



20TH CENTURY CONSORT

JANUARY 27, 1990

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

present

The 20th Century Consort
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Elisabeth Adkins, violin

Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano

David Hardy, cello

Sara Stern, flute

Saturday, January 27, 1990

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 1989-90 performance series is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.

The participation of composers in this season's programs is made possible in part by grants from MEET THE COMPOSER's Composers Performance Fund, which is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts; Broadcast Music Inc.; and the Getty, M & V Dreyfus, Metropolitan Life, Xerox, Dayton Hudson, and Helena Rubinstein Foundations.

THE PROGRAM

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, HMSG Department of Education
Nicholas Maw, composer

CONCERT

Child Song (1985)

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Stern, Ms. Logan

Chinary Ung
(b. 1942)

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1920-22)

Allegro
Très vif
Lent
Vif, avec entrain

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

INTERMISSION

Trio No. 2 for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1929)

Allegro ben moderato
Molto allegro
Andante molto moderato – Allegro ma non troppo

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

Frank Bridge
(1879-1941)

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.

1989-90 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

October 21 — *Count the Echoes*

Music by Claude Debussy, George Crumb, Henri Lazarof,
and Bruce MacCombie

December 9 — *Winter Winds*

Works by James Willey, Jon Deak,
William Doppmann, and Francis Poulenc

January 27 — *Child's Play*

Music by Chinary Ung, Maurice Ravel,
and Frank Bridge

March 3 — *Songs, Dances, and Icons*

Compositions by James Primosch, Charles Fussell,
Neil Rolnick, and Arnold Schoenberg

April 14 — *A Distant Mirror*

Guest Artists: **The Folger Consort**

Music by Mark Kuss, Charles Wuorinen,
John Harbison, Luciano Berio, and Dan Welcher

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, *Artistic Director*
Alyce Rideout, *Manager*

James D. Allnutt, *Production Assistant*
Susan Chalifoux, *Reception Coordinator*
Curt Wittig, *Recording Engineer*



Smithsonian Institution

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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 50,000 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.



CHINARY UNG: Child Song

Although he is not a newcomer to the new-music scene, Chinary Ung remained unknown to most listeners until he suddenly burst into the consciousness of the musical world last year when he was awarded the Graewemeyer Prize, the most remunerative award offered to a composer today. Born in Cambodia in 1942, Ung came to the United States in 1964 where, for the next four years, he studied composition at the Manhattan School of Music. In 1974, he earned a D.M.A. in composition at Columbia where the teacher whom he considered his principal influence was Chou Wen-Chung, like Ung an American composer born in the Orient who makes use of traditional musical materials from his native land for works composed in the styles of western concert music. Following teaching stints at Northern Illinois University, Connecticut College, and the University of Pennsylvania, Chinary Ung has been on the faculty of the Arizona State University in Tempe for the last three years.

Originally composed in 1985 for the Chicago New Music Ensemble, Child Song is heard tonight in a revision that tightens the composition considerably and shortens it from around twenty minutes to about ten minutes. The composer has described it as follows:

Child Song is composed from fragments of a Cambodian child's tune that all Cambodian village children know. This is the gist of the words:

"Pour the coconut milk...

The rooster is wearing the crocodiles' coat...

The crocodile is riding the horse

and I am riding the elephant."

The ellipses in this little poem, represented by the dots, stand for nonsense syllables; they produce a rhythmic effect, but have no precise meaning, and thus become simply rhythmic phonemes. The exact form of the text varies from village to village, but, says Ung, "This is the one I know." The four instruments create a layered texture in "some form of quasi-atonality."

In the middle section you hear the flute playing the main theme, violin playing the countermelody, cello playing a kind of tribal gong music, and the piano representing the young village boy who has gone to the city and becomes sophisticated.

The resulting work constantly evokes the sounds and the songs of Ung's homeland, but it does so through the filter of a rich musical imagination that has produced a sophisticated concert work for adults that still does not forget what it was to be a child.

MAURICE RAVEL: Sonata for violin and cello

Ravel composed this "duo" (as he referred to it while it was in progress) during a summer visit to his native Basque country, and completed it the following year at his newly acquired home, Le Belvedere, in Montfort-Amaury, a small village about 30 miles from Paris. The Sonata, as it was finally called, is a surprisingly austere work for a composer usually associated with the most sensuous sonorities. But it evidently marked a conscious departure for the composer, who had recently encountered the new trends coming from Vienna, in such pieces as Schoenberg's Pierrot lunaire, for example. But if he never took on most of the elements of Schoenberg's style, nonetheless he drew from it precisely what suited him.

The resulting work—dedicated "To the Memory of Claude Debussy," his friend and colleague who had died in 1918—is a fascinating showpiece for the two instruments, each of which carries half the burden of the piece. The remarkable feeling of independence that each line generates is perhaps the most modern element of the score; at times Ravel writes simultaneous different keys for the two parts, and he avoids any simple melody-and-accompaniment dichotomy. More often than not, the whole of each line is both melody and accompaniment. The first movement follows a reasonably normal sonata form, based on an alternation of major and minor triads, avoiding such obvious conventions as inverting the parts so that the violin, say, would play in the recapitulation what the cello had played in the exposition.

The second movement, Tres vif, exploits special effects, with an homage to Stravinskian rhythmic ostinatos, played pizzicato in one part against a sustained line in the other. A brief lyric passage of melody sometimes imitated between the two instruments offers a respite from the energy of the main section. The slow movement is a wonderfully lyric outpouring that, more than anywhere else in the work, offers sheer melody with the accompaniment of another instrument. Its middle section is dramatic and tense, but the close, with the instruments muted, is pure and serene. The finale is the longest and tightest movement in the sonata, built on a rondo structure whose refrain contrasts with three other melodies. The refrain figure is stated at once in the cello, expanded by imitations in the violin and pizzicato accompaniments. This returns after each of the contrasting sections. On the last return, Ravel tightens up the texture still further by juxtaposing the refrain with the third countertheme to engineer a dramatic close.

FRANK BRIDGE: Piano Trio No. 2

The most important teacher of the young Benjamin Britten, Frank Bridge deserves recognition today as far more than a talented pedagogue sensitive to the needs of a young genius, for he was a highly gifted composer who composed many songs, chamber works, and orchestral pieces in the early years of this century. In these early works, almost ecstatic expressive outbursts were allied with firmly controlled counterpoint, though the overall effect was highly romantic.

Following the First World War, Bridge's music took a turn toward greater intensity and austerity, moving considerably beyond what his audiences had come to expect of him in terms of rhythmic flexibility and harmonic extensions (greatly influenced by Bridge's admiration of and immersion in the music of Alban Berg and other composers of the early Second Viennese School.) Though he remained fundamentally English in his approach, the conservatism of his country's musical life in the 1920s and 30s essentially cut him off from his audience, and many of his most important works were undervalued. Fortunately for us, in recent years, many of these are beginning to return to the repertory.

One such work is the Piano Trio No. 2, begun in the fall of 1928, completed on 31 January 1929, and first performed before an invited audience in a London hotel the following November. Though apparently laid out in four movements, the Trio actually consists of two pairs of linked movements. Its harmonic sound is colored by an extensive use of bitonality, projected in unusual instrumental ranges and combinations precisely designed to avoid the comfortable and cozy sounds characteristic of much English chamber music of the day.

The opening is stark, cold drear. Although its tempo designation is modified Allegro, the music feels slow, as if it must unwind very gradually. Indeed, the opening movement functions as a kind of massive slow introduction to the propulsive second movement, Molto allegro, which is marked by the strong pizzicatos in the strings.

The last half of the work, like the first half, consists of linked slow-fast movements. The Andante molto moderato is marked by repetitive rhythm patterns (particularly in the piano) over which the violin and cello sing a plaintive song invested with the same plaintive rhythms. Icy tremolos in the strings die away for a moment, and then launch directly into the whirlwind of the final movement. There is a brief restatement of the two passages from the opening movement, but this return is not triumphant (as it would have been in the romantic era). Here the effect is more one of simple survival, a determination to hold on to the end, which is muted and ambivalent.