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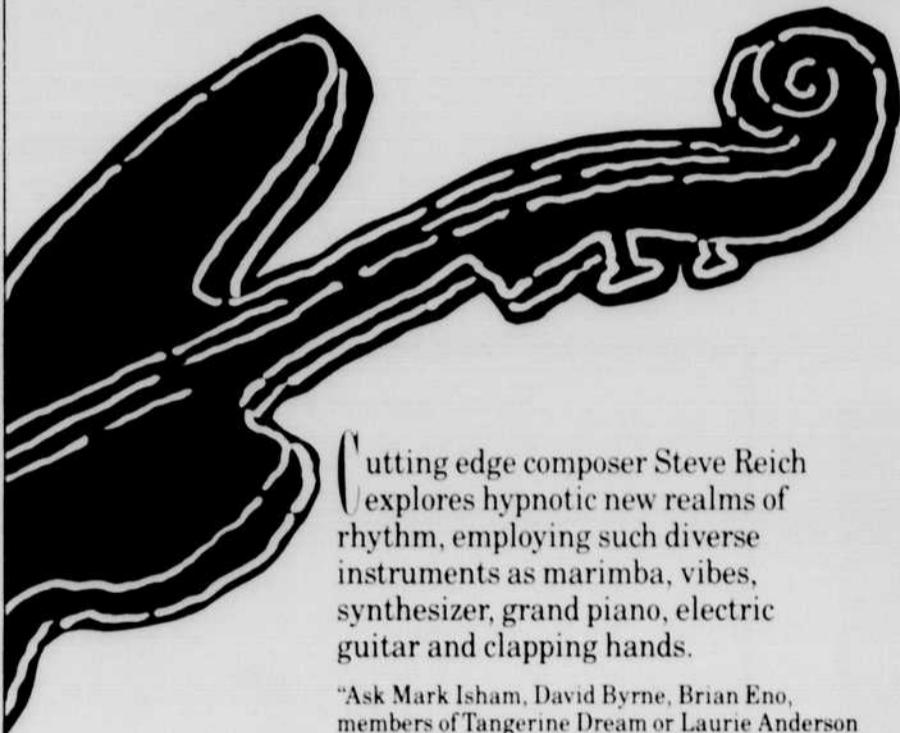
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# CLASSICAL MUSIC GOOD ENOUGH TO SHAPE ROCK 'N ROLL



Cutting edge composer Steve Reich explores hypnotic new realms of rhythm, employing such diverse instruments as marimba, vibes, synthesizer, grand piano, electric guitar and clapping hands.

"Ask Mark Isham, David Byrne, Brian Eno, members of Tangerine Dream or Laurie Anderson to name one artist who has had an impact on their music, and Steve Reich's name comes forth with an inevitability that's like his own music."

MT Magazine

## STEVE REICH & MUSICIANS

Friday, March 2 • 8 p.m. • \$15, \$10

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**Encore!**

## Mardi Gras culture at museum

By Julie Decker  
Encore Contributor

Next week, on Feb. 27, New Orleans will begin its annual celebration of Mardi Gras. The streets of that city will fill with people joining to celebrate the occasion and to watch the traditional parade.

"Ritual and Regalia," an exhibition currently on display at the University Museum of Natural History, marks the holiday and is a tribute to the Mardi Gras Black Indians of New Orleans.

The exhibit was produced by Melinda Hoder as a final project for her master's degree in folklore and photography and features the costumes, music and tribal customs of the Mardi Gras Black Indians.

Hoder was primarily interested in the folk art of diverse cultures and began her research on

the Mardi Gras Black Indians while living in New Orleans, where she first became familiar with the distinctive sights and sounds of their traditions.

The exhibit features costumes and beadwork patches by George Landry, who was known as Big Chief Jolly of the Wild Tchoupitoulas Indian Tribe of New Orleans. The costumes are on loan from his relatives, the Neville family, and the exhibit is dedicated to the memory of Landry and the spirit of the Mardi Gras Black Indians.

The elaborate traditions of the Mardi Gras Black Indians are evident in the costumes. Bright orange and red feathers triumphantly express the dramatic ceremony of the Black Indians.

Intricate beadwork depicting the Indians and their way of life illustrates the centuries-old African heritage that is embedded in the religious and social customs of the people.

Color photographs of the parading Mardi Gras Black Indians are accompanied by excerpts of prayers and songs, such as "Brother John," "Meet the Boys" and "New Suit" that signify the pride of the Mardi Gras Black Indians.

Their music is percussive and polyrhythmic, and it is played on drums, tambourines, cowbells and even bottles, all of which are easily transported for playing in the Mardi Gras parade.

The Mardi Gras Black Indians became known for their rhythmic songs and dances, as well as their colorful costumes. Their culture is rich in heritage and ceremony, and here the distinctive sights and sounds of their tradition are kept alive.

Also included in the exhibition are photographs of Chief Jolly sewing costume patches, taken by his nephew, Charles Neville of the The Neville Brothers, a nationally renowned music group based in New Orleans.

The tradition of costume and ceremony stretches back to an ancient African heritage and culture and to religious and social customs involving the whole community in a ritual of

artistic and musical expression.

On Carnival Day in contemporary New Orleans, the Mardi Gras Black Indians parade in costume throughout the city beginning early in the morning and ending late at night. They bring their own interpretation of the Mardi Gras celebration to the black neighborhoods.

No one knows the exact origin of the Black Indians, but groups of black people in American Indian style costumes were seen at Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans as early as 1883.

Some believe that people of mixed African and French or African and Spanish ancestry had intermarried with Native Americans. Others believe that during the days of the Underground Railroad, Native Americans helped runaway slaves to escape, harboring them and adopting some of them into their villages.

Another legend of the Mardi Gras Black Indian's origins stems from written laws that banned blacks from masking on Mardi Gras Day, spurring them to parade in their own neighborhoods and to adopt a style of costume that included everything but a mask.

These costumes were decorated with ostrich feathers, maribou, sequins, seed beads, rhinestones, velvet, satin and costume jewelry, sewn into a wide range of designs.

Whatever the truth of the legends, and whatever the origin of the culture, the Mardi Gras Black Indians have created for us a legacy of bright costumes, distinctive rhythmic songs and dances, and a history of rich tradition, that still survives today in New Orleans.

The exhibit brings this unique culture to viewers throughout the country. The celebrations of tradition and the Mardi Gras Parade are brought to life in the photographs, songs and costumes which make up the exhibit. It is a colorful look inside the proud culture of these Mardi Gras Black Indians.

"Ritual and Regalia" will be on display through Sunday, April 15, in the lobby of the University Museum of Natural History, 1680 E. 15th Ave.

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