

“Interventionist” Phasing in Steve Reich’s *Nagoya Marimbas*

Steve Reich’s *Nagoya Marimbas* (1994) poses challenges to performers, listeners, and analysts alike. The piece includes a series of repeated two-part unison canons and many changes of meter. While Horlacher (2000/2001) and Roeder (2003) have investigated metric interpretations of Reich’s earlier phase-shifting compositions, this paper addresses Reich’s specific strategies for *disclosing downbeats*, drawing connections between these strategies and his manipulation of pitch-class collections. Because Reich alters both the pitch-class content and the rhythmic patterns to attain specific results expediently, I describe Reich’s approach to phasing in this piece as “interventionist.”

Drawing on Krebs’s (1999) notion of “interpretive layers,” I demonstrate how registral high- and low-points aid in disclosing pattern downbeats. I relate passages with disclosed downbeats to Reich’s manipulations of pitch-class collections through their gradual rate of change. Many of the collections that Reich uses in *Nagoya Marimbas* include a maximal number of interval-class 5. I adopt Temperley’s (2001) “line of fifths” to model changes in the pitch-class collection throughout this piece and define four categories of changes. My analysis reveals that Reich often reinforces the degree of salience of change to the collection through other musical domains, such as register and meter.