

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

# 20th CENTURY CONSORT

January 27, 2001

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin  
Paul Cigan, clarinet  
David Hardy, cello  
Thomas Jones, percussion  
Daniel Lewin, violin  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano  
Sara Stern, flute  
Nancy Thomas-Weller, viola  
Susan Schilperoort, manager  
Curt Wittig, electronics  
Marcus Wyche, stage manager

Saturday, January 27, 2001  
Pre-Concert Discussion 4:00 p.m.  
Concert 5:00 p.m.  
Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

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The 20th Century Consort's 2000-2001 performance series is sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and funded in part by generous contributions from The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz 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; David Froom, Bruce MacCombie,  
Bruce Wolosoff, composers

## Program

### "New Millennium Blues"

Blues for the New Millennium . . . . . Bruce Wolosoff

Mr. Cigan, Mr. Lewin, Ms. Logan

Sonata for Violin and Cello . . . . . Maurice Ravel

Allegro  
Trés vif  
Lent  
Vif avec entrain

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy

### Intermission

Turning Point . . . . . Bruce MacCombie

Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan, Ms. Stern

Fantasy Dances . . . . . David Froom

Stomp  
Ritual Dance  
Jump

Mr. Cigan, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall,  
Mr. Lewin, Ms. Logan, Ms. Stern, Ms. Weller

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The audience is invited to join the artists in the Plaza Lobby for an informal post-concert reception, sponsored by the Friends of the 20th Century Consort

# Program Notes

by Steven Ledbetter

## BRUCE WOLOSOFF (b. 1955)

*Blues for the New Millennium* (First performance)

Born in 1955 in New York City, Bruce Wolosoff began his musical studies on the piano at the age of three. He played in rock, jazz, and fusion bands throughout his teens while studying piano for 16 years with German Diez. At Bard College (B.A., 1977) he also studied composition with Joan Tower, improvisation with Roswell Rudd, and theory with Benjamin Boretz. While at Bard he formed the "Music Collective" with multi-instrumentalist/composer Elliot Sharp. There followed graduate studies at the New England Conservatory (M.M., 1980) where he was regular pianist with the New England Conservatory Contemporary Ensemble. He took private studies in jazz improvisation and arranging with Jaki Byard, harmony with Charlie Banacos, counterpoint and serial composition with Robert Di Domenico.

Moving back to New York to study classical piano with Richard Goode and composition with Lawrence Widdoes, Bruce Wolosoff also studied at the Dalcroze School with Dr. Hilda Schuster. As pianist, he made a critically acclaimed recording of piano music by Busoni for Music & Arts records and was active as a recitalist and soloist, premiering numerous works including the *Sonata for piano* by Richard Danielpour at Weill Hall, and Danielpour's *Second Piano Concerto* with the Denver Chamber Orchestra under the direction of JoAnn Falletta. He organized an 80th birthday tribute to Olivier Messiaen at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall series called "Music of Our Time."

At the age of 30, following the loss of his parents, Bruce Wolosoff abandoned public performance to devote himself more completely to composition. He has received awards from ASCAP, Meet the Composer, and the American Music Center. His numerous commissions include *Planetary Songs* for Danish recorder virtuoso Michaela Petri; *Elegy* for trombonist Art Baron (commissioned by the Ecole Normale de Musique and published by Gerard Billaudot in Paris); *the secret fire* for oboist Rudolph

Vrbsky and the 20th Century Consort; *In Nomine* for the Lark String Quartet (co-commissioned by the Linton Music Series in Cincinnati), which was premiered by the Lark Quartet at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theatre.

Last season, *ghost dances* for solo piano received its world premiere at the Hirschhorn Museum by pianist Lisa Logan; *mutatis mutandis* for solo electric violin was premiered by violinist Charles Wetherbee (concertmaster of the Columbus Symphony), and Wolosoff scored the independent feature film, *Soho, they call it*.

Regarding his newest composition, the composer writes:

About a year and a half ago I felt lost as a composer. The language I was working in felt stale and I felt that it was not reflecting who I had become as a person. I didn't feel like writing. I busied myself with editing and copying projects, played some piano, played with my kids. I didn't know if I would ever write again.

One morning I read in the newspaper that my teacher and friend Jaki Byard had been murdered. This was a terrible shock. Jaki was a very lovable person. He was also the finest musician I have ever known. I spent a lot of time in the following weeks listening to his recordings and playing his pieces at the piano. Then one night William Bolcom and I were having a conversation over dinner and Bill told me that "the only thing that matters as a composer is to come from your fire." This remark had a great impact on me.

I began meditating on the source of my fire as a musician, a fire that had for some months been smoldering at best. One of the realizations I came to was that I had allowed myself for years to become a bifurcated musician. In public I was a "classical" musician. At home, I listened to jazz, jazz, and more jazz. I remembered the enthusiasm and joy with which I had played boogie woogie piano as a kid. So one day last winter I went out to the record store and bought a stack of boogie woogie records: Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, Pete Johnson. I spent some days listening to them, absorbing their energy, then found myself at the piano playing boogie woogie, sketching boogie woogie-based music, and that's what I did for the next 3 months! Then I felt that it was time to compose a tribute to Jaki Byard, which became the *solo piano suite many worlds*.

It was about this time that my friend Christopher Kendall called me to see if I'd be interested in composing a new work for the

20th Century Consort in celebration of the new millennium. Normally a call like this makes me very happy. This time, however, I found myself feeling conflicted about the project. I had turned a significant corner in my development as a composer and didn't want to lose the direction I was heading in or the head of steam I was starting to pick up. Could I compose a work that could satisfy the concert demands of a "modern classical" program while remaining true to my newly discovered musical language? *blues for the new millenium*, scored for piano, violin, and clarinet, is the piece that emerged from that process. It is dedicated to a remarkable man, Oliver F. Davenport, who turned 90 this past year.

—Bruce Wolosoff

### MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

#### *Sonata for violin and cello*

Ravel composed this "duo" (as he referred to it in letters to his friends while it was in progress) in 1921, working extensively during a summer visit to his native Basque country, and completing it early the following year at his newly acquired home, Le Belvédère in Montfort-Amaury, a small village about thirty miles from Paris. The *Sonata*, as it was finally called, is a surprisingly austere work for a composer usually connected with the most sensuous sonorities, whether conceived for piano, chamber ensemble, or full orchestra. But it evidently marked a conscious departure for the composer, who had recently been made aware of new trends coming from Vienna; he had heard Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, for example, and, although he never took on most of the elements of Schoenberg's style, nonetheless he drew from it precisely what suited him. A sonata composed for two melody instruments is sure to be more linear in conception than, say, a string quartet. Ravel worked intensively on it, but with difficulty, since he was already beginning to show the medical problems that were to grow worse over the rest of his life—sleeplessness and increasingly frustrating struggles to invent musical ideas—which would, in a decade, force him to stop composing almost entirely. The finished work was dedicated "To the Memory of Claude Debussy," his friend and colleague, who had died in 1918.

The resulting work is a fascinating showpiece for the two instruments, each of which carries half the burden of the piece. The remarkable feeling of independence that each line generates is perhaps the most modern element of Ravel's score; at times he writes simultaneous different keys for the two parts, and he avoids any simple melody-and-accompaniment dichotomy. More often than not, the whole of each line is both melody and accompaniment. The first movement follows a reasonably normal sonata form, based on an alternation of major and minor triads, with Ravel avoiding such obvious conventions as inverting the parts so that the violin, say, would play in the recapitulation what the cello had played in the exposition. The second movement, *Trés vif*, exploits special effects including *pizzicato*, with an homage to Stravinskian rhythmic ostinatos, played *pizzicato* in one part against a sustained line in the other. A brief lyric passage of melody sometimes imitated between the two instruments offers a respite from the energy of the main section. The slow movement comes next, a wonderful lyric outpouring that, more than anywhere else in the sonata, offers sheer melody with the accompaniment of another instrument. Its middle section, by contrast to that of the second movement, is dramatic and tense, but the close, with the instruments muted, is pure and serene. The finale is the longest and tightest movement in the sonata, built on a rondo structure whose refrain contrasts with three other melodies. The refrain figure is stated at once in the cello, expanded by imitations in the violin and *pizzicato* accompaniments. This returns after each of the contrasting sections. On the last return, Ravel tightens up the texture still further by juxtaposing the refrain with the third countertheme to engineer a dramatic close.

### BRUCE MacCOMBIE (b. 1943)

#### *Turning Points*, for flute, cello, and piano (First performance)

Bruce MacCombie (born in Providence, Rhode Island, 1943) grew up in Massachusetts and studied composition with Philip Bezanson at the University of Massachusetts, where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees. He earned his doctorate at the University of Iowa in 1971 and also studied in Germany with

Wolfgang Fortner at Freiburg University. After four years in Europe, he returned to the United States to take a position in music theory at Yale in 1975 and to join the composition faculty there the following year. While at Yale, he coordinated an annual series of six concerts of new music and taught various seminars relating to twentieth-century music literature. In 1979 he was awarded one of the first Goddard Lieberman Fellowships by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award noted that "Mr. MacCombie composes polished gems of musical understatement. Characterized by a fresh and penetrating wit, they sparkle and yet are clothed in mystery." He has served on the boards of the Charles Ives Society, Composers Forum, Inc., the Huntington Theatre Company, and the Artist Advisory Board for *Piano Today* magazine. From 1980 to 1985 he was Vice President and Director of Publications for the music publishing firm of G. Schirmer. In March 1986, he became Dean of The Juilliard School, and took up his present position as Dean of the School of the Arts of Boston University in 1992.

Regarding his new flute trio, the composer writes:

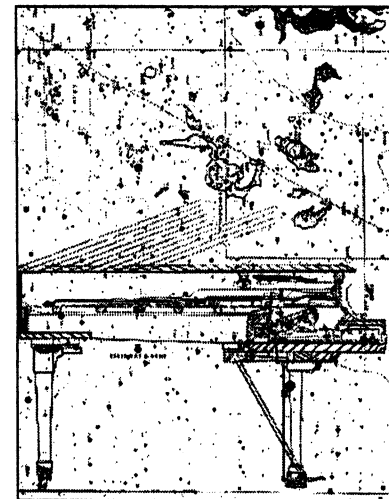
Scored for flute trio (flute, cello, and piano), *Turning Points* was written in November and December, 2000 for members of the 20th Century Consort, with a first performance planned for January 27, 2001 in Washington, DC.

While composing during that unusual election period, I had in mind that, despite the ongoing political turmoil, our calendar was quietly presenting us with a number of major turning points: a new year, a new century, a new millennium. As I was both reflecting back and looking ahead during this unique juncture in time, this piece became something of a little post-modern etude in an arch-like form, with a blending of musical and stylistic elements of the past and present. There is a rather antique sounding scale made into a tune with romantic accompaniment in the outer parts of the piece, and a contrapuntal yet static middle section which eventually dissipates before leading back to the opening.

## DAVID FROOM (b. 1951)

### *Fantasy Dances* (First performance)

Born in Petaluma, California, in 1951, David Froom studied at both the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Southern California before moving to New York for further studies at Columbia University. His principal teachers have included Chou Wen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and William Kraft. He also studied with Alexander Goehr at Cambridge on a Fulbright grant and received a fel-



lowship to study at the Tanglewood Music Center. He has also received fellowships to the Wellesley Composers Conference and the MacDowell Colony. He has taught at Baruch College in New York and the University of Utah. Since 1989 he has been on the faculty of St. Mary's College of Maryland, where he is now Associate Professor and Chairman of the Music Department. In recent years his music has been featured at the 1991 Festival of New American Music in Sacramento, where he was the featured composer and in which seven of his works were performed. His *Chamber Concerto* shared the first prize in the 1993 Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards with a work by Osvaldo Golijov.

Regarding his new *Fantasy Dances*, the composer writes:

*Fantasy Dances* (in three movements, altogether lasting about thirteen minutes) reflects my fascination with the diminishing gaps between various styles of music— both within the "modern classical music" community and in the wider world generally. I revel in a world where the new can embrace any aspect of a readily available past. The notion, suggested throughout the century just concluded, that we American composers might find a "third stream" of music, half-way between jazz and classical music, has been broadened to what some might see as a beautiful and expansive lake (others might see a vast swamp), where everything and anything is available to the composer searching for an effective means of expression. Personally, while I embrace a wide range of musical interests, I do so while favoring internally and contextually consistent, continu-

