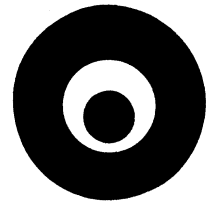




The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
and
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
present



20th CENTURY CONSORT
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
David Hardy, cello
Loren Kitt, clarinet

Lynne Edelson Levine, viola
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Sara Stern, flute

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Saturday 7 December 1991
Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Lecture-discussion/4:30 p.m.

Christopher Kendall
Edward P. Lawson, Chief, HMSG Education Department
David Froom and Nicholas Maw, composers

The participation of composers in these programs is made possible by generous grants from **Meet The Composer**, through the Composers Performance Fund, which is supported by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), and the Getty, Xerox, Metropolitan Life, and Dayton Hudson Foundations.

Concert/5:30 p.m.

The 20th Century Consort's 1991-92 performance series is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency, and the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts.

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The audience is invited to join the artists in the Plaza lobby for an informal post-concert reception, sponsored by The Friends of the 20th Century Consort.

THE PROGRAM

Piano Quartet (1985)

DAVID FROOM
(b. 1951)

Played without pause:

- I. Dramatic and decisive
- II. Very slow and expressive
- III. Scherzo - Trio - Scherzo
- IV. Very slow

Ms. Adkins, Ms. Levine, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

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 has received fellowships to study at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Wellesley Composers Conference, and the MacDowell Colony.

Mr. Froom has taught at Baruch College in New York and the University of Utah, and is currently an Assistant Professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland. His music has been recorded for Opus One and Centaur Records.

The composer has provided the following commentary on his piano quartet:

My Quartet for Piano and Strings (about 14 minutes long) was completed in 1985; it was written for and is dedicated to Eliza Garth. The work is in four movements without a break. The first movement, stark and dramatic, sets up many of the issues (concerning pitch, texture, register, and form) which are elaborated across the rest of the work. The second movement is slow, elegaic, and quite short. It functions primarily as an introduction to a fast-paced Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo. This third movement is the center of gravity for the work, with the second Scherzo containing the climax for the whole piece. The quartet concludes with a slow final movement, which is both a reprise/transformation of the second movement and the coda for the entire work.

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Your assistance in turning pages as quietly as possible, between compositions or movements, is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911)

MAURICE RAVEL
(1875-1937)

- I. Modéré - très franc
- II. Assez lent - avec une expression intense
- III. Modéré
- IV. Assez animé
- V. Presque lent - dans un sentiment intime
- VI. Vif
- VII. Moins vif
- VIII. Épilogue - lent

Ms. Logan

As with so many of his other orchestral works, Ravel wrote the "Noble and Sentimental Waltzes" first for piano, probably with no particular intention of orchestrating them at all. The work was first performed by Louis Aubert in May 1911 without an announcement of the composer's name. Speculation as to the author's identity ranged from Satie to Kodály. Once the composer's name was revealed, Ravel was prevailed upon by Mlle Trouhanova's ballet company to orchestrate the work to accompany a ballet. He did so very quickly, and Adelaide, ou Le Langage de fleurs had four gala performances at the Théâtre du Châtelet in April 1912 (on a program with Dukas' La Peri and d'Indy's Istar). After a revival in 1916, the ballet failed to hold the stage. It was laden with a silly scenario in which a flirtatious prima donna presents a series of flowers to her suitors, the noble duke and the amorous Loredan. The musical score stands firmly on its own without the dubious benefit of this narrative element, and it has become firmly established (both in its original piano version and in orchestral dress) as a concert piece.

Nothing characterizes the 19th century and Romanticism quite so much as the 3/4 lilt of the waltz. From the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to World War I, the waltz dominated Europe and America, first as a somewhat scandalous new dance that caused fathers to worry about their daughters (it was, after, all, the first social dance in which the partners assumed an embrace position), eventually as a familiar and well-loved dance for the elders, while the younger fry turned to something else that was newly scandalous in its turn.

Ravel's suite of waltzes is an amazingly objective summary of the waltz tradition, a jeu d'esprit that probably had no further aim, when first conceived, than taking the waltz medium almost as a "found object" and working with it as a modeler with his clay. This intention is signaled by the epigraph that Ravel put at the head of his score, drawn from Henri de Regnier: "le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile" ("the delicious and ever-new pleasure of a useless occupation.") The score alternates faster and more vigorous waltzes (presumably the "noble" ones) with slower and more evocative movements ("sentimental").

The opening waltz is unusually acerbic in harmonic character (especially for a genre so associated in the public mind with sugary harmonies); Ravel makes use of appoggiaturas and added dissonances of the seventh, ninth, and eleventh to reduce the sugar content considerably. No. 2 is more fragile, featuring a delicate little melody (in the later orchestration, for the flute). The third has a broader swing, with rhythmic patterns often extending over two bars in the manner of Tchaikovsky; the oboe gets the main tune in the orchestration. No. 4 continues this broader rhythm but in an animated fashion, more in the style of a Viennese waltz. It has hints of the raciness of the later Viennese operettas. The fifth waltz is slower, more delicate, essentially an interlude. No. 6 is extremely fast and harbors rhythmic complexities in its written-out alterations of 3/2 and 6/4 meters (a kind of rhythmic shift often employed in waltzes, but rarely notated so explicitly.)

Ravel himself regarded No. 7 as one of his finest creations; it begins tentatively and blossoms into a charming freshness of melody that builds to an exhilarating climax. Such an ending virtually requires a coda. Ravel's Épilogue casts one more retrospective glance in slow waltz style with imaginative and evocative coloration. This envoi is a final sophisticated tribute to the long waltz tradition -- a tradition that Ravel himself was to destroy with the violent satire of La Valse in less than a decade.

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INTERMISSION

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Flute Quartet (1981)

NICHOLAS MAW

(b. 1935)

- I. Moderato con moto
- II. Lento
- III. Molto vivace

Ms. Adkins, Ms. Levine, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Stern

Nicholas Maw, born in Grantham, England and now living in Washington DC, has composed voluptuous music that does not turn its back on the traditions of the past, even when it projects the composer's own personal vision. Along with a body of passionate instrumental music (such as the remarkable Life Studies for 15 stringed instruments), he has produced a substantial body of music for voice, ranging from the song cycle The Voice of Love for mezzo-soprano and piano, to a three-act opera, The Rising of the Moon, composed for Glyndebourne, and the elegant tribute to Italian love poetry, La Vita Nuova.

The Flute Quartet was commissioned by the Nash Ensemble, one of England's foremost chamber music groups, for whose flutist, Judith Pearce, the flute part was specifically conceived. The first performance was given in May 1981.

The composer's own statement regarding his Flute Quartet explains his special approach to the instrument in this work:

In writing the work I could not help being struck by how little repertory there is for what is, after all, a very attractive combination of instruments. There are no equivalents for the flute of the great works for clarinet and strings - with the possible exception of the sonata for flute, viola, and harp of Debussy - and such works as do exist, delightful though they may be, are of a rather lightweight nature, such as the flute quartets of Mozart, or the Serenades of Beethoven and Reger. The flute seems to have gained the reputation of not being able to sustain serious musical argument, and has consequently been relegated to a rather secondary position in the instrumental hierarchy which, in my view, certainly does not do justice to its qualities.

Those qualities are certainly Apollonian rather than Dionysian. This was expressed rather well by Carl Nielsen (speaking of his own Flute Concerto) when he said: "The flute cannot deny its own nature, it belongs to Arcadia and prefers a pastoral mood; the composer is there obliged to respect its gentle spirit if he doesn't want to be stamped a barbarian." The only thing I would add to that is that none of these qualities necessarily preclude musical substance; nymphs and shepherds are not the only people to go out of doors.

More recently the flute has become very popular among composers; its combination of suppleness and natural virtuosity suit a certain kind of mid-20th century musical language, and it can make almost anything written for it sound at least superficially attractive. But it seems to me much of this recent output concentrates too much on the virtuoso aspect and denies the essential nature of the instrument, which is its ability to articulate and sustain a musical line. In this work, although I have not presumed to aim at Arcadia - or even tried for the "pastoral" - I have attempted to write music that respects the essential nature of the instrument, even if I have indulged in a few histrionics of my own from time to time. These mainly occur in the last movement, which I think of as a modest homage to the spirit of Haydn, and where I have addressed myself to a problem that has long preoccupied me -- the writing of really fast music.

Suite from L'Histoire du soldat (1918)
for violin, clarinet, and piano

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882-1971)

Marche du soldat
Violon du soldat
Tango-Valse-Rag
Petit Concert
Danse du diable

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan

In its original form, L'Histoire du soldat was a collaboration between Stravinsky and the Swiss writer, C. F. Ramuz, designed as a small theater piece that could tour successfully at a time (1918) when the large-scale productions of the Ballets Russes, from which Stravinsky had already become world famous, were out of the question owing to the dislocations caused by the war. The result was a blend of music, dance, and narration for an ensemble consisting of a speaker, three actor-dancers, and an instrumental group of seven players: a percussionist plus two each of woodwinds, brass, and strings (representing one high-pitched and one low-pitched instrument in each pair); the story unfolded as a version of the Faust legend, in which the devil attempts to win the soul of a soldier and finally succeeds in doing so. Throughout the action, the soul is visually and musically represented by the soldier's violin, which he plays at the very beginning, loses to the devil, wins back by a trick, and finally loses permanently.

The success of the stage piece prompted Stravinsky to prepare a concert suite for performance without actors, but retaining eight of the eleven musical numbers. But in the autumn of 1919, even before the large concert suite received its first performance, Stravinsky prepared a smaller, chamber music transcription of five movements from the score as a gift for Werner Reinhart of Winterthur, who had not only provided the financial support for the original production in 1918 (as Stravinsky recalled later, "He paid for everybody and everything, and finally even commissioned my music"), but who was also a distinguished amateur clarinetist. For this arrangement, then, Stravinsky recast the score of the five chosen movements as a kind of piano reduction with obbligato parts for the violin and, of course, the clarinet.

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Program Notes by
STEVEN LEDBETTER

Edited by Marcus L. Overton

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Alyce Rideout, Manager
James D. Allnutt, Production Assistant
Susan Chalifoux, Reception Coordinator
Curt Wittig, Recording Engineer

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Marcus L. Overton, Manager, RAP Performing Arts

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Resident Associate Program

The continuing education, cultural, and membership arm of the Smithsonian Institution for metropolitan Washington, RAP relies on the financial support of its more than 61,000 memberships to fund its activities, including the presentation of distinguished performing artists and ensembles in more than 100 performances annually. Please telephone 202/357-3030 for membership information.

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20th CENTURY CONSORT
Remaining Concerts 1991-92

January 25

Suite Music

Benjamin Britten: Suite for Solo Cello
Donald Crockett: Celestial Mechanics
Kamran Ince: Hammer Music
Peter Warlock: The Curlew

February 29

Leap Era

Guest Artists:
The Folger Consort
Mark Kuss: Contralumina
Ian Krause: Tientos
David Liptack: Ancient Songs
Ryohei: Meditations

April 4

Avant Folk

Luciano Berio: Folk Songs
George Crumb: An Idyll for the Misbegotten
Paul Schoenfield: Six British Folk Songs
Shulamit Ran: Apprehensions