

**THE RENWICK GALLERY
OF
THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS
PRESENTS**

THE 20th CENTURY CONSORT

Sunday, November 16th 2:00 PM

1975

PROGRAM

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1

Béla Bartók

Allegro appassionato

Adagio

Allegro

Three Place Settings

Barbara Kolb

for violin, clarinet, double bass, percussion
and narrator

I *I Think I'll Have . . .*

Irving Diamond

II *Roast Peacock*

Cora, Rose and Bob Brown

III *Automort*

Ronald F. Costa

INTERMISSION

Madrigals — Book III

George Crumb

for soprano, harp and percussion,
based on fragments from Federico Garcia Lorca

I *La noche canta desnuda — Allegro molto ritmico*

II *Quiero dormir — Adagio, with great calm*

III *Nana, niño, nana — Slowly, tenderly; with a
gentle, rocking movement*

Divertissement

Ross Lee Finney

for clarinet, violin, cello and piano

Allegro

Adagio misterioso

Allegro gioioso

Adagio misterioso

Allegro energico

PROGRAM NOTES

Madrigals, Book III

George Crumb

From Garcia Lorca: "La noche canta desnuda sobre los puentes de marzo..." ("Night sings naked above the bridges of March ..."). There is a sense of magic and Moorish ritualism in this first song's evocation of Lorca's image. The intense motor rhythmic quality of the instrumental parts is set in isorhythm, a compositional device dating from the fourteenth century which sets pitch and rhythm patterns of different lengths against each other, creating with limited material a cycle of endless juxtapositions. Above these ("bridges of March"?), and in stark contrast to the strict control of the isorhythms, the voice sings melismas of untamed exuberance.

"Quiero dormirel sueño de las manzanas para aprender un llanto que me limpie de tierra..." ("I want to sleep the sleep of apples, to learn a lament that will cleanse me of the earth..."). In his directions to the performers, Crumb reveals much of the significance the texts holds for him. The indication is "with great calm" as the soprano sings an arching melody. This is answered by harp and vibraphone in a passage which seems unconscious or other-dimensional in its suspension of time -- "quasi senza misura" and "dream-like, gently undulating." After these phrases ("I want to sleep the sleep of apples...") are repeated in free inversion, the remaining text is heard quietly "chastely" at the end, fleeting, drifting off...

"Nana, nino, nana del caballo grande que no quiso el agua..." ("Lullaby, child, lullaby of the proud horse who would not drink water..."). Unmistakably a lullaby, the beginning of this third song, with its gentle rocking rhythm and its hush, and the nobility and then thoughtful quietude of "the proud horse who would not drink water." In the middle section of the song is the text: "Duermete, rosal, que el caballo se pone a llorar. Las patas heridas, las crines heladas, dentro de los ojos un punal de plata." ("Go to sleep, rosebush, the horse begins to cry. Wounded legs, frozen manes, and within the eyes a silver dagger.") Here the music responds to the growing uneasiness of disturbing images, until the nightmare of terror and tragic defiance suddenly cries out, then disappears, and the lullaby returns, slipping into silence.

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1

Bela Bartok

This first of Bartok's two sonatas for violin and piano was dedicated to his friend, violinist Jelly Aranyi and first performed in Vienna on February 8, 1922 by Mary Dickenson-Auner and Eduard Stevermann. Bartok was studying and actively promoting Schoenberg's music in Hungary during this period and elements of Schoenberg's expressionism are noticeable in the free use of dissonance and the avoidance of tonal repetition. The work remains basically tonal, however. (Bartok suggested there was a fundamental C# tonality.) The first movement, in sonata form and full of the lucid formal control so characteristic of Bartok, is balanced by a third movement also with a sonata construction in which the presence of East-European folk music is in energetic evidence. The adagio middle movement is full of typically Bartokian melodies, weaving with tight intervals through arching phrases.

Three Place Settings

Barbara Kolb

These are three vignettes Kolb has composed on gastronomical matters. They explore the possibilities for good-natured humor and parody in a contemporary musical language. The notational and ensemble difficulties posed for the performers are substantial, requiring intricate coordination and response among the performers. There are areas of virtual improvisation, playing in which some rhythmic freedom is allowed within a generally defined time-frame, as well as specifically notated music of considerable complexity. Always the effect is one of illustration, text and music hand in glove, constantly commenting on one another.

Kolb makes these remarks: "This work represents three aspects of food. The first is concerned with nostalgia, whim and desire. The second is taken from an elegant 1936 wine cookbook and challenges the talents of the most illustrious chef de cuisine. The third is the death of the automat, as the title sarcastically implies."

Divertissement

Ross Lee Finney

Finney writes of the work: "Divertissement was composed in Paris in 1964 and reflects, it seems to me, the great pleasure that I found in walking around the "left bank" during the evening. It is certainly not programmatic and I had no conscious intention that the work should reflect my feelings, but the contrasts of mood (energy vs starry softness -- seriousness vs light-hearted humor) always remind me of walks along the Seine or up Bo Mich. The work is like a walk, the last movement returning to the beginning, the work is built on a symmetrical hexachord that is very harmonic."

There are in the work five movements whose characters are direct and engaging. The first, allegro energico, is full of driving rhythms and colorful instrumental writing. This melts into a slow, atmospheric movement, adagio misterioso. The allegro gioioso is full of demanding ensemble playing and a bouyant energy, and is followed by cadenzas. The last movements are a sort of free retrograde, in essence retracing its steps through another adagio misterioso section and finally an allegro energico which passes in reverse the landmarks of the first movement.

Notes by Christopher Kendall

THE 20th CENTURY CONSORT

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

F. Anthony Ames, *percussion*

Dotian Carter, *harp*

Barbara Haffner, *cello*

Mike Hammer, *narrator*

Kathleen Hinton, *violin*

Christopher Kendall, *conductor*

Jeanne Kirstein, *piano* (Finney)

Loren Kitt, *clarinet*

Janet Steele, *soprano*

Margaret Hee-Leng Tan, *piano* (Bartók)

Richard Webster, *double bass*

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CONSORT wishes to acknowledge the International Humanities Foundation, Mr. Arthur Delaney, and Mr. Lloyd Symington whose generous gifts have helped make this concert possible. The Consort also wishes to express its gratitude to Catholic University, Mr. Lloyd Herman, Mr. Allen Bassing and the Renwick Gallery of the National Collection of Fine Arts, and to others too numerous to mention.

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