Steve Reich
Music for 18 Musicians
Week of 18th May
Background – the composer

Steve REICH
(b. 1936)

- American composer – one of the most famous and well-respected contemporary composers
- Began his career as a percussionist and was fascinated with repeating patterns
- Is known as the ‘father’ of minimalism – a whole new form of music
Background – the music

Music for 18 Musicians (excerpt)

- Written in 1974
- One of Reich’s first pieces for large ensemble
- Features an ensemble of clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, cello, voices, marimbas, vibraphones, metallophones, xylophones, pianos and maracas
- Minimalism is a type of music that features just a few short ideas and a lot of repetition
Click here to watch the orchestral performance.
Listening questions for EYFS & KS1

Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2

• Can you keep a steady beat (heartbeat) along to the music? You can tap on your knees, like we do in music lesson.

• Did the speed of the music change at all?

• What animal or creature does this piece of music make you think of? The music keeps such a steady beat and is so busy that it makes me think of a busy, hard-working minibeast.

• Draw a picture of your creature. Listen to the music while you draw.
Listening questions for KS2

Year 3 & 4

• The orchestra had no conductor. How did they stay in time with each other without anyone to watch?

• Describe the difference between the sound the marimbas (wooden tuned percussion instrument) and vibraphones (metal tuned percussion instruments) make.

• When the singers perform, are they singing something different to everyone else or the same?

Year 5 & 6

• Tap along with the beat (pulse) of this music. How many beats are in each bar? 3, 4, 5 or 6?

• The genre this is written in is called minimalist music. After listening to this piece, how would you describe minimalist music?

• There is a lot of repetition in this music. Listen from the beginning and write down letters for each section you can hear. Remember, if a section is repeated, you use the same letter again. For example A B A structure has two different sections of music but the A section is repeated later in the piece.
Nursery and Reception
Steve Reich's piece of music is made up of many repeated patterns. We are going to create our own repeated pattern using Chrome Music Lab:

1. Watch this short tutorial by clicking here
2. Now click on the link below and create your own pattern.

https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/

Year 1 and 2
This piece of music is made up of lots of short patterns that are repeated, this is called minimalism. Now let's create our own piece of minimalist music:

• First, watch this short tutorial by clicking here
• Then click on the link below and create your own piece of minimalist music.

https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/

• Finally, share your piece of music with someone at home and ask them to save the link, if possible.
Year 3, 4, 5 & 6

- Minimalism is a type of music that features just a few short ideas and a lot of repetition. We are now going to compose our own minimalist piece of music using Chrome Music Lab.

- Click [here](https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/) to watch a video that explains how. You’ll need to open [https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/](https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/)

- **Year 5 & 6** – challenge yourself further. Can you add harmony? A more extended structure? More complex rhythms? Can you compose in a different time signature? Could you compose something that you can play part of on your instrument?

Once you are happy with your composition, click save. Copy the link and email it to me at admin@stmp.camden.sch.uk. I would love to hear your work!

Year 5 & 6 – in the listening activities, did you work out that there are 3 beats in every bar?
Listen to Music for 18 Musicians. You can listen with your eyes closed if you want to so you can see the images inside your head better.

• What image do you get in your head when you listen to it?
  • You might hear a factory where they make robots who build things with Lego bricks. Or perhaps you heard a kingdom on an ocean or a superhero rescuing someone. Or maybe you heard something completely different...

• Create a piece of art showing what you saw when you listened. You might do a drawing or painting, make a play dough sculpture or build something with recycled materials. You could make this on your own or with someone in your family.

• Take a photo of your creation and upload it to the BBC website by clicking here.