

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 Ylva 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.

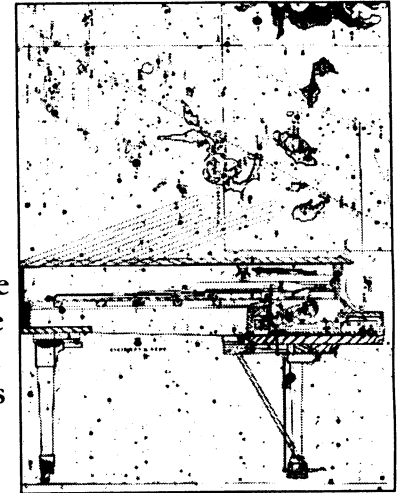
I am most grateful to the Minnesota Commissioning Club* for their sponsorship of this project, and give a special thanks to Jack and Linda Hoeschler who kindly allowed me the use of their home in order to complete the writing.

— 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 Schwantner, 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.

* * *

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Angelus at Washington National Cathedral

Johana Arnold, Rosa Lamoreaux, & Milagro Vargas, sopranos

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Scott Reiss, recorders, dulcimer

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