

Steve Reich - Different Trains Electric Counterpoint (1989)

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1. *Different Trains: America - Before the War* 2. *Different Trains: Europe - During The War*
3. *Different Trains: After the War* Kronos Quartet: David Harrington – violin John Sherba – violin Hank Dutt – viola Joan Jeanrenaud - cello 4.
Electric Counterpoint: Fast 5. *Electric Counterpoint: Electric Counterpoint: Slow* 6. *Electric Counterpoint: Fast*
Pat Metheny – guitar, multiinstruments

Different Trains (1988) will probably go down in history as Reich's masterpiece. And deservedly so. Reich's phase-shifting minimalism is made dazzlingly entertaining in *Different Trains*, which is scored for string quartet and digitally sampled voices that repeat bits of speech concerning trains and Reich's experience with them growing up. The sinister part here is that some trains carried Jews to death camps. That's here as well. The Kronos Quartet has also never sounded better. *Electric Counterpoint* (1987) has one guitar--Pat Metheny in this case-- playing to 10 pre-recorded motifs, also on guitar. You absolutely need this. ---Paul Cook, amazon.com

This late-'80s work finds the minimalist composer mixing acoustic and taped material to great effect. The disc's centerpiece is "*Different Trains*," a work that frames Reich's impressions of his boyhood train trips between his mother in Los Angeles and his father in New York; Reich also intersperses references to the much more harrowing train rides Jews were forced to take to Nazi concentration camps. Using the fine playing of the Kronos Quartet as a base, Reich layers the work with the taped train musings of his governess, a retired Pullman porter, and various Holocaust survivors -- vintage train sounds from the '30s and '40s add to the riveting arrangement. And for some nice contrast, Reich recruits guitarist Pat Metheny to create a similarly momentous piece in "*Electric Counterpoint*" (Metheny plays live over a multi-tracked

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tape of ten guitars and two electric basses). Two fine works by Reich in his prime. ---Stephen Cook, Rovi

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