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MUSIC FOR 18 MUSICIANS

Steve Reich

GVSU New Music Ensemble, Bill Ryan, dir.
5.1 surround SACD/CD hybrid

1970s downtown New York City and Steve Reich's brand of Minimalism are inextricably linked. That is all about to change. His era-defining opus, **Music for 18 Musicians**, one of his most enduringly popular works with its creamy orchestration and trippy patterns, has found new roots in the heartland. A band of regular Michigan students and volunteers led by Bill Ryan has devoted the last year to perfecting it; in the process, turning it into something of a lifestyle.

This hybrid SACD/CD audiophile, surround recording captures every phrase of the work, as though you were hearing it for the first time in your life, farm-fresh. Engineered by Silas Brown on location at Grand Rapids' Victorian temple to great music, the St. Cecilia's Music Center, the work seems newly-minted for the 21st century.

Walking around Allendale, Michigan, home of the ensemble, where the land is flat, where one can see for miles and miles and miles, and where this view sometimes seems infinite, the music seems written for the location. The piece is huge, monolithic, yet unencumbered by its hour-long frame, by its huge staff of players and interlocking rhythms and melodies. It stretches long and far and encourages deep breathing and space, as does the home of this recording: The Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble performs "Music for 18 Musicians" with a spirit and abandon befitting the passion of its composer, inspired by the commitment and experience of its leader, and with the exuberance and vision of its youth.

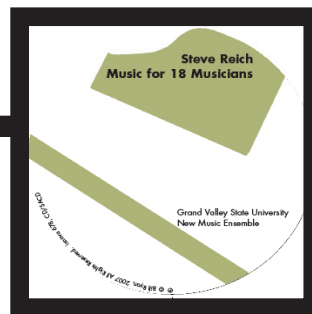
With performances lauded by the New York Times and Bang On a Can Marathoners, we now invite you to discover this ensemble, and to rediscover this extraordinary work in its 100% organic glory.



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Who would have thought? From a mid-western school in Michigan, Grand Valley State University, here comes a really first class New Music Ensemble. They spent a good long time rehearsing and then came to New York City and blew away a full house at the Winter Garden with their performance of Music for 18 Musicians - at dawn - during the Bang on a Can Marathon. They then went on to make a really moving recording of the piece. A gorgeous and stunningly accurate CD of Music for 18 Musicians from the heartland to the heart. Take a listen.
 — Steve Reich

...[The Bang on a Can Marathon] performance of Steve Reich's "Music for 18 Musicians" by the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble around 5 a.m. on Sunday was attended by more than 400 people, by Mr. Lang's estimate. For listeners present from the evening's onset, that performance took on unanticipated dimensions: higher cognitive functions ceded to powerful impressions of physicality and emotion. The entry of the maracas in Section VI felt epic.
 — Steve Smith, New York Times



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