



The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

March 12, 1994

**The Smithsonian Associates**  
presents



**Lecture-Discussion**

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort

**Concert**

“Haute Cuisine”

*La Création du monde, Opus 81*

DARIUS MILHAUD  
(1892-1974)

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

*Sonatine*

PIERRE BOULEZ  
b. 1925

Ms. Stern, Ms. Logan

**Intermission**

*Quatour pour la Fin du Temps*

OLIVIER MESSIAEN  
(1908-1992)

1. Liturgy of crystal
2. Vocalise for the Angel who announces the end of time
3. Abyss of the birds
4. Interlude
5. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus
6. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets
7. Jumble of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time
8. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Adkins, 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.

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**20th Century Consort**  
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

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Elisabeth Adkins, Violin  
David Hardy, Cello  
Loren Kitt, Clarinet  
Lynne Edelson Levine, Viola  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, Piano  
Sara Stern, Flute  
Jane Bowyer Stewart, Violin



**Saturday, 12 March 1994**  
**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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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.

# The Program

## DARIUS MILHAUD

### *La Création du monde, Opus 81*

Among the most prolific of twentieth-century composers, with a catalogue running well past 400 works, many of them quite large, Darius Milhaud absorbed music wherever he went and transmuted the received impressions into his own work. Having done so, he would move on to new territory. The mere fact that a work in one style might prove to be very popular was not enough to induce him to continue writing in that style; he also needed to find musical problems worth solving. Among his most successful works were those inspired by his encounters with various popular musical traditions during and immediately after the First World War. Two years in South America left an indelible impression on him, followed closely by the influence of American jazz, which began making its way to Europe via recordings long before musicians traveled there in person. Already in 1919 Milhaud composed the flip, cheeky, jazzy ballet *Le Boeuf sur le toit* as a musical depiction of an American speak-easy, though at that time he had never seen one. Most “serious” musicians of the twenties in the United States considered jazz a form of musical primitivism that was beneath contempt, a view that had as much to do with racism as with musical values. Any bibliography of writing about jazz in that period is filled with articles posing such trenchant questions as whether listening to jazz might not bring about the destruction of western civilization and all that was good and moral and wholesome, and whether jazz should be considered to have a place under the rubric of “music” at all. Milhaud’s own memoirs, *Notes Without Music*, recall an incident during his first American visit. He had given a lecture at Harvard, which was followed by a party given by Archibald T. Davison, a friend of the composer’s on the Harvard faculty:

This was right in the middle of Prohibition, and the tiniest authentic drink cost a small fortune. Whisky was served in teacups, which were filled underneath the table. Dr. Davison had chosen the Hotel Brunswick for the party, because it had an excellent jazz orchestra, and he knew I would like to hear it. When I arrived in New York, I had told the newspapermen interviewing me that European music was considerably influenced by American music. “But whose music?” they asked me; “Macdowell’s or Carpenter’s?” “Neither the one nor the other,” I answered, “I mean jazz.” They were filled with consternation, for at that time most American musicians had not realized the importance of jazz as an art form and relegated it to the dance hall. The headlines given to my interviews proved the astonishment caused by my statements: “Milhaud admires jazz” or “Jazz dictates the future of European music”. . . The jazz orchestra of the Hotel Brunswick was conducted by a young violinist called Reissman [sic; i.e., Leo Reisman], who got from his instrumentalists an extreme refinement of pianissimo tones, murmured notes, and

glancing chords, whisperings from the muted brass, and barely formulated moans from the saxophone, which had a highly individual flavor.

Later Milhaud had a chance to hear real New Orleans jazz played at a Harlem nightclub.

The music I heard was absolutely different from anything I had ever heard before and was a revelation to me. Against the beat of the drums the melodic lines crisscrossed in a breathless pattern of broken and twisted rhythms.

For the rest of his American stay, he frequented places where jazz could be heard, soaking up as much music as he could find. He took records, purchased in a Harlem shop, back to Europe with him, and resolved to use the new style in a chamber work. He had been scheduled to work with Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars on a ballet. The scenario by Cendrars drew from African folklore to tell a version of the creation; Léger’s designs drew inspiration from animal costumes worn by African dancers during religious rites.

At last, in *La Création du monde*, I had the opportunity I had been waiting for to use these elements of jazz to which I had devoted much study. I adopted the same orchestra as used in Harlem, seventeen solo instruments, and I made wholesale use of the jazz style to convey a purely classical feeling.

No one is likely to confuse Milhaud’s work with actual New Orleans jazz. The legato waves of melody at the opening come from a different musical world, though the saxophone adds a characteristic wail. But when the tempo speeds up into a rhythmic and bluesy fugue, the source of inspiration is beyond question. The ensuing sections return to the opening material and call up sultry lamenting melodies before breaking out in a still faster tempo with a four-bar rhythmic lick as an ostinato accompaniment, which builds to a kind of melodic free-for-all characteristic of New Orleans jazz. Earlier ideas, the sax’s opening melody, the fugue subject played tremolo on the flute, summarize the discourse in concluding this score, which remains one of the most successful examples of a rapprochement between symphony and jazz band ever written.

## PIERRE BOULEZ

### *Sonatine* for flute and piano

Pierre Boulez has been one of the world’s leading musical figures for more than three decades. As a boy he divided his attention between mathematics and music, and his father intended that he become an engineer. But he chose differently, and against his father’s will, he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he quickly found that the most interesting things were happening in Olivier Messiaen’s harmony class, which ranged far

beyond the restrictive limits of the normal conservatory curriculum. Boulez's alert mind, already trained in the clear paths of mathematics, sought always for what was genuinely original, and he made something of a reputation by decrying "new" works that he considered merely facile in their novelty. Perhaps his strongest statement came in the notorious, feisty essay "Schoenberg is Dead," which was not an obituary tribute to the recently deceased master, but an attack on those who continued his footsteps without, in Boulez's view, progressing beyond.

The *Sonatine* for flute and piano is one of Boulez's earliest works to have made a considerable splash. It was followed by two piano sonatas in the late '40s and the highly regarded *Soleil des Eaux* (1948); then came the premiere of *Le Marteau sans maître* in 1955 that made him internationally famous.

Over the years Boulez has withdrawn many of his pieces from circulation and reworked some of them into new forms. He is never satisfied that a composition is entirely "finished"; everything is to some extent "work in progress" as long as the mind that conceived it continues to function and to grow. This is one reason why his output is not exceptionally large, although it includes works for chorus and orchestra, for orchestra alone, for a wide range of chamber ensembles, for one or two pianos, and for electronic media.

For some years Boulez's composing was slowed by his increasingly active life as a conductor. Like many composers who conduct, he began largely out of self-defense, to be sure that his own works would be properly rehearsed and performed. But he quickly developed a reputation as an unusually thoughtful proponent of certain composers, especially of many twentieth-century figures. His conducting technique is up to any complication that a composer can devise, and even very difficult scores are "sorted out" under his baton—in some cases for the first time. As music director of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and of the New York Philharmonic, he made a series of important recordings that remain monuments of their kind.

In recent years he has concentrated his activities more at IRCAM (the *Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique* in Paris), the center for all kinds of experimentation in music, of which he is director. But he is also actively composing again, as well as making a home for musicians of pioneering minds from all over the world.

Boulez composed his *Sonatine* for flute and piano in 1946 on a commission from Jean-Pierre Rampal, who, however, never played the work, finding it too extreme for his taste. Boulez described the work as having been influenced in its conception by Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony, Opus 9*; the conception in question was the metamorphosis of a single theme throughout the work. In musical style, the two pieces had virtually nothing in common. As Boulez explained to Joan Peyser, "*The Chamber Symphony* is in a post-romantic style, a style that had no effect on me at all." The story of the publication of the *Sonatine* links Boulez, the atavist of total serialism, with a composer most people would find his exact opposite, John Cage. For a few years in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the two men found one another's music very interesting (their correspon-

dence has recently been published). Cage was better connected than Boulez at the time, and when he came with an offer from Henry Cowell to publish Boulez's music through Cowell's *New Music Editions* in New York, it put just enough pressure on Heugel and Amphion, the French publishers who had been dawdling over this music for some time, to agree to publish everything Boulez had ready to put out at that time.

The *Sonatine* has always been regarded as a phenomenally difficult work, with high-speed wide leaps, contrasting articulations that must be performed almost without break, and a presentation that is athematic. It is a work of prodigious invention with regard to rhythm, sonority, texture, and color. The pitches are carefully arranged in structural terms, but never shaped so as to suggest a recognizable or memorable theme; that is simply not what this music was about. Along with the first piano sonata and a few other works, the *Sonatine* was much discussed as marking the arrival of a significant new voice in postwar composition.

## OLIVIER MESSIAEN

### *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps*

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was one of the most influential composers of this century. His taste for music was awakened by a Christmas gift he received in 1916—scores of *The Damnation of Faust* and *Don Giovanni*, a remarkable gift for an eight-year-old! Two years later his family moved to Nantes and he took formal instruction in harmony. His teacher, Jehan de Gibon, gave him the score of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Messiaen has described his encounter with this work as "a real bombshell . . . probably the most decisive influence of my life."

All his life Messiaen was an active student of rhythm, the aspect of music in which he perhaps made his most important contributions—not only rhythms that have been employed in traditional European concert music, but also the rhythms of the Greeks and Hindus. But perhaps the central fact of his life, and one that stands at the core of a work like *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps* [*Quartet for the End of Time*] is the one Messiaen described this way:

I have the good fortune to be a Catholic; I was born a believer . . . A number of my works are dedicated to shedding light on the theological truths of the Catholic faith. That is the most important aspect of my music . . . perhaps the only one I shall not be ashamed of in the hour of death.

Certainly the circumstances of the work's composition are as harrowing as can be imagined, and needful of some kind of faith to see its completion. In June 1940, a small group of French soldiers was captured by the Germans between Verdun and Nancy; Messiaen was part of that group, and was distinguished from the rest of the captives by the fact that he carried with him in his kit bag a series of miniature scores ranging from Bach to Berg. When he was sent to Stalag VIII A in Saxony, he was allowed to keep his music. In the same camp, Messiaen met a violinist,

Jean Le Boulaire, a clarinetist, Henri Akoka, and a cellist, Etienne Pasquier. Boulaire and Akoka, astonishingly enough, had their instruments with them, and Pasquier was soon presented with a cello lacking a string. Messiaen composed a piece for them, which became the fourth movement (Interlude) of the *Quartet for the End of Time*. Soon he envisioned a much larger work, inspired by the Biblical vision of the Apocalypse (a vision that must have seemed to many caught up in the horrors of the war to be coming all too true).

The score was finished by January 1941. Messiaen had composed a piano part for his piece, not knowing whether a piano could be found. But an old, out-of-tune upright was found, and the composer joined his four colleagues in captivity in the first performance, which took place before an audience of five thousand prisoners from France, Belgium, Poland, and elsewhere, a true cross-section of humanity, on a bitterly cold January 15, 1941. Messiaen preceded the performance with remarks on the symbolism of the music, and then played the work. Messiaen later noted that no other audience had ever shown greater attention to or understanding of his music.

The work's title refers first of all to the apocalyptic vision in the tenth chapter of Revelation, of "an angel, full of strength, descending from the sky, clad with a cloud, covered with a rainbow . . . [H]e lifted his hand to the sky and swore by Him who lives in the centuries of centuries saying: *"There shall be no time."* But in Messiaen's music the title has a technical sense, too, a freeing of the music from a regular pulse either through very slow tempi or irregular rhythms. The scoring changes from movement to movement, so that the variety of colors is quite remarkable. Messiaen's fondness for various kinds of symbolism shows in the number of movements (eight is the number of the Infinite and Endless) and in particular musical gestures linked to Biblical images. The very first entrance of clarinet and violin are marked "like a bird," the earliest instance in Messiaen's output of his fascination with birdsong. The composer's own comments on the music follow; except where otherwise noted, each movement calls for all four instruments:

1. **Liturgical of crystal.** Four in the morning, the waking of the birds; a solo blackbird extemporizes, surrounded by sounding dusts, by a halo of trills lost high up in the trees. Transpose this into the religious level: you get the harmonious silence of Heaven.

2. **Vocalise for the Angel who announces the end of Time.** The first and third parts (very short) conjure the power of this strong angel covered with a rainbow and clad with clouds, who sets one foot on the sea and the other on the earth. The middle section [without clarinet] brings the impalpable harmonies of heaven. The piano's soft cascade of blue-orange chords surround the near-plainsong-like chant of the strings with their distant chime.

3. **Abyss of the birds.** (For solo clarinet.) The abyss is Time, with its sadness and weariness. The birds are the opposite of Time: our longing for light, stars, rainbows, and jubilating vocalises.

4. **Interlude.** (Without piano.) A Scherzo, more extrovert than the other movements, with which, however, it has certain melodic ties.

5. **Praise to the Eternity of Jesus.** (Cello and piano.) Jesus is here considered as the Word. A long and infinitely slow phrase of the cello magnifies with love and reverence the eternity of the powerful yet mild Word, "whose years shall not get used up." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Gospel according to John, 1:1)

6. **Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets.** (All instruments in unison.) Rhythmically, this is the most characteristic of the eight movements. Use of the added value, of augmented and diminished rhythms, of non-retrogradable rhythms... [A technical discussion of rhythm occurs here] Listen especially towards the end of the piece to the theme's fortissimo by augmentation, with the changes in register of its different notes.

7. **Jumble of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time.** This brings back some things from the second movement. The Angel full of strength appears, and above all the rainbow that covers him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, of all luminous and tonal vibration). In his dreams, the author hears and sees classed chords and melodies, familiar colors and shapes; then, after this transitory stage, he passes into the unreal and undergoes with ecstasy a wheeling, a giratory compenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These swords of fire, these orange-blue flows of lava, these sudden stars: that is the jumble, these are the rainbows.

8. **Praise to the Immortality of Jesus.** (Violin and piano.) A broad violin solo, the counterpart of the fifth movement's cello solo. This second praise is more specifically addressed to the second aspect of Jesus, to Jesus the Man, to the Word that has become flesh, the immortal reborn one who imparts us his life.

Messiaen's imagery, his coloristic flair (hearing chords, for example, as "blue-orange"), his rhythmic variety and energy, and his expressive range, no less than the dramatic account of its composition and first performance, have made the *Quartet for the End of Time* one of the seminal scores in the composer's output and one of the most extraordinary chamber works of the twentieth century.

—Program notes by Steven Ledbetter

# 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.

**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. Performances in Washington have included recitals at the British Embassy, Wolf Trap and the Phillips Collection. He also performs with the Opus 3 Trio. Mr. Hardy has recorded for Melodyia.

**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. Currently, Mr. Kendall is the Director of the Music Division at Boston University School for the Arts. He regularly conducts the symphony and chamber orchestras 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 has performed with the Emerson String Quartet in their series at the Smithsonian.

**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 the National Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Virginia Youth Symphony, and the New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony.

**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 Zuckerman, Ransom Wilson, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. She has recorded for Pro Arte Records, VAI Audio, and Delos. Ms. Logan is the pianist of the Opus 3 Trio.

**SARA STERN**, Flutist, specializes 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.

**JANE BOWYER STEWART**, Violinist, joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1981 and is a first violinist. She earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Music degrees from Yale University. In Washington, she has been a guest artist with the National Musical Arts Ensemble and a member of the Manchester String Quartet. As a founding member of the Chamber Soloists of Washington, she has recorded for compact disc.