



Smithsonian Institution

The Hirshhorn Series

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall,
Artistic Director

7:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 21, 1979

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and
Sculpture Garden

Presented by Smithsonian
Performing Arts

James R. Morris, Director

The Program

Five Glasses of Absinthe

William Penn

for flute, clarinet, two percussion,
harp, piano, violin, viola, cello,
conductor

(Ms. Stern, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Merz,
Mr. Jones, Ms. Carter, Mr. Orkis,
Mr. Rouslin, Ms. Westphal, Mr. Garlick,
Mr. Kendall)

I. The Lure of Elegant Rhyme: A Toast to Life Asleep

II. Perfumed Stillness in a Pastel Vase

III. Abstract Consciousness

IV. Azure-Green Drifts

V. Le Tombeau de l'Ame: Tranquility in Its Sabbath Day Repose

Amazon

Joan Tower

for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano
(Ms. Stern, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Rouslin,
Mr. Garlick, Mr. Orkis)

Intermission

Cantata

Maurice Wright

for tenor, percussion and electric sounds

(Mr. Gordon, Mr. Steele)

I. To music, to becalm his fever

II. To Lucia playing on her lute

III. The commendation of music

IV. Wit predominant

V. To music, to becalm his fever (continued)

Concerto for Guitar and Chamber Ensemble

Richard Rodney Bennett

for guitar with flute/piccolo, oboe/English horn,
bass clarinet, French horn, trumpet, two percussion,
celesta, violin, viola, cello, conductor

(Mr. Starobin, Ms. Stern, Mr. White, Mr. Johnson,
Mr. Carter, Mr. Flowers, Mr. Merz, Mr. Jones, Mr. Orkis,
Mr. Rouslin, Ms. Westphal, Mr. Garlick, Mr. Kendall)

Vivo

Andante lento

Con brio

(Movements played without pause)

Notes on the Program

Tonight's concert is the first in a series of four programs by the 20th Century Consort to be given this season at the Hirshhorn. Over the course of the season, the Consort will perform works which reflect the multiplicity of approaches to music taken by composers over the past eighty years. From a chronological point of view, the compositions will range from Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, written in 1899, on the very brink of this century, to works by Davidovsky, Luther, and Penn which will receive their first public performances in the course of the series. Extremes of format, from the intimate to the blatantly theatrical, will be explored. Some of the works will be easily accessible; others will challenge the listener.

Tonight's program, all works written in the '70s, illustrates the plurality of styles which has typified the century as a whole. Particularly during the present decade, composers have become less strict in their approach to specific areas of their craft such as the treatment of dissonance, the use of recently-developed technical means to further art music, and even the notation of the music itself. At the same time, however, a stronger sense of direction may be seen than was clear in much of the frankly experimental work of the '60s. In this respect, the various orientations which have emerged during the past ten years may be said to mirror the changing self-perception of our society. The pieces on this program at once demand respect for their individuality and recognition of their common heritage as outgrowths of a cycle of fracture, reintegration, and continued experimentation which has already lasted for the better part of a century.

William Penn was born in 1943, studied at SUNY Buffalo and at Michigan State University, and has taught composition and theory at the Eastman School of Music. He is presently the composer-in-residence for the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, for which he has written some thirteen scores, selections from which have been compiled into a record album entitled *The Music of Shakespeare—Vol. 1*. Penn has also recently recorded *Crystal Rainbows*, an album utilizing instruments from the exhibit "The Harmonious Craft" which was on display at the Renwick Gallery last year. Penn's "Fantasy" for solo harpsichord was performed last year at one of the Hirshhorn concerts, and his "Cosmic Awakening" was used at the National Air and Space Museum's Spacearium.

"Five Glasses of Absinthe," written specifically for the 20th Century Consort, receives its world premiere tonight. It is a programmatic piece which was written in Austin, Texas during the end of the past summer while the composer was under the influence of Austin's gorgeous landscape. The piece is dedicated to O.C., B.C., and D.P., the composer's two cats and wife. Penn is reluctant to elaborate on the meaning of the sections or on the nature of the composition, preferring that the piece speak for itself. The theatrical nature of the work, incorporating improvisatory sections, non-standard playing techniques, movement by the players to instruments other than their own, and so on, allows the listener to become involved in a very direct and immediate way, justifying the composer's attitude.

Joan Tower was born in New York in 1938, but was brought up in South America. She received her education at Bennington College and Columbia University, from which she holds the DMA. Currently Assistant Professor of Music at Bard College, Ms. Tower is also pianist with the Da Capo Chamber Players, a well-known group which won the prestigious Naumberg Chamber Music Award in 1973. Among the honors given to Ms. Tower are the National Endowment Award (1974-5), a MacDowell Colony Fellowship (1974), and a Guggenheim Fellowship, under which she is presently working on an orchestral piece to be premiered in 1980 by the American Composers' Orchestra at Tully Hall, Dennis Davies conducting.

"Amazon" (1977) was written for the Da Capo Chamber Players on a commission from the Contemporary Music Society. The work is scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, a chamber grouping which has become a classic one for the Twentieth Century, analogous to the piano quintet of the Romantic era or the quartet sonata of the Baroque. The word *Sostenuto* appears at the outset of the piece, which is in one section with several internal subdivisions. Ms. Tower writes:

The Great Brazilian river, the Amazon, provides some of the images reflected in this piece: a background flow that undergoes changes in width (of texture), speed (of notes), ripples (trills), and interruptions in the flow (either by "static" events or by silence).

Much of the time, the winds are paired off against the strings or piano, although flowing *tutti* unison passages are also common. Because of the frequent use of unison writing, dissonance is present more as a horizontal than a vertical element.

Later this fall a companion piece, "Amazon II," will receive its premiere by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic Orchestra.

Maurice Wright was born in Front Royal, Virginia in 1949, studied at Duke University and Columbia University, and was Music Lecturer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. In 1977 he received the Charles Ives Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and was also the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Wright recently directed Boston University's Young Artists Composition Program at Tanglewood.

Wright's **"Cantata"** juxtaposes electronically-generated recorded sounds with live music, creating a theatrical setting which follows in the tradition of combining these essentially dissimilar media as established at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center primarily through the work of Mario Davidovsky, Otto Luening, and Vladimir Ussachevsky. The tape itself represents a fusion of two techniques, as computer-generated sounds (including the synthetic speech programmed by Charles Dodge) work in conjunction with material arrived at through the manipulative procedures possible in the "classical" analog tape studio. The score of the work includes a meticulously notated "part" for the tape, allowing the live musicians to coordinate their lines exactly with the predetermined sounds. The result is a tightly-knit musical fabric which mirrors and amplifies the texts in a quite extraordinary manner. The work accepts dissonance as a requisite to its sophisticated contrapuntal writing.

Wright comments:

My CANTATA for tenor voice, percussion, and electronic sound is music about music; a celebration of harmony and sound. I chose these seventeenth-century texts because they sing so well about the effect of music in moments of passion and in times of quiet reflection. The singer is joined by a kind of "ghost chorus" in the first piece and is taken through a series of dream images in the ensuing movements. Computer synthesized plucked strings represent Lucia in the second piece, while in the third piece soft bell-like sounds are transformed into robust blasts as the soul is "changed for

harmony." Lucasia represents an altogether different style of music in the fourth song, and an extended electronic interlude is offered to bring back the subdued spirit of the opening poem. This time the ghost chorus joins the singer in the form of a computer voice singing computer proverbs (MELT WITH EASE/FALL LIKE THE FLOWERS/ WITH THIS MY HEAVEN) drawn from the human text. A brief but noisy coda concludes the dream and returns the singer to his silence.

The electronic sound serves as an accompanist of accordion-like dimension. It is full and complex in one instance while simple and intimate in another. The various percussion instruments also were chosen for their particular points on lines spanning pitched and unpitched sound, focused and diffused articulation. In this way the two parts sometimes support the voice with a polite background, but also often challenge it, race with it, and mimic it.

Although the "Cantata" has been performed before, the composer has edited the tape since the work's last hearing; tonight's execution, utilizing the revised tape, thus constitutes a premiere of sorts.

Richard Rodney Bennett, born in Kent in 1936, studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he subsequently taught composition (1963-1966), and in Paris with Pierre Boulez as the recipient of a French Government grant. Now a London resident, Bennett has composed symphonies (including one commissioned by Leonard Bernstein for the New York Philharmonic in 1968), operas (among them two commissions for Sadlers Wells), film scores (*Equus*, *Murder on the Orient Express*), ballet music (his "Jazz Calendar" was choreographed at Covent Garden) and scores for radio and television.

The "**Guitar Concerto**" shows traces of the twelve-tone or dodecaphonic technique of composition championed by Arnold Schoenberg and his followers, and is perhaps the most consistently dissonant work on this evening's program, yet it is at the same time remarkably lyrical and of a refreshing

clarity. Mr. Bennett provides the following guide to his composition:

The concerto was completed in September 1970 and is dedicated to Julian Bream. It was anticipated by five short *Impromptus* for guitar (1968) which were studies in writing for this instrument. The instrumental ensemble was chosen to create a light and transparent texture and consists of flute, oboe doubling English horn, bass clarinet, horn, trumpet, percussion, celesta, and string trio. The percussion section makes particular use of Latin American instruments—claves, maracas, bongos, tom-toms, etc.

The piece opens with a slow, improvisatory passage for guitar and percussion, the soloist rising from his lowest note as though tentatively sketching out his territory. This leads into a fast movement (*Vivo*). At first the guitar engages in a lively dialogue with the ensemble, then, in a more lyrical section, accompanies the violin. The rest of the movement develops these two ideas, with the guitar acting sometimes as soloist, sometimes as accompanist, and sometimes as part of the ensemble. At the climax of the movement the soloist bursts into a dramatic cadenza, which leads back naturally to a variation of the opening "crossroads" material. This introduces the slow movement of the concerto, based almost entirely on a long winding line for horn (*Andante lento*). This line is gradually expanded intervally as the movement increases in intensity until the violin finally draws it across three octaves. There is a short, impassioned cadenza and a coda in which the guitar floats a web of harmonics over the cello's gentle echo of the original horn line.

A further variation of the "crossroads" material now appears, this time played by the ensemble, and the guitar leads into a rhythmically complex finale (*Con brio*). As in the first movement, there is a contrasting lyrical section, and toward the end the guitar briefly recalls the opening bars of the concerto, whereupon the work ends suddenly and violently.

Kenneth Slowik

Texts

I. TO MUSIC, TO BECALM HIS FEVER

Charm me asleep, and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers,
That being ravished, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers . . .

Melt, melt, my pains,
With thy soft strains;
That having ease me given,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Robert Herrick (1591-1647)

II. TO LUCIA PLAYING ON HER LUTE

When last I heard your nimble fingers play
Upon your lute, nothing so sweet as they
Seemed: all my soul fled ravished to my ear
That sweetly animating sound to hear.
My ravished heart with play kept equal time,
Fell down with you, with you did Ela climb,
Grew sad or lighter, as the tunes you played,
And with your lute a perfect measure made:
If all, so much as I, your music love,
The whole world would at your devotion move;
And at your speaking lute's surpassing charms
Embrace a lasting peace, and fling by arms.

Samuel Pordage (1633-1691)

III. THE COMMENDATION OF MUSIC

Oh, lull me, lull me, charming air!
My senses rock with wonder sweet;
Like snow on wool, thy fallings are,
Soft as a spirit's are thy feet;
Grief who need fear
That hath an ear?
Down let him lie
And slumbering die,
And change his soul for harmony.

William Strode (1602-1645)

IV. WIT PREDOMINANT

Ah! lay by your lute;
Ah! Lucasia, forbear.
Whilst your tongue I may hear,
Other music is mute.
Ah! lay by your lute,
For the heavens have decreed
that my heart should submit
To none but the charms of your wit.

The conflict was hot
When I first met your eyes;
Yet my heart would still rise
Though through and through shot.
The conflict was hot;
But your wit's great artillery
when drawn to the field,
Oh then, 'twas my glory to yield!

To satisfy all,
When an empire is due
To each beauty in you,
The world is too small,
To satisfy all.
With the rest you in triumph
shall sit and survey;
But give wit all the spoils of the day.
Thomas Rymer (1641-1713)

V. TO MUSIC TO BECALM HIS FEVER

(continued)

Thou sweetly canst convert [a pain]
From a consuming fire,
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep,
And give me such repose,
That I, poor I,
May think, thereby,
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers,
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains,
With thy soft strains;
That having ease me given,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Robert Herrick (1591-1647)

Notes on the Artists

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, Conductor

Antioch College, University of Cincinnati. Conducting with Thomas Schippers and Louis Lane. Founder, The Folger Consort; Music Director, Washington Sinfonia.

Daniel Carter, French Horn

Curtis Institute of Music. Co-Principal Horn, National Symphony Orchestra.

Dotian Ann Carter, Harp

Curtis Institute of Music. Principal Harpist, National Symphony Orchestra.

David Flowers, Trumpet

University of Michigan, Catholic University of America. National Symphony Orchestra.

Glenn Garlick, Cello

Eastman School of Music, Catholic University. Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. Alexandria Quartet.

David Gordon, Tenor

Wooster College, McGill University, Conservatoire du Québec. Studied with Dale Moore, Karl Trump, and Luigi Ricci. In 1974, National Finalist, Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. Since 1975 leading lyric and *buffo* tenor, Upper Austrian State Theater in Linz.

Edward Johnson, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet

Eastman School of Music, Yale. Studied with Howard Boatwright, Stanley Hasty. Concerts and broadcasts in Europe and Asia. First Prize, Gaudeamus Competition, 1978.

Thomas Jones, Percussion

University of Maryland. Studied with Ron Barnett. Freelance percussionist with Contemporary Music Forum, American Camerata for New Music, Theater Chamber Players. Extra Percussionist, National Symphony Orchestra.

Albert Merz, Percussion

Eastman School of Music. Faculty, American University. Extra Percussionist, National Symphony Orchestra.

Lambert Orkis, Piano, Celesta

Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University. Faculty, Temple University. Penn Contemporary Players.

Dan Rouslin, Violin

Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, University of Iowa. Faculty, University of Delaware. First Violin, Delos String Quartet.

David Starobin, Guitar

Peabody Conservatory. Studied with Aaron Shearer. Faculty, Brooklyn College. Specialist in contemporary music for guitar.

Glenn Steele, Percussion

Glassboro College, Temple University. Studied with Alan Abel, Charles Owen, Fred Hinger. Faculty, Temple University. Penn Century Players.

Sara Stern, Flute, Piccolo

Studied with Richard E. Townsend, Merrill Jordan, Julius Baker, Marcel Moyse. Faculty, D.C. Youth Orchestra. National Ballet Orchestra.

Barbara Westphal, Viola

Royal College of Music, London; Yale University. Studied with Broadus Erle, Itzak Perlman, Michael Tree. Delos String Quartet.

Richard White, Oboe, English Horn

Eastman School of Music. National Symphony Orchestra.

20th Century Consort

F. Anthony Ames, Executive Director
Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director
Vicki Goldrich, Assistant Director

The 20th Century Consort is an ensemble of professional musicians drawn from the symphonic, chamber, and solo concert worlds. The Consort, a non-profit organization, has three fundamental aims: to perform important Twentieth Century chamber works; to educate a broad-based audience about the merits and pleasures of this music; and to stimulate composition in a variety of chamber forms. By offering audiences an opportunity to hear not only a few standard works, but also many other substantial though lesser known compositions, the Consort is making an active contribution to the emergence of a larger and more permanent repertoire.



Smithsonian Institution
October/November 1979

Coming Events

Monday, October 22	Cantilena Chamber Players
Saturday, October 27 and Sunday, October 28	Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra
Saturday, October 27 through Monday, October 29	Smithsonian Chamber Players
Thursday, November 1 and Friday, November 2	Hu Hung-Yen

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	House Manager—Donna Campbell
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Please note	The taking of pictures and the use of recording equipment during the performance is strictly prohibited. In case of emergency, walk to the exit located at the rear of the auditorium.
First aid	See the house manager or an usher.
Rest rooms	Located in the center lobby.