

20TH CENTURY CONSORT

FEBRUARY 11, 1989

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

present

The 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Elisabeth Adkins, violin

David Hardy, cello

Thomas Jones, percussion

Loren Kitt, clarinet

Lambert Orkis, piano

Sara Stern, flute

Guest Artists

Paul Schoenfield, piano

Lucy Shelton, soprano

Saturday, February 11, 1989

Lecture-discussion 4:30 p.m.

Concert, 5:30 p.m.

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

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.

THE PROGRAM

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, Department of Education
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Nicholas Maw, composer
Paul Schoenfield, composer

CONCERT

Janissary Music (1966)

Mr. Jones

Charles Wuorinen

(b. 1938)

Contrasts (1938)

Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)
Sebes (Fast)

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Adkins, Mr. Orkis

Béla Bartók

(1881-1945)

Chansons madécasses (1926)

Nahandove
Aoua
Il est doux

Ms. Shelton, Ms. Stern, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Orkis

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)

INTERMISSION

Sonatina (1961)

Andantino
Quasi Cadenza-Allegro
Intermezzo-Vivace

Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt

André Jolivet

(1905-1974)

Cafe Music (1986)

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Schoenfield

Paul Schoenfield

(b. 1947)

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.

1988-89 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

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

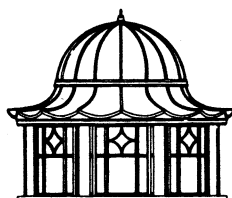
December 3 — *Death and Transfiguration*
20th Century Consort
Music by George Crumb and Olivier Messiaen

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*
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Janet W. Solinger, *Director*, Resident Associate Program
Marcus L. Overton, *Manager*, 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

Charles Wuorinen: JANISSARY MUSIC

Charles Wuorinen studied at Columbia University with Otto Luening, Jack Beeson, and Vladimir Ussachevsky, and now teaches at the Manhattan School of Music. A prolific composer, he is also an energetic spokesman for new music, particularly works that are serially organized, a technique of which he remains a fervent proponent in a time of confused and rapidly changing aesthetics.

The title of Janissary Music (which is dedicated to Raymond des Roches, director of the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble) refers to the elite corps of soldiers who formed the personal guard of the Turkish sultans. The Janissary bands typically included fifes, shawms, bass drums, cymbals, triangles, kettledrums, and other percussion instruments. Their distinctive sound--rich in vibrant percussion effects--was strikingly introduced into European music with a wave of "Turkish" music in such works as Mozart's ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO and a march section in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Laid out in two movements running in all twelve and a half minutes, Janissary Music is a demanding showpiece of virtuosity and musicianship for a single player, who must control a vibraphone, marimba, twelve drums, twelve metal instruments (three each tamtams, cymbals, cowbells, and triangles), and a single kettledrum tuned to F (which plays only twice--the last notes of each movement). Vibraphone and marimba dominate the beginning, but slowly the other instruments--first the drums and then the metal instruments--are introduced, gradually to be worked into an athletic and colorful rotation through the various groups by the end of the first movement.

During the second movement, individual groups take their turn for rather elaborate treatment, culminating in a final outburst of vibraphone pyrotechnics and a single crash on the smallest triangle, followed by a crash on the timpano as the final punctuation.

* * *

Béla Bartók: CONTRASTS

With one exception, all of Bartók's chamber music is for stringed instruments, with or without the addition of a piano. Only once did he turn to a wind instrument, on the occasion of a commission from Benny Goodman and Joseph Szigeti, to whom Contrasts is dedicated. Bartók completed the work in Budapest on September 24, 1938, after having heard recordings of the Benny Goodman band sent by Szigeti. Far from trying to blend the three very different types of instruments into a single complex sonority, Bartok exploits the difference in sound production as much as possible, as the very title of the work suggests. He had long since become a past master of violin effects--multiple stops, bowed and pizzicato notes played simultaneously, glissandi, and so on; now he investigates the possibilities of the clarinet as well, while keeping the piano part (conceived for himself) modestly in the background.

The original plan, according to Goodman's wish, was to have a two-movement work that would fit on a single twelve-inch 78-rpm record, but Bartók found that he needed greater scope for the working out of his material; and the planned two movements became three with the addition of the slow middle movement. The music is strongly nationalistic, possibly Bartók's musical response to the unchecked advance of Nazism.

The Verbunkos, or recruiting dance, was employed to encourage enlistments in the Hungarian army in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; thereafter it remained as a characteristically Hungarian musical genre featuring sharply dotted rhythms in a slow march tempo with ornamental turns, runs, and arpeggios decorating the melodic lines. In its fully developed historical form, the Verbunkos began with a slow section (lassu) followed or alternating with a wild fast one (friss) and indeed the original two-movement plan of Contrasts was designed to reflect this format.

The Verbunkos ends with a clarinet cadenza that leads on to the languid slow movement, in which piano and clarinet begin by mirroring one another, while the piano contributes soft percussive tremolos inspired by Balinese gamelan music. The fast dance, Sebes, begins with a short passage on a scordatura violin (with the E string tuned to E-flat and the G string to G-sharp), following which the violin is directed to return to a second, normally tuned instrument. This is the only example of scordatura in Bartók's entire output.

The outer sections of the dance are in a lively 2/4 meter, but the extended middle section uses what is often called "Bulgarian rhythm," which Bartók learned in his folk music studies: (8+5)/8, or more properly (3+2+3+2+3)/8. When the original 2/4 returns, the dance gets wilder and wilder (with just a few momentarily tranquil passages and a cadenza for the violin) before reaching its brilliant conclusion.

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Maurice Ravel: CHANSONS MADÉCASSES

These "songs of Madagascar" represent a high point in Ravel's late style--a style marked by economy and austerity, even though his music is put in the service of exotic texts that might have inspired a lush orchestral score twenty years earlier.

The poems were published in French in 1787; a certain Evariste-Désiré de Parny claimed to have translated them from songs collected among the people of Madagascar. This was poetic license, to put it mildly; Parny had never been to Madagascar and was ignorant of the language. The texts, however, are marvels of evocative imagery, and Ravel was clearly drawn to them. He composed the songs on a commission from Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

Ravel described the Chansons madécasses as "a sort of quartet in which the voice plays the role of the principal instrument." The two outer songs are expressively erotic in character; the middle song is more dramatic in its hinting at the evil effects of the "white men" who bring death and destruction to the exotic and distant land. At the premiere of the cycle in 1926, this movement caused something of a scandal on the grounds that its anti-imperialistic view was unpatriotic.

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Song Texts for the
Chansons madécasses
are on the following pages.

Your cooperation in turning the pages quietly, and only upon the completion of each song is gratefully appreciated.

I. Nahandove

Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!
L'oiseau nocturne a commencé ses cris,
la pleine lune brille sur ma tête,
et la rosée naissante humecte mes cheveux.
Voici l'heure; qui peut t'arrêter,
away,
Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

Le lit de feuilles est préparé;
je l'ai parsemé de fleurs
et d'herbes odoriférantes;
il est digne de tes charmes,
Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

Elle vient.
J'ai reconnu la respiration précipitée
que donne une marche rapide;
j'entends le froissement de la pagne
qui l'enveloppe; c'est elle,
c'est Nahandove, la belle Nahandove.

O reprends haleine, ma jeune amie;
repose-toi sur mes genoux.
Que ton regard est enchanteur!
Que le mouvement de ton sein est vif
et délicieux sous la main qui le presse!
Tu souris, Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

Tes baisers pénètrent jusqu'à l'âme;
tes caresses brûlent tous mes sens;
arrête, ou je vais mourir.
Meurt-on de volupté,
Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

Le plaisir passe comme un éclair.
Ta douce haleine s'affoiblit,
tes yeux humides se referment,
ta tête se penche mollement,
et tes transports s'éteignent dans la langueur.
Jamais tu ne fus si belle,
Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

...Tu pars, et je vais languir
dans les regrets et les désirs.
Je languirai jusqu'au soir.
Tu reviendras ce soir,
Nahandove, ô belle Nahandove!

Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!
The night bird has begun its cries,
the full moon shines upon my head,
and the early dew moistens my hair.
This is the hour; who can be keep you

Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!

The bed of leaves is ready;
I have strewn it with flowers
and with aromatic herbs;
it is worthy of your charms,
Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!

She comes.
I recognized the rapid breathing
of hurried walking;
I hear the rustling of the cloth
that covers her; it is she,
it is Nahandove, the fair Nahandove.

O take breath, my young love,
rest on my lap.
How enchanting is your glance!
How lively and delicious is the movement
of your breast under the hand pressing it!
You smile, Nahandove, fair Nahandove!

Your kisses penetrate to the soul;
your caresses set all my senses on fire!
Stop, or I shall die.
Can one die of voluptuous pleasure,
Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!

The pleasure passes in an instant.
Your sweet panting grows gentler,
your moist eyes close again,
your head droops wearily,
and your rapture yields to languor;
Never were you so beautiful,
Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!

...You leave me, and I shall languish
amid regrets and desires.
I shall languish until evening.
You'll come back this evening,
Nahandove, o fair Nahandove!

II. Méfiez-vous des blancs

Aoua! Aoua!
Méfiez-vous des blancs,
habitans du rivage.
Du temps de nos pères,
des blancs descendirent dans cette île.
On leur dit: Voilà des terres,
que vos femmes les cultivent;
soyez justes, soyez bons,
et devenez nos frères.

Les blancs promirent, et cependant
ils faisoient des retranchemens.
Un fort menaçant s'éleva;
le tonnerre fut renfermé
dans des bouches d'airain;
leurs prêtres voulurent nous donner un Dieu
que nous ne connoissons pas;
ils parlèrent enfin d'obéissance
et d'esclavage.
Plutôt la mort!
Le carnage fut long et terrible;
mais malgré la foudre qu'ils vomissoient

et qui écrasait des armées entières,
ils furent tous exterminés.
Aoua! Aoua!
Méfiez-vous des blancs!

Nous avons vu de nouveaux tyrans,
plus forts et plus nombreux,
planter leur pavillon sur le rivage.
Le ciel a combattu pour nous.
Il a fait tomber sur eux les pluies,
les tempêtes et les vents empoisonnés.
Ils ne sont plus, et nous vivons,
et nous vivons libres.
Aoua! Aoua!
Méfiez-vous des blancs,
habitans du rivage.

Aoua! Aoua!
Beware of the white men,
dwellers on the shore.
In our fathers' time
white men descended upon this island.
One of them said: Here is land,
let your wives cultivate it;
be just, be good,
and become our brothers.

The white men promised, and meanwhile
they were building entrenchments.
A menacing fort arose;
thunder was enclosed
in bronze mouths.
Their priests wanted to give us a god
we do not know;
finally they spoke of obedience
and slavery.
Rather--death!
The carnage was long and terrible,
yet for all the lightning bolts they spat
forth,
which destroyed entire armies,
they were utterly exterminated.
Aoua! Aoua!
Beware of the white men!

We have seen new tyrants,
stronger, and more numerous,
plant their banners on the shore.
Heaven fought for us.
It dropped rains upon them,
and tempests and poisonous winds.
They are no more, and we live on,
and we live free.
Aoua! Aoua!
Beware of the white men,
dwellers on the shore.

III. Il est doux de se coucher

Il est doux de se coucher, durant la chaleur, It is good to lie down in the heat of the
day,
sous un arbre touffu, et d'attendre under a leafy tree, and to wait
que le vent du soir amène la fraîcheur. until the evening wind brings freshness.

Femmes, approchez.
Tandis que je me repose ici
sous un arbre touffu, occupez mon oreille
par vos accents prolongés.
Répétez la chanson de la jeune fille,
lorsque ses doigts tressent la natte,
ou lorsqu'assise auprès de riz,
elle chasse les oiseaux avides.

Women, approach.
While I rest here
under a leafy tree, delight my ear
with your soothing voices.
Repeat the song of the young girl
while she braids her hair
or, while sitting by the rice patch,
chases the greedy birds away.

La chant plaft à mon âme.
La danse est pour moi presque aussi douce
qu'un baiser. Que vos pas soient lents;
qu'ils imitent les attitudes du plaisir
et l'abandon de la volupté.

The singing is pleasing to my spirit.
Dancing for me is almost as sweet
as a kiss. Step slowly;
imitate the poses of pleasure
and the surrender to voluptuous bliss.

Le vent du soir se lève;
le lune commence à briller au travers
les arbres de la montagne.
Allez, et préparez le repas.

The evening wind awakens;
the moon begins to shine through
the trees on the mountain.
Go, and prepare the meal.

--Evariste-Désiré de Forges,
Vicomte de Parny

André Jolivet: SONATINA

Parisian André Jolivet had difficulty deciding on a musical career, being almost equally drawn to the visual arts (his father was a painter), drama, and literature. But by his mid-teens, he had already conceived a ballet, for which he created the scenario, designed the scenery and costumes, and wrote the music! While working as a schoolteacher (at his parents' insistence), he continued to study music.

Two years after hearing Schoenberg's first Paris concerts in 1927, he had the arresting experience of hearing Edgard Varèse's Amériques. For the following two years, Jolivet studied with Varèse, forming an iconoclastic approach to a training that had been largely classical. In this way, he carved out his own particular niche in recent music.

The Sonatina for flute and clarinet dates from a time when the composer's work was dominated by a series of concertos for traditional instruments (piano, flute, harp, trumpet, cello) and newer ones (ondes martenot). The emphasis on virtuosity that naturally grows out of concerto-writing may be found even in the smaller chamber works such as this Sonatina, which is a lively duet cast as a busy dialogue between two instruments, neither of which is willing to yield primacy (there is only a handful of measures in the piece in which one instrument rests while the other plays.) The dialogue is sometimes civil, with one participant holding a sustained note (as of attentiveness) while the other converses, but much of the time they compete in wit, brilliance, and elegance--a conversation characteristically French.

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Paul Schoenfield: CAFE MUSIC

Paul Schoenfield is one of an increasing number of composers whose work is inspired by the whole world of musical experience--popular styles both American and foreign, vernacular and folk traditions, and the "normal" historical traditions of cultivated music-making, often treated with sly twists. He frequently combines ideas that grew up in entirely different worlds into the same piece, making them talk to each other, so to speak, and delighting in the surprises their interaction evokes.

A pianist and composer who "ran away at 16" from his native Detroit, Schoenfield studied at Carnegie-Mellon Institute and the University of Arizona. He recently moved to Ohio (after about six years in Minnesota), where he now teaches at the University of Akron.

Cafe Music took root in the composer's experience of filling in for a friend as the pianist of a trio that played regularly in a restaurant in St. Paul. Primarily intended as live background music for diners, the trio performed pieces from early 20th-century America and late 19th-century Vienna. The idea presented itself to use the thematic styles, harmonies, and typical gestures of this thrice-familiar music as the basis for an original work for the same ensemble--violin, piano, and cello.

Commissioned to write a chamber piece for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Schoenfield produced Cafe Music; and the piece had its only previous performance in that city in the winter of 1987. So far, at least, all performances of the piece require the presence of the composer at the keyboard, for (as he genially confesses) he has not yet written down the piano part!

Cafe Music is in three movements: Allegro -- Andante moderato -- Presto.

The contents or technique require no explication for anyone who has ever heard the sounds of a potted-palm salon orchestra.

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Program Notes by Steven Ledbetter