



Pure Pleasure NS 79170

Steve Reich: Drumming

Format: 1LP 180g 33rpm / standard sleeve

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Manufacturer: Pure Pleasure Original label: Nonesuch Genre: Jazz

Simply put, "Drumming" is, along with some of Philip Glass' "Einstein On The Beach", one of the most fascinating pieces of first-generation minimalism. The version recorded for Elektra/Nonesuch in 1987 ranks among Reich's masterpieces. The 60-minute continuous work features one basic rhythm pattern. Throughout four segued movements it is multiplied, played in canon on various percussion instruments. "Part I" is for four pairs of tuned bongo drums; "Part II" for three marimbas (played by nine players) and two singers mimicking the sound of marimbas; "Part III" for three glockenspiels, piccolo, and whistling (played by Reich himself); "Part IV" for all previous instruments, including voices. Transitions between movements are gradual, the whole piece being built on accumulation and reduction. When it is time to go to the next movement, players are slowly removed, quarter-notes replaced by rests, in order to make room for the new instruments. The piece almost comes to a complete halt at the end of "Part III", keeping only the most basic pulse before the whole process starts over, building up to the finale. There is a sense of happiness and lightness irradiating from "Drumming". It is a perfect example of the paradox of the simple and the complex, the easy and the challenging underlying minimalist music. Both cerebral and vitally tribal or ritualistic, this album is a must-have.

"Drumming" - Bob Becker, Ben Harms, Gary Kvistad, Steve Reich, Gary Schall, Glen Velez, Thad Wheeler (tuned drums, marimbas, glockenspiele); Pamela Wood Ambush, Jay Clayton (voc); Steve Reich (whistling); Mort Silver (fl); a.o.