

# IAML ~ IASA 1983

## CONCERT OF RECENT AMERICAN MUSIC

20th Century Consort  
Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History

Monday, May 9, 1983

8:00 P.M.

WILLIAM DOPPMANN

Spring Songs, for soprano, clarinet, percussion and piano [1981]

Lucy Shelton, soprano; Loren Kitt, clarinet; Thomas Jones,  
percussion; Lambert Orkis, piano

GEORGE CRUMB

Celestial Mechanics (Makrokosmos IV), for piano 4 hands and  
assistant [1979]

Lambert Orkis, piano; Jan Orkis, piano assistant; James  
Primosch, piano

JAMES PRIMOSCH

Exchanges, for flute and clarinet [1981]

Sara Stern, flute; Loren Kitt, clarinet

JOSEPH SCHWANTNER

Sparrows, for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello,  
harp, percussion, piano and conductor [1979]

Lucy Shelton, soprano; Sara Stern, flute; Loren Kitt, clarinet;  
Barbara Sonies, violin; William Foster, viola; David Hardy,  
cello, Rebecca Anstein, harp; Thomas Jones, percussion; Lambert  
Orkis, piano; Christopher Kendall, conductor 4

I. WILLIAM DOPPMANN

Spring Songs, for soprano, clarinet, percussion and piano [1981]

Sarabande ("When that Aprille..." - Geoffrey Chaucer)  
Interlude I  
In His Own Write ("I sat belonely..." - John Lennon)  
Music for the Hunt ("Sleep'st thou...?" - Robert Burns)  
Entr'acte  
Love-child ("What if...?" - Willa Doppmann)  
Interlude II  
Song ("Morning opened..." - Donald Justice)  
Postlude

Ms. Shelton, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Jones, Mr. Orkis

II. GEORGE CRUMB

Celestial Mechanics (Makrokosmos IV), for piano 4 hands and  
assistant [1979]

I. Alpha Centauri  
II. Beta Cygni  
III. Gamma Draconis  
IV. Delta Orionis

Mr. Orkis, Mr. Primosch, Ms. Orkis

- INTERMISSION -

III. JAMES PRIMOSCH

Exchanges, for flute and clarinet [1981]

Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt

IV. JOSEPH SCHWANTNER

Sparrows, for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello,  
harp, percussion, piano and conductor [1979]

Ms. Shelton, Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Sonies, Mr. Foster,  
Mr. Hardy, Ms. Anstein, Mr. Jones, Mr. Orkis, Mr. Kendall

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.

REBECCA ANSTEIN, Harp  
Dickinson College, Peabody Conservatory. Principal Harp, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra.

WILLIAM FOSTER, Viola  
Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music. Assistant Principal Viola, National Symphony Orchestra.

DAVID HARDY, Cello  
Peabody Conservatory. Highest prize awarded an American, 7th International Tchaikovsky Competition. Assistant Principal Cellist, National Symphony Orchestra.

THOMAS JONES, Percussion  
University of Maryland. Contemporary Music Forum, American Camerata. Theater Chamber Players. Extra Percussionist, National Symphony Orchestra.

CHRISTOPHER KENDALL, Conductor  
Antioch College, University of Cincinnati. Founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort. Artistic Director of Millennium Ensemble.

LOREN KITT, Clarinet  
Curtis Institute of Music. Principal Clarinet, National Symphony Orchestra.

LAMBERT ORKIS, Piano  
Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University. Faculty, Temple University. Principal Pianist, National Symphony Orchestra.

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

JAMES PRIMOSCH, Piano  
Cleveland State University, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University.  
Composition with George Crumb, George Rochberg, Richard Wernick.

LUCY SHELTON, Soprano  
Pomona College, New England Conservatory. Twice winner of Naumberg Award.  
Performances with National Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic,  
Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras.

BARBARA SONIES, Violin  
Eastman School of Music, The Julliard School. Philadelphia Trio.  
Concertmistress, Opera Company of Philadelphia Orchestra, Mozart Society  
Orchestra.

SARA STERN, Flute  
Principal Flute, Kennedy Center Terrace Theatre Orchestra. Flutist with  
Millennium Ensemble, and frequent solo recitalist.

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

SPRING SONGS, dedicated to the memory of John Lennon, was written for the 1981 summer season of Chamber Music Northwest. The composer has provided the following extensive note:

The cycle SPRING SONGS, composed to a far-flung heterogeneous selection of texts, was begun ten years ago with a setting, for voice and piano, of the first seventeen lines of Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Coming back to this isolated effort five years later, I was struck--and gripped--by the almost incongruous shift of mood that occurs near the end: at the mention of the "holy blissful martyr"--Thomas à Becket--the music is overcome by images of the Crucifixion, ~~(a phrase, now in the clarinet, quotes Bach's setting, in the St. Matthew Passion, of Jesus' words, "Iama sabachthani?" ["why hast thou forsaken me?"])~~, and the piano plunges into its deepest notes. This unexpected poignancy and desolation, as against the song's initial and sustained high spirits of buzzing and twittering nature, seemed to provide the necessary tension, the growth energy, to exfoliate a set of songs. [Choice of certain of the texts fell into place at this time, proceeding in accordance with a dynamic of dramatic--sometimes violent--contrast, by means of which a composer's traditional response to the awesome and exhilarating suspense of life about to renew itself could be counterpointed with darker images--the uncertainty, now and then, of survival, and the unshakable feeling that sacrificial propitiation must be made and deemed worthy if the wheel is to turn again.]

→ John Lennon's poem, from his 1964 collection In His Own Write, was sketched then. Connected to the Chaucer by an instrumental interlude suggesting medieval jongleurs' music, the setting was to be Oriental--his whimsical tale of the "almost seen" as though told in song by a geisha, ~~accompanying herself on a samisen (here on autoharp)~~. The scoring was begun in earnest on December 7, 1980, the eve of the fatal shooting of Lennon in New York City. This tragic coincidence unavoidably left its imprint on the subsequent piece, transforming an idyllic "aubade" of Robert Burns into a savage hunt's-revel, presided over by the singer as imperious Diana-of-the-Chase, vehemently declaiming her lines.

An entr'acte follows, separating the two halves of the cycle, in which the singer, quoting from the 22nd Psalm in a frightened child's whisper, confides the pangs of being born into a strange and inhospitable world, ~~(then as now)~~. The fourth song is a mother's fantasy about her sleeping child. Succeeding verses carry her crib-side vigil toward grander and scarier vistas until, at the words "Love not given...", the cycle reaches its climax. During the next interlude, the players propose images from Ophelia's "How should I your true love know" to the singer who, Ophelia-like, strums absently, entranced and self-absorbed. The final poem, from Summer Anniversaries by the Pulitzer prizewinning Iowa poet Donald Justice, celebrates the dawning and fairy-tale passage of a day in a wintry town. The players coach the singer on her lines, and a long-accumulated residue of conflicting emotions induces her, toward the end, to turn her back to the audience and, in an inarticulate cadenza, vent her vocal energy into the strings of the piano, now electronically amplified. Returning to face a fading world, she is as though transfigured--an ancient soul, pronouncing (with difficulty--the players still coach her) a grandmother's benediction: A life for a life, freely given.

The postlude is a return of the jongleurs' music in a higher key.

DOPPMANN: Spring Songs

I. Sarabande

When that Aprille with his shoures sote  
The drogte of Marche hath perced to the rote  
And bathed ev'ry veyne in swich licour  
Of which vetru engendered is the flour  
When Zephirus with his swete breath  
Inspired hath in ev'ry holt and heeth  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne  
And smale fowles maken melodye,  
That slepen al the night with open yē  
(So pricketh hem Nature in her corages):  
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages  
And palmers for to seken straunge strondes,  
To ferne halwes couthe in sondry londes;  
And specially from ev'ry river's ende  
Of Engelond from Caunterbury they wende  
The holy blissful martir for to seke...

-- Geoffrey Chaucer

II. In His Own Write

[The John Lennon text must be deleted here, due to copyright problems.]

III. Music for the Hunt

Sleep'st thou, or wauk'st thou,  
    fairest creature?  
Rosy Morn now lifts his eye,  
Numbering ilka bud, which Nature  
Waters wi'the tears 'o-Joy.  
Now to the streaming fountain  
Or up the heathy mountain  
The hart, hind and roe, freely,  
    wildly-wanton stray.  
In twining hazel bowers  
His lay the linnet pours,  
The laverock to the sky  
Ascends with sangs o'Joy,  
Whilst the sun and thou arise  
    to bless this day

--Robert Burns

#### IV. Love-child

What if the child did die?  
When tummy hurts grew too big for heart to handle--  
What tussle-headed honey could fill his yellow bed as snugly as he?  
And what would become of poor fuzzy bear, awake in his cold corner?

(What if his master grew too big and stole away?  
What tassle-headed honey could fill his yellow bed?  
And what would become of poor fuzzy bear, awake in his cold corner?)

(What if no golden cherished king could fit his humble crib as grandly as he did?  
And what would become of grizzly bear  
awake and starving and stricken in his cold, cold cave?)

Love not given has nowhere to go  
Yet Fate was kind:  
there is yet today -  
The son is only sleeping.

-- Willa Doppmann

#### Entr'acte

I was pumped out like water;  
All my bones feel disjointed;  
My heart, like wax, melted...  
And Thou layest me in the dust -  
(O Abba...)

-- from Psalm XXII

#### Interlude II

...cockle-hat...  
...sandal shoon...  
...grass-green turf...  
...stone...  
...snow...

-- from Ophelia's song,  
"How should I your true love know,"  
William Shakespeare

V. Song

Morning opened  
Like a rose,  
And the snow on the roof  
Rose-color took!  
Ah, how the street  
Toward the light did leap!  
And the lamps went out.  
Brightness fell down from the steeple clock  
To the row of shops  
And rippled the bricks  
Like the scales of a fish  
And all that day  
Was a fairy tale  
Told once in a while  
To a good child.

-- Donald Justice

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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 essentially 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-handed 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. Astrologers considered it of importance as portending good fortune.

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EXCHANGES was composed in the fall of 1981 and was first performed at Columbia University in the Spring of 1982.

The title refers to the interaction between the players on both a large level--the exchanges of musical gestures and phrases--and a more local level, where one instrument picks up the pitch just played by the other instrument. This latter process is utilized in the introduction, interludes and postlude of the piece. These sections surround four short movements: the first is fast and aggressive; the second, scherzo-like; the third is slow and elegaic; the fourth is very fast and alternates soft music restricted in register with louder, more disjunct music.

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Joseph Schwantner was born in 1943 and is presently Composer-in-Residence of the St. Louis Symphony, on leave from the Eastman School of Music, where he is an Associate Professor of Composition. SPARROWS was composed in 1979 for the 20th Century Consort with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The next year, Mr. Schwantner received the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his orchestral work Aftertones of Infinity. In recent years Schwantner's compositions have developed a more accessible style, departing from the complex, dissonant textures of his earlier work and evolving into music with ideas much easier to grasp on first hearing. As the composer puts it, "What is on the surface is more easily perceived."

SPARROWS displays the composer's interest in several disparate kinds of music which may be heard throughout the composition. For example, there are passages of quasi-Renaissance polyphony intoned by the instrumentalists at key points, along with a dance-like interlude, and, toward the end of the piece, an extended passage of passacaglia-like counterpoint. The listener will also note Schwantner's fascination with aural coloration, achieved through the use of antique cimbals which are struck and bowed by the string players, and the dark timbre of string sound achieved by tuning the strings one-half step below normal concert pitch. The scoring with harp, percussion, and piano, and the use of a rich variety of instrumental doublings in addition to the players' singing also add to the timbral palette of SPARROWS.

Schwantner has used haikai by Issa (1762-1826) which form a kind of cycle (beginning and ending with a reference to sparrows) as his text. The images and musics are intended by the composer to create a series of "dream states" which drift from one to another during the progress of the work.

SCHWANTNER: Sparrows

1. Come then, come hither;  
Play your games and bide with me,  
Motherless Sparrow
2. The plum tree blossoms;  
The nightingale sings;  
But I am alone.
3. The autumn wind!  
Even the mountain's shadow  
Trembles before it.
4. Through this world of ours  
The butterfly's existence--  
Such a hastening!
5. Wild Geese, hush your cry!  
Wherever you go it is the same--  
The floating world!

6. A note from the bell--  
A cry from the waterfowl--  
And the night darkens!
7. Heedless that the tolling bell  
Marks our own closing day--  
We take this evening cool.
8. The night is dim  
But over the falls that ran with wine  
Stands the moon.
9. What loveliness!  
Seen through a crack in the wall  
The River of Heaven!
10. By night sacred music  
And into the flare of the torches  
Float crimson leaves!
11. Radiant moon!  
Tonight, must you too  
Hasten thither?
12. And, when I die,  
Be thou guardian of my tomb,  
Grasshopper.
13. Cry not, insects,  
For that is a way  
We all must go--
14. A glimpse of the Moon--  
A note from the Nightingale--  
And the night's over!
15. Greet the new sky  
With consonance of harmonies--  
Right to the sparrows!

-- A selection of poems from The Autumn Wind, by Issa, translated by  
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