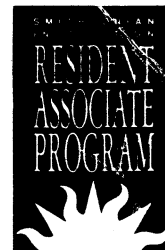




The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
and
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
present



20th CENTURY CONSORT
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

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

David Hardy, cello
Michael Rusinek, clarinet
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Tony Ames, percussion
Dotian Levalier, harp

Guest Artist

Lucy Shelton, soprano

* * *

Saturday 04 April 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

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.

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

THE PROGRAM

AVANT FOLK

Cafe Music (1986)

PAUL SCHOENFIELD

(b. 1947)

Allegro
Andante moderato
Presto

Ms. Atkins, Ms. Logan, Mr. Hardy

Paul Schoenfield is one of an increasing number of composers whose work is inspired by the whole world of musical experience -- popular styles both American and foreign, vernacular and folk traditions, and the "normal" historical traditions of cultivated music-making, often treated with sly twists. He frequently combines ideas that grew up in entirely different worlds into the same piece, making them talk to each other, so to speak, and delighting in the surprises their interaction evokes.

A pianist and composer who "ran away at 16" from his native Detroit, Schoenfield studied at Carnegie-Mellon Institute and the University of Arizona. He recently moved to Ohio (after about six years in Minnesota), where he now teaches at the University of Akron.

Cafe Music took root in the composer's experience of filling in for a friend as the pianist of a trio that played regularly in a restaurant in St. Paul. Primarily intended as live background music for diners, the trio performed pieces from early 20th-century America and late 19th-century Vienna. The idea presented itself to use the thematic styles, harmonies, and typical gestures of this thrice-familiar music as the basis for an original work for the same ensemble -- violin, piano, and cello.

Commissioned to write a chamber piece for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Schoenfield produced Cafe Music; and the piece had its only previous performance in that city in the winter of 1987. So far, at least, all performances of the piece require the presence of the composer at the keyboard, for (as he genially confesses) he has not yet written down the piano part!

The contents or technique require no explication for anyone who has ever heard the sounds of a potted-palm salon orchestra.

Apprehensions (1979)

SHULAMIT RAN

(b. 1949)

Ms. Shelton, Mr. Rusinek, Ms. Logan

Shulamit Ran was born in Tel-Aviv, Israel, in 1949 and lives in Chicago. She took early lessons in piano and began composing small pieces while still a child. Later she studied composition with Alexander Uriah Boskovich and Paul Ben-Haim. In 1962 she received a scholarship to study at the Mannes College in New York, where she worked with Norman Dello Joio. Before she had been in the country a year -- she was just fourteen -- she had appeared on a televised New York Philharmonic Young People's concert as the soloist in her Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra with Leonard Bernstein conducting. Later she studied in Chicago with Ralph Shapey and remained there as an active pianist, composer, and teacher at the University of Chicago. She has written most extensively for instruments in various chamber groupings or for orchestra. Her work has received increasing honors and attention, culminating in the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for her Symphony No. 1, premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Even before that event, Daniel Barenboim invited her to be composer-in-residence at the Chicago Symphony, for which she is writing a new work for the 1992-93 season. Her pre-concert talks with audiences, particularly dealing with new music, reveal a passionate concern for the future of the art and for the link of communication between composer, performer, and listener. The composer has provided the following note on her piece:

It was my initial intention to group together a number of poems, until I came across Sylvia Plath's Apprehensions. Written in the last year of her life, it is the first poem in the "Winter Trees" collection. What immediately struck me upon reading it was what I perceived of as the musical suggestiveness of the poem's central idea and formal plan: in four stanzas, the colors white, gray, red, and black are used as a metaphor for the metamorphosis of a state of mind. Each stanza is rich with powerful imagery, ranging from the eerie to the intensely violent. More than an opportunity to paint color in sound -- an attractive but, in and of itself, not exactly an original impulse -- the poem's form hinted at the possibility of a great contrast between movements, held together and propelled forward by one central idea. The overall shape of a gradual ascent to a horrific climax culminating in a steep fall was one I found myself drawn to enormously, leading me to treat the work as a kind of "mini-opera," consisting of three "acts," or movements, followed by an "aftermath," or an epilogue. Toward that end I added a clarinet (to me an instrument which can be closely linked to the human voice), as a kind of "alter ego," to the more conventional pairing of voice and piano. My increased concern at the time of composing Apprehensions for the control of thematic transformation, coupled with contrapuntal thinking, allowed me a greater economy in the use of compositional materials and a new freedom of expression.

-- Shulamit Ran

INTERMISSION

Idyll for the Misbegotten (1985)

GEORGE CRUMB

(b. 1929)

Ms. Stern, Mr. Jones, Mr. Merz, Mr. Ames

George Crumb (b. 1929, Charleston, West Virginia) grew up in a musical family and learned from childhood to play the clarinet and piano. He took his undergraduate degree in composition at Mason College of Music and Fine Arts in his native Charleston, then went to the University of Illinois for his master's degree. In the summer of 1955 he was a composition fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. Meanwhile he was working toward his D.M.A. at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Ross Lee Finney, who, after his father, became the strongest musical influence on him. He has been on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania since 1965. In addition to numerous grants and awards from the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for Echoes of Time and the River.

Crumb's early music grew out of short musical subjects in which timbre played as important a role as pitch and rhythm. His music has continually been marked by an extraordinarily refined ear for color and astonishing inventiveness in the creation of sounds, often using novel methods of tone production, occasionally with amplification to pick up the delicate overtones that might be lost otherwise. Much of his music has been programmatic, often drawing on a zodiacal cycle or number symbolism or such quasi-dramatic elements as masked performers, to serve the cause of musical illustration with vivid sounds, ranging from the sweet and delicate to the threshold of pain.

Many of Crumb's works make use of overtly theatrical elements: the players may need to wear masks, to move around on the platform in specifically defined ways, to interact with one another or with the audience the way an actor does, rather than to remain firmly fixed in a seat with their eyes on the printed part. Very often the dramatic element comes through the use of ritualistic gestures that suggest the operation of primordial myths.

Sometimes the ritual elements act as a kind of political commentary. This is especially the case in Crumb's "environmentalist" score for the 1985 composition An Idyll for the Misbegotten, for flute and three percussionists, sounds, from the composer's description of his ideal performance at a summer music festival: he would like the music to be heard "from afar, over a lake, on a moonlit evening in August." The "misbegotten" of the title is us -- homo sapiens. As the composer has noted:

Mankind has become ever more "illegitimate" in the natural world of the plants and animals. The ancient sense of brotherhood with all

life-forms (so poignantly expressed in the poetry of St. Francis of Assisi) has gradually and relentlessly eroded, and consequently we find ourselves monarchs of a dying world. We share the fervent hope that humankind will embrace anew nature's "moral imperative."

The score employs two of the most fundamental and ancient of instrument types: the flute -- adapted by primitive humanity from the reeds growing by the side of a lake -- and drums. The music aims to capture a mood of tension and mystery that breaks through the tranquillity of silence into a level of near hysteria. As is often the case in Crumb's music, there is a musical quotation -- from Debussy's Syrinx -- and a text to be spoken by the flutist (while still playing the instrument). In this case, it consists of a few lines from an eighth-century Chinese poet: "The moon goes down. There are shivering birds and withering grasses."

Folk Songs (1964)

LUCIANO BERIO
(b. 1925)

Ms. Shelton, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Stern, Mr. Rusinek, Mr. Jones,
Mr. Merz, Ms. Levalier, Ms. Levine, Mr. Kendall

To Luciano Berio (b. Oneglia, near Imperia, Italy, 1925), music came as a birthright. Both his father and grandfather were composers and church musicians, and he began studying piano and composition with his father while still a schoolboy. After the war, Berio went to Milan, where he studied law briefly but also attended the composition classes of Ghedini at the conservatory. Italy's musical life was conservatively eclectic for the most part. The sole exception among leading composers was Luigi Dallapiccola, whose influence on Berio was significant, though, ironically, the two Italian composers had to travel to Massachusetts to meet. In the summer of 1951 Berio held a fellowship in composition at Tanglewood; that same summer Dallapiccola was composer-in-residence. Dallapiccola introduced Berio to the twelve-tone technique, and some of his first compositions following that summer, such as the orchestral piece Nones, made use of serialism in various ways.

By this time he had already married the late American singer Cathy Berberian, for whom he wrote many of his vocal works (including Folk Songs). While in the United States he was introduced to the whole range of American music-making, which led to his creation of the first electronic music studio in Italy. Berio spent most of the 1960s teaching in the United States at Mills College, Harvard, and the Juilliard School, where he remained from 1965 to 1971. It was during that period that he investigated the reworking of musical ideas from one piece to another, seeking out different directions that may be taken from a specific musical gesture. During this time he wrote his single best-known work, Sinfonia, which created a sensation when it was performed by the New York Philharmonic and the Swingle Singers under the direction of Leonard Bernstein.

Folk Songs for mezzo-soprano and seven instruments (there is also a version for orchestra), composed on a commission from Mills College and intended specifically for the performing skills -- both vocal and linguistic -- of Cathy Berberian, is one of Berio's most ingratiating works. The title is not strictly accurate, since some of the melodies are not exactly folk songs, but it suggests the character of these materials as "folklike." The first two songs, "Black is the color of my true love's hair" and "I wonder as I wander" were both composed by John Jacob Niles in the Elizabethan modes. "Loosin Yelav" comes from Armenia, the country of Cathy Berberian's forebears; the song describes the rising of the moon. The French song "Rossignolet du vois" has the nightingale giving advice to a lovelorn soul: sing your serenade two hours after midnight. "A la femminisca" is an old Sicilian song sung by fishermen's wives as they wait on the docks. Next come two Italian songs, "La donna ideale" and "Il Ballo," which are, in fact, compositions by the young Berio himself, written in 1949 for Cathy Berberian, who was then a Fullbright Fellowship student in Italy. The first of these, in the Genoese dialect, advises that, if you find a woman who is well-born, well-mannered, well-informed, and with a good dowry, don't let her get away. "Il Ballo" speaks of the effects of love: The wisest men lose their heads over it, but love resists the son, the ice and everything else. "Motettu di tristura" is a Sardinian song to the nightingale, in which the singer notes, "How you resemble me as I weep for my lover; when they bury me, sing this song." Then come two songs from the Auvergne, from the repertory of arrangements by Joseph Canteloube. "Malurous qu'ò uno fenno" sings of the eternal paradox: He who lacks a spouse seeks one, while he who has one wishes he had none. In "Lo fiolaire," a girl sits at the spinning wheel thinking about exchanging kisses with a shepherd. The last song of the cycle, "Azerbaijan love song," was discovered by Cathy Berberian on a 78 rpm disc from what was then the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan; it is sung in the language of that region.

Program Notes by
STEVEN LEDBETTER
Edited by Helen Hammond

20th Century Consort
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director
Alyce Rideout, Manager
Curt Wittig, Recording Engineer
James D. Allnutt, Production Assistant
Susan Chalifoux, Reception Coordinator

Smithsonian Institution
Robert McC. Adams, Secretary
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Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Janet W. Solinger, Director, Resident Associate Program
Penelope Dann, Acting Program Manager, Resident Associate Program

SONG TEXTS

Apprehensions (Sylvia Plath)

There is this white wall, above which the sky
creates itself -
Infinite, green, utterly untouchable.
Angels swim in it, and the stars, in indifference also.
They are my medium.
The sun dissolves on this wall, bleeding its lights.

A gray wall now, clawed and bloody.
Is there no way out of the mind?
Steps at my back spiral into a well.
There are no trees or birds in this world,
There is only a sourness.

This red wall winces continually:
A red fist, opening and closing,
Two gray, papery bags -
This is what I am made of, this, and a terror
Of being wheeled off under crosses and a rain of pieties.

On a black wall, unidentifiable birds
Swivel their heads and cry.
There is no talk of immortality among these!
Cold blanks approach us:
They move in a hurry.

"Apprehensions" from THE COLLECTED POEMS OF SYLVIA PLATH, Edited by
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BERIO FOLK SONGS

Text: Folk Poems

Black is the color... (U.S.A.)

Black is the color of my true love's hair,
His lips are something rosy fair.
The sweetest smile and the kindest hands,
I love my love and well he knows
I love the grass whereon he goes.

If he no more on earth will be
Twill surely be the end of me.
Black is the color of my true love's hair.
His lips are something rosy fair.
The sweetest smile and the kindest hands,
I love the grass whereon he stands.

