

20TH CENTURY CONSORT

May 11, 1991

**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
Paula Francis, violin
David Hardy, cello
Truman Harris, bassoon
Loren Kitt, clarinet
Teri Lee, violin
Lynne Levine, viola

Yun-Jie Liu, viola
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Orrin Olson, French horn
Robert Oppelt, double bass
Paul Roby, violin
Sara Stern, flute
David Teie, cello

Guest Artists

Susan Bender, soprano
Mark Bleeke, tenor

Saturday, May 11, 1991

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 1990-91 performance series is funded in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency, and the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts.

The participation of composers in this season's programs is made possible in part by generous grants from MEET THE COMPOSER's Composers Performance Fund, which is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts; the American Society for Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI); and the Getty, MacDonald, Metropolitan Life, Xerox, and Dayton Hudson Foundations.

THE PROGRAM

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, HMSG Department of Education
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort
Stephen Albert, composer
David Froom, composer

CONCERT

LANDSCAPES

Distant Hills Coming Nigh

Sun's Heat (1989)

Flower of the Mountain (1985, 1990)

Ms. Bender, Mr. Bleeke

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Harris, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Liu

Ms. Logan, Mr. Olson, Mr. Oppelt, Ms. Stern, Mr. Vrbsky

Mr. Kendall

Stephen Albert

(b. 1941)

INTERMISSION

***Down to a Sunless Sea* (1988)**

Rhapsody for String Quintet

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Levine, Mr. Oppelt, Mr. Roby

Mr. Kendall

David Froom

(b. 1951)

Appalachian Spring

(original version for 13 instruments, 1944)

Ms. Adkins, Ms. Francis, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Harris

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Lee, Ms. Levine, Mr. Liu, Ms. Logan

Mr. Oppelt, Mr. Roby, Ms. Stern, Mr. Teie

Mr. Kendall

Aaron Copland

(1900-1990)

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.

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.

1991-92 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

November 2

Halloween

Charles Ives' *Halloween*, Jon Deak's *Lucy and the Count*
Paul Schoenfield's *Elegy, Rag, and Boogie* for piano, 4 hands
Stephen Albert's *Treestone* (complete)

December 7

Tet à Tet

Copland's *Sextet*, Pott's *Quintet*, Froom's *Quartet*
and Nicholas Maw's *Flute Quartet*

January 25

If I had a hammer . . .

MacCombie: *Chamber Designs*; Alexander: *Song of Songs*
Primosch: *Four Sacred Songs*
Ince: *Hammer Music*

February 29

Leap Era

Mark Kuss: New work for guest artists,

The Folger Consort

Ryokei: *Meditation* for recorder solo
David Liptak: *Ancient Songs* (premiere)
Arnold Schoenberg: *Serenade*

April 4

Sadie Hawkins deferred

Jon Deak: *Lady Chatterly's Lover*
Odaline de la Martinez: *Cantos d'Amor*
Shulamit Ran: *Apprehensions*
Rebecca Clarke: *Trio*

Programs subject to change

20th Century Consort

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

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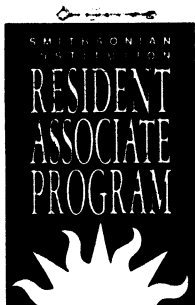
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The Resident Associate Program is the continuing education, cultural, and membership arm of the Smithsonian Institution for metropolitan Washington, and relies on the support of its more than 61,000 memberships to support its activities. The Program brings distinguished performing artists to the Washington area in more than 100 performances annually. Please telephone 357-3030 for membership information.



20th CENTURY CONSORT
Saturday 11 May 1991
Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Distant Hills Coming Nigh
STEPHEN ALBERT

Born in New York City and now living in Newton, Massachusetts, Stephen Albert began composition studies in his teens with Elie Siegmeister and Darius Milhaud, then continued at the Eastman School of Music, where his teacher was Bernard Rogers. In his early 20s, he studied in Philadelphia with Joseph Castaldo and George Rochberg. This preparation would seem destined to lead to the academy and to a career as a composer-professor, but Albert consciously chose to avoid that route. He found himself outside what was regarded as the mainstream of contemporary musical development for wanting to avoid the mannered complexity characteristic of the academy that was "in" when he was completing his studies. In recent years, the change in the musical environment has given composers "permission" to find new ways of using tonality--long banned from "official" musical centers--and to remember that in all periods, some of the most powerful music was also the most direct. At the same time, it has made the kind of music that Albert had been writing all along more "acceptable"--even to the point of his winning the 1985 Pulitzer Prize for his symphony *RiverRun*. Now, in a sharp distinction from the not-so-distant past, he teaches a composition class at Juilliard.

Distant Hills Coming Nigh is the title he has given to a new work compounded of two related compositions, one composed five years before the other. The first performance of the work in its present combined form was given by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center on 27 April 1990, conducted by Christopher Kendall, with Dawn Upshaw, soprano, and David Gordon, tenor, as the soloists. Both works draw from James Joyce, whose passionately lyrical and evocative prose has attracted the composer for many years.

The first part of *Distant Hills Coming Nigh* -- *Flower of the Mountain* -- is an extended solo work for soprano accompanied by a chamber orchestra, a form which has a distinguished predecessor in the American repertory, Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Whether or not Albert was specifically inspired by the Barber work, which he admires greatly, both works are settings of prose-poems in which a character is recalling an event in the past; they share in particular a sense of longing and nostalgia for a special, unrecoverable moment that lingers in the memory, one that is perceived to have changed one's life.

Flower of the Mountain sets the final words of Molly Bloom from the close of Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. Molly is a middle-aged woman, lying awake in bed next to her sleeping husband, Leopold Bloom. Her long monologue (25,000 words in Joyce's book!), a seemingly random melange

of ideas, moves back and forth in thought between her boorish lover Boylan and her aging husband. As she begins to drift off to sleep she recalls the day 16 years earlier when Leopold asked her to marry him and she agreed, Albert sets passages drawn from the very end of that long final monologue. An unaccompanied clarinet plays a slow turn around a sustained note, a fundamental figure of the piece, suggesting the gradual falling into place of distant memories. The soprano's very first words--"I love flowers"--are set as two long-held notes with a more rapid turn between them. The wonderful directness of Alerbt's setting eliminates any need for extensive analysis, except to note that the work grows in intensity, archlike, as the fragmentary images circling in Molly's somnolent mind build to a climax of energy and activity, returning at the end to the gentle lulling of the opening--Molly's final quiet thoughts as she drops off to sleep.

Having created this musical representation of the wife, Albert says, he "began to wonder about the husband." Investigating Bloom's musical persona, he composed *Sun's Heat* for tenor and instrumental ensemble; originally conceived as a sextet, it was later enlarged to correspond to the earlier score. Albert considers it a self-sufficient composition that can also be performed in conjunction with *Flower of the Mountain*; when the two movements are heard together, the combined work is called *Distant Hills Coming Nigh*. The two pieces occasionally share similar materials when they refer to similar things in the text, though the composer notes that this happens for expressive purposes, not for the purposes of cyclical organization or any other precompositional reason.

In choosing the text for Bloom's piece, Albert selected passages from chapters 8 and 13 of *Ulysses* with the aim of pointing up Bloom's contradictory nature as compared to his wife's. Molly was very earthy and vulgar, yet touched with a spiritual quality when remembering the moment of truth, and feeling at one with her surroundings. Bloom recalls the events with nostalgia, yet with a clear awareness of his own mortality--a feeling generally heightened by Eros--and the recollection of specific images, such as the girls on the beach, and especially of her perfume, "Heliotrope," which sets off a series of earthy olfactory allusions. All this takes place in a raucous opening song which the composer describes as "pub-like." In the midst of this eager, sensual recollection, Bloom thinks of his own mortality, of "the other world," of things that mystify him.

His thoughts turn to the time he made love with Molly on Howitt Hill, the same moment she thought of in *Flower of the Mountain*, and the turn figure that opens the earlier movement returns prominently in Bloom's song ("Fields of undersea buried cities"). The passionate outburst called forth by these warm recollections fades as Bloom cogitates on the passage of time, the loss of those memorable moments, gone as a mirage, leaving behind no lasting satisfaction, while Molly, on the other hand, had found a fulfilling moment of truth. As the composer expressed it, "Bloom searches, wanders on his never-ending Odyssey, while, in a way, Molly never left home."

Down to a Sunless Sea

DAVID FROOM

Born in Petaluma, California, David Froom studied at both the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Southern California before moving to New York for further studies at Columbia University. His principal teachers have included Chou Wen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and William Kraft. He also studied with Alexander Goehr at Cambridge on a Fulbright grant, and on fellowships at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Wellesley Composers Conference, and the MacDowell Colony. He has taught at Baruch College in New York and the University of Utah. He is currently an Assistant Professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Down to a Sunless Sea was originally composed for string orchestra, with assistance from the Snowbird Institute for the Arts and Humanities; in that form it is dedicated to and was premiered by Joseph Silverstein and the Utah Symphony Orchestra in Salt Lake City, November, 1987. A revision and reorchestration for string quartet, to be heard today, was premiered, also under Silverstein's direction, at the Chautauqua Institution in August, 1988. The composer has provided the following statement about the composition:

The title of this work comes from Coleridge's great poem "Kubla Khan," which begins

In Xanadue did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome devree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

The whole subject of "program" music is a touchy one. I believe very strongly that a work of music cannot specifically portray concrete physical events: there are no musical knives and forks. Music can, however, evoke moods, though the perception of these varies somewhat from listener to listener. It can also make imitative references to the real world. Finally, it can meet the world halfway by making a description of an event match a description of the music. For instance, one could use the image of a sunset sky. Parts of the sky rapidly become suffused with rich and warm colors, then are slowly closed up in darkness. One can easily imagine music which could be described in similar terms. In this Rhapsody, I often use this last kind of musical imagery, especially with reference to some of the beautiful scenery of the state of Utah (where I was living at the time I composed this work): the huge "measureless" canyons with their crashing rivers, the sunsets over the Great Salt Lake, etc. These specific programmatic references aside, perhaps the best justification for using the Coleridge line for my title is that I wanted to write a piece which would evoke the same sense of mystery that the opening lines of the poem evoke in me.

Appalachian Spring, Ballet for Martha
AARON COPLAND

Born in Brooklyn on 14 November 1900, Aaron Copland died in New York on 2 December 1990. Composed in 1943-44, Appalachian Spring was commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, and was first performed in the Coolidge Festival at the Library of Congress on 30 October 1944.

American composers' urges to write in a nationalistic, "American" style ran deeply before Aaron Copland created one way of doing so in the 1920s. His desire to become recognizably "American" led at first to an encounter with jazz elements (though never with actual jazz composition) in the Organ Symphony, Music for the Theater, and the Piano Concerto. Though these works marked Copland as a man to watch and hinted at the course of things to come, they were regarded by many as "difficult" scores. And his style became still more complex at the beginning of the 1930s with the Symphonic Ode, the Short Symphony, and the granitic Piano Variations.

But the social changes of the 1930s brought a general interest among the leftist artists and thinkers with whom Copland was friendly in attracting a wider audience than ever before, in addressing the common man and expressing his hopes, dreams, and desires by artistic means. Copland was one of a generation of composers who shared this desire; and he accomplished the change of viewpoint with notable success, simplifying his style for greater accessibility, yet never ceasing to be utterly individual in sound and approach. The simplicity heightened certain elements that had not been apparent in his music earlier--most notably an extraordinary tenderness that never becomes sentimental. At the same time, Copland's music retained its energy and verve, its sense of space and color in laying out orchestral lines; thus his music is instantly recognizable as proceeding from the same musical imagination, no matter what its style.

Copland had already written two popular ballets based on western themes--a striking achievement for a composer city-born and city-bred. Both Billy the Kid, composed for Eugene Loring, and Rodeo, composed for Agnes de Mille, had been notable successes, so it was surely no surprise when Martha Graham asked him to compose a ballet for her. Graham presented him with a scenario to which he invented his music, scoring it for 13 instruments because that was all that could be accommodated in the Coolidge Auditorium.

Having no title in mind as he composed, Copland called it "Ballet for Martha" (which remains its subtitle) as he worked. During the rehearsals, Copland asked the choreographer what they ought to call the new piece; Graham suggested Appalachian Spring, a phrase she had found in a poem by Hart Crane (though it had nothing to do whatever with the scenario of the ballet). For years Copland was amused when people told him that he had captured the beauty of the Appalachians in his music!

The scenario is a simple one, touching on primal issues of marriage and survival, on the eternal regeneration suggested by spring. It is set in the Pennsylvania hills early in the 19th century. The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbor suggests now and then the rock-like confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple is left quiet and strong in their new house.

Shortly after the premiere, Copland prepared a version for full orchestra that contains the ballet's substance while omitting a few passages that he felt were of interest only when accompanying the danced story. For many years that was the only way one could hear the music of *Appalachian Spring*, except in the performances of the Graham company. But in the last decade or so, many performances have chosen to feature the original scoring for 13 instruments, while still using the shortened form of the orchestral version. The limitation to 13 instruments gives no feeling of restraint. Even when writing for full orchestra, Copland always tended to produce a lean sound, lithe and athletic; the use of the smaller ensemble simply highlights that tendency in his work.

All three of Copland's major ballet scores make use of old folk melodies, but *Appalachian Spring* uses the least; the only tune to pre-date the composition is the Shaker hymn "Simple Gifts," which serves as the basis of a series of variations near the end of the ballet. But the tune also plays a background role in unifying the entire score; from the introduction onward, we frequently hear a three-note triadic motive that is easily recognizable as the first five notes of "Simple Gifts" in outline form. From this motive comes the entire triadic "sound" of the ballet. It employs a harmonic style often referred to as "white-note harmony" because its elements can be found by playing all the white notes of the piano keyboard; this diatonic sound, even when employed in chords dissonant by traditional harmonic standards, seems fresh and clean compared to the endless, sometimes overheated, chromaticism of late Romantic music. When used here, to evoke a new world, an open frontier being settled by hardy individuals, Copland makes it by turns strong, assertive, even acerbic, or delicate and tender.

Through all its changing moods, Copland's score calls up a sense of the optimism and courage, the vigor and energy, and the deep wellspring of faith and hope that we like to regard as characteristic of the American experience.

-- Program Notes by Steven Ledbetter --

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Your assistance in turning pages quietly is greatly appreciated
by Recording Engineer Curt Wittig.
Thank You.

Texts

Distant Hills Coming Nigh

Flower of the Mountain

I love flowers
Id love to have the whole place
swimming in roses
God of heaven
theres nothing like nature
the wild mountains then the sea
and the waves rushing
even out of ditches
primroses and violets
nature it is

the sun shines for you he said
the day we were lying among
the rhododendrons
the day I got him to propose
to me
yes first I gave him a bit
of seedcake
out of my mouth
and it was leap year like now
sixteen years ago

my God after that long kiss
I near lost my breath
yes
he said I was a flower of
the mountain
yes
so we are flowers all a
womans body
yes
that was one true thing
he said in his life
and the sun shines for you
today (etc)
yes

and that was why I liked him
because I saw that he
understood or felt
what a woman is

O that awful deepdown torrent
O and the seas
and the sea crimson
sometimes like fire
and the glorious sunsets
and the fig trees in the Alameda
gardens
yes
and rosegardens (and the) jessamine
and geraniums and cactuses (etc)
and Gibraltar as a girl
where I was a flower of the mountain
yes
when I put the rose in my hair
or shall I wear a red
yes

and how he kissed me under the
the Moorish wall
and I thought
well as well him as another
and then I asked with my eyes
to ask again
yes
and then he asked me
would I
yes
to say
yes
my mountain flower
and first I put my arms around him
yes
and drew him down to me
so he could feel my breasts
all perfume
and his heart was going like mad
yes
I will
yes

* * *

Texts from Ulysses, by James Joyce
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renewed 1942, 1946 by Nora Joseph Joyce.
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Sun's Heat

Those girls, those girls, etc.,
those lovely seaside girls.
Sharp as needles they are
Eyes all over them
Longing to get the fright of
their lives,
Those girls, those lovely
seaside girls
Allow me to introduce my
Have their own secrets.
Those girls, those lovely
seaside girls.
Chaps that would go to the dogs
if some woman
didn't take them in hand.

Wait

Hm Hm Yes that's her perfume
What is it? Heliotrope?
Know her smell in a thousand
Bath water, too.
Reminds me of strawberries,
and cream
Hyacinth perfume made of oil
or ether or something.
Muskrat. That's her perfume

Dogs at each other behind
Good evening. Evening.
How do you sniff?

Hm, Hm Animals go by that
Yes now,
Dogs at each other behind,
Good evening, Evening.
Yes now, look at it that way
we're the same

Just close my eyes a moment
won't sleep though
Half dream. She kissed me.
Half dream. My youth.
It's the blood of the south
Moorish.
Also the form The figure
Just close my eyes, half dream,
She kissed me, kissed me, kissed me
Sun's heat it is seems to a
secret touch telling me memory.

Below us bay sleeping sky,
No sound
The sky.
The bay purple fields of undersea
buried cities
Pillowed on my coat she had her hair
Earwigs in the heather scrub,
my hand under her nape, you'll
toss me all
O wonder! Softly she gave me
in my mouth seedcake warm
and chewed
Joy. I ate it Joy.
Young life her lips that gave me
pouting.
Flowers her eyes were, take me,
willing eyes.
All yielding she tossed my hair,
Kissed, she kissed me
Willing eyes all yielding
Me. And me now.

Dew falling. The year returns.
Ye crags and peaks I'm with you
once again.
The distant hills seem
Where we
The rhododendrons,
All that old hill has seen.
All changed forgotten
And the distant hills seem coming
nigh.
A star I see
Were those night clouds there all
the time?
No. Wait.
Trees are they?
Mirage.

The 20th CENTURY CONSORT
1990-91 Season

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