it unrecognized by Reich. Scripture is used – and abused – by many of those whose voices are heard, which grounds the resulting narrative in a biblical as well as contemporary timeframe. The Noah trope, personified in Walter's preaching, becomes an analogue for the Apocalypse, yet the original narrative foregrounds the theme of personal holiness as the only means for ensuring lasting social change. The portrayal of believers themselves also varies: Walter's treatment is broadly sympathetic, whilst Reich questions the sanity of the female Hispanic preachers.

Racial tension in American society is personified in the voices of Brother Walter and Daniel Hamm. Friction between African-Americans and American Jewry also emerges, which acts as a sub-plot to the Nazi persecution during the Holocaust. This appears in the words of Naomi and the Vegetarian in the proto-version of *It's Gonna Rain*; in the events of *Come Out* (especially the murder of a Jewish shop owner and the Jewish composition of the trial jury), and in the changing social

patterns of domicile in 1960s Harlem. It is seen most clearly on the Pullman trains, in the demeaning living conditions experienced by African-American porters.

Supremacist views are frequently articulated: Jessie Owens' story in *The Greatest Moments of Sport* is embedded in *The Plastic Haircut*; Naomi's extended diatribe in *It's Gonna Rain* brings to light deep-seated racial hatred; the Harlem police are seen to be institutionally Racist; and the persecution of the Jews in the Holocaust becomes a defining personal narrative for Reich.

Reich also frames his narratives through the use of placefulness. Each piece has a clearly defined location that is created by its subject matter, its source materials, its performance setting, or the audience to whom it is performed. *Livelihood* is set firmly in the city of San Francisco. *It's Gonna Rain* creates a microcosm of the same city, documenting various encounters in Union Square, and enhanced by the contextual sounds of pigeons, automobiles, streetcars and pedestrians walking in the Square. *Come Out* is powerfully linked with Harlem through the events that led to the arrest and trial of the Harlem Six. The commissioning of *Buy Art, Buy Art* for the Museum of Merchandise Exhibition anchors the piece to Philadelphia, but also more broadly to the professional careers of the artists themselves on the East Coast of the United States. The performance of *My Name Is* becomes inseparably linked with its setting in whichever concert venue it is performed, as selected members of the audience are heard in it. *Different Trains* has a diverse sense of placefulness and a more complex focalisation: the US, then Europe, and finally Europeans arriving in America after the War.

There is also a strong temporal dimension to Reich's narratives. His juxtaposition of speech extracts sets up a pseudo-temporal relationship between

the actual sequence in which these events took place historically, and the manner in which they are arranged in the piece. In *Livelihood*, for example, the action seemingly takes place during a single day, with the piece progressing in a linear manner towards the passengers bidding the driver good night. A similar approach is taken in *It's Gonna Rain*, which establishes a similar timeframe, and for which the source recordings were indeed made in one day, albeit with large portions subsequently discarded. This approach reflects one of the classical Greek unities, with the dramatic action occurring during a 24-hour period. *Different Trains* has less precise temporal markers, consisting entirely of undivided complete years between 1939 and 1941. *Buy Art, Buy Art* and *My Name Is* are defined primarily by the time taken to perform them in their performance situation. Similarly, in *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out* the length of the phased tape loops is the main determinant of each piece's temporality.

The present study has drawn from the entirety of sources currently extant and available. It is recognised that additional source material may subsequently emerge, which could further develop this research, possibly adding supplementary narrative trails or diverting the course of paths already mapped. Sources not presently available include: the original recordings for *Livelihood* that Reich made in his San Francisco taxi; the 'field' recordings that he created in Union Square that formed the basis for the sound collage of *It's Gonna Rain*; the extensive amount of recorded material given to Reich by Truman Nelson from which the composer created *Harlem's Six Condemned*; Nelson's scenario for the same piece, and any further interview material created by Reich as preparatory material for the pieces considered here.

The present thesis also provides a foundation for related research in Reich's later speech-based works, particularly *City Life* and *WTC 9/11*, which are essentially sound collages in the same tradition as the seven pieces considered here. It is anticipated that source material for these pieces will become available in due course, which is likely to include computer-generated materials as well as speech recordings. Narrative trails could also be charted for the composer's two large-scale video operas, *The Cave* and *Three Tales*. Scholarly attention has already been drawn to developing an appropriate methodology for considering the organization of visual and sonic elements of such works, and the present thesis offers a model of narrative construction that could inform further analysis of multimedia pieces.

Finally, Reich's compositional energy at the age of 77 appears unabated, and there is a realistic possibility that additional speech-based works may yet be produced. Given the composer's assertion that his music does not tell stories, understanding such pieces must call for a full consideration of their source materials, recognising that what is presented in each of Reich's speech-based works will inevitably continue to live in the light of what is not presented.

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SR-CD3, Track 5

*Harlem's Six Condemned*.

SR-CD8, Tracks 1-2

Union Square, 6/64.

SR-CD9, Tracks 1-4

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SR-CD10, Tracks 1-3

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