

ing into your head,” and indeed, if you’re not especially listening to it that’s exactly what it is.<sup>32</sup>

Reich went on to develop this technique in such works as *Violin Phase* (1967), later works such as *Music for a Large Ensemble* (1978) and *Tehillim* (1982) abandon strict phase technique, but continue to explore the possibilities of long-term repetitions of one sort or another. As Eno said, “Reich sort of abandoned that system as a way of working, which is rather fortunate because that meant I could carry on with it [laughs]. And *Music for Airports* is one of the products of that.”<sup>33</sup> In the liner notes to his 1970 composition *Four Organs*, Reich stressed his belief in the expressive power of gradual processes in music, and the importance of not burying structure in mathematical formulae, in a statement which could almost be by Eno himself: “The use of hidden structural devices in music never appealed to me. Even when all the cards are on the table and everyone hears what is gradually happening in a musical process, there are still enough mysteries to satisfy all.”<sup>34</sup>

Eno’s experience of hearing what he has called the “aural *moiré* patterns”<sup>35</sup> of *It’s Gonna Rain* was additionally refreshing on account of its seeming to run against the trend towards the unnecessarily complex and grandiose in rock music:

I heard this in the early 1970s, which was just at the time that most of the people that I was involved with were doing exactly the opposite thing. Twenty-four track recorders had just become current, and the idea was to make more and more grotesque, Gothic pieces of music, filling up every space and every corner of the canvas. And to hear something that was as alive as this Reich piece, and so simple, was a real shock to me ... I thought, “I can do this. It’s not hard.” [laughs]<sup>36</sup>

La Monte Young (b. 1935) is a composer whose conceptual works fitted perfectly into the anything-goes, avant-garde, anarchic artistic atmosphere of the 1960s. In his *Composition 1960 #3* the duration of the piece is announced and the audience is told they may do whatever they wish until it is over. In *Composition 1960 #6* the performers stare at the audience as if they were the performers. Another 1960 composition contains only two notes, B and F#, “to be held for a long time.” John Lennon and Yoko Ono were later to indulge in this genre of composition, in one Lennon/Ono piece, fans blow open the pages of a Beethoven symphony, and the players are directed to play whatever falls under their eye.<sup>37</sup> But it is Young’s works in the specifically repetitive realm that inspired Eno’s imagination. In his 1960 piece *X for Henry Flynt*, the performer is instructed to produce a single unspecified sound over and over for an unspecified interval of time. Eno performed this piece on piano around 1967 – it was “the first

---

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Korner, “Aurora Musicalis,” *Artforum* 24:10 (Summer 1986), 79.

<sup>33</sup> Tannenbaum, “Cage and Eno,” 68.

<sup>34</sup> Steve Reich, liner notes to *John Cage: Three Dances, Steve Reich, Four Organs*, Capitol/Angel S36059, 1973.

<sup>35</sup> John Hutchinson, “Brian Eno: Place #13,” color brochure (Dublin: Douglas Hyde Gallery, 1986), n.p.

<sup>36</sup> Tannenbaum, “Cage and Eno,” 68.

<sup>37</sup> Eric Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction*, Prentice-Hall History of Music Series, H. Wiley Hitchcock, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 187.