



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



20th CENTURY CONSORT
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

with special guest

THE FOLGER CONSORT

20th Century Consort

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Thomas Jones, percussion
Lynn Edelson Levine, viola
Sara Stern, flute

David Hardy, cello
Loren Kitt, clarinet
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Christopher Kendall, Conductor

Folger Consort

Tina Chancey, viol
Scott Reiss, recorder

Robert Eisenstein, viol
Christopher Kendall, lute and
percussion

Guest Artist

William Sharp, Baritone

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Saturday 29 February 1992
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 Liptak and Mark Kuss, 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 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.

THE PROGRAM

LEAP ERA

Contralumina (1992)
(World Premiere)

MARK KUSS
(b. 1960)

Mr. Reiss, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Chancey, Mr. Eisenstein

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. While there he was President and Artistic Director of the Seattle Composers Forum (during that time, his L'homme arme was performed by the Twentieth-Century Consort). He is now working on his doctorate at Duke University in North Carolina. As the youngest composer of this program, Kuss is a member of a 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). In his earlier work, L'homme arme, he drew on an oft-used fifteenth-century melody that served as the basis of dozens of masses and many chansons, actually quoting the source material. His new piece, Contralumina, takes an approach entirely different in its relation to the past: eschewing quotation or stylistic imitation, he uses four instruments normally deployed only for the performance of music centuries old, but treats them as if they were modern instruments--by seeking new sonorities and new combinations of sounds that can only be created with these "ancient" instruments. Regarding his piece, the composer writes:

Contralumina, was commissioned by the Folger Consort. It is scored for two Violas da Gamba, Lute, Recorders, and Folk Percussion. Though faced with an immense and extraordinary body of literature associated with these instruments, I chose instead to focus my work simply on their "surface sound". There are in fact no references to early music in the piece. There are references to: Music from Ghana, Namibia, Bela Bartok, Robert Fripp, Arvo Part, Brian Eno and Steve Reich.

The piece is written in five movements. Movements one, three and five are based on, or rather informed by African drumming patterns from Namibia and Ghana. The second and fourth movements are "process" pieces which explore consonance and dissonance through intersecting musical planes. All five movements are either totally or partially palindromic.

The title of Contralumina came to me when I realized how hard I was working to keep the light of history from blinding me during my work, and with the understanding that complex structures, though often operative in music, are seldom perceived.

--Mark Kuss

Ancient Songs (1992)
(World Premiere)

DAVID LIPTAK
(b. 1949)

The Stars

For we are the stars, For we sing.
For we sing with our light.
For we are birds made of fire.
For we spread our wings over the sky.
Our light is a voice.
We cut a road for the soul
for its journey through death.
For three of our numbers are hunters.
For these three hunt a bear.
For there never yet was a time
when these three didn't hunt.
For we face the hills with disdain.
This is the song of the stars.

Passamaquoddy Indian

Ghosts & Shadows

Ghosts in this forest, shadows
thrown back by the night
Or in the daylight
like bats that drink from our veins
and hang from moist walls, in deep caves
Behind this green moss, those awful white stones
We pray to know who has seen them
Shadows thrown back by the night
We pray to know who has seen them

Gabon Pygmy

Jerome Rothenberg. Technicians of the Sacred. Second Edition,
revised and expanded, pages 149 and 45. Copyright (c) 1968, 1985
Jerome Rothenberg. Used by permission of the University of
California Press.

Aiken Drum

There was a man lived in the moon, lived in the moon, lived in the
moon,
There was a man lived in the moon,
And his name was Aiken Drum;
And he played upon a ladle, a ladle, a ladle,
And he played upon a ladle,
And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his hat was made of good cream cheese...
And his coat was made of good roast beef...
And his buttons were made of penny loaves...
His waistcoat was made of crust of pies...

His breeches were made of haggis bags...

There was a man in another town, another town, another town,
There was a man in another town,
And his name was Willie Wood;
And he played upon a razor, a razor, a razor,
And he played upon a razor,
And his name was Willie Wood.

And he ate up all the good cream cheese...
And he ate up all the good roast beef...
And he ate up all the penny loaves...
And he ate up all the good pie crust...

But he choked upon the haggis bags, the haggis bags, the haggis
bags,
But he choked upon the haggis bags,
And there was an end on Willie Wood.

Traditional. Reprinted in The Baby's Bouquet (ca. 1877), an
illustrated collection of nursery rhymes by Walter Crane.

Death Song

In the great night my heart will go out
Toward me the darkness comes rattling
In the great night my heart will go out

Papago Indian

Reproduced by permission of the Smithsonian Institution Press
from Bulletin 90 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian
Institution 1929. pp. 126.

The Wreckage of the Moon

After dark
Near the South Dakota border,
The moon is out hunting, everywhere,
Delivering fire,
And walking down highways
Of a diamond.

Behind a tree,
It lights on the ruins
Of a white city:
Frost, frost.

Where are they gone,
Who lived there?

Bundled away under wings
And dark faces.

I am sick of it, and I go on,
Living, alone, alone,
Past the charred silos, past the hidden graves
Of Chippewas and Norwegians.

This cold winter
Moon spills the inhuman fire
Of jewels
Into my hands.

Dead riches, dead hands, the moon
Darkens,
And I am lost in the beautiful white ruins
Of America.

James Wright. "Having Lost My Sons, I Confront the Wreckage of the Moon: Christmas, 1960", from Collected Poems (c) 1961 by James Wright, Wesleyan University Press, used by permission of University Press of New England.

**Mr. Sharp, Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan, Mr. Jones, Ms. Adkins,
Mr. Hardy, Mr. Kendall**

David Liptak grew up in Pittsburgh and studied at Duquesne University. He earned the D.M.A. at the Eastman School of Music in 1976, following which he joined the faculty of Michigan State University. In 1980 he moved to the University of Illinois. In both of these positions he conducted new-music ensembles and taught composition and theory. Finally in 1987 he took up his present appointment in composition at the Eastman School of Music. His music has been widely performed and honored, with prizes from the George Enesco International Composition Competition (1986) and the Minnesota Orchestra 75th Anniversary Composers Competition (1978).

He wrote Ancient Songs this year for baritone William Sharp; the work receives its first performance here. The cycle is performed without breaks between the five songs and lasts about twenty minutes. In addition to the baritone solo, the score calls for flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), violin, cello, piano, and percussion. The composer has provided the following commentary on his new work:

Ancient Songs, for baritone voice with instrumental ensemble, is a setting of five texts that resonate with understanding that is instinctive and old. The idea for this selection of texts began to assert itself as I was reading parts of Jerome Rothenberg's Technicians of the Sacred (1985). This collection of translations of "primitive" poetry seemed to be in concord with musical impulses that reach beyond the civilizing influence of the Western tradition into myth, fancy, illusion, and "wildness." The first two texts are translations found in Rothenberg's collection: "The Stars" and "Ghosts & Shadows."

The third text, "Aiken Drum," is a traditional child's verse

that I learned while singing with my two-year-old daughter. I have borrowed the melody as well as the words for this setting, which I have transformed to suggest the darkness that lies beneath the surface of this and other traditional nursery songs. Aiken Drum may have been "a fighter in the battle of Sheiffmuir (1715)," according to a Scottish ballad, or, according to a poem in "The Dumfries Magazine" (October 1825), he may have been a "strange little brownie."

The fourth text, consisting of but three lines, is "Death Song," from the culture of the Papago Indians of the American Southwest. The calm acceptance with which death is faced suggests a serenity in the understanding of life and death that is not a character common to contemporary Western society. The final text is a twentieth-century poem by James Wright, "Having Lost my Sons, I Confront the Wreckage of the Moon: Christmas, 1960." I first set this poem for voice and piano in 1977, and have since attempted several other versions. I understand there to be a strong connection in spirit to that much older poetry in James Wright's work; it possesses a "wildness" (alluded to above) that is clearly described in Robert Bly's essay on Wright in his book American Poetry, Wildness and Domesticity.

--David Liptak

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INTERMISSION

Meditation for Unaccompanied Recorder (1975)

RYOHEI HIROSE

(b. 1930)

Mr. Reiss

Ryohei Hirose began his musical studies in his native Hokkaido and then moved to the Tokyo University of Arts, where he worked with Ikenouchi and Yashiro between 1955 and 1962. He has written music for both Japanese and European instruments, often borrowing elements from one style to apply to the instruments characteristic of the other. He also studied the music of India, through visits to that country in the early 1970s; there he also absorbed the traditional elements of drone and raga into a "pan-Asian" technique.

The shakuhachi, an end-blown bamboo flute, is one of the most frequently encountered of Japanese instruments. Hirose has frequently written for it, as well as for its European counterpart, the recorder. By adapting shakuhachi techniques to the recorder, he obtains a wide range of special sonorities.

The recorder is so thoroughly connected in our minds with earlier European music--ending at about the time of J.S. Bach--that many Americans are unaware of a large and growing repertory of contemporary, even avant-garde, works written for the instrument,

especially following the example of Luciano Berio's Gesti of 1965, which brought a tremendous upsurge of interest in the new possibilities of the instrument. In Europe the new works are part of the mainstream repertory for the recorder, while American players still tend to concentrate on the instrument's historical possibilities.

Hirose's Meditation is one of a handful of works at the peak of the repertory for the recorder as an avant-garde instrument. Running about ten minutes in length, Meditation is cast as an extended arch in five connected sections, played without pause, beginning and ending quietly. The outer sections make extensive use of playing techniques borrowed from the shakuhachi; most prominent of these is the "bending" of pitches.

The second section of the work is aleatoric, improvisatory in character, employing nine different techniques, all of which are represented in the score by nonstandard notation. These include fluttertongue on a non-specific pitch, multiphonics, a white noise effect, removing the instrument's head joint, rapid random fingering, glissando, lip vibrato, and so on. This description gives the impression of nothing more than a catalogue of special effects, but Hirose produces out of this wealth of possibilities and artistic and dramatic whole.

The third and fourth sections of the scores are closely linked. The third becomes angular, wilder, creating a sense almost of anger and calling for extremely rapid passage work. The fourth section builds, through many rapid changes and extremes of pitch, velocity, and volume, to end on a very high, shrill whistle sustained the length of the player's breath. The final section, completing the arch of the work, is very slow and quiet, once again drawing upon shakuhachi techniques as it makes its way finally to silence.

Tientos (1991)

IAN KROUSE
(b. 1956)

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

Ian Krouse is a Maryland native. He studied at the University of Southern California with Morton Lauridsen, William Kraft, and Leonard Rosenmann, and is now on the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles. He received a BMI student composer's award early on and has continued to receive recognition from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts (for opera projects); last year he was a semifinalist in the Kennedy Center Friedheim awards competition. A professional guitarist, Krouse was co-founder of the De Falla Guitar Trio, which has made a number of records. One of his recordings was honored with a 1984 Stereo Review record-of-the-year award. Krouse's large output ranges widely, from works for solo guitar or guitar ensemble to pieces for full orchestra in the instrumental field and from

songs to opera on the vocal side. No doubt it is his experience with the guitar that has drawn him repeatedly to Spanish literature and folk music, both of which have played a frequent role in his music as well. The composer has provided the following comment on his piece which, incidentally, is receiving its performance tonight on his ninth birthday (he was born on Leap Year Day, 1956):

Tientos is the most recent in a series of works which reflect my continuing preoccupation with the traditional music of Spain. Although the tiento is one of Spain's earliest surviving forms, its meaning and social function have changed radically throughout the five hundred years of its existence. The fifteenth-century Spanish vihuelists used the term tento for pieces which, by virtue of their unspecified form and improvisatory nature, were like less formal cousins to the more highly evolved and more contrapuntally rigorous fantasias. The form survives today not only as a medium of expression for serious composers--often of works for the guitar--but, perhaps surprisingly, as a flamenco guitar form. My Tientos reflects all of these influences, and many of the formal dynamics are derived from the inherent tensions resulting from the juxtaposition of such disparate influences. I chose the unusual plural form of the word precisely for this reason; my piece is not a tiento so much as it is about the tiento. It is a darker, and slower, companion to my earlier Bulerias for four guitars. Although both works are highly imbued with the character and techniques of flamenco music, that is where the comparison stops. The lifeblood of Bulerias is rhythm. But in Tientos I chose to focus on the strangely melismatic style peculiar to flamenco singing. The instrumentation of flute and string trio may seem a far cry from the world of flamenco guitars, but I hope that something of the profound intensity of that highly complex vernacular idiom survives here.

--Ian Krouse

Program Notes by
STEVEN LEDBETTER
Edited by Helen Hammond

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The audience is invited to join the artists in the Plaza Lobby for a post-concert reception.