

Wayne Siegel

### **Domino Figures**

for 10 - 100 guitars (18')

1979

Domino Figures was inspired by and dedicated to the Danish guitarist Erling Møldrup. The piece can be performed by any number of guitarists from ten to one hundred, and despite the unusual ensemble required for performance, Domino Figures has been widely performed since it was composed in 1979, including a television production with 105 guitarists, made to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Denmark's TV2 - a record-breaking performance that in fact found its way into the Guinness book of records!

Essentially, this piece is a strict canon constructed around 97 different musical figures. The performers sit in a semicircle, and each musical figure is passed around this semicircle in a kind of slow chain reaction similar to that of falling dominoes by means of a unique system of visual cues. The guitarist on the audience's extreme left begins playing the first figure, signaling the player to his left by dipping the neck of his guitar slightly as he begins. The second player then waits one beat after receiving this signal before beginning the same figure and signaling the player to his left. In this way the musical figure is sent around the semicircle, each guitarist beginning one beat after the player to his immediate right. Any given figure reaches the last guitarist about 36 seconds after the first guitarist has set the new figure moving around the semicircle, and these new figures are combined with previous figures while they are in the process of replacing them.

A sonic effect not usually associated with the guitar is created by the large number of guitarists performing the same figure in different tempi. Massive, sustained, almost choral textures are produced, and these textures evolve and change slowly, creating a spatial effect as elements gradually move from one side of the semicircle to the other.