

**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

Thomas Jones, percussion

Loren Kitt, clarinet

Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano

William Popp, accordion

Sara Stern, Flute

James Lee, cello

Guest Artists

Mark Bleeke, tenor

Lucy Shelton, soprano

The Folger Consort

Robert Eisenstein, viola da gamba

Christopher Kendall, lute

Scott Reiss, recorder

Saturday, April 14, 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 a grant 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
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort
John Harbison, composer
Mark Kuss, composer

CONCERT

L'homme Arme (1988-89)

Mark Kuss
(b. 1960)

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan
Mr. Popp, Ms. Stern, Mr. Lee
Mr. Kendall

Moments of Vision (1975)

John Harbison
(b. 1938)

Moments of Vision
First or Last
During Wind and Rain
Last Love-Word
"So, Time"

Ms. Shelton, Mr. Bleeke
Mr. Eisenstein, Mr. Kendall, Mr. Reiss

INTERMISSION

Gesti (1970)

Luciano Berio
(b. 1925)

Mr. Reiss

Vox Femina (1984) *(A cycle of poems by, and about, women)*

Dan Welcher
(b. 1948)

Ms. Shelton
Ms. Adkins, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan
Ms. Stern, Mr. Lee
Mr. Kendall

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.

1990-91 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

October 20

Music by Robert Beaser, Richard Rodney Bennett,
Lukas Foss, and Charles Wuorinen

December 1

Works by Mario Davidovsky, Paul Hindemith,
Charles Ives, and Alan Schindler

January 12

Music by Bohuslav Martinu, Darius Milhaud,
Francis Poulenc, and Igor Stravinsky

March 23

Compositions by Ingolf Dahl, Bruce MacCombie,
and Nicholas Maw

May 11

Stephen Albert's *Distant Hills* and
Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*

Programs subject to change

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

Robert McC. Adams, *Secretary*
James T. Demetron, *Director*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
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 54,000 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

A DISTANT MIRROR

Until the middle of the last century, few composers really knew much music older than the generation of their teachers. Virtually all music heard in concerts or opera houses was new. Only dusty antiquarians pursued any knowledge of the art from previous centuries. The late 15th-century theorist and composer Johannes Tinctoris (who is himself represented in Charles Wuorinen's work this evening) explicitly remarked that no music more than 40 years old is worth the listener's attention. At that time he was drawing attention to the beginnings of what we now call Renaissance style with the early works of Dufay and others. But the sentiment remained current for centuries. Every generation felt that it had so thoroughly improved the expressive qualities of the musical language that nothing as much as two generations old was worth bothering with.

That attitude changed, gradually but markedly, during the Romantic era, for one of the principal wellsprings of Romanticism was an interest in the "gothic" past, which led, in turn, to a general interest in the history of music. The founding in 1850 of the Bach-Gesellschaft to promote the publication of the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach (an activity that took most of the rest of the century to complete) was perhaps the signally important step in this change of attitude. Composers began actively studying the music of much earlier predecessors than before. Rossini, for example, seems an unlikely figure to have subscribed to the Bach edition, but he studied it carefully (with evident results in his Petite Messe Solonelle), and Brahms entered wholeheartedly into what we would call the scholarly study of earlier music—reading older theoretical treatises, comparing early editions and manuscripts, editing the keyboard music of Couperin and the Schubert symphonies for critical editions, and so on.

Brahms thus provided our first model, then—and a worthy one indeed—for many composers of our own time who have been educated in a world where the music of all periods is continually available on recordings, on the radio, and in concert. The entire past has become an ahistorical, living present. Even composers who do not make a specialized study of, say, Burgundian polyphony, can no longer escape having heard some of it. And few would be so rash as to say that music five or six centuries old can no longer speak to the modern musician or listener, in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. As Charles Wuorinen wrote, in introducing a recording of the work that opens this evening's program:

We have most of the past with us in living form, for comfort, influence, rejection, embrace.

And contemporary composers have offered an extraordinarily rich range of responses to that past that is present, some of which will appear in the present program.

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CHARLES WUORINEN: Bearbeitungen Über das Glogauer Liederbuch

Performed by Elisabeth Adkins, Loren Kitt, James Lee, and Sara Stern

The unlikely German title of this work ("Arrangements from the Glogau Songbook") in fact precisely describes its content, an instrumentation of six short musical compositions copied about 1475 into a manuscript made at the behest of a canon of the cathedral of Glogau (now Glogow, Poland, roughly midway between Berlin and Warsaw). The manuscript collection is a miscellany containing instrumental and vocal pieces, sacred and secular, including many chansons of composers in the then-dominant Burgundian tradition.

Prolific composer, virtuoso pianist and conductor, Charles Wuorinen is also a teacher and writer actively supporting the cause of new music. He received the 1970 Pulitzer Prize of Time's Encomium, the first time the award was made for an electronic composition. By far the bulk of his large output is for traditional musical instruments, shaped by a rigorous serial technique in which he frequently derives duration as well as pitch content from the basic set.

In 1962 Wuorinen chose to make a metaphorical visit to the 15th century and embrace six short pieces from the Glogauer Liederbuch in order "to make my own some particularly attractive artifact of an older musical culture." The works he chose to arrange for modern instrumental quartet—flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), violin, and cello—were interesting because "the intervallic environment changed from moment to moment, almost every new note kaleidoscopically creating a functionally 'new' harmony;...their angular behavior charmed me and beckoned me toward timbral composing with the notes that the works already provided." The original works were written for three voices (or instrumental lines); Wuorinen has divided them up among his four players, highlighting them with the full range of possible colors and articulations, just as if he were using those elements of instrumental sonority to help shape a work entirely his own, thus achieving a friendly embrace across the centuries.

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JOHN HARBISON: Moments of Vision

Born in Orange NJ, John Harbison has long been actively involved with older choral music, particularly during the years in which he conducted Boston's Cantata Singers, a group best known for its performances of music by J.S. Bach and Heinrich Schütz, two of the greatest masters of the musicalization of texts. Harbison's Pulitzer Prize-winning score, The Flight into Egypt (1986) was in fact commissioned by the Cantata Singers and conceived as an homage to Schütz, one of his favorite composers. But The Flight into Egypt was by no means his first "conversation" with older music. In 1975 he was commissioned to write a score for an early music ensemble by the Cambridge Consort, which had won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award the previous year. The group dissolved before he completed the commission, so Harbison withdrew from the obligation to the Naumburg Foundation and dedicated his score to the composer Seymour Shifrin, "my partner in the exploration of the ancient consort," who was composing his Renaissance Garland for the ensemble. For his consort song-cycle, Harbison did not choose the poems of a Renaissance writer, but rather of Thomas Hardy. Though this may be surprising at first glance, Hardy's lyrics are ideally suited to the kind of setting that an inspiration from Renaissance music might evoke: they are formally compact, making good use of repetition patterns and verbal inversions, much as did the rondeau or ballade of the Burgundian court chanson. Harbison agrees with Shifrin's observation that Moments of Vision is medieval: "There is a bluntness and remoteness about the piece that I associate with medieval music....I never tried anything like it before or since."

Harbison has provided the following comments on the work:

The Prelude immediately states the main musical preoccupation, the elaboration of various forms of a Burgundian cadence. This stark and fascinating old formula suggested many combinations, and makes itself felt in all the movements.

There are not dynamic or expression marks in the score, just the notes. In this way, and in the demands on vocal and instrumental intonation and fluency, this is one of the most difficult pieces I have ever composed. But early music performers are accustomed to making interpretive decisions from skeletal evidence, and it was this creative partnership I invited.

Among the other early techniques to be found are the drone in the title setting, the cantus firmus in the first duet, and the final mensuration canon. These have their origins in the texts, poems which seem both ancient and adaptable, like the instruments I have asked to accompany them.

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TEXTS for both song cycles on this evening's program will be found at the conclusion of these notes.

Please assist the artists by turning pages, when necessary, as quietly as possible, and only at the conclusion of individual songs. Thank you....

MARK KUSS: L'homme Armé

Born in Laconia NH, Mark Kuss grew up in New England and studied at the New England Conservatory, then moved to Seattle where he took his master's degree at the University of Washington. He is currently the President and Artistic Director of the Seattle Composers Forum. As the youngest composer on this program, Kuss is a member of the generation of musicians for whom music history classes include excellent recordings and performances of Medieval and Renaissance music (unlike similar classes a generation earlier, when the quality of the available recordings was more likely to arouse derision than admiration from the student.) To this generation, the melody "L'homme armé" is as familiar as that of the Passion Chorale or the flute solo that opens the Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun. The anonymous tune—possibly a folk song—was certainly familiar to Renaissance composers, nearly three dozen of whom employed it in various guises, from simple songlike structures to the most elaborate polyphonic Mass compositions. Dufay may have started the tradition of Mass settings, but other composers eagerly followed suit, determined to show what they could do with this flexible, malleable material. There is a palpable sense of competition between each of the many settings and its predecessors; the great Josquin Desprez actually composed two Mass compositions based on the tune involving entirely different structural issues.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find a contemporary composer looking again at this material that so many other composers have tried their hands at. Kuss first aimed to write a piece that was "a little like Birtwistle's orchestration of Machaut," but he turned away from that approach and finally composed something much looser, a modern composition that is essentially "a set of variations in which theme is always present, though not necessarily evident."

Speaking at greater length about the work, the composer has also commented:

My interest in the tune arose last year while I was working with early music specialist Margaret Tindemans. I have always been fascinated by the trans-historicality of musical materials and by what appears to be both a continuity and a disparity of musical-historical epochs. The mesh of these two interests led me to try a setting of my own. In working out the details, the piece became a kind of reconciliation of my musical childhood, my training, and what have become my acquired tastes. The three were not and are not still always in the most comfortable of relations.

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LUCIANO BERIO: Gesti

The leading composer of his generation in Italy, Luciano Berio divides his time between that country and the United States (where he lived for a number of years), and ranges over the entire chronological course of music history to gather ideas for his works. Some of his major compositions bear purposely generic titles—Sinfonia (Symphony), Opera, and Coro (Chorus)—as if they aimed to summarize and redefine the very notion of the genre. Often he uses older music, either as a framework for a wide-ranging musical commentary (as in the movement of Sinfonia that grows from the use of an entire movement of Mahler's Second Symphony as its "found object," around which other musical ideas cluster and offer comment) or as more straightforward arrangements of an older work (in which activity he has drawn on Monteverdi, Weill, Boccherini, Gabrieli, Frescobaldi, Lennon and McCartney, and anonymous folk songs.)

Gesti, for unaccompanied recorder, would seem to fall into the series of compositions that Berio entitled Sequenza, each for a single player. He composed Sequenza I for flute in 1958 and Sequenza II for harp in 1963. The next composition in the series is entitled Sequenza IV for piano, composed in 1966. There is no Sequenza III, but Gesti fits into the series at just the right point. On the other hand, the title of Gesti has a certain Medieval ring to it. Most commonly, the word means "gestures" or "actions"; but it also is used in Italian as an equivalent to the literary form known as chansons de geste ("songs of deeds"), the epic poems that tell of great deeds of knightly valor.

All of Berio's music is intensely theatrical in conception; even his abstract instrumental works for orchestra or for soloist require the performer to be in possession of a superlative technique while pressing the capabilities of the instrument to its utmost.

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DAN WELCHER: Vox Femina

In the middle generation of the composers represented on this program, Dan Welcher studied at the Eastman School of Music, receiving both his bachelor's degree and a performance certificate in bassoon, then pursued composition for a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music. From 1972 to 1978 he taught at the University of Louisville and was principal bassoonist of the Louisville Orchestra. In 1978 he moved to the University of Texas at Austin, where he still teaches.

Vox Femina is a remarkable, inclusive composition that took its unique shape as a result of a commission for a work that would be performed by members of the University of Texas' Beta Xi chapter of the honorary music sorority Sigma Alpha Iota. As the composer explains:

When I looked at the roster of players and singers available to me, I decided to feature a solo singer (there were a goodly number of voice majors in the chapter) with an instrumental chamber ensemble of strings, winds, and piano. Although there were no percussionists in the group, I was able to circumvent that problem by having the singer accompany herself with the tambourine and augment the sonic forces at one point by playing three crotales, the violinist lend a smokier atmosphere in the third-stream jazz section with a cymbal-and-brush, and the pianist highlight the Renaissance dance-piece with a triangle.

In choosing a text, I looked at the poetry of women throughout history, hoping (at first) to find a single poet whose work would speak for women in general. I abandoned this plan early on, when I discovered that there were common themes in the female voices of the distant past, recent past, and present day; and I determined to make a piece that used as many of these different poets as I could. That decision prompted another, more musical, idea: that I could highlight the poetry of each woman with music of her own time and place. Thus, the opening and closing ceremonial troubadour songs quote a 12th-century dance tune, the "Yes, I am black" song from the Song of Songs quotes an ancient Hebrew chant (in the flute), the Sappho song contains a fragment (in the introductory and closing bars) of incidental music from the Greek theatre of Sappho's time, et cetera. A particularly vivid adaptation of this idea occurs in the pair of St. Theresa poems: the four melodic instruments quote an entire motet (O vos omnes) of Tomás Luis de Victoria (1540-1611), while a muffled piano with the sustaining pedal held down plays, in separate key and tempo, two organ pieces of another Spanish composer of the period, Antonio de Cabezon (1510-1566). The resulting schizophrenia of sound was intended to represent St. Theresa's own duality and mysticism, and this section is the only one in which my own music is secondary (only the vocal part is not "borrowed"). In "Lot's Wife" I have used Dmitri Shostakovich's musical initials (D-E flat-C-B) as a sort of ostinato and binding device against an otherwise serial composition. The series is first presented in the vocal line (introduced, actually, by the cello just before the voice enters) in "Yes, I am black," and forms the connective tissue of the entire work, culminating in the jazz piece, "Wake me, Weston," which is entirely serial.

The work, then, presents a musical circle, ending with the second verse of the Countess of Dia's troubadour song that opened the entire piece. Goethe's Faust ends with the famous paean to "Das Ewigweibliche," usually translated as the "eternal feminine"; Vox Femina is an attempt at presenting that undefinable concept through the words of women throughout recorded history, and employing some of the music they may have heard while they lived.

