



Smithsonian Institution

Three Centuries of Chamber Music

20th Century Consort

with The Emerson String Quartet

Christopher Kendall,
Artistic Director

8:00 p.m.

Monday, December 8, 1980

Baird Auditorium

National Museum of Natural History

Presented by Smithsonian
Performing Arts

James R. Morris, Director

The Program

Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp**Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)***Pastorale: Lento, dolce, rubato**Interlude: Tempo di Minuetto**Finale: Allegro moderato ma risoluto*

Ms. Stern, Mr. Dutton, Ms. Carter

Celestial Mechanics (Makrokosmos IV)**George Crumb
(b.1929)***I Alpha Centauri**II Beta Cygni**III Gamma Draconis**IV Delta-Orionis*

Mr. Orkis, Mr. Primosch, Ms. Orkis

Intermission

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 17**Bela Bartók
(1881-1945)***Moderato**Allegro molto capriccioso**Lento*

Mr. Setzer, Mr. Drucker, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Finckel

Five Songs**David Maslanka
(b.1943)**

for soprano and baritone solos, with
flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, harp, piano, 2 violins,
viola, cello, double bass, percussion, and
conductor

Ms. Shelton, Mr. Opalach, Ms. Stern, Mr. White, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Beck,
Ms. Carter, Mr. Orkis, Mr. Drucker, Mr. Setzer, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Finckel,
Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall

Notes on the Program

With the exception of some slight incidental and commissioned pieces, Debussy's chamber works divide neatly into two parts. The *String Quartet Op. 10* was composed in 1893, just after the orchestral *Prelude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*. Twenty-two years elapsed before the appearance of the first of the three sonatas *pour divers instruments* in 1915. These neo-classical works were originally to have formed the first half of a group of six sonatas, (the standard number of pieces in a set from the early Italian violin sonatas through Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets to the six string quartets of Bartók), but Debussy's health failed before the project could be completed. The music of Couperin, master of *l'age classique* (the French term for the Baroque era), is often viewed as a precedent for the Debussy works, but in fact the affinity was probably more one of musical patriotism than of stylistic identity.

The **Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp**, the second in the series, is generally considered to be superior to the two others, which are scored for cello and violin respectively, each with piano. The peculiar combination of instruments in the second sonata was chosen with a particular tone color in mind, one exploited most successfully in the *Pastorale* and *Interlude* (Minuet). The *Finale* is perhaps the most original of the movements, which together make up a work full of virtuosity and great charm.

George Crumb was born in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1929, received the M.M. from the University of Illinois in 1952, studied further at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, and took the D.M.A. at the University of Michigan before beginning a teaching career which started at the University of Colorado and later took him to his present position at the University of Pennsylvania. Despite his es-

entially academic career, Crumb remains an exceptionally innovative composer. The recipient of grants from the Rockefeller (1965), Guggenheim (1967), and Coolidge (1968) foundations, Crumb won national recognition with his *Echoes of Time and the River: Four Processionals for Orchestra* for which he was given the Pulitzer Prize in music after its 1968 premiere by the Chicago Symphony.

Celestial Mechanics, created in April, 1979, and recently recorded by the 20th Century Consort for the Smithsonian Collection, is the fourth in a series of works entitled (or subtitled) *Makrokosmos*. The first two works were scored for solo piano and the third (*Music for a Summer Evening*) for two pianos and percussion. Mr. Crumb writes:

I had long been tempted to try my hand at the four-hand medium, perhaps because I myself have been a passionate four-hand player over the years. The best of the original four-hand music—which includes, of course, those many superb works by Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms—occupies a very special niche in the literature of music. The idiom, a strange hybrid of the pianistic and the orchestral, lends itself readily to a very free and spontaneous kind of music—one thinks of the many collections of dances of various types and of the predilection for the "fantasy" genre. The present work, therefore, comprising a suite of "cosmic" dances composed in a rather "fantastic" style, falls squarely within the tradition.

My sole departure from tradition occurs at two points in the score where I have enlarged the medium to six hands; and so, in the whimsical manner of Ives, the page turner must contribute more substantively to the performance than is his wont.

The title *Celestial Mechanics* is borrowed from the French mathematician Laplace. The titles for the four movements (added after the music was completed!) are the beautiful names of stars of the first through the fourth magnitude. The

majestic movement of the stars does indeed suggest the image of a "cosmic choreography" and, in fact, I briefly considered opting for an alternate title (proposed by my brother, punster that he is)—*The Celestial Ballroom*.

Alpha Centauri is a binary star located above the pastern in the constellation Centaurus, the Centaur. Worshipped for its unusual brightness by the Egyptians, who called it Serk-t, Alpha is of interest to today's astronomers as the star nearest our solar system—92,892,000 miles away. Beta Cygni is found in Cygnus, the Swan, and may also be binary. Its gold and azure coloring makes it one of the most striking of the stars. Gamma Draconis, in Draco, the Dragon, is a double star which was used for navigation in ancient times, being closer to the pole than any other bright star about four thousand years ago. It is still circumpolar. Delta Orionis is another double star, found in Orion, the Hunter. Astrologists considered it of importance as portending good fortune.

In commemoration of the centenary of Bela Bartók's birth, the Emerson Quartet has programmed all six of the Bartók string quartets. Two will be presented on this series; the remaining four may be heard in the 20th Century Consort's concerts at the Hirshhorn Museum. The Bartók quartets must be considered the single most important chamber music repertory yet to come out of this century, and reflect a goodly portion of the composer's life as well as his deep concern for the structural problems with which Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven had grappled. Bartók's vocabulary is, of course, entirely different from that of the Viennese masters, but his music remains much closer in spirit to theirs than to the quartets of later nineteenth-century composers, in which the expansive was cultivated at the expense of more disciplined classical forms.

Bartók completed the *String Quartet No. 1* in 1909 as his Op. 7, employing a thoroughly chromatic harmonic language coupled with a rather broad, quasi-improvisatory romantic character. The *String Quartet No. 2* was finished eight years later, after nearly two years of work. The evolution which had taken place since the first quartet is striking. Even the ordering of the movements—slow-fast-slow—is highly unusual, and heightens the somewhat rarefied atmosphere of the work. The melodic excesses of the first quartet are ruthlessly swept aside, and are replaced by a new concentration on motivic development, a formal process which will be pursued to its logical end in the fourth quartet. As an outgrowth of the special motives chosen for this manipulation, the myriad appoggiaturas of the first quartet which contributed to its dense chromaticism yield to a style rich in false relations, simultaneous modal mixtures, chains of parallel dissonances, and, in some cases, brief passages of bi- or polytonality.

The *Moderato* of the *Quartet No. 2* has been analyzed as a sonata form movement, but in fact cannot be said to possess true contrasting themes. Rather, its course is determined by the continuous unfolding of the material of the opening measures. The six-note figure played by the first violin eventually is broken down into two interlocking five-note patterns, from which a wealth of other fragments is derived later. At the same time, however, the second of the original five-note patterns exhibits an important symmetry, being composed of a rising perfect fourth, a descending minor second, a falling fourth, and another descending minor second. Such a symmetrical formation may be used horizontally (melodically) or vertically (harmonically), in its entirety or in uniform parts. In this way, the symmetrical formations serve to replace strictly conventional tonality as an archi-

tectonic device. The underlying structure may not be immediately apparent to the ear, but as the quartet progresses the listener gradually perceives the beautifully crafted motivic web which binds the work together into a cohesive whole.

The motivic activity is frequently set against sustained or repeated pedal tones, which serve to establish quasi-tonal oases, a process particularly noteworthy in the multi-sectional *Allegro molto capriccioso*. The *Lento* finale is also composed of many parts, which are motivically linked to produce a variation-like structure. This last movement, like its predecessors, reflects and requires the utmost concentration, for as a whole, the quartet marks the turning point in Bartók's formal procedures.

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1943. He received his musical education at New England Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, the Hochschule "Mozarteum" in Salzburg, and Michigan State University. His major composition teachers were Joseph Wood and H. Owen Reed. Mr. Maslanka has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller foundation; he has also won awards from ASCAP and the American Music Center. His works have been published by Carl Fischer, Inc., and have appeared on CRI records.

Maslanka's **Five Songs** for soprano, baritone, and thirteen players was composed in 1975 at the MacDowell Colony with the support of an NEA fellowship. It received its first performance the next year under the direction of the composer, who has provided the following notes:

The attitude and tone of the first four poems may be summarized in a single poem from Basil

Bunting's *Second Book of Odes* (1964-65). Though not part of *Five Songs*, it stands as a motto:

A thrush in the syringa sings.
"Hunger ruffles my wings, fear,
lust, familiar things.

Death thrusts hard. My sons
by hawk's beak, by stones,
trusting weak wings
by cat and weasel, die.

Thunder smothers the sky.
From a shaken bush I
list familiar things
fear, hunger, lust."

O gay thrush!

The fifth poem, *Leaving the Rest Unsaid* (Graves), is an assertion of human dignity in the face of a capricious universe.

The Songs and Interludes form a single dramatic unit and are played without significant pause.

Kenneth Slowik

Texts

Five Songs

1) **A Point of Land** (David Kelly)

A point of land crests into the rain-slanted lake.
The waves around it rise to meet the sheets of
water pouring from the slate-grey sky. It will
rain forever here. Fish split the surface and re-
turn into the water unchallenged by the gulls
that would be feeding on a clearer day. Every-
thing here is water or of the water.

A boat, its motor growing louder then shutting
off, comes gliding to shore out of the greyness of
sky and lake. Two obscured figures step off the
boat, the larger mooring it by rope to a crippled
tree standing out from the thin piece of land.
The figures disappear up the beach and into the
landscape where the point of land widens and
becomes mainland. The original setting reclaims
itself.

2) **Warning to Children** (Robert Graves)

Children, if you dare to think
Of the greatness, rareness, muchness,
Fewness of the precious only
Endless world in which you say
You live, you think of things like this:
Blocks of slate enclosing dappled
Red and green, enclosing tawny
Yellow nets, enclosing white
And black acres of dominoes,
Where a neat brown paper parcel
Tempt you to untie the string.
In the parcel a small island,
On the island a large tree,
On the tree a husky fruit.
Strip the husk and pare the rind off:
In the kernel you will see
Blocks of slate enclosed by dappled
Red and green, enclosed by tawny
Yellow nets, enclosed by white
And black acres of dominoes,
Where the same brown paper parcel—
Children, leave the string alone!
For who dares undo the parcel
Finds himself at once inside it.
On the island, in the fruit,
Blocks of slate about his head.
Finds himself enclosed by dappled
Green and red, enclosed by yellow
Tawny nets, enclosed by black
And white acres of dominoes,
With the same brown paper parcel
Still unopened on his knee.
And, if he then should dare to think

Of the fewness, muchness, rareness,
Greatness of the endless only
Precious world in which he says
He lives—he then unties the string.

3) **Hag-Ridden** (Graves)

I awoke in profuse sweat, arms aching,
knees bruised and soles cut to the raw—
Preserved no memory of that night
But whipcracks and my own voice screaming.
Through what wild, flinty wastes of fury,
Hag of the Mill,
Did you ride your madman?

4) **My Hand Looks for You** (Kelly)

The house is made of grey stone.
The lights are off inside,
The piano covered with an old sheet.
In the kitchen the rats have made a home for
themselves.
There is enough flour to last them all winter.
The moon crawls through a hole in the living
room window
And shadows lie together on the old couch
Listening to the dead radio.
I walk in the yard, afraid of trees
And I listen to the shifting of stones.
Your picture is still on the parlour wall
And my hand looks for you over surfaces.

5) **Leaving the Rest Unsaid** (Graves)

Finis, apparent on an earlier page,
With fallen obelisk for colophon,
Must this be here repeated?
Death has been ruefully announced
And to die once is death enough,
Be sure, for any life time.
Must the book end, as you would end it,
With testamentary appendices
And graveyard indices?
But no, I will not lay me down
To let your tearful music mar
The decent mystery of my progress.
So now, my solemn ones, leaving the rest
unsaid,
Rising in air as on a gander's wing
At a careless comma,

(Poems by David Kelly are used by permis-
sion of the author. Poems by Robert Graves
are used by permission of Curtis, Brown
Ltd., NY, NY.)

Notes on the Artists

20TH CENTURY CONSORT

Anthony Ames, Executive Director

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

The 20th Century Consort is an ensemble of professional musicians drawn from the symphonic, chamber, and solo concert worlds. The Consort, a nonprofit

organization, has three fundamental aims: to perform important 20th-century chamber works; to educate a broad-based audience about the merits and pleasures of this music; and to stimulate composition in a variety of chamber forms. By offering audiences an opportunity to hear not only a few standard works, but also many other substantial though lesser known compositions, the Consort is making an active contribution to the emergence of a larger and more permanent repertoire.

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director,
Conductor

Antioch College, University of Cincinnati.
Conducting with Thomas Schippers and Louis Lane. Founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort.

Carolyn Beck, Bassoon

California State University, Northridge; Yale School of Music. Studied with Arthur Weisberg, Don Christlieb, Alan Goodman. Hidden Valley Chamber Orchestra.

Dotian Carter, Harp

Curtis Institute of Music. Principal Harpist, National Symphony Orchestra.

The Emerson String Quartet

Eugene Drucker, Violin

Phillip Setzer, Violin

Lawrence Dutton, Viola

David Finckel, Cello

Winners of the 1978 Naumburg Award in Chamber Music, the Quartet was formed while its members were students at The Juilliard School, under the tutelage of Robert Mann, first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet. The Emerson String Quartet is perhaps the only quartet performing today in which two violinists share equally the position of first violin. The Quartet has made two recordings of string quartets by American composers.

Thomas Jones, Percussion

University of Maryland. Studied with Ron Barnett. Freelance percussionist with Contemporary Music Forum. American Camerata for New Music, Theater Chamber Players. Extra Percussionist, National Symphony Orchestra.

Loren Kitt, Clarinet

Curtis Institute of Music. Principal clarinet, National Symphony Orchestra.

Jan Opalach, Bass-baritone

Indiana University. Studied with Margaret Harshaw, Richard Torigi. Winner 1980 Naumburg Vocal Competition, 1979 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. New York City Opera, Caramoor Festival, and Handel Festival, Kennedy Center. Recorded for Nonesuch, Columbia, Vox, and CRI records.

Jan Orkis, Piano Assistant

New York University, Temple University. Assistant to the Dean, Temple University College of Music.

Lambert Orkis, Piano

Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University. Faculty, Temple University. Penn Contemporary Players.

David Primosch, Piano

Cleveland State University, University of Pennsylvania. Composition with George Crumb, George Rochberg, Richard Wernick. Piano with Andrius Koprevirus, Lambert Orkis.

Lucy Shelton, Soprano

Pomona College, New England Conservatory. Studied with Jennie Tourel, Jan DeGaetani, Gerard Souzay. The Jubal Trio. Winner 1980 Naumburg Vocal Competition.

Sara Stern, Flute

Studied with Richard Townsend, Merrill Jordan, Marcel Moyse. Romantic Chamber Ensemble, Anechoic Wind Quintet, Washington Philharmonia.

William Vaughn, Double bass

Eastman School of Music. Studied with Oscar Zimmerman. National Symphony Orchestra.

Richard White, Oboe

Eastman School of Music. National Symphony Orchestra.



Smithsonian Institution

December 1980

Coming Events

Sunday, December 14	20th Century Consort (Hirshhorn Series)
Wednesday, December 17 and Thursday, December 18	Handel's Messiah (Special Event)
Saturday, December 20 and Sunday, December 21	Bobby Hutcherson and Walt Dickerson (Jazz Heritage Series)
Friday, December 26 through Wednesday, December 31	Holiday Celebration (Special Event)

Coming up in the Three Centuries of Chamber Music Series:

Monday, February 2	Smithsonian Chamber Players
Monday, March 2	Romantic Chamber Ensemble
Monday, May 4	20th Century Consort
	Call 357-1500 for ticket information

Smithsonian Institution	Secretary—S. Dillon Ripley
	Assistant Secretary for Public Service—Julian Euell
Smithsonian Performing Arts	Director—James R. Morris
	Director of Chamber Music Programs—James Weaver
	Director of Museum Programs—Shirley Cherkasky
	Technical Director—Harold Closter
	House Manager—Sharyn Reitz
Acknowledgements	The 20th Century Consort wishes to acknowledge the National Endowment for the Arts for its generous support.
Please Note	The taking of pictures and the use of recording equipment is strictly prohibited. In case of emergency see the house manager or an usher.
Rest rooms	Located in the century lobby and Associates Court.
