

20TH CENTURY CONSORT

DECEMBER 3, 1988

**The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
and
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden**

present

The 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall,
Artistic Director and Conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin

William Feasley, guitar

David Hardy, cello

Thomas Jones, percussion

Loren Kitt, clarinet

Lisa Emmenheiser Logan, piano

Albert Merz, percussion

Harold Robinson, bass

Guest Artist

William Sharp, baritone

Saturday, December 3, 1988

Lecture-discussion, 4:30 p.m.

Concert, 5:30 p.m.

Auditorium, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The audience is invited to join the artists in the Plaza lobby after the concert for a wine-and-cheese reception, sponsored by the Friends of the 20th Century Consort.

The 20th Century Consort's 1988-89 performance series is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, Department of Education,
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Christopher Kendall, 20th Century Consort

CONCERT

Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death (1962-68)

Poems by Federico García Lorca

Refrain One

- I. LA GUITARRA
(The Guitar)

Refrain Two

- II. CASIDA DE LAS PALOMAS OSCURAS
(Casida of the Dark Doves)

Refrain Three

- III. CANCIÓN DE JINETE, 1860
(Song of the Rider, 1860)

Refrain Four

- IV. CASIDA DEL HERIDO PAR EL AGUA
(Casida of the Boy Wounded by the Water)

George Crumb

(b. 1929)

Mr. Sharp, Mr. Feasley, Ms. Logan, Mr. Robinson
Mr. Jones, Mr. Merz,
Mr. Kendall

INTERMISSION

Quatour pour la fin du temps (1941)

(Quartet for the End of Time)

- I. Liturgie de cristal
II. Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
III. Abîme des oiseaux
IV. Intermède
V. Louange à l'Eternité de Jésus
VI. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes
VII. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
VIII. Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus

Olivier Messiaen

(b. 1908)

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

1988-89 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

November 5 – *Gala Opening Concert*
Guest Ensemble, **Collage New Music** from Boston

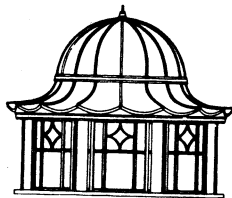
December 3 – *Death and Transfiguration*
20th Century Consort
Music by George Crumb and Olivier Messiaen

February 11 – *Contrasts and Café Music*
20th Century Consort
performs Bartok, Ravel, Schoenfield, Jolivet and Wuorinen

March 18 – *Magic!*
20th Century Consort
Works by Stephen Albert, Allen Schindler, and Joseph Schwantner

April 22 – *Strings in the Earth and Air*
20th Century Consort
Music by Warren Benson, Michael Finckel, and Nicholas Maw;
Arnold Schoenberg's *Transfigured Night*

20th Century Consort
Christopher Kendall, *Artistic Director*
Alyce Rideout, *Manager*



Smithsonian Institution

Robert McC. Adams, *Secretary*
James T. Demetron, *Director*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Janet W. Solinger, *Director*, Resident Associate Program
Marcus L. Overton, *Senior Program Coordinator*, RAP Performing Arts

The Resident Associate Program is the continuing education, cultural, and membership arm of the Smithsonian Institution for metropolitan Washington, and relies on the support of its more than 60,000 members to support its activities. The Program brings distinguished performing artists to the Washington area in more than 100 performances annually. Please telephone 357-3030 for membership information.

Please note:

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment
are strictly prohibited.

Restrooms are located in the lower lobby adjacent to the escalators.



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Our century has seen the wild proliferation of musical styles, but it is still rare to find a composer whose style is immediately identifiable as his own, not an overlay of tricks superimposed on a prevailing, generalized language. This program is devoted to the music of two such original composers, both of whom had thoroughly-grounded musical educations, but moved beyond them to invent a sound that marks each one at once as an individual and, consequently, influential artist. It would be too great a simplification to say that George Crumb's inventions occur in the realm of color while Olivier Messiaen's take place in the realm of rhythm, but there is nonetheless a grain of truth in that assertion. More important, though, is the fact that both men have written music that transcends technique to express profound human sentiments -- joy, longing, pain, terror, and hope.

GEORGE CRUMB: Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death

Born in 1929 in Charleston, West Virginia, into a musical family, George Crumb learned from childhood to play the clarinet and piano. He took his undergraduate degree in composition at Mason College of Music and Fine arts in Charleston, and received a master's degree from the University of Illinois and a doctorate from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Ross Lee Finney. On the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania since 1965, he has received numerous grants and awards, including those of the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He received the Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for Echoes of Time and the River.

Crumb's early music grew out of short musical subjects in which timbre played as important a role as pitch or rhythm, and has been continually marked by an extraordinarily refined ear for color, astonishing inventiveness in the creation of sounds, and novel methods of tone production, occasionally with amplification for delicate overtones. Much of his music has been programmatic, often drawing on the zodiacal cycle and number symbolism, or such quasi-dramatic elements as masked performers.

Among his best-known works are several featuring vocalists--in particular his Ancient Voices of Children, which is something of a "top hit" in contemporary music. It is, in fact, the last of a series of settings of the Spanish poetry of Federico García Lorca, whose plays and poems are marked by a passionate intensity and a generally tragic view of life. Crumb encountered Lorca's poetry when he was a student at Ann Arbor when, as he has noted in an interview, "I immediately identified with its stark simplicity and vivid imagery but of course could not imagine that I would one day complete a cycle of eight works based on this poetry." Night Music I (1963) was the first work in this cycle, followed by four books of Madrigals for soprano with various instrumental combinations. Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death came in 1968. The largest of the eight settings, it is also the most intense in its dramatic projection.

Although Crumb began sketching the work in Boulder, Colorado, in 1962, it was completed only in 1968 when, Crumb says, "I felt I had evolved a definite form for my musical ideas." He completed the score in Media, Pennsylvania. The work was commissioned by the University of Iowa, and first performed in Iowa City on March 29, 1969.

The piece consists of four "death-songs," settings of four of Lorca's most beautiful poems, each of which is preceded by a "refrain"; these are instrumental passages, though with vocal elements--mostly phonetic sounds uttered by the instrumentalists themselves. There are, in addition, three "death-drones," long stretches of sustained sound based on the interval of the fourth played by amplified contrabass; they dominate the musical texture in the first and last songs and in Refrain Three.

The four songs are by turns dark and lamenting (with intimations of flamenco style as the guitar laments), ironic and mocking, violent and terror-ridden, and finally dream-like, with a conscious echo of another death-obsessed artist, Gustav Mahler.

PLEASE TURN PAGES QUIETLY DURING THE MUSIC.

The composer summarized his aims as follows: "Lorca's haunting, even mystical vision of death--which embodies, yet transcends, the ancient Spanish tradition-- is the seminal force of his dark genius. In composing Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death, I wanted to find a musical language that might complement this very beautiful poetry."

OLIVIER MESSIAEN:

Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps (Quartet for the End of Time)

Long recognized as one of the most influential composers of this century, Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon, France, in 1908. His taste for music was awakened by a Christmas gift he received in 1916: scores of The Damnation of Faust and Don Giovanni--remarkable gifts for an eight-year-old! When his family moved to Nantes two years later, he commenced formal instruction in harmony with Jehan de Gibon, from whom he received the score of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande, an encounter described by the composer as "a real bombshell...probably the most decisive influence of my life."

All his life, Messiaen has been an active student of rhythm, the aspect of music in which he has perhaps made his most important contributions--not only the rhythms of traditional European court music, but Greek and Hindu rhythms as well. But perhaps the central fact of his life, standing at the core of this work and all others, is the one Messiaen described thus:

I have the good fortune to be a Catholic; I was born a believer...A number of my works are dedicated to shedding light on the theological truths of the Catholic faith. That is the most important aspect of my music...perhaps the only one I shall not be ashamed of in the hour of death.

Certainly, the circumstances of the work's composition were harrowing. Captured with a small group of French soldiers by German troops between Nancy and Verdun in June, 1940, Messiaen carried with him in his kit bag a set of miniature scores ranging from Bach to Berg, which he was allowed to keep in captivity. In the prison camp of Stalag VIII in Saxony, he met violinist Jean Le Boulaire, clarinetist Henri Akoka, and cellist Etienne Pasquier. Boulaire and Akoka, astonishingly enough, had their instruments with them; and Pasquier was soon presented with a cello lacking a string. Messiaen composed a piece for them, which became the fourth movement (Intermède, or Interlude) of the Quartet for the End of Time. Soon he envisioned a much larger work, inspired by the Biblical vision of the Apocalypse (a vision that must have seemed to be coming true in the horrors of the war.)

Although not knowing whether a piano could even be found, Messiaen had nonetheless composed a piano part in the piece, which was finished by the beginning of 1941. When an old, out-of-tune upright was found, the composer joined his four colleagues in the first performance before an audience of five thousand prisoners from France, Belgium, Poland, and elsewhere, on a bitterly cold January 15, 1941. Messiaen later noted that no other audience had ever shown greater attention to or understanding of the music.

The work's title refers first of all to the apocalyptic vision, in Revelation X, of "an angel, full of strength, descending from the sky, clad with a cloud, covered with a rainbow...He lifted his hand to the sky and swore by Him who lives in the centuries of centuries saying: There shall be no time." But in Messiaen's music the title has a technical sense, too, referring to a freeing of the music from a regular pulse either through very slow tempi or irregular rhythms. The scoring changes from movement to movement, in a remarkable variety of colors. Messiaen's fondness for symbolism shows in the number of movements (eight is the number of the Infinite and Endless) and in particular musical gestures linked to Biblical images. The very first entrances of the clarinet and violin are marked "like a bird," the earliest instance in Messiaen's output of his fascination with birdsong. The composer's own comments on the music follow; except where otherwise noted, each movement calls for all four instruments.

1. Liturgie de cristal (Liturgy of crystal)

Four in the morning, the waking of birds; a solo blackbird extemporizes,

surrounded by sounding dusts, by a halo of trills lost high up in the trees. Transpose this into the religious level: you get the harmonious silence of Heaven.

2. Vocalise pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
(Vocalise for the angel who announces the end of Time)
The first and third parts (very short) conjure the power of this strong angel covered with a rainbow and clad with clouds, who sets one foot on the sea and the other on the earth. The middle section (without clarinet) brings the impalpable harmonies of heaven. The piano's soft cascade of blue-orange chords surround the near-plainsong-like chant of the strings with their distant chime.
3. Abîme des oiseaux (Abyss of the birds), for solo clarinet
The abyss is Time, with its sadness and weariness. The birds are the opposite of Time: our longing for light, stars, rainbows, and jubilating vocalises.
4. Intermède (Interlude), without piano
A scherzo, more extrovert than the other movements, with which, however, it has certain melodic ties.
5. Louange à l'Eternité de Jésus (Praise to the Eternity of Jesus), cello and piano
Jesus is here considered as the Word. A long and infinitely slow phrase of the cello magnifies with love and reverence the eternity of the powerful yet mild Word, "whose years shall not get used up." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Gospel according to John, I:1).
6. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes
(Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets), all instruments in unison.
Rhythmically, this is the most characteristic of the eight movements. Use of the added value, of augmented and diminished rhythms, of non-retrogradable rhythms... Listen especially towards the end to the theme's fortissimo by augmentation, with the changes in register of its different notes.
7. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
(Jumble of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of Time)
This recalls the second movement. The Angel full of strength appears, and above all the rainbow that covers him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, of all luminous and tonal vibration.) In his dreams, the author hears and sees classed chords and melodies, familiar colors and shapes; then, after this transitory stage, he passes into the unreal and undergoes with ecstasy a wheeling, a giratory compenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These swords of fire, these orange-blue flows of lava, these sudden stars: that is the jumble, these are the rainbows.
8. Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus (Praise to the Immortality of Jesus), violin and piano.
A broad violin solo, the counterpart of the fifth movement's cello solo. This second praise is more specifically addressed to the second aspect of Jesus, to Jesus the Man, to the Word that has become flesh, the immortal reborn one who imparts us his life.

Messiaen's imagery, his coloristic flair (hearing chords, for example, as "blue-orange"), his rhythmic variety and energy, and his expressive range, no less than the dramatic account of its composition and first performance, have made the Quartet for the End of Time one of the seminal scores in the composer's output, and one of the most extraordinary chamber works of the 20th century.

NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

CHRISTOPHER KENDALL -- conductor, artistic director, and chamber musician -- studied conducting with Louis Lane, Thomas Schippers, Richard Lert, and Antal Dorati. He has recently added the post of Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony to those he already holds as founder/artistic director of both Millennium and the 20th Century Consort, and founder/lutenist of the Folger Consort. As guest conductor, he has led performances by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Da Capo Players, and the Musica Nova ensemble, among many others. His public television series Millennium: Ten Centuries of Music received the Houston Film Festival's 1986 Gold Award.

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ELISABETH ADKINS, now in her fifth season as Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony, complements orchestral work with an active chamber music schedule. She is a founding member of the American Chamber Players, and the Chamber Soloists of Washington, and a member of the Broadwood Trio.

WILLIAM FEASLEY holds a diploma from the Estudio de Arte Guitarrístico in Mexico City, an M.M. from Peabody Conservatory, and was the first guitarist to receive the Conservatory's coveted Artist Diploma. Currently head of guitar studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and at the Levine School, he was recently invited both to perform and judge at the First Panhellenic Guitar Competition in Greece.

DAVID HARDY, Associate Principal Cellist of the NSO, distinguished himself as a major artist early in his career, as the top-ranking American at the Seventh International Tchaikovsky Competition and receiving, in 1986, the diploma from the Rostropovich International Cello Competition in Paris.

A master percussionist whose performances with the Consort have provided many memorable and exciting moments, THOMAS JONES is a busy free-lance artist who moves easily among bands, pit orchestras, and symphonic ensembles. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland, and is currently a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University.

LOREN KITT is Principal Clarinetist of the National Symphony, and teaches at the Peabody Institute. With the NSO, he has often appeared as soloist in works by Mozart, Debussy, Copland, and Messiaen. In addition to long-time Consort membership, he also performs regularly with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Theater Chamber Players.

LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN is a graduate of the Juilliard School where she was a scholarship student of Ania Dorfman. A busy performer in both live performance and broadcasts in the New York area prior to coming to Washington, she has appeared as soloist with major orchestras, such as the Baltimore Symphony and the United States Marine Band, as well as the Chautauqua Festival Orchestra.

ALBERT MERZ is a free-lance percussionist who often performs with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Theater Chamber Players at the Kennedy Center, and many other Washington and East coast-based chamber music groups. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Catholic University.

HAROLD ROBINSON assumed the post of National Symphony Orchestra Principal Bassist in 1984, following extensive previous experience as principal or associate principal in the Houston and Albuquerque Symphonies, and with the Santa Fe Opera. Among other chamber music activities, he has collaborated with the Fine Arts and Guarneri quartets, and played in the Mostly Mozart Festival.

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Baritone WILLIAM SHARP is a versatile artist equally at home in concert, recital, opera, recordings, and film, in a repertoire ranging from 12th-century troubadour songs to contemporary world premieres. Winner of the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition, he made his New York recital debut in the Young Concert Artists Series in 1983 and his Washington debut at the Kennedy Center in March, 1984. In recitals and orchestral engagements throughout the U.S. and abroad, he has appeared with major orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Icelandic Symphony and Chamber Orchestra, as well as the most prestigious festivals, including the Aspen Festival and Marlboro.

I

La Guitarra

Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Se rompen las copas
de la madrugada.
Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Es inútil callarla.
Es imposible
callarla.
Llora monótona
como llora el agua,
como llora el viento
sobre la nevada.
Es imposible
callarla.
Llora por cosas
lejanas.
Arena del Sur caliente
que pide camelias blancas.
Llora flecha sin blanco,
la tarde sin mañana,
y el primer pájaro muerto
sobre la rama.
¡Oh, guitarra!
Corazón malherido
por cinco espadas.

The Guitar

*The lament of the guitar
begins.
The wine cups of daybreak
are broken.
The lament of the guitar
begins.
It is useless to hush it.
It is impossible to hush it.
It weeps monotonous
as the water weeps,
as the wind weeps
over the snowfall.
It is impossible to hush it.
It weeps for things far away.
Sand of the warm South,
asking for white camellias.
It weeps arrow without target,
evening without morning,
and the first dead bird
upon the branch.
Oh, guitar!
Heart grievously wounded
by five swords.*

II

Casida de las Palomas Oscuras

Por las ramas del laurel
vi dos palomas oscuras.
La una era el sol,
la otra la luna.
Vecinitas, les dije:
¿Dónde está mi sepultura?
En mi cola, dijo el sol.
En mi garganta, dijo la luna.
Y yo que estaba caminando
con la tierra a la cintura
vi dos águilas de mármol
y una muchacha desnuda.
La una era la otra
y la muchacha era ninguna.
Aguilitas, les dije:
¿Dónde está mi sepultura?
En mi cola, dijo el sol,
en mi garganta, dijo la luna.
Por las ramas del laurel
vi dos palomas desnudas.
La una era la otra
y las dos eran ninguna.

**Casida of the Dark Doves*

*Through the branches
of the laurel
I saw two dark doves.
The one was the sun,
the other the moon.
Little neighbors,
I said to them,
where is my tomb?
In my tail, said the sun.
in my throat, said the moon.
And I who was walking
with the earth at my belt
saw two eagles of marble
and a naked girl.
The one was the other
and the girl was no one.
Little eagles,
I said to them,
where is my tomb?
In my tail, said the sun,
in my throat, said the moon.
Through the branches
of the laurel
I saw two naked doves.
The one was the other
and both were no one.*

III

Canción de Jinete, 1860

En la luna negra
de los bandoleros,
cantan las espuelas.
Caballito negro.
¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto?
... Las duras espuelas
del bandido inmóvil
que perdió las riendas.
Caballito frío.
¡Qué perfume de flor de cuchillo!
En la luna negra,
sangraba el costado
de Sierra Morena.
Caballito negro.
¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto?
La noche espolea
sus negros ijares
clavándose estrellas.
Caballito frío.
¡Qué perfume de flor de cuchillo!
En la luna negra,
¡un grito! y el cuerno
largo de la hoguera.
Caballito negro.
¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto?

Song of the Rider, 1860

*In the black moon
of the highwaymen,
the spurs sing.
Little black horse.
Whither with your dead rider?
... The hard spurs
of the motionless bandit
who lost his reins.
Little cold horse.
What a scent of the flower
of a knifel
In the black moon
bled the mountainside
of Sierra Morena.
Little black horse.
Whither with your dead rider?
The night spurs
its black flanks
piercing with stars.
Little cold horse.
What a scent of the flower
of a knifel
In the black moon,
a shriek! and the long
horn of the bonfire.
Little black horse.
Whither with your dead rider?*

IV

Casida del Herido por el Agua

Quiero bajar al pozo,
quiero subir los muros de Granada,
para mirar el corazón pasado
por el punzón oscuro de las aguas.
El niño herido gemía
con una corona de escarcha.
Estanques, aljibes y fuentes
levantaban al aire sus espadas.
¡Ay, qué furia de amor, qué hiriente filo,
qué nocturno rumor, qué muerte blanca!
¡Qué desiertos de luz iban hundiéndose
los arenales de la madrugada!
El niño estaba solo
con la ciudad dormida en la garganta.
Un surtidor que viene de los sueños
lo defiende del hambre de las algas.
El niño y su agonía, frente a frente,
eran dos verdes lluvias enlazadas.
El niño se tendía por la tierra
y su agonía se curvaba.
Quiero bajar al pozo,
quiero morir mi muerte a bocanadas,
quiero llenar mi corazón de musgo,
para ver al herido por el agua.

* Casida of the Boy Wounded by the Water

*I want to go down to the well,
I want to go up the walls of Granada,
to watch the heart pierced through
by the dark thrust of water.
The wounded boy was moaning
under his crown of rime.
Pools, cisterns, fountains
raised their swords to the wind.
What a fury of love, what a wounding edge,
such nocturnal murmurs,
such a white death!
Such deserts of light were crumbling
the sands of dawn!
The boy was alone,
the city asleep in his throat.
A water spout out of his dreams
wards off the hungry algae.
The boy and his agony, face to face,
were two green rains enlaced.
The boy stretched out on the ground,
and his agony bent over.
I want to go down to the well,
I want to die my own death, by mouthfuls,
I want to stuff my heart with moss,
to watch the boy wounded by the water.*

* Casida is an Arabic poetical form