



The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

April 24, 1993

**Lecture-Discussion**

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, HMSG Education Department  
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort  
Francis Pott, Composer

The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

**Concert**

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**20th CENTURY CONSORT**

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

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**"TEN TO TANGO"**

Suite for violin, clarinet, and piano (1936)

DARIUS MILHAUD  
(1892-1974)

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan

"Tango" (1985)

ROBERT XAVIER RODRIGUEZ  
(b. 1946)

Mr. Bleeke, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Popp,  
Mr. Jones, Ms. Logan, Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy

Elisabeth Adkins, Violin  
Paula Sisson Akbar, Violinist  
Mark Bleeke, Tenor  
David Hardy, Cello  
Thomas Jones, Percussion  
Christopher Kendall, Conductor  
Loren Kitt, Clarinet  
Lynne Edelson Levine, Violist  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, Piano  
William Popp, Accordion  
Sara Stern, Flute

Saturday 24 April 1993

Lecture-Discussion 4:30 p.m.

Concert 5:30 p.m.

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

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The 20th Century Consort's 1992-93 performance series  
is funded in part by  
The National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency,  
and the Smithsonian Office of the Assistant Secretary  
for Arts and Humanities.

**Intermission**

4'33" (1960)

JOHN CAGE  
(1912-1992)

The Ensemble

Piano Quintet (1993)

FRANCIS POTT  
(b. 1957)

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

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 20th Century Consort gratefully acknowledges the support of the British Council,  
which made it possible for Francis Pott to travel to Washington for this performance.

## THE PROGRAM

### Tango

#### ROBERT X. RODRIGUEZ

Robert Xavier Rodriguez was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1946 and currently lives in Richardson, Texas. He received his earliest musical training in piano and harmony in San Antonio. He attended the University of Texas at Austin, where his teachers included Hunter Johnson and Kent Kennan, then took his D.M.A. at the University of Southern California, where he worked with Halsey Stevens and Ingolf Dahl. He also studied privately with Nadia Boulanger. In 1975 he joined the faculty of the University of Texas at Dallas, where he has taught composition and also directed the collegium musicum. From 1982 to 1985 he was composer-in-residence of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Although he has also written many orchestral and chamber works, his best-known compositions are theatrical, whether for ballet, traditional operatic stage, or chamber opera. These frequently draw on pre-existing music, treated with both respect and a canny skill. These include everything from Medieval dances (in his *Estampic* of 1980, a ballet score for orchestra or large ensemble) to Mexican folksong (in the recent *Frida*, a theatrical biography with book by Hilary Blecher and lyrics by Migdalia Cruz, of Frida Kahlo, the wife of Diego Rivera and an iconoclastic, free-thinking, free-loving, self-created Mexican woman artist). *Tango*, too, employs both familiar and original material to represent the tango craze that dominated popular music just around the time of World War I and to satirize the official opposition of the Church "sinful" music. The parodistic element of the work has become, if anything, even more pointed years following its composition, in light of the political treatment of the National Endowment for the Arts, which was involved in the commission.

The composer has provided the following note:

*Tango* (1985) is a one-act comic opera for tenor solo and chamber ensemble. It was commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts for a consortium of three new-music groups: Voices of Change (Dallas), the Chicago Ensemble, and the Twentieth-Century Consort (Washington, D.C.).

The text of *Tango* was compiled by the composer from actual news-clippings, letters, and sermons from the height of the tango craze which swept Europe and the United States in 1913-14. There are three short scenes played without pause. In scene one, the tenor enters as an elegant tango dancer, then quickly changes character to become a radio newscaster, reporting world-wide reactions to the tango, both favorable and unfavorable. In scene two, the tenor again changes character and becomes Cardinal Basilio Pompili, Vicar of Rome, as he declaims a thunderous letter officially denouncing the tango in the name of Pope Pius X. The Cardinal, in spite of himself, occasionally gets caught up in the tango spirit while reading the declamation. In the final scene, the tenor resumes his newscaster character and reports on the attempts to reform the tango into a more respectable dance called "The Paragon," with numerous rules for avoiding physical contact between the partners. He attempts to demonstrate the paragon, but is gradually drawn back to the tango as he exits the stage in his original character as a tango dancer.

The score of *Tango* evokes the sounds of a typical cabaret ensemble of violin, piano, and accordion, with prominent solo passages for those instruments. Further tango atmosphere is achieved by the use of several quotations of familiar classics (Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, Bach's *My Heart Ever Faithful*, Schubert's E-flat Piano Trio, and Brahms's Fourth Symphony) arranged in tango style. Also quoted are the medieval *Mass of Tournai*, which is used to represent the Vatican, and the Minuet from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which is, in its original setting, used to accompany Don Giovanni's romantic exploits in the ballroom scene. In *Tango*, this minuet is employed to represent the "properly danced" paragon. As in Mozart's opera, it is accompanied by three contrasting dances: in this case, three tangos, in different instrumental colors and meters, which gradually envelop the minuet.

....Robert X. Rodriguez

## INTERMISSION

4'33"

#### JOHN CAGE

John Cage was at the forefront of the avant-garde virtually from the beginning of his career in music until his death in August 1992, just a month before his eightieth birthday; his many writings about music are as well-known as the music itself. Functioning as both philosopher and composer, Cage's views on music and its relationship to life have been influential throughout the world. This point may be illustrated by getting a perspective from afar. In any recent history of contemporary music written by a European, Cage is quite simply the dominant American figure. His recent visit to the Soviet Union revealed how eagerly his ideas have been received there. He is the eighth musician chosen to deliver the prestigious Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard, a series that annually brings a distinguished creator or interpreter of an art to discuss poetics in the broadest sense of the term. Cage's Norton lectures are, in essence, spoken musical compositions.

Cage was the son of an inventor, who evidently passed on to him the inventor's Muse. Already in high school he distinguished himself academically with special awards for Latin and oratory (no one who ever heard him deliver one of his characteristically soft-spoken speeches could doubt that he was comfortable in front of an audience). After two years at Pomona College, he went to live in Europe and never returned to complete a formal degree. By the time he returned to California in 1933, he involved himself actively in poetry, music, and painting. Over the years he has developed a reputation as one of the world's leading authorities on mushrooms.

While studying music theory and composition in New York with Adolph Weiss, Cage attended Henry Cowell's classes on non-Western music, which proved to be an important stimulus. His earliest compositions were very chromatic. By the late 1930s he began to work a good deal with percussion and with dancers in Seattle, San Francisco, and

Chicago. In 1943 he moved permanently to New York and began his collaboration with Merce Cunningham, with whom he worked for the rest of his life.

Cage's best known early works are diverse compositions for prepared piano (a normal piano with various objects -- metal screws, rubber plugs, and so on -- inserted between the strings to convert it into a percussion instrument with many different sonorities). The most important change in Cage's work came through the study of Eastern philosophies, particularly Zen Buddhism, and the *I Ching*, the Chinese book of changes, which he began to use as a basis for composition. The *I Ching* introduced elements of chance into his music, so that many decisions normally made by a composer are determined through specified processes of chance, though in his earlier works of this sort, the actual sounds of the final composition, once completed, remained fixed. By the mid-1950s, Cage was pursuing a still more flexible goal, composing music so that, for example, certain sections of a work might be played simultaneously by different musicians or consecutively, as if they were different movements in the traditional sense.

The most striking single fact about John Cage's view of music was his open-mindedness and generously inclusive orientation. This does not simply mean that he drew on musical traditions that others overlooked, but rather that he redefined the very notion of music to include almost everything that happens or can happen. His most famous -- or notorious -- piece, *4'33"*, consists of a performer at any instrument (originally a piano) with a stopwatch, playing nothing for four minutes and thirty-three seconds. Yet the piece is not simply a joke, not simply an abnegation of the composer's "responsibility," and not even simply an exploitation of silence. To an audience present at a performance, *4'33"* demonstrates clearly that there is no such thing as silence. The music consists of every sound that happens to be made during the time that it is going on -- which means that every performance is unique and unrepeatable. This may alert us to an important point: with any piece of music, no two performances are alike. Quite apart from questions of conductorial interpretation or accidental wrong notes, the ambient sounds that occur during any performance are always different. We have just become accustomed to disregarding them. And there is a philosophical extension to all this: to Cage, music does not occur simply because we come to a particular place at a particular time with the expectation of hearing it. Everything we do is -- and produces -- music.

This point was reinforced by a question directed to the composer at one of his Harvard seminars in 1989. A student asked Cage for his thoughts on silence. He did not answer for a surprisingly long time, as if thinking of what he would say. Then, suddenly, his face lit up in his broad, generous smile, and he remarked, "I'm enjoying it." Cage's main goal is to break down the distinction between "art" and "life," to sensitize audiences to the sights and sounds around them at all times. As he wrote in *Silence* (1961):

Our intention is to affirm this life, not to bring order out of chaos or to suggest improvements in creation, but simply to wake up to the very life we're living, which is so excellent once one gets one's mind and one's desires out of the way and lets it act of its own accord.

### **Piano Quintet** **FRANCIS POTT**

English composer Francis Pott was born in Wallingford, Berkshire, in 1957. He was a chorister in the Choir of New College, Oxford, and subsequently held music scholarships at Winchester College and at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood, while at the same time pursuing private studies in piano with Hamish Milne. He currently combines academic with performance positions, as a member of the celebrated Choir of Winchester Cathedral and an active solo pianist and accompanist, as well as John Bennett Lecturer in Music at St. Hilda's College, Oxford.

He has provided the following commentary on his *Piano Quintet*, which receives its premiere in this performance:

The first two movements of this piece were conceived in somewhat different form in 1988, but underwent extensive rewriting in 1992. The finale dates from this latter period, and at the time of writing the future existence of a Scherzo between slow movement and finale remains a possibility, though the three-movement structure is such as to provide a self-sufficient complete work.

The Piano Quintet repertoire contains its share of major landmarks, and, as it seemed at least potentially inhibiting to make a point of evading the shadows cast by Messrs, Brahms, Franck, Fauré, Schumann, and others, it may be that listeners can identify occasional "nods" in the direction of one or another such model (for example, a certain rhythmic figure in the finale which is probably related to a comparable device in the Brahms Quintet's Scherzo, or the recurrent use of a descending four-note scale, as heard in Franck's opening bars); there is also an entirely accidental kinship between a fragment of the opening theme and a pattern heard in Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra*. The diversity of these patterns should serve as well as anything to indicate an eclectic romanticism in my musical make-up, which I hope will be apparent also through the piece itself.

The mood of the *Quintet* is predominantly optimistic and straightforward. The first movement is traditional to the extent of being an orthodox sonata structure with a repeated exposition. The first subject, stated by the strings in octaves and without preamble, both presents the seeds of the second subject (introduced as an expansive cello solo) and encapsulates a habit of setting an apparent triple (three eight-note) rhythm against the basic time signature of four unashamed quarter-note beats in the bar; this is to persist throughout the first and last movements, as is a general tendency to think across barlines in a fluid fashion which perhaps owes something to my prolonged experience of both sixteenth-century polyphony and jazz.

The development section of this movement escalates, via exploration of the main themes, to a broad climax, following which a deliberately low-key, subdued recapitulation condenses past material. The second subject, this time taken by the viola, reintroduces past restlessness, and after a further "appassionato" climax there is a hard-driven coda

The focal point of this movement is the note C, and, although its major/minor status may not be clearly defined, the tonal character of the music is never in question.

The slow movement is a lengthy essay in elegiac romanticism, prefaced by these lines from a poem written by the Welsh poet Alun Lewis shortly before his death in Burma in the Second World War:

"...Out of the depths of the sea  
Love cries and cries in me.

And summer blossoms break above my head  
With all the unbearable beauty of the dead."

The tonal center of this movement is E. The mood is predominantly wistful and nostalgic, though a mournful cello solo early on is more explicitly sorrowful and portends the eventual sustained climax of the movement. This climax comes about two-thirds of the way through as a culmination of development of the cello theme (during which references back to the first movement have been heard). Thereafter, a prolonged epilogue allows the cello continued prominence as it meditates on past events with the upper strings providing a muted background. The closing bars balance the opening ones, the last sound heard being an isolated high string harmonic which began the movement.

This movement is, in part, a late farewell to my father, who died from cancer in 1983. In the words of Carl Nielsen, a composer dear to my heart, "Music is the sound of life"; and this movement, written after delay sufficient for relative serenity, might be seen less as a torrent of anguish, more as a flower on a grave.

The finale opens with a vehement five-note figure which is an inversion of part of the second subject from the first movement. After a slow introduction, punctuated by the five-note pattern's attempts to get matters under way, an extended Allegro is launched. Its initial theme is relatively unassuming, but before long the tendency toward triple "cross rhythms" agitates the surface. After a considerable climax, an extended melodic idea is presented, again by the cello. This leads into a fugato section featuring a repeated-note figure which bears some relationship to the main theme of the first movement. The fugato attempts to rise to a climax but eventually dissipates, via recollections of the Allegro's first theme, into a slower central passage in which earlier events from all movements are briefly heard. Thereafter, the fugato material regains grounds, along with dancing triple rhythms. In due course a climactic "tutti" restatement of the earlier cello theme is reached, and a short coda (related to that of the first movement) declaims the opening theme of the finale, dressed in the triple rhythm and by now anchored to the original tonal point of C. The ending is concise and straightforwardly cheerful, though also rhythmically hectic. The piano part throughout is particularly challenging, signing off with a defiantly plain chord of C major.

This piece will doubtless horrify modernists and all who decry present-day attempts to come up with tunes in keys. No matter; it is dedicated not to them, but to my beloved wife, who is neither of these things!

...Francis Pott

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**ELISABETH ADKINS**, Violinist, is Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. In 1987 she was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Yale University where she studied with Oscar Shumsky. A versatile musician, Ms. Adkins performs in recital as well as soloist with orchestra, recently playing the world premiere of Andreas Makris' *Concerto Fantasia* for violin and orchestra with Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony. Her many activities in chamber music include the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, the annual Library of Congress Summer Chamber Festival, and regular appearances as solo violinist with the 20th Century Consort. She is a founding member of both the American Chamber Players and the Chamber Soloists of Washington.

**PAULA SISSON AKBAR**, Violinist. A native of Oregon, Ms. Akbar attended Lewis and Clark College and the Yale University Graduate School of Music. Before joining the National Symphony Orchestra as a first violinist in 1991, she performed with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the New Haven Symphony, and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. She is concertmaster of the Virginia Chamber Orchestra.

**MARK BLEEKE**, Tenor. Mark Bleeke's career has brought him international acclaim for his outstanding performances. He sings music of many different periods and styles, including opera, oratorio, contemporary and medieval. This season Mr. Bleeke sings the roles of Orfeo at the Hong Kong Festival and Apollo with the Boston Early Music Festival. At the Carmel Bach Festival he will sing the arias in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Cantatas 208 and 80, and *The Seasons* by Haydn. This past season he toured through France singing the roles of Tamino from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Don Ottavio from *Don Giovanni*. Mr. Bleeke has been featured with the New York Philharmonic (live telecast under the direction of Zubin Mehta), Musica Sacra with Richard Westenberg, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Symphony Orchestra of Montreal. He sang the New York premiere of Penderecki's *Magnificat* at Carnegie Hall, the American premiere of Mendelssohn's *Te Deum*, and the New York Premiere of Dave Brubeck's *Mass: To Hope*. With the 20th Century Consort he has been featured in works of John Harbison and Stephen Albert. Mr. Bleeke has recorded for RCA Columbia, Delos, Music Masters, Musical Heritage, Newport Classic, and Koch International.

**DAVID HARDY**, Cellist. The top-ranking American prizewinner at the Seventh International Tchaikovsky Cello Competition in Moscow, Mr. Hardy is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory. He has studied with Laurence Lesser, Stephen Kates, Berl Senofsky and Mstislav Rostropovich. He made his solo debut with the Baltimore Symphony at the age of 16. In 1981 he became the Associate Principal Cellist of the National Symphony and the youngest member of that organization. Performances in Washington have included recitals at the British Embassy, Wolf Trap and the Phillips Collection. Mr. Hardy has recorded for Melodiya.

**THOMAS JONES**, Percussionist, graduated from the University of Maryland and is a freelance musician who enjoys playing many styles of music. He plays drums and percussion at the Kennedy Center, National Theater and Wolf Trap. He is the timpanist with the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, percussionist with the 20th Century Consort and works regularly as the drummer in a variety of bands. He has long experience in recording studios as a drummer and percussionist.

**CHRISTOPHER KENDALL**, Artistic Director and Conductor. In addition to his involvement with the 20th Century Consort, Mr. Kendall is founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort. He regularly conducts the symphony and chamber orchestra at the Juilliard School in New York, and from 1987-1992 he served as Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. His recent guest conducting appearances include the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in Canada, Music Today Ensemble, San Francisco Chamber Symphony, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Mr. Kendall has recorded on the Delos, Nonesuch, Bard and Smithsonian Collection labels.

**LOREN KITT**, Clarinetist, is Principal Clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra and a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music. Prior to joining the National Symphony in 1970, he performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic and was Principal Clarinetist of the Milwaukee Symphony. He has also been a Professor of Music at Oberlin Conservatory and is currently on the Faculty of the Peabody Conservatory. In addition to his activities with the 20th Century Consort, Mr. Kitt is heard frequently in Washington with the Theater Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress Summer Music Festival, and is a regular guest performer with the Emerson String Quartet in their series at the National Museum of Natural History.

**LYNNE EDELSON LEVINE**, Violist, attended the Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Joseph dePasquale. She joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1978. A founding member of the Manchester String Quartet, she has performed chamber music at the Phillips Collection, the Washington Cathedral, and the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater. Her concerto performances have included appearances with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Virginia Youth Symphony, and the New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony. She recently performed a recital at the National Gallery of Art.

**LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN**, Pianist, is a graduate of the Juilliard School where she received both Bachelor's and Master's of Music degrees as a student of Ania Dorfmann. She has performed in recitals at Alice Tully Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, and appears frequently at the Kennedy Center and National Gallery. She has appeared as soloist with both the Baltimore Symphony and the Richmond, Virginia, Symphony. As an established chamber musician, Ms. Logan has performed across the globe with such artists as Julius Baker, Eugenia Zukerman, Ransom Wilson, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. She has recorded for Pro Arts Records.

**WILLIAM POPP**, Accordionist, is the accordionist and principal arranger for The United States Air Force Strolling Strings. With the Strolling Strings he has performed extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. Mr. Popp received Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Denver. He has received awards from the Accordion Teacher's Guild, the Great Western Accordion Association, and the Accordion Association of Metropolitan Washington. His professional experience includes performances with the Denver Symphony Orchestra, the Aspen Music Festival Symphony Orchestra, and free-lance work in the Denver and Washington, D.C. areas.

**SARA STERN**, Flutist. Specializing in chamber music, her repertoire encompasses the full range of the flute literature. As solo flutist with the 20th Century Consort, Ms. Stern has performed many contemporary compositions, including several significant world premieres. She has also served as Principal Flute of the Kennedy Center's Terrace and Eisenhower Theater Orchestras and the Virginia Chamber Orchestra. As flutist with the Rosewood Consort, Ms. Stern has toured widely and has also concertized extensively with Dotian Levalier, harpist. A series of guest appearances with the Emerson String Quartet and a Carnegie Hall debut recital in 1989 have established her as an artist of major stature. Ms. Stern has recorded on Smithsonian, Pro Arte and Nonesuch labels.

**CATHERINE FLYE**, Stage Director for **Tango**, graduated from London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama and spent five years in repertory theatre in the United Kingdom, playing a variety of roles from Shakespeare to Lerner and Loewe. As Artistic Director for Interact Theatre Company, she has co-authored and produced fourteen commissioned plays and entertainments. At Shakespeare Theatre, where she is an instructor, Ms. Flye played Maria in **Twelfth Night**, Lady Montague in **Romeo and Juliet**, and Queen Margaret in **Richard III** with Stacey Keach. In 1992, Ms. Flye starred as Joyce Grenfell in **Joyce**, a collaboration between the Washington Stage Guild and Interact Theatre Company, for which she has received a Helen Hayes nomination. Opening in May of this year, she will star in the Washington premiere of Willy Russell's hit comedy **Shirley Valentine**, to be produced by Interact Theatre Company at Church Street Theatre. Her previous work with the 20th Century Consort includes the staging for "Eight Songs For A Mad King" earlier this season.

**TESSA DUNNING**, Costumes for **Tango**. Ms. Dunning has been associated with Interact Theatre Company for four years, as a director, stage manager, costume designer and publicist. She comes to Washington from Great Britain via Boston, where she worked with Peoples Theatre and WGBH Television. She has directed **Arms and the Man** for Montgomery Playhouse, **Pygmalion** and **Music Hall** for the British Embassy Players and **Company** for Unity Center. Ms. Dunning is Costume Consultant to the Georgetown Film Society.

**LINDA GARNER MILLER**, Movement Advisor for **Tango**, is an Associate Professor of Dance at George Mason University and the resident choreographer for Interact Theater Company. She has had a varied career as a performer, teacher, and choreographer, most recently choreographing **Carmen** for the Virginia Opera, and **The Gifts of St. Nicholas** for the Folger Consort in Washington Cathedral. Ms. Garner Miller was nominated for a Helen Hayes award for her choreography for Interact's **H.M.S. Pinafore**.

**LINDA S. EVANS**, Lighting Designer for **Tango**. For the past ten years, Ms. Evans has served as a lighting designer and technical director for the Smithsonian Institution, providing artistic and technical services for the variety of programs sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and the Performing Arts Division. She has served in the same capacity for exhibits at the Hirshhorn and the Air and Space Museum. Ms. Evans is the Technical Director for Fairfax County's Followspot Children's Theatre and is Interact Theatre Company's resident lighting designer.