



The Web Magazine from the American Music Center

cover matter radar chatter

LISTEN to radio

Radar - InPrint

A Conversation with Robert Carl, author of *Terry Riley's In C*

By [Frank J. Oteri](#)

Published: January 14, 2010



Robert Carl

- **READ** an excerpt from *Terry Riley's In C* by Robert Carl (Courtesy of Oxford University Press).

[Ed note: Oxford University Press is a proud sponsor of NewMusicBox and this very book has been featured in their sponsored space on this site. However, despite this serendipitous synchronicity, their welcome support for NewMusicBox in no way influences our editorial content.]

In April 2009, the 45th anniversary of Terry Riley's *In C* was celebrated on the main stage of Carnegie Hall in an all-star performance assembled by the Kronos Quartet's David Harrington. The event included the participation of musical luminaries across a wide swath of genres ranging from Philip Glass and Joan La Barbara to Dave Douglas, Lenny Pickett, and Wu Man, plus some of the participants in the piece's earliest performances—Morton

Subotnick, Katrina Krinsky, Jon Gibson, and Stuart Dempster. Some of us felt it was a long overdue acknowledgment from one of the world's most prominent bastions of high culture for the historical significance of minimalism and the work which served as a catalyst for establishing this new musical paradigm. Although, fascinatingly enough, the 1968 New York premiere of *In C*, which directly led to its premiere recording on Columbia Masterworks, occurred in Carnegie's much smaller, and at the time less high-profile, Recital Hall, now known as Weill Recital Hall. But if last year's Carnegie Hall celebration confirmed *In C*'s status as a landmark in music history, two more recent events reveal *In C* to be a harbinger of the future as well.

In July 2009, Oxford University Press issued Robert Carl's analytical volume *Terry Riley's In C* as part of their series, *Studies in Musical Genesis, Structure, and Interpretation*, the first work of a living composer to be so accredited. This may seem another accolade in the establishing of *In C* as standard repertoire, but in fact Robert Carl's book is also largely about how *In C*'s adaptability among musicians of a wide variety of stylistic backgrounds provides an excellent road map for the future of music.

In November 2009, innova issued *In C Remixed*, a 2-CD set featuring a crisp performance of Riley's original score by the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble along with 18 remixes and re-conceptualizations of *In C* by a broad range of people including some of today's most forward thinking musical creators—e.g. David Lang, R. Luke DuBois, Phil Kline, Mason Bates (a.k.a.

[advanced search](#)

Related Articles

[Terry Riley: Obsessed and Passionate About All Music Cover](#)

[The Field Trip to End All Field Trips](#)

Radar - By Bill Ryan

Related Links

[Website for the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble's In C Remixed Project](#)

 [Email to a Friend](#)

 [Printer Friendly](#)

newmusicbox
is supported by

BOOSEY & HAWKES

The world's leading independent publisher of classical music and jazz.



Looking for new music?

Visit AMC's Online Library — the largest online database of American music.

Masonic), and Paul D. Miller (a.k.a. D.J. Spooky That Subliminal Kid).

Right before the start of this new year, I chatted with Robert Carl about his insightful book as well as the past, present, and future of what is an undeniable musical phenomenon. It is clear that in addition to being one of the most significant pieces of American music created thus far, *In C* also continues to shape and inform the music of today and tomorrow.—FJO

Frank J. Oteri: Your book, *Terry Riley's In C*, is part of a series of books, Oxford University Press's *Studies in Musical Genesis, Structure, and Interpretation*, which deal with single pieces of music. Curiously it's the first book in that series to deal with the music of an American composer, and the first to deal with a living composer. There have been analytical books written about other specific books for decades, but books about single pieces of music are a relatively recent phenomenon. A few years back there was an excellent book about Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, and there have been books about specific Broadway musicals and jazz albums, as well as close to a hundred books in Continuum's *33 1/3* series on rock albums. I'm wondering how many of these types of book you yourself have read and how much of an impact they had on your own work.



Listen to Robert Carl and Frank J. Oteri's wide-ranging discussion of

Riley's seminal work.

Audio samples used in the program are pulled from GVSU New Music Ensemble's new disc on innova records, *In C Remixed*.

Purchase: amazon.com 

Robert Carl: I have to tell you that I'm woefully ignorant about all of this in many ways, but I've had this book as a glimmer in the back of my eye for a long period of time. At one point, just looking through the Oxford catalog of music books that turned up one day in the mail, I saw this series which I had never really thought of before. It's essentially a musicological series dealing with monuments pretty much of the 19th century, maybe the early 20th: very scholarly, very historically oriented, dealing with manuscripts and source material study. And I thought, "Gosh, wouldn't it be a hoot if *In C* were part of that?" So out of the blue I emailed the editor, whose name I saw there—Malcolm Gilles. He's a rather remarkable polymathic man who is a Bartók scholar, among many other things. I asked him whether such a book could possibly be part of this series, even though it was kind of the camel's nose under the tent, in terms of bringing the 20th century in. And he wrote back, "What an interesting idea. Send us a proposal." And that's how it started. It was totally out of the blue. And I think he was as intrigued by the idea that if there was to be a break in the wall of these 19th century monuments that this series was dealing with, this might be a very interesting piece to do it with—that a piece that is recent 20th century and actually in many ways highly experimental and radical in terms of its practice might take its place along with these repertoire monuments. So I have to say that I was more driven by the topic of the book than I was by driven by the genre of the book.

FJO: A book of this nature is ultimately fundamentally different from a biography or a book about a specific style or time period. Your book is not really a book about Terry Riley or a book on minimalism or the 1960s, although all of those topics get fleshed out in it. By focusing on a single piece, you provide a very specific window through which all of these other things can be observed.

RC: I should say that, if someone hasn't seen it, it's not a big book—it's about 160 pages. But it is to some degree a portrait or a bio of Terry Riley leading up to *In C*, so in a sense it's the first half of his life. When I first met him he did say, "I haven't had a biography yet, and maybe this is it." I hope it isn't; I hope

there's more coming down the pipeline. But it serves a certain function of taking him up to about 1968-69, and it does also deal with the pieces that led up to *In C*, starting from works that he was writing just after he got to San Francisco and Berkeley: the String Quartet; the Trio; *Music for the Gift*, which he made in Paris—the pieces that are both acoustic—"classical"—and the pieces that are electro-acoustic. And the influences of jazz and drug use and the culture which was in between Beat and Counterculture in San Francisco at that time, all of those things go into the mix and I think are essential to show how he got to a certain critical point where he wrote the piece essentially in one night in a white heat. That's one of those apocryphal stories that seems to be true. At least the horse's mouth says it is, and I believe him.

FJO: We often talk about composers and principal works of theirs that immediately spring to mind, e.g. Stravinsky and *The Rite of Spring*. Certainly Stravinsky had a very long career and wrote lots of other fabulous music, but *Rite of Spring* is the piece that everyone thinks of. With Schoenberg, it is probably less so with *Pierrot*. People also think of *Verklärte Nacht* and the development of twelve-tone music, which was later. But Terry and *In C* are almost inseparable. No other piece he's done has had quite the same impact. It's sad that Terry thought that this book will be his biography considering he created so many incredible works for string quartet—he's probably our most prolific living composer of quartets—plus all the remarkable solo keyboard compositions and improvisations. Why do you think that is?

RC: For one thing, *In C* met a particular need with genius at the moment, to work out a strategy for dealing with open form that still preserved character and a certain precision and yet was also so incredibly open. I think the balancing act that he got doing that with the structure of the piece—a one-page score with 53 modules—is a remarkable thing. He himself says he could have gone on and done it over and over again and he decided not to. Only a couple of pieces that followed are anything like this: *Tread the Trail* and *Autumn Leaves*. So it stands out because it seems to meet a very particular need for structured and improvised musics melding together. Another thing that I discovered about it listening to a lot of the recordings that have been made over the years is that there are few pieces that are as welcoming to musicians who come from an unbelievable range of experience, not just classical versus non-classical but also Western and non-Western, popular and learned, whatever that is, all of these points on the spectrum seem to be able to find a meeting point in the piece. In that sense, it's one of the most benign forms of globalization that you could possibly have; it's a counter-model to the ways that has gone.

FJO: You mentioned these other two *In C*-like pieces, which are barely known at all. And I also thought of a third, *Olson III*.

RC: Yes.

FJO: But none of those pieces caught on either. There are no recordings of the two pieces you mentioned, and there's only one archival recording of *Olson III* that was issued on CD by the Cortical Foundation in the 1990s. So there isn't a well-spring the way there has been with *In C*. And I wonder if perhaps to some extent it's because the score is so widely available—Terry has offered it for free on his website and links to that score are on other sites all over the internet. Plus it's so easy to disseminate: it's just one page and everyone plays from the same page. So aside from all this philosophical stuff we've been talking about—being open to all musicians, being a platform for globalization—it's also downright practical. Anyone can get a hold of it and put together a group of people to perform it without too much trouble.

RC: I think that's a great point. I couldn't agree more. It was an incredibly

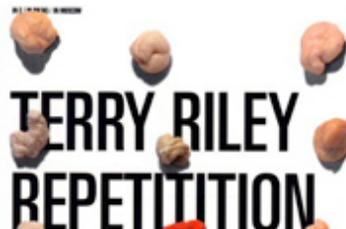
courageous decision to print the score on the foldout of the original LP. You bought the LP and there it was: white on black, very '60s! So everybody got the score when they bought the recording, and it immediately became clear how it worked. There was no mystification about what the technique or the process was. You could figure it out in a second. So that was enormously courageous, but at the same time it was prescient because it was like freeware. Free is the new economy, and he did that. And I think no thing was more important to the practical professional aspects of his career than that giving away that he did. It's had an enormous impact on why that piece is iconic.

FJO: In terms of contemporary music compositions, I can't think of any that have been recorded as many times. Having all these different versions of *In C* out there to choose from is like the access we have to so many different conductors' takes on the Beethoven symphonies or various Mozart operas.

RC: I think there's a subtle but a real difference, though, between the repertoire and *In C*. *In C* has an open instrumentation and an open duration. And as a consequence of the kind of accordion structure it has, where it can expand or contract, the relationships between the modules are also different from performance to performance, even though the sequence always remains the same. Every time someone decides to perform it, every time someone decides to record it, it's a new version, maybe a new realization. Maybe we should be using the word realization instead of interpretation, because interpretation suggests a 19th-century ideal of a score which is a fixed artifact that one is supposed to realize as close as possible to the text. But with *In C*, you can only get so close and then like a magnet you bounce off it.

FJO: One of the things I find so wonderful about your book is that you include this elaborate annotated discography of all the different recordings of *In C* that have come out. There are some listeners out there who are not particularly attuned to minimalism and find constant repetition a source of irritation. To listen to one recording would be a challenge for such a person, to listen to twelve different recordings and to be able to describe how each one is unique would be sheer torture. I imagine you had to listen to each of these recordings many times over in order to get the level of detail that you bring to this. So I'm interested in hearing your analytical listening process and the amount of time you spent with all these recordings.

RC: There's a much prettier realization in the book than what I was working from, which were raw sheets. I worked up a template which showed a time grid going from left to right and then from top to bottom the modules. I would just listen and figure out when each module entered and exited, so there's this series of horizontal bars that are moving their way from left to right across the page and slowly descending with different types of overlaps. I'd do that with each one and over time I got better at it and so it didn't take so long. The first one I did is the 1968 premiere recording. And, by the way, I'm sure that someone else will listen and will hear differences with what I hear because many of the modules are deliberately close to one another. If you're hearing one [module] ending you may actually be fooled because it's the beginning of one that's very closely structured. It's one of those things where you try to make the best judgment call you can. The other answer is that strangely enough, precisely because of the difference between the spirit of the different recordings, it almost becomes this adventure of what's next. What's it gonna be now? There's this one Russian recording with a group that's called The Terry Riley Repetition [sic] Orchestra. I'm sure it's not a typo; I think it's a joke. It's a performance from



Moscow and there are sleigh bells and women yodeling. It's like *Les Noces* gone wild and yet it's the piece; you hear everything in it.

FJO: I often joke with people about the critics in *Gramophone* magazine who compare the tempos and differences in accelerandos in different recordings of Bruckner symphonies.

RC: Indeed, this is Oxford Press, and I do say what the tempo is. It's very easy. You just have your metronome with you and listen to the pulse very carefully and adjust it until you've got the light flashing with it. So that's there for the documentation. And since the book has come out, two more recordings of *In C* have come out. It means there has to be another edition; that's my hope if I can keep up with them.

FJO: One of the recordings that just came out is a two-disc set of *In C* remixes by all different people, which perhaps takes this notion of malleability, realization rather than performance, to an even further extreme even though they were all working with the same performance by the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble. Some of the resultant pieces are very different, but all of them have hints of *In C*. How does a process like that create a further interpretative history for this piece?



innova's *In C Remixed*, featuring the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble, open up a whole new set of possibilities.



One of the more unusual *In C* recordings to be released thus far features the Moscow-based Terry Riley Repetition [sic] Orchestra.

RC: Terry is very open to whatever people do. He's very generous and I think he's inherently curious, so I don't think he has any trouble with it. I listened once through the whole set, and I think that the works that appeal to me the most are in fact the ones that are so different that they stand on their own as pieces. When you listen to the performance of *In C* that the group gives, which is a great one—it's very tight and is actually one of the shortest ones around—the piece still stands as a monument. I hate to use this word because it's so counterculture, but it still has this quality. Many of the other pieces strike me as hommages. It's the "Tombeau de Terry" that we have here. But there were two that I was particularly taken by. There are a

couple that make it into a club mix that people can dance to, maybe that's one of the hopes that they had for the album, that it will go out into the world and do that like the *Reich Remix* album did. But the one by Mason Bates had a really interesting mix between the original sounds and the techno sounds. And then David Lang's which went completely somewhere else, processed enormously and turned into this big, slowly mutating electro-acoustic texture. It's like the ghost of the piece floating along. For me, I like the works that take off from it and actually make truly new pieces, but that's just my taste.

FJO: David Lang has said publicly a number of times that for him and composers of his generation and beyond, *In C* was the same kind of life changing work that *The Rite of Spring* had been to an earlier generation of composers.

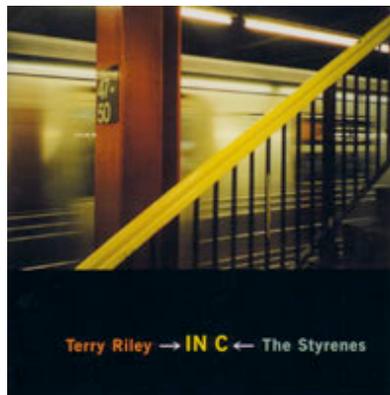
RC: It occupies a similar position in the birth of a movement. You can look at Paris in 1913 and say, "Well, there's modernism." That's where it starts. It's easy to mark it as a break point, even though there are a million things that presage it and you could choose other important strands. It's the same thing with minimalism, but I think that *In C* is really such an obvious encapsulation of everything that was going on. Everything that's in *In C* was already in the air, but

it's the first piece to bring slow harmonic motion, pulse, and repetition, and actually modal harmonic structure—all of those elements together in one piece. All of those were out in the air but not combined as fully and as successfully as I think *In C* does. So in that sense it is *The Rite of Spring* of a movement. I would say one other thing, too. A lot of early minimalism was extremely purist, very strict, rigorous, and abstract. Like the early Reich phasing pieces. They're enormously different from the sound of modernist music, but actually share a rigorous abstraction that is tied to modernism. *In C* is one of the first pieces that sounds more like both popular music and world music. Rock wasn't so much in Terry's mind at the time. It was much more jazz and world music, Indian music in particular. So it's opening up to other types of music in the world. Also, it's much more playful. And that playfulness makes it a kind of post-modern thing as well as minimalist, and I think that's maybe another aspect of the influence that's gone on with it.

FJO: He may not have had rock music in mind but he was a hero to rock musicians. The Who recorded "Baba O'Riley," and early on there was even a rock band named Curved Air after another one of Terry's pieces, *A Rainbow In Curved Air*. And so many rock groups have done the piece.

RC: Oh sure.

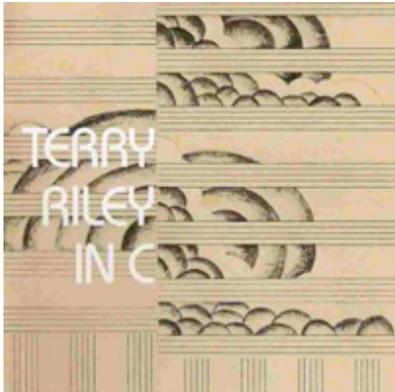
FJO: In terms of the people who were involved with the premiere and the premiere recording of it, that's another thing about the catalyst that it represented—there were so many important composers. You mentioned Steve Reich. Reich participated in that first performance. And he hadn't done those phase pieces you mentioned yet. Those came after *In C*. *It's Gonna Rain* is 1965; that's a year later. Pauline Oliveros was also involved, as was Morton Subotnick, whose own music was very different. Stuart Dempster was on the first recording, as was Jon Hassell, David Rosenboom, and Katrina Krinsky—all these major figures of the last half century, as well as some important figures who should be better known today like Ramon Sender, Jon Gibson, and Phil Winsor. That's a really heady group of people.



The Styrenes is one of the rock bands that has recorded *In C*.

RC: Terry inspires a certain loyalty to begin with. He's very generous and people reciprocate. He actually wrote *In C* for a retrospective concert in 1964—they were doing it that year at the San Francisco Tape Music Center as a part of a series of local artists each with their own show. And he was just sort of calling people up, getting people off the street. There was one man, a jazz pianist named James Lowe who played in it, who basically was working at the Tape Music Center in a barter arrangement. He did custodial type work and they gave him access to the machines. And Terry said, "C'mon and play in my piece." It was that sort of thing. Actually Reich said that at the dress rehearsal a couple of hippies came in with a trumpet and tried to start playing and Reich was the one who threw them out. "I just wanna blow, man!" Terry probably would have let them play. But the group was there because they enjoyed the communal experiences that they'd had in a lot of different ways. And they'd been together for a while. Pauline Oliveros, Morton Subotnick, and Terry had all been in grad school together. Other people were there that he'd been working with at the Tape Music Center. So it was a good chance to do a kind of community action to express their bonding. And the thing that was great about it, aside from just the fact that it birthed a piece, is that there was, in particular, Stuart Dempster there, who interestingly enough did not play the premiere. He had another gig [that night]. When I interviewed him

for the book he couldn't believe he didn't do it, but then he went back and looked at his books—he has meticulously documented his life—and in fact he said, "Gosh, I had a gig with the Oakland Symphony that night so I couldn't have played." But he played in a revival concert that happened maybe about half a year later, just before Terry was to leave to go to Europe. (That actually didn't happen; he ended up going to New York.) So [Stuart] knew the piece and he had the score. And when he got to Buffalo, for the Creative Associates program, he was the one who said, "We should do this piece." And he brought it to the attention of Lukas Foss. That led to some recital type performances in Buffalo and then they took it to New York [City]. And David Behrman had been brought into the mix, so to speak, as a listener. He liked the piece and went back to Columbia [Records] and said, "We should really record this piece." And one thing led to another. One thing that



Columbia Masterworks' 1968 World Premiere Recording of *In C* was akin to a second premiere.

is very interesting about *In C* as a new model in the 20th century is that it is a piece that had two premieres. The concert premiere was certainly incredibly important, especially as an event historically that we can look back on. But if it had only been that, this piece might not have been the piece it became. It was the fact that it had the recording that came out in 1968 on a major label that amazingly enough thought it would actually have crossover appeal going in both directions—to both classical listeners and a counterculture youth audience. They were looking for things that might fit that mold. And that's something that I'm not sure has ever happened before.

FJO: The other thing I find interesting about the composition of the piece, which is an extension of its openness and Terry's own openness, is that the pulse—which is so significant to both the sound and the functionality of the piece—was actually not part of his original conception. The fact that this only emerged during rehearsals strikes me similarly to how I felt when I learned that the poem we know today as *The Waste Land* is just as much a product of Ezra Pound's role as its editor as T.S. Eliot's role as poet.

RC: This is where Steve Reich comes in. He was part of the ensemble. There were not many rehearsals, by the way. No one knows exactly how many there were. No one really remembers. It was really informal. By what was more or less the dress rehearsal, they were still floundering around, they couldn't quite keep together. And Reich said, "Well, once a drummer, always a drummer; let's have a pulse." They didn't have a trap set, so they put it on the piano and they had Reich's girlfriend at the time, Jeanie Brechan, doing it. It's very interesting. It's signed by Terry Riley, but there is a Steve Reich thumbprint on it. It probably would have been much more like *Music for the Gift* which is the electro-acoustic piece that precedes it. It would have felt much more like big amorphous cycles; it would not have had the precision. But again, one of the things that Terry has a gift for is that he says, "Hey, that's a good idea; let's do that!" And he's not appropriative or defensive about where something comes from if it works. That's part of the collaborative process.

FJO: One of the stories I find so fascinating about all the composers who were at that premiere is the story you have in the book about the man who walked out, Henry Jacobs. I was hoping you would have done an interview with him. I did some web surfing to find more information about him, and I found a website that purports to have contact information for him. Maybe the site hasn't been updated in a while. He was involved with Ken Nordine and there's a recording for sale there called *Vortex Sound Experiments* which sounds pretty wacked out. So I

thought to myself, "This guy's a nut job! He's off the wall adventurous, totally my kind of composer. So why is he having a problem with *In C*?" Seems like instead he should have been part of the performance!

RC: Somebody who's a graduate student at Berkeley emailed me about this, too. He's doing a dissertation on Henry Jacobs. And I wrote back to him and said this is what I have from participants. But I don't know. I didn't interview him, I'm not sure if he's still alive or not. If he is and he finds this, please let me know and don't be too angry with me! But I think it's probably like when you have dueling Marxist sects. There is a group of people doing a certain type of experimental thing, which is really their world and they feel that that's really where it needs to be going. I think he had a series at the San Francisco Exploratorium; I'm just imaging this, but it could be a little bit like an American version of INA-GRM series in France with this very surrealistic San Francisco inflected *musique concrète*. I could see that if he was doing very wacked out electro-acoustic music, this music, which sounded so relatively simplistic—if you were really involved with complex electro-acoustic layering and textures—might have had markers about it that set off the wrong alarm bells. But this really is a guess. And I don't want to malign someone without knowing what the truth is.

FJO: Well, if he's still around, I want to track him down. You've inspired me.

RC: Please do and please let me know.

FJO: All of this brings me to talk with you about your own music. In many ways, you're a back door historian; you're a composer and that's primarily what you do. And I find it interesting to talk about these rival aesthetics because your own music is worlds away from *In C* and from what it engendered.

RC: It's hard for me not to like a new piece of music. I can be disappointed, sure, but it's always a thrill for me. That's the most facile answer I'll give, but I'll get more substantial. I also write a lot of reviews of new music CDs for *Fanfare* [magazine] and I kept hearing recordings of *In C*. And my whole idea of it changed as I heard more and more realizations. I realized what a remarkably flexible, open, and adaptable piece it is. And in terms of my own music, I've written a lot of pieces and I have a whole category of pieces that are more open form and improvisational. I think that this aspect of 21st-century music practice is only going to get more and more important. The lines between what's called jazz and classical are melting as we speak. What *In C* represents is one of many useful models for ways of dealing with that greater interpenetration between different traditions. The other thing is my students at the Hartt School [University of Hartford]. These young composers just take this for granted. The piece is a landmark, it's an icon, it's a masterpiece—fine. They are also—let's call them young classical composers, for lack of a better word—really much more open to using improvisation and structuring improvisation than previous generations. They see it as part of their craft. For me as a composer teaching composition, that led me to think more and more about the importance of this piece and why I wanted to do a study of it. And I feel I learned an enormous amount. Even though, you're right, my music is very different from what would be called minimalist or post-minimalist. If there's any tradition it's coming from, it's probably more early American ultra-modernism with Ives and Ruggles and then some romantic elements thrown in. But the idea of pacing, the idea of space, the idea of allowing music to open up and take as long as is necessary to do what it needs to do, that's what I learned from minimalism. Just as I learned from [John] Cage to stop being afraid. Cage is the ultimate model to do what needs to be done and to follow your imagination. There's a composer to whom in one sense I have no relation in my own music in any sort of technical way but who is an enormous inspiration to me. I probably first heard *In C* in maybe about '74, which is six

years after the disc came out. And I remember when I first heard it, it was kind of a disorienting experience. I was a late starter as a composer and I was just starting to get involved with writing music. I was in college was very drawn to the music of Ives and Carter—and this music is still very important to me. So *In C* was a challenge and almost an insult in some ways. I think I was scared of it at first. And I also think that first recording, fantastic though it is, defined the piece a little too clearly in people's ears. It was much more a kind of carnival and you didn't hear the structure as well. There are many different aspects to it, and the multiplicity of it got frozen in amber for a while because of that recording. That was the devil's bargain; that was the trade-off. So, I heard it early on, but frankly it took me a long time to grow up to where I think I could really appreciate it enough to have something that was maybe useful to say about it and that I hope shows a love of the piece. I listen to it now, and after years of hearing all these different performances, I know when this or that module is coming up. When module 35 hits with the long melody I get a rush and think, how are they going to deal with it now? I know that's kind of insider, but, like any great piece of music, eventually you know it: you know the sequence and you know the tunes and the progressions. In that sense, I can't imagine being disappointed by it as a piece. I might be disappointed by some performance, though in a way it would have to be really bad. *In C* is almost indestructible; the performance would have to be really bad for it to be significantly maimed. It could be left kind of anodyne, but not really destroyed.

FJO: Coming to this piece from being a Carter devotee as well as an admirer of Ives and Ruggles, I'd like to ask you about where you think *In C* fits in the continuum of the so-called American maverick tradition. Though it sounds very different, what Terry Riley has done here is so individual and is yet another manifestation of this kind of rugged independence. Maybe now that we're in the 21st century we can look back and perceive connections between—to rehash terms that now seem somewhat quaint, though the tremors of them still have impact in certain places—"uptown" and "downtown". Nowadays you can do "uptown" analytical work on a "downtown" piece. You can also go hear Carter played at a downtown club. We've passed these boundaries.

RC: It's sort of a dream. We're both composers and we've lived through the same period and I suspect that we're both pretty happy to see the way things have gone. It's not like one side has crushed the other. As a matter of fact, the interesting thing about the youth that I deal with [at Hartt] is that they tend to snarf it up pretty equally. They may write a piece which is quite Zappa-esque in terms of its sound, and yet it's using complex rhythmic structures that may come out of Carter. Of course, Zappa's music is complex to begin with, but mixing and matching is going on all the time. I will tell you that when the millennium turned over I said, "I am so happy that I'm now a 21st century composer." Because when you were a 20th century composer, it felt like there was so much baggage that came with different aesthetics and camps and battles that had been fought. When the clock ticked and it went past midnight, here we are now and we can truly do what we want to do. It's totally artificial, I know, but it felt that way to me. And it didn't feel like the post-modernism thing where everything's fine, we can mix and match, rather we can now work with these materials and make them personal and synthesize them anyway we want and integrate them anyway we want. In that sense, I remain a total Pollyanna and quite irrationally optimistic about the field.

FJO: So then a final question to bring this back to *In C*. You alluded earlier in our conversation to the idea that it goes against the counterculture nature of this piece to call it a landmark or a masterpiece, but here we are 45 years after its conception and it is music of the previous century. It's undeniably part of history, but is it also part of the canon of classical music? To look at it from a

counterculture point of view, a canon is what we rebel against in order to create something new. So do we rebel against *In C*? How?

RC: The canon itself is constantly expanding as well. It's bringing in other cultures. We're not far at all from a point where composers who study what's called classical music are going to know the major canonical gamelan works and the major canonical gagaku works—you already see it—and certain major pieces and major musicians who come out of African music of all sorts. Classical music, whatever we call it, is just going to keep broadening its definition in terms of what we're calling a music made for its own sake, concert music of some sort, but it also has a social function. And *In C* fits very comfortably within whatever that tradition or that field is as a landmark work and I think it will survive. In that sense we don't need to worry too much; its prospects for survival are excellent as a work of music that people are going to keep doing seriously. And when you mention counterculture, I should mention that it still is in many ways a prophetic work, because it's one of the greatest examples of human beings getting together to agree to do a communal action where they maintain their individually yet with a prescribed goal. I think it's a political statement. More than Cage, I think it's an example of a structured anarchy which is very positive. And as such I think it remains a useful idealistic model for us in terms of all the political and social issues that we have.

