

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

20/1 CENTURY CONSORT

November 4, 2000

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates
presents

20/1 Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Peter Becker, bass
Paul S. Cigan, clarinet
Alice Giles, guest harp
Thomas Jones, percussion
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Sara Stern, flute
Rachel Young, cello

Susan Schilperoort, manager
Curt Wittig, electronics
Marcus Wyche, stage manager

Saturday, November 4, 2000
Pre-Concert Discussion 4:00 p.m.
Concert 5:00 p.m.

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden



The 20th Century Consort's 1999-2000 performance series is sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and funded in part by generous contributions from The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Dimick Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Friends of the 20th Century Consort.



The Smithsonian Associates

Pre-Concert Discussion

Christopher Kendall, conductor;
Jessica Krash, Mark Kuss, Paul Schoenfield, composers

Program

"Election Special"

Details at 11 Jessica Krash
1. Detail at 11
2. Our Far-flung Correspondent
3. Traffic and Weather Together on the 8's (scherzo)
4. Public/private

Ms. Logan

Sextet Paul Schoenfield
I. Dedication
II. A Walk in the Woods
III. The Return

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Cigan, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall,
Ms. Logan, Ms. Stern, Ms. Young

Intermission

Sequenza II Luciano Berio
Ms. Giles

The Show (Donald Barthelme). Mark Kuss
IV. Overture
V. The Amazing Numbered Man (Martin Gardner)
VI. A Short Reprise
VII. A Little About the Sulking Lady
VIII. Her Song (Emily Dickenson)
IX. Some of the Other Acts
X. Reprise
XI. The Dark Side

- XII. The Bitchslap Aria (Dr. Dre)
- XIII. The Grave Robbers
- XIV. A Short Diversion: Themes and Variations; The Weiner Song
- XV. Where We Left Off
- XVI. A Moment of Reflection
- XVII. The List of Fools
- XVIII. Reprise
- XIX. The Moral

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Cigan, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall,
Ms. Logan, Ms. Stern, Ms. Young



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

Program Notes

by Steven Ledbetter

JESSICA KRASH (b. 1959)

Details at Eleven

Pianist and composer Jessica Krash was born in Washington, D.C.. After graduating with high honors from Harvard College, she earned a master's degree in piano from Juilliard and a doctorate in composition from the University of Maryland. Her piano teachers have included Patricia Zander, Nadia Reisenberg, and Ylida Novik. In composition she worked with Earl Kim and Lawrence Moss. In addition, she has done chamber music work with Joel Krosnick, Sandor Vegh, and Leon Kirchner.

Now on the faculty of George Washington University, she is also director of the Washington chapter of the American Composers Forum. Her music has been performed in traditional and experimental settings in New York City, Boston, and Washington, among others. In the Washington area, she has been performed by such new-music groups as the Contemporary Music

Forum, the Capital Composers Alliance, No Noise Reduction, and crossCurrents. Such acclaimed artists as cellist Tanya Anisimova, violinist Ian Swenson, saxophone Gary Louie, and soprano Martha Elliott have premiered her work. She has worked with several choreographers, including Beth Davis, Nancy Havlik, Tony Powell, and Clara Maxwell. As a pianist she has taken part in chamber music performances with string players including Kolja Blacher, Igor Gavrysh, Ian Swenson, Tanya Anisimova, Ryan Brown, and Elizabeth Anderson, and she has recorded a piano work composed for her by Lawrence Moss.

The title of *Details at Eleven* immediately conjures up, for present-day Americans, the image of network news, particularly the "teaser" designed to attract the viewer to a forthcoming broadcast. Originally the work consisted of just the first movement, which bears the title. But, according to the composer, "Christopher Kendall asked me to write more of it." So, taking the cue from the approach of the first movement, she expanded the piece to its current four movements, all of which have something to do with our experience of the news media—including print (the title of the second movement comes from *The New Yorker*) and radio (third movement)—and the sometimes instant transition between the serious and the absurd, the presumed substance of the broadcast or article and the commercial advertising that pays for it. Loath to give too much away before a hearing of the piece, Jessica Krash provides the following brief comment to direct the listener's attention:

Structures that we take for granted in the presentation of the news are like some of the preoccupations in postmodern art (fragments, interruptions, odd or absurd juxtapositions, mixtures of cultures) but these are also metaphors for personal and interpersonal experiences.

—Jessica Krash

PAUL SCHOENFIELD (b. 1947)

Sextet

Detroit-born Paul Schoenfield currently lives in Cleveland, Ohio, having divided his time in recent years between Ohio and Israel. He is one of an increasing number of composers whose music 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 mixes in a single piece ideas

that grew up in entirely different worlds, making them talk to each other, so to speak, and delighting in the surprises their interaction evokes. (Who would imagine Wagner's *Tannhäuser* turning up in a country fiddle piece? But it happens, in one of Schoenfield's earliest works to be recorded, *Three Country Fiddle Pieces for violin and piano*.) Schoenfield is a pianist and composer who, he says, "ran away at 16" from his native town; he studied at Carnegie-Mellon Institute and the University of Arizona. After living in Minnesota for about six years, he moved to Ohio, where he was on the faculty of the University of Akron. Schoenfield's shorter chamber works with characteristic titles—*Three Country Fiddle Tunes*, *Vaudeville*, and *Cafe Music*—and longer pieces such as the piano concerto often refer to popular styles of entertainment music, even though Schoenfield transmutes them clearly into concert works—serious compositions with a sense of humor. The score to be performed here is a slight revision (the composer describes it as "mostly touching up details") of the original previously performed by the 20th Century Consort.

The composer has provided the following note about the *Sextet*:

The *Sextet*, composed in the spring and summer of 1993, reflects a certain self-indulgence on my part in that it is simply a musical transcription drawn from personal reflections. The result is perhaps more akin to a diary than an actual musical composition, and of course, the whole process is closer to film scoring than to genuine writing for the concert hall.

The work is cast in three separate parts, but it will be obvious to the listener that all three of these commingle the same material and musical processes. The first part (*Dedication*) provides a setting and introduces various personalities and situations appearing throughout. The second part (*A Walk in the Woods*) is the heart of the piece. It is a mini piano concerto cast as a set of variations, and portrays the turbulent pondering which can occasionally interrupt an otherwise relaxing stroll. The short final movement (*The Return*) merely reflects upon the first two and serves jointly as a summary and a farewell.

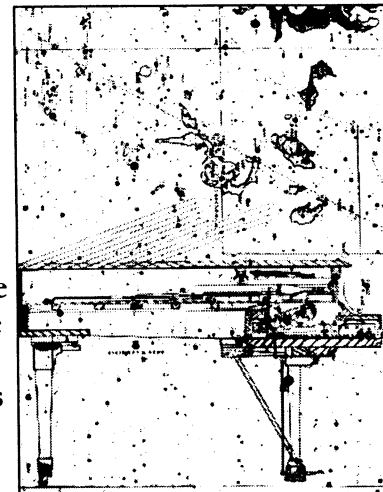
I am most grateful to the Minnesota Commissioning Club* for their sponsorship of this project, and give a special thanks to Jack and Linda Hoeschler who kindly allowed me the use of their home in order to complete the writing.

— Paul Schoenfield

*Charlie Boone, Carol Heen, Jack and Linda Hoeschler, Samuel and Thelma Hunter, Nick Nash, Karen Lundholm, David and Judy Ranheim, Fred and Gloria Sewell

LUCIANO BERIO (b. 1925) *Sequenza II, for harp* (1963)

When his opera *La vera storia* was premiered at La Scala in March 1982, Luciano Berio told a reporter for the London Times, "When the work is properly staged, you should have the impression in the second part that the music is constantly suggesting theatre without ever quite achieving it." Even in Berio's abstract instrumental works for orchestra or for soloist, the music is intensely theatrical in conception; the performer must be in possession of a superlative technique while pressing the capabilities of the instrument to its utmost.



Born in Oneglia (Imperia), Italy, in 1925, Berio grew up in a family where 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, when in his early twenties, 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 then mostly conservative. The leading composers (with one important exception) had spurned twelve-tone techniques in favor of more eclectic approaches. The sole exception was Luigi Dallapiccola. His influence on Berio was significant, though, ironically, the two Italian composers had to travel to Massachusetts to meet. In the summer of 1951 Berio was composition fellow 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.

The whole range of American music-making to which Berio was introduced in the United States had a striking influence on his work. He became interested in electronic music after hearing the first tape compositions of Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky; this led to his creation, with Bruno Maderna, of the first electronic music studio in Italy. A performance that he gave with John Cage

in his concert series opened up to him still further the possibilities of a music apart from rigid precompositional plans. According to Berio, the musical work is not so much an end in itself, an object that requires nothing more (he calls this "the Beethovenian concept of art"), but rather something that occurs in a relationship with each performer and listener, who have the responsibility to seek out that relationship, to find in this music an answer to the classic question posed by the eighteenth-century Frenchman who asked, "Sonata, what do you want of me?"

His own output ranged widely from works for various solo instruments to large-scale works for orchestra, and even operas. Among his best known and most frequently performed compositions are the many pieces composed for varying solo instruments under the overall title *Sequenza*, the first of which was written for flute in 1958. He has followed this up with further works for harp, piano, trombone, viola, oboe, percussion, and violin, among others. Each of these works is at once a tribute to the performer for whom it was composed, a showpiece of instrumental technique (often involving novel sounds and approaches to its playing), and an homage to the history of the instrument and how it has been played over the centuries. In the case of *Sequenza II* (1963), Berio knew that most listeners approach the instrument thinking of it with a memory of its use by the French Impressionist composers, as he told interviewer Rossana Dalmonte:

as if its most characteristic feature were that it could be played by half-naked girls with long, blond hair, who confine themselves to drawing seductive glissandi from it. But the harp has another, harder, stronger and more determined side to it, one which the modern school of Salzedo has helped establish. *Sequenza II* aims to focus on some of these characteristics, and to make them appear simultaneously: at certain moments it must sound like a forest with the wind blowing through it.

MARK KUSS (b. 1960)

The Show

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 armé* was performed by the Twentieth-Century Consort). Since then, other works, including *Contralumina*, *Leaves*, *Power Synth*, *Folk* (and pseudo folk) *Songs*, and *Piano Trio* have also been heard on this series. He earned his doctorate at Duke University in North Carolina and, after teaching for a time St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina, moved to the University of Southern Connecticut in New Haven. In addition to being regularly heard in the programs of the Twentieth Century Consort, Kuss's music has been performed by the Tanglewood Institute Orchestra, the Folger Consort, the Yale University Wind Ensemble, and at the MacDowell Colony, the Swannanoa Music Festival and the Monadnock Music Festival. A solo CD of his work will appear from Gasparo Records this fall.

Kuss is a member of a generation of musicians for whom music history classes included excellent recordings and performances of the whole historical realm of European music and also began to extend to non-Western and folk traditions. Today's young composers have available to them all of history and the whole world of music, and they have begun to draw upon this unprecedented wealth of resources for new works. The range and variety of his earlier music performed on this series previously helps explain why Christopher Kendall thought of him as an excellent composer to set this particular text.

As the composer explains:

The Show is based upon a text of similar name by Donald Barthelme. This text, which first appeared in the late '80s in *The New Yorker*, has become a cult classic for the postmodern "be" and "would be" literary elite. The text (and text it is, not really poetry or prose) is a brilliantly funny critique of high modernism and all of its excesses delivered in the driest, flattest manner imaginable. It is a piece filled with strange images, odd associations, quirky syntax, faux naive sincerity, controlled anarchy, silliness, seriousness, etc., etc., etc. It is a true literary sideshow.

Christopher Kendall approached me about setting "The Show" to music last January. I said sure. I reread the piece and realized that a

song cycle was lurking around inside but was not going to give itself up easily. Certain texts are “musical.” “The Show” is not. (The natural rhythms of the text are irregular and off-kilter—beautifully consistent with the content of the piece.) I spent the summer on it and remember with pain and pleasure setting moments like this: “There are only five regular convex solids...” or: “Gonna bitchslap ma skankyass ho...”

My piece not only uses the Barthelme text but also imports texts from other sources, including Emily Dickinson, Dr. Dre, and others. The form of the piece is episodic but is bound by a constantly recurring musical entity akin to either the promenades in Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* or the title cards that appear between scenes in a silent film. Musical languages and styles alter in quick succession—from Shostakovich to Bartók to Brahms to Purcell to Schoenberg to Schwanter, Oscar Mayer, Glass, Gilbert and Sullivan, and so on.

A few of my favorite moments: Brahmsian variations of the “Wiener song” and the shift from a twelve-tone palindromic structure to the G&S “Got a little list.”

I was struck by the humor, accessibility, and profundity of the original Barthelme piece. I hope my piece has a bit of this in it too.

—Mark Kuss

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THE FOLGER CONSORT

December 15–17 (4 performances)

A Coventry Carol

in Gaston Hall, Georgetown University

with *Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford*

Robert Eisenstein, Laurence Dreyfus, Wendy Gillespie, Markku Luolajan-Mikkola, and Jonathan Manson, viols; Webb Wiggins, organ

Music for Christmas by William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, and others.



January 12 & 13, 2001 (2 performances only)

Angelus at Washington National Cathedral

Johana Arnold, Rosa Lamoreaux, & Milagro Vargas, sopranos

Robert Eisenstein & Margriet Tindemans, medieval fiddles, recorder

Christopher Kendall, lute, add harp, citole

Scott Reiss, recorders, dulcimer

Medieval English music in a magnificent Gothic setting.

Pre-concert discussions, hosted by radio and television personality

Robert Aubry Davis with guest scholars and musicians, precede each Friday performance.

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About the Artists

ELISABETH ADKINS, violin, is Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. She received her doctorate from Yale University, where she studied with Oscar Shumsky. She is active as a recitalist, concerto soloist, and chamber musician. Recent appearances include concertos with the National Symphony, the Springfield Symphony, and the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, and recitals at the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery, and the Phillips Collection. She is a founding member of the American Chamber Players; her recordings with the group can be heard on Koch International Classics. The daughter of noted musicologists, she and her seven siblings comprise the Adkins String Ensemble, which gave its debut concert in 1993 and has completed a CD recording. Ms. Adkins is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.

PETER BECKER, bass-baritone, performs opera, oratorio and chamber music throughout the U.S. and abroad. His last appearance with the 20th Century Consort was a memorable performance of Peter Maxwell Davies' "Eight Songs for a Mad King." He has worked with leading period-instrument ensembles including the Folger Consort, Tafelmusik, The Smithsonian Chamber Players, Project Ars Nova, Four Nations Ensemble, The Baltimore Consort, and Consort Royal, as well as at a number of festivals including Spoleto (Italy and U.S.), Caramoor, Utrecht, Hong Kong, Jerusalem and others. His theater credits include engagements with Canadian Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, The New York Shakespeare Festival, Teatro Opera di Roma, The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Lyric Theater and Opera Manhattan. He has performed Kurt Weill's "Seven Deadly Sins" with the New York Philharmonic under Kurt Masur, the Philadelphia and Montreal Orchestras under Charles Dutoit, the Brooklyn Philharmonic and Vienna Radio Orchestra under Dennis Russell Davies and the San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas. Mr. Becker has recorded for Teldec, Elektra, Decca-London, New Albion and Dorian. A leading interpreter of medieval song repertoires, he is featured on *Medieval Lyric*, a series of recordings supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Mt. Holyoke College.

PAUL CIGAN, clarinet, began his musical education at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music studying under David Breeden and David Neuman, both of the San Francisco Symphony. After transferring to Temple University, he received a Bachelors degree under Anthony Gigliotti, former principal clarinetist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. While in Philadelphia, Paul performed with the Concerto Soloists Chamber Orchestra. He has performed as principal clarinetist with the San Antonio Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Virginia Symphony, and the Sarasota Opera. Other orchestras he has performed with include the National Repertory

Orchestra, New World Symphony, and the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. Currently a member of the National Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Cigan has also performed as chamber musician with members of the National Symphony, the National Musical Arts and the 20th Century Consort.

ALICE GILES, guest harpist, first attracted international notice in 1982 when she won First Prize in Israel's International Harp Competition. A student of June Loney in her native Australia and Alice Chalifoux in the USA, she gave her solo debut at the Merkin Hall in 1983. She was invited by Rudolf Serkin for three summers at the Marlboro Music Festival and has been engaged at numerous other festivals internationally. She has given solo recitals at Wigmore Hall, New York's 92nd Street Y, Alte Oper in Frankfurt and Gulbenkian Lisbon, and has performed concertos with the Danish Radio Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra Taiwan, the Badische Staatskapelle, all the ABC Symphony Orchestras of Australia and many others. Alice Giles has given many first performances of music for the harp, and is considered by Luciano Berio as the foremost interpreter of his *Sequenza II*. She has taken part in many Berio tributes including his 70th birthday celebration at the 92nd Street Y. Ms. Giles has a harp/piano duo "Duo Corda" with her husband, pianist Arnan Wiesel.

THOMAS JONES, percussion, graduated from the University of Maryland and is a freelance musician who enjoys playing many styles of music. He plays drums and is percussionist 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.

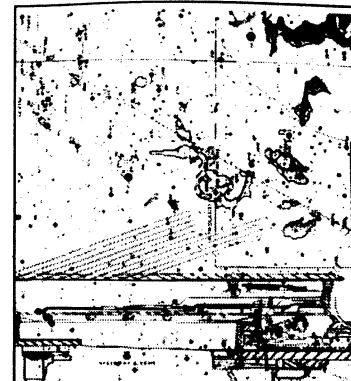
CHRISTOPHER KENDALL, Artistic Director and Conductor, is Director of the School of Music at the University of Maryland and founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort. From 1987 to 1992, he was Assistant, then Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony, and from 1993-1996 directed the music programs at Boston University and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Guest conducting engagements include the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Boston's Collage and Dinosaur Annex, New York Chamber Symphony, Annapolis Symphony, Dayton Philharmonic, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the Symphony, Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of the Juilliard School. His performances can be heard on the Delos, CRI, Bard, ASV, and Smithsonian Collection labels.

LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN, piano, is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where she received both Bachelor and Master 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 served as acting principal pianist for

the National Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared as soloist with both the Baltimore and Richmond Symphonies. As an established chamber musician, Ms. Logan has performed across the globe with such artists as Julius Baker, Eugenia Zucherman, 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, flute, has performed much of this century's most important solo and chamber music and has premiered and recorded significant new compositions as solo flutist with the 20th Century Consort. Other positions she currently holds are Principal Flute with the Virginia Chamber Orchestra and the Washington Concert Opera. Ms. Stern's musical evolution has included such diverse turns as the Afro-Cuban "Kwane and the Kwanditos," the San Francisco street trio "Arcangelo," recitals at Carnegie Hall and the Terrace Theater, and guest artist appearances with the Emerson String Quartet and the American Chamber Players. She is also a member of the flute and harp duo "Stern and Levalier" with NSO Principal Harpist Dotian Levalier, and solo flutist with the woodwind-based "Eastwind Consort."

RACHEL YOUNG, cellist with the National Symphony Orchestra, has appeared as soloist with the National Chamber Orchestra, the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, the New England Conservatory Chamber Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra's Summer Youth Ensemble. Prior to her appointment to the National Symphony she was the Principal Cellist of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra and founder of the Isosceles Duo. Ms. Young has presented recitals at Strathmore Hall, the German and Austrian Embassies, New England Conservatory, and the Anderson House Museum, as well as solo appearances at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the John F. Kennedy Center. She has appeared as a chamber artist with the Twentieth Century Consort, the National Musical Arts Society, the Embassy Series, the Washington Music Ensemble, the Contemporary Music Forum, on WGMS Radio and at the White House. Ms. Young received the Bachelor of Music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music where she studied with Laurence Lesser, and her master's degree is in cello performance with Stephen Kates at the Peabody Conservatory.



20/1 Century Consort 2000–2001 Concert Series Upcoming Concerts

Saturday, Dec. 2, 2000 "Holy the Firm"

Susan Narucki will be guest soprano for a program including George Crumb's "Little Suite for Christmas," John Harbison's "Variation," Mario Davidovsky's "Quartetto" (1987) and the premiere of James Primosch's "Holy the Firm."

Saturday, January 27, 2001 "New Millennium Blues"

New works by David Froom and Bruce MacCombie will be performed, along with the premiere of Bruce Wolosoff's "Blues for the New Millennium."

Saturday, March 10, 2001 "Diamonds in the Sky"

Lucy Shelton, guest soprano, will join the Consort in performing new works by James Fry and Margorie Merryman, as well as Luciano Berio's "Sequenza" (soprano) and Thomas Albert's "Thirteen Ways."

April 21, 2001 "Chamber Potluck"

Guest mezzo-soprano Milagro Vargas will be part of a program including chamber music by Luciano Berio and chamber symphonies by Stephen Jaffe (premiere), Maurice Wright and Arnold Schoenberg.

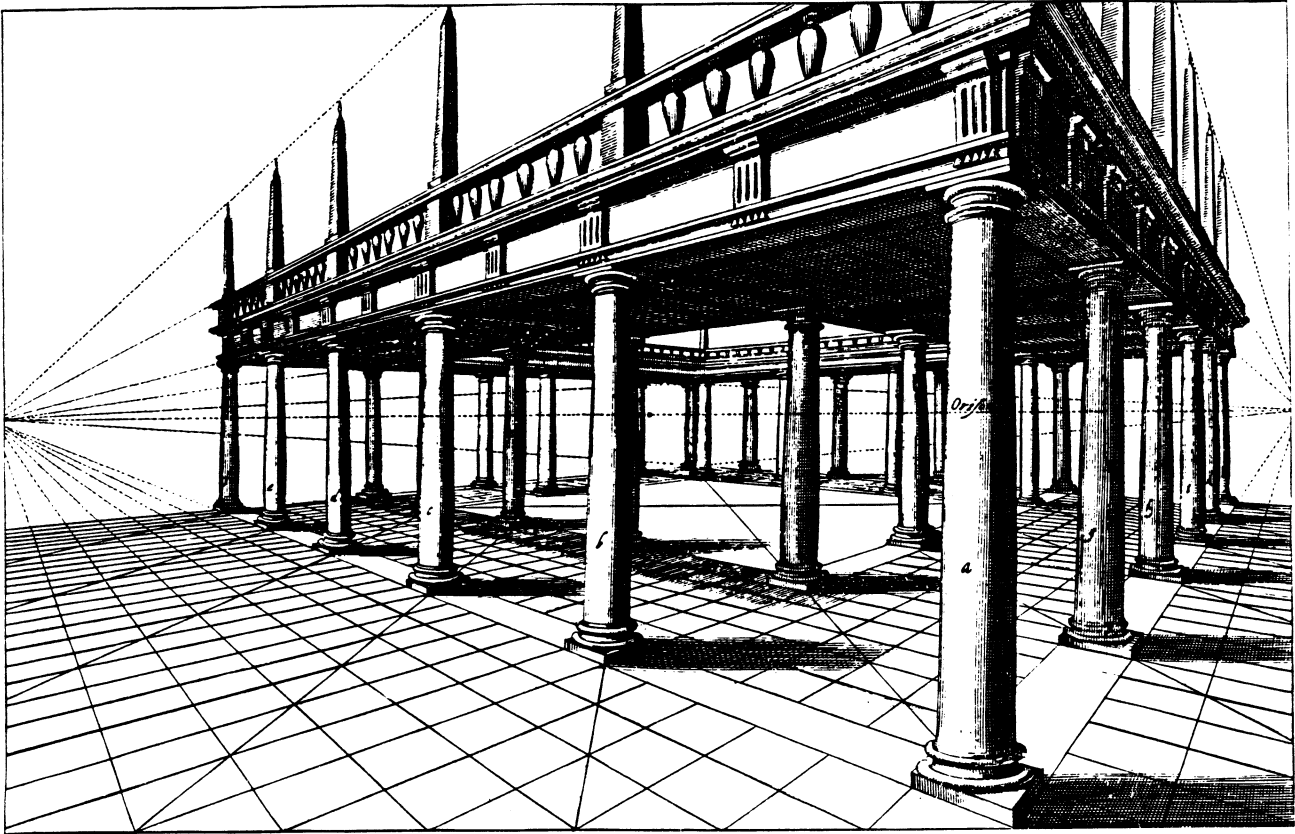
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Nancy B. Dalzell	Dotian Levalier	Robert & Carol Schwartz
Jon Deak	Blanche Levenberg	Henry S. Shields
Dennis Deloria & Suzanne	David Liptak	Anne Simon
Thouvenelle	Sherry & Wilbert Mahoney	Diane Smart
Donna & John Donaldson	Dorothy Marschak	David & Louise Smeltzer
Natalie & Grahm Dunlop	Nicholas Maw & Maija Hay	Anne M. Sprague
Peter & Margo Dunn	Bruce & Mara Mayor	Doris Tennyson
Frank K. Eggleston	John McCarthy	Michael Toman & Deta
Robert Eisenstein	David S. McCullough	Davis
David Elliott & Pauline Tang	Ruth McDiarmid	Sherry Walker
Diane Epperson & Keith	Helen McNeill	Robert & Margaret Ward
Roberts	Andrew & Janice Molchon	Gail Wein
Yana & Doug Feith	Lanning Moldauer	Richard & Beatrice Wernick
Mary Lu & H.F. Freeman	Claire & Morris Moses	Jean McC. Wilkins
David Froom & Eliza Garth	Phyllis F. Namrow	Frances Wright
Gerard & Jane Gold	Patricia L. Orend	Louise and Wendel Yale
Walter & Brent Goo	Victoria O'Reilly	Compiled March 2000

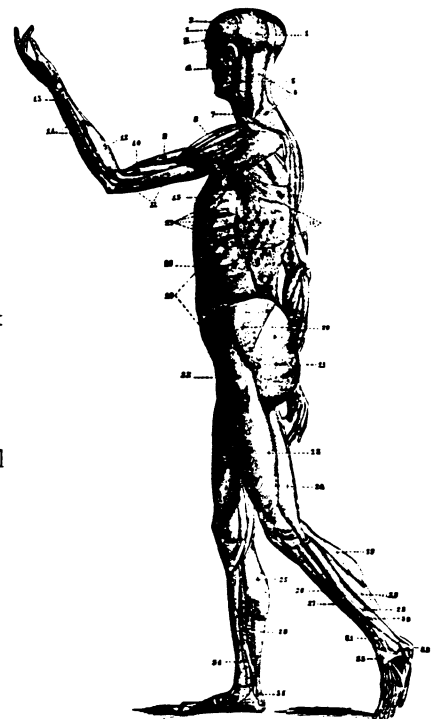
The Show

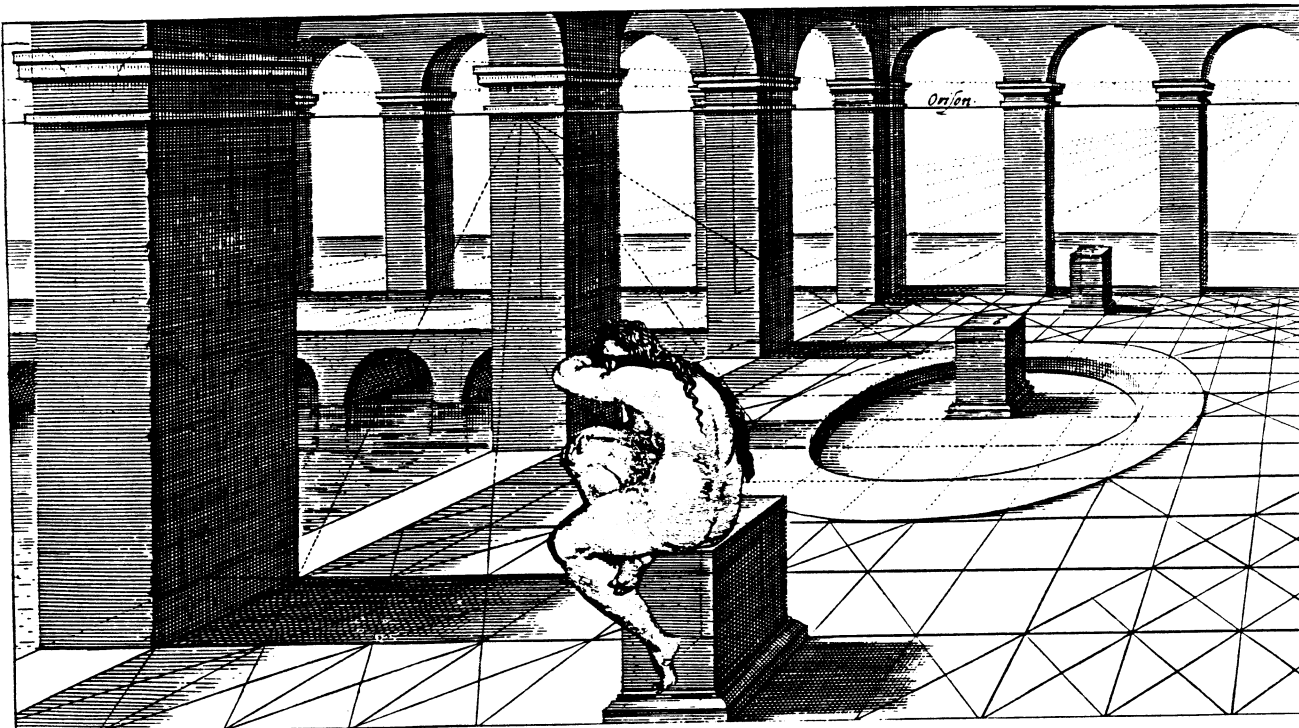


In the abandoned palazzo, weeds and old blankets filled the rooms. The palazzo was in bad shape. We cleaned the abandoned palazzo for ten years. We scoured the stones. The splendid architecture was refurbished and painted. The doors and windows were dealt with. Then we were ready for the show.



The noble and empty spaces were perfect for our purposes. The first act we hired was the amazing Numbered Man. He was numbered from one to thirty-five, and every part moved. And he was genial and polite, despite the stresses to which his difficult métier subjected him. He never failed to say "Hello" and "Good-bye" and "Why not?" We were happy to have him in the show.





Then, the Sulking Lady was obtained. She showed us her back. That was the way she felt. She had always felt that way, she said. She had felt that way since she was four years old.

We obtained other attractions—a Singing Sword and a Stone Eater. Tickets and programs were prepared. Buckets of water were placed about, in case of fire. Silver strings tethered the loud-roaring strong-stinking animals.

The lineup for opening night included:

A startlingly handsome man
A Grand Cham
A tulip craze
The Prime Rate
Edgar Allan Poe
A colored light

We asked ourselves: How can we improve the show?



We auditioned an explosion.



There were a lot of situations where men were being evil to women—dominating them and eating their food. We put those situations in the show.

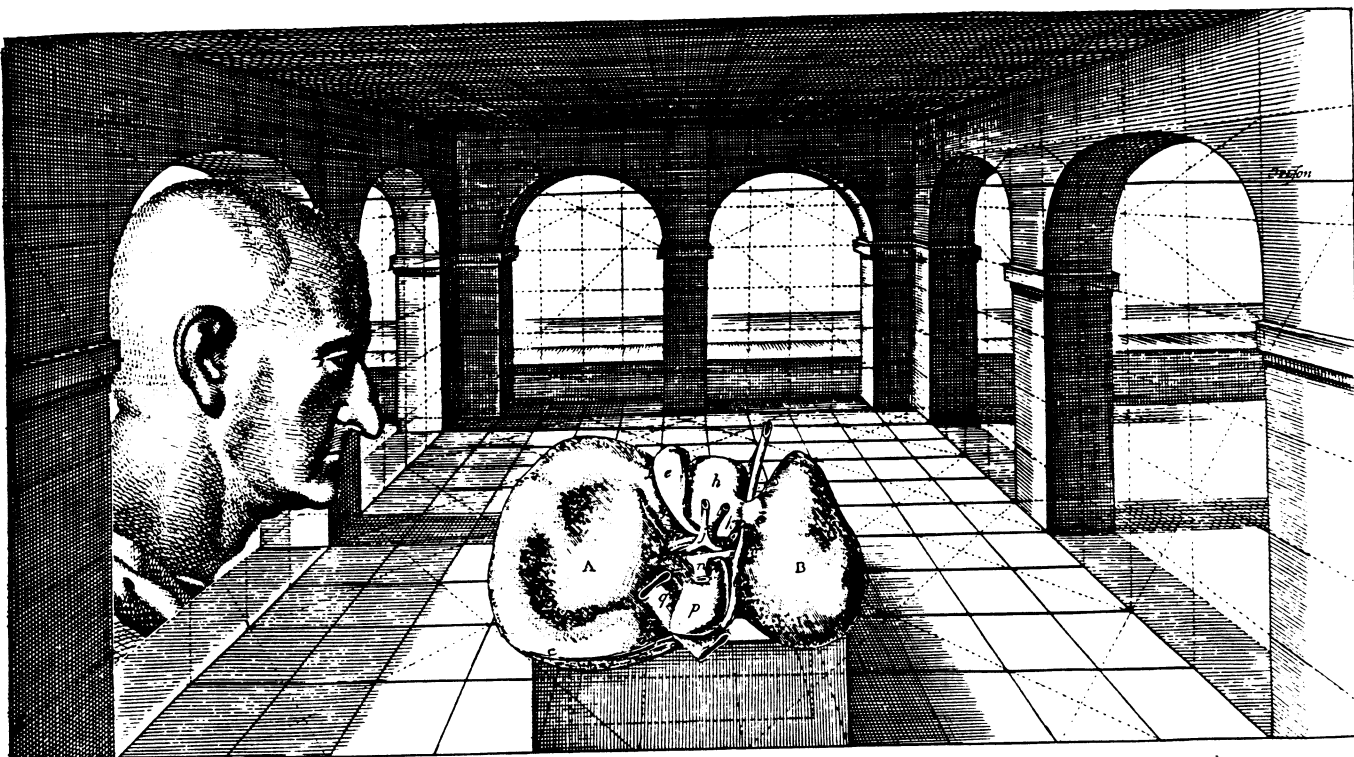


In the summer of the show, grave robbers appeared in the show. Famous graves were robbed, before your eyes. Winding-sheets were unwound and things best forgotten were remembered. Sad themes were played by the band, bereft of its mind by the death of its tradition. In the soft evening of the show, a troupe of agoutis performed tax evasion, atop tall, swaying yellow poles. Before your eyes.

The trapeze artist with whom I had an understanding . . . The moment when she failed to catch me . . .

Did she really try? I can't recall her ever failing to catch anyone she was really fond of. Her great muscles are too deft for that. Her great muscles at which we gaze through heavy-lidded eyes . . .

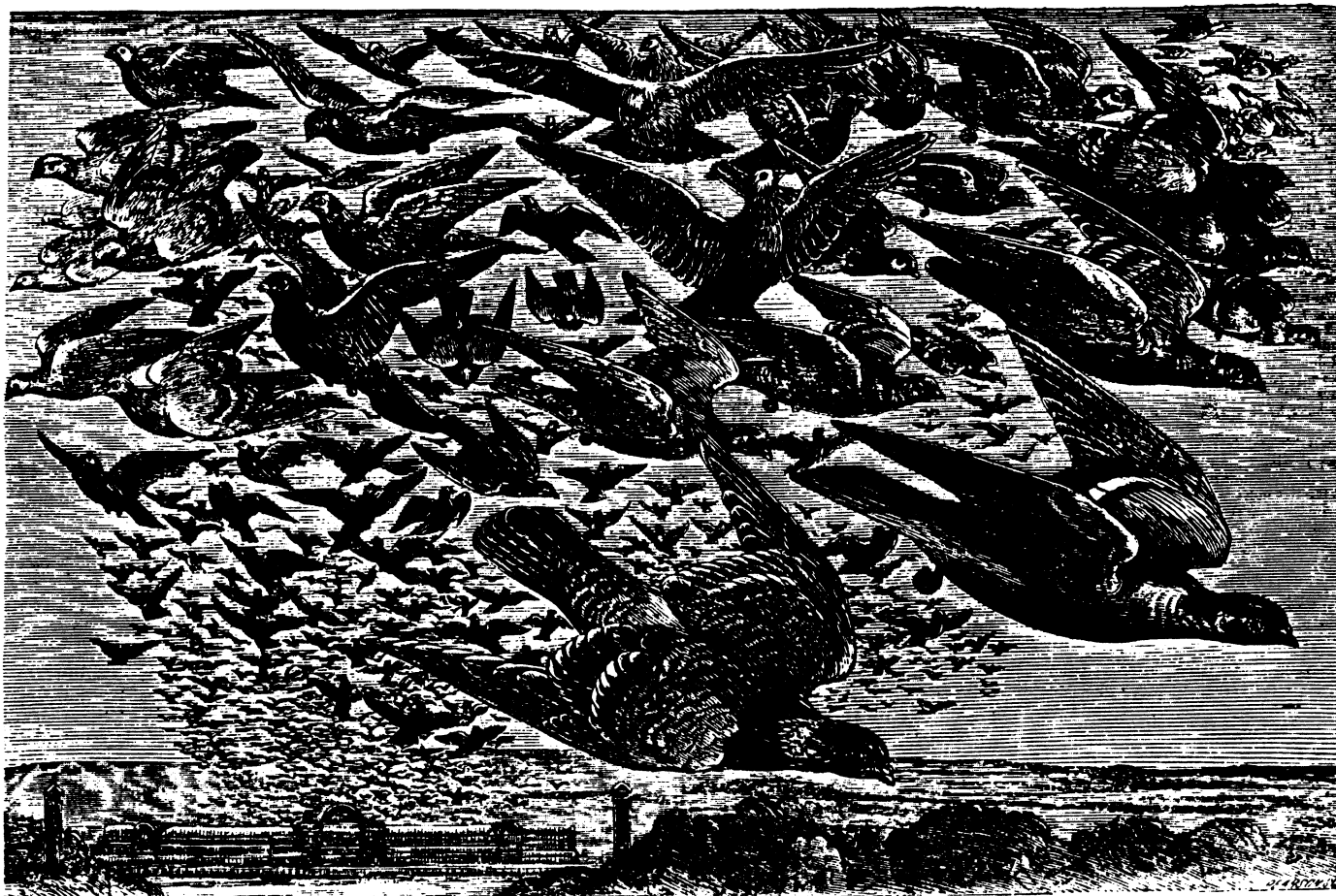
We recruited fools for the show. We had spots for a number of fools (and in the big all-fool number that occurs immediately after the second act, some specialties). But fools are hard to find. Usually they don't like to admit it. We settled for gowks, gulls, mooncalfs. A few babies, boobies, sillies, simps. A barmie was engaged, along with certain dum-dums and beefheads. A noodle. When you see them all wandering around, under the colored lights, gibbering and performing miracles, you are surprised.



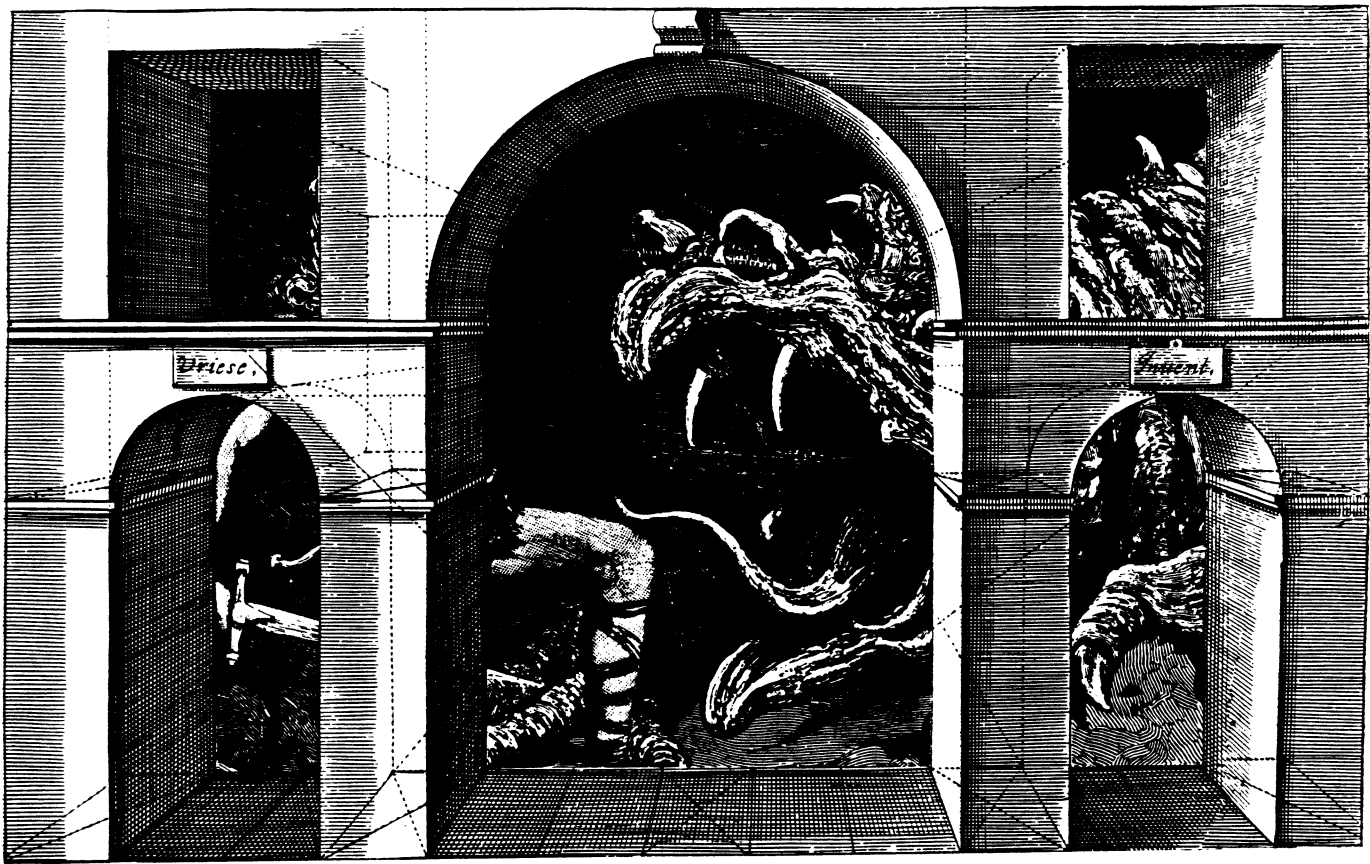
Performances flew thick and fast. We performed The Sale of the Public Library. We performed Space Monkeys Approve Appropriations. We did Theological Novelties and we did Cereal Music (with its raisins of beauty) and we did not neglect Piles of Discarded Women Rising From the Sea.

There was faint applause. The audience huddled together. The people counted their sins.

I put my father in the show, with his cold eyes. His segment was called, My Father Concerned About His Liver.



We used The Flight of Pigeons from the Palace.



It is difficult to keep the public interested.
 The public demands new wonders piled on new wonders.
 Often we don't know where our next marvel is coming from.
 The supply of strange ideas is not endless.
 The development of new wonders is not like the
 production of canned goods. Some things appear to be
 wonders in the beginning, but when you become familiar
 with them, are not wonderful at all. Sometimes a seventy-five-
 foot highly paid monster will raise only the tiniest *frisson*.
 Some of us have even thought of folding the show—
 closing it down. That thought has been gliding through
 the hallways and rehearsal rooms of the show.

The new volcano we have just placed under contract seems
 very promising. . . .

—DONALD BARTHELME



Scenes of domestic life were put in the show.



Text:

In the abandoned palazzo, weeds and old blankets filled the rooms. The palazzo was in bad shape. We cleaned the abandoned palazzo for ten years. We scoured the stones. The splendid architecture was furbished and painted. The doors and windows were dealt with. Then we were ready for the show. The noble and empty spaces were perfect for our purposes.

"Overture"

The first act we hired was the amazing numbered man. He was numbered from one to thirty-five and every part moved. And he was genial and polite. He never failed to say "hello", "goodbye", "why not". This was his song:

Martin Gardner, from: *The Book of Mathematical Puzzles and Diversions*

"The Amazing Numbered Man"

The regular polygon is a plane figure bounded by straight lines, with equal sides and equal interior angles. There are, of course, an infinite number of such figures. In three dimensions the analogue of the regular polygon is the regular polyhedron: a solid bounded by regular polygons with congruent faces and congruent interior angles at its corners. "Hello". The tetrahedron, the hexahedron, the octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron. . . The Pythagoreans believed that these forms underlay the structure of the traditional four elements: fire, earth, wind and water. The dodecahedron was obscurely tied with the entire universe. "Why not?"

"A Short Reprise"

"A Little About The Sulking Lady"

Then the sulking lady was obtained for the show. Then the sulking lady was obtained. Then the sulking lady was obtained for the show. She showed her back to us, that was the way she felt. She had always felt that way, she said. She had felt that way since she was four years old.

"Her Song"

Emily Dickinson. The *soul* selects her own society.

The soul selects her own society, then shuts the door.
Unmoved she notes the chariots parking at her gate.
Unmoved an emperor be kneeling upon her mat.
Unmoved, unmoved, unmoved. . .
I've known her from an ample nation choose one,
then close the valves of her attention like stone.

"Some Of The Other Acts"

We obtained other attractions: a singing sword and a stone enter. Tickets and programs were prepared. Buckets of water were placed about in case of fire. Silver strings tethered the loud roaring strong stinking animals.

The lineup for the opening night included a startlingly handsome man, a Grand Cham, a tulip craze, the Prime Rate, a colored light. We asked ourselves, asked ourselves "How can we improve the show?" We auditioned an explosion.

"Reprise"

"The Dark Side"

There were a lot of situations where men were being evil to women, dominating them and eating their food. We put these situations in the show.

"The Bitchslap Cavatina"

Dr. Dre *Beeyatch*

Bitchslap, bitchslap, bitchslap--gonna bitchslap ma skankyass ho.
Btichslap, bitchslap, bitchslap--slap ma skankyass ho.

Translation: I will cause bodily harm to my less than reputable girlfriend.

"The Grave Robbers"

In the summer of the show, of the show, grave robbers appeared in the show. Famous graves were robbed before your very eyes. Winding sheets were unwound and things best forgotten were remembered. Sad themes were played by the band bereft of its mind by the death of its tradition.

"A Short Diversion: Theme and Variations-- The Weiner Song"

"Where We Left Off"

Performances flew fast--flew thick and fast. We performed the sale of the public library. We performed space monkeys approve appropriations. We did novelties, theological novelties. And too, piles of women rising from the sea. And we did cereal music with its raisins of beauty--raisins of beauty.

"A Moment of Reflection"

Ach, oy, oy, ach.

There was faint applause. The audience huddled together. The people counted their sins.

We recruited fools for the show. We had slots for a number of fools. But fools are hard to find. Usually they don't like to admit it.

"The List of Fools"

We settled for: boors and beefheads and barmies and bumkins and babies and boobies and clowns. We had charlatans, do-dos and dullards and daredevils dum-dums and churls in white gowns. And a fop and a faker, fanatic a gowk and a gull and a hick and a jerk, a lickspittle mooncalf a manikin moron a neophyte, novice and lout.

We hired a prig, a prude and a priss and a quack and a rascal, a runt and a rube, and a simpleton, simp, and a sulk and a sot and a sap and a scamp and a sponge. Add a screwball, a toady, a twit and a tyro, a toper a tosspot, a wag, a tippler, a trickster, a yokel, a zealot, a poet, composer and nag.

When you see them all wandering around, under colored lights, gibbering and performing miracles you are amazed.

"Reprise"

"The Moral"

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