



Smithsonian Institution

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

7:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 9, 1980

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden

Presented by Smithsonian
Performing Arts

James R. Morris, Director

The Program

Portals (1926)

for 13 solo strings and conductor

Mr. Setzer, Mr. Faulkner, Ms. Kohl, Mr. Drucker, Ms. Price,

Mr. Dutton, Ms. Kitt, Ms. Merz, Mr. Finckel, Mr. Garlick, Mr. Budd,

Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Hood, and Mr. Kendall

Carl Ruggles

(1876-1971)

Evocations

Four Chants for Piano (rev. 1954)

Carl Ruggles

I. Largo (1937)

II. Andante con fantasia (1941)

III. Moderato appassionata (1943)

IV. Adagio sostenuto (1940)

Mr. Orkis

The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula (1969)

David Bedford

for tenor, 8 strings, and conductor

(b. 1937)

Mr. Gordon, Mr. Setzer, Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Drucker, Mr. Dutton,

Ms. Kitt, Mr. Finckel, Mr. Garlick, Mr. Vaughn, and Mr. Kendall

Intermission

Three Songs

Carl Ruggles

for tenor and piano

Thy Presence Ever Near Me

How Can I Be Blythe and Glad

Toys

Mr. Gordon and Mr. Orkis

String Quartet No. 1, Op. 7 (1908-9)

Béla Bartók

Lento

(1881-1945)

Allegretto

Allegro Vivace

Mr. Drucker, Mr. Setzer, Mr. Dutton, and Mr. Finckel

Notes on the Program

Carl Ruggles, like his friend and fellow New Englander Charles Ives, was profoundly individualistic both personally and musically. He has often been described as a mystic, but perhaps the designation transcendentalist would be more fitting. Born in 1876, Ruggles studied with J. K. Paine around the turn of the century, and was influenced by the works of Debussy and Schoenberg. Almost all of his compositions from this period were later destroyed however, when Ruggles developed the unremittingly dissonant, contrapuntal, and chromatic style for which he is known.

Despite the complexity of his music, Ruggles was driven by an uncompromising urge for clarity, a quality of beauty he himself described as "sublime." Most of his pieces are quite brief, and the whole of his published output could be recorded on one disk. His music generally elicits strong, but hardly uniform, reactions from listeners and critics. Two respected writers' comments illustrate these diverse attitudes: for one, Ruggles' music "seems the inspired groping of a dilettante ex-violinist," while another would compare "the breadth and versatility of Ives with that of Schoenberg, the purity of Ruggles with that of Webern."

Portals was originally intended for thirteen solo strings, and later recast for full string orchestra. Written in 1925-26 and dedicated to the composer's friend Harriette Miller, the score bears the following quotation from Walt Whitman: "What are those of the known but to ascend and enter the unknown?" The thirteen lines are rarely used independently, but rather engage in octave doublings to

build the thick but carefully calculated vertical sonorities arising from the interplay of several jagged yet somehow lyrical melodies. The repeated upward figurations which seek "to ascend and enter the unknown" are constantly defeated, resulting in a movement that has been described like that of "water boiling in a pot—an expanding universe which is at the same time necessarily contracting, a motion without external limit."

Evocations, subtitled *Four Chants for Piano*, is heard tonight in the revision of 1954. The movements, dedicated to Harriette Miller, the pianist John Kirkpatrick, Ruggles' wife Charlotte, and Charles Ives, originally appeared separately, and were composed between 1937 and 1943. Ruggles was almost continuously revising his works, seeking more precise notations of the rhythmic complexities and balance of the sonorities so integral to his music. The score of *Evocations* teems with indications for specific tempo changes, instructions for the use of the *sostenuto* and *una corda* pedals, and directions concerning the length of sustained notes. Octave doublings are frequent, and the dynamic range is extensive, perhaps in an effort to use the piano orchestrally and to explore its capabilities in an intensely personal way.

David Bedford was born in London in 1937. He entered the Royal Academy of Music as a scholarship student in 1958, studying there with Lennox Berkeley, and becoming keenly interested in the works of Schoenberg, Maderna, and Nono. In 1961, Bedford worked under Nono in Venice and later at the Milan

Electronic Studio while on a grant from the Italian government. In addition to his serious compositions, Bedford also arranges popular music.

The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula was commissioned by tenor Peter Pears, who gave the work its first performance on November 22, 1969, in Queen Elizabeth Hall. The composer has provided the following notes for his work:

The text, taken from a short story by Arthur C. Clarke, relates the story of mankind from the beginning to the end as seen from one point in space—a beach. The story, and the music, fall into three sections. In the first, a neanderthal boy comes to the beach and sees the sea for the first time. For the first time the sand bears the imprint of human footsteps. The boy goes, the tide comes in and washes the footprints away.

The second scene is set in the present. There is now a town near the beach, which is crowded with people. A child has built a sandcastle; when he goes, the tide comes in and smooths it away.

The final scene is set thousands of years in the future. A black dust cloud has entered the solar system and will soon engulf the sun completely, rendering the earth uninhabitable. The entire human race is emigrating in giant starships to seek another planet. For the last time a child is playing on the sand. His parents come to take him away.

Since there are literary elements common to the three scenes (the beach, a child playing, the tide coming in and erasing signs of human activity, the beach alone) the musical material assigned to these elements is similar in each scene, though it is extended, developed, or varied each time, rather than repeated exactly.

Several methods of playing peculiar to stringed instruments are employed in an attempt to give the music a character and mood to match the text.

Frequent glissandi are used so that definite pitches tend to be unstable. In some passages the players are instructed to play slightly out of tune. In others, quarter-tones are used. It is a rule for the instruments throughout the piece that a note which has a crescendo marking must

also rise slightly in pitch during the crescendo, and vice-versa for a diminuendo.

On the whole the piece is extremely quiet, vibrato is used rarely, and mutes are used more often than not.

There are two instrumental interludes, which, as a contrast to the pitch instability of the majority of the piece, use long held high harmonics to give a suspended static effect.

TEXT

The child came through the stunted trees at the forest's edge. He was naked, heavily built, and had coarse black hair tangled over his shoulders. The tribe had not long since come to this land and he was the first ever to set foot upon that lonely beach. Slowly he walked out to the water's edge, and as he did so for the first time in all history, the level sand bore upon its face the footprints it would one day know so well. The tide was turning. Far away in the forest, a wolf howled once and was silent. It was time to go. Under the low moon the oncoming tide was smoothing away the two lines of footprints. But they would return in their thousands and millions in the centuries yet to be.

The child playing among the rock pools knew nothing of the forest that had once ruled all the land around him. Everything had changed save the line of the hills against the sky. Beyond the sea across the bay a great ship was moving slowly to sea. Evening came at last when the tide was returning to the land. At his mother's words the child gathered up his playthings. Without regret he left the sandcastle to the advancing waves, for tomorrow he would return and the future stretched endlessly before him.

And now the hills had changed, worn away by the weight of years. Since

noon, the boy had been playing in the shallow pools left by the retreating tide. Along the shore his mother and father were coming quickly, as though the time were short. His father took him by the hand and said quietly, "It's time to go." The boy turned to his mother: "Can I come again tomorrow?" His mother's eyes filled with tears. And he knew at last that never again would he play upon the sands by the azure waters. He had found the sea too late and must now leave it forever. A long while later, the last of the three great starships climbed towards the horizon and shrank into nothingness over the edge of the earth.

The tentacles of the Dark Nebula were brushing against the frontiers of the Solar System. Across the sand the line of foam moved steadily onward, planing down the tangled footprints. Beneath the stars the beach lay waiting for the end. It was all alone now as it had been in the beginning. Only the waves would move, and but for a little while upon its golden sands.

For Man had come and gone. . . .

A. C. Clarke (from "Transience," part of a collection of short stories, *The Other Side of the Sky*).

A little-known and entirely different side of Carl Ruggles may be seen in the two songs **Thy Presence Ever Near Me** and **How Can I Be Blythe and Glad**. These are essentially popular or salon songs, strophic and strictly tonal, and give little hint of the grim "mysticism" of his later compositions. **Toys**, written in 1919 for Ruggles' son Micah, is quite another matter. The vocal line is a curious but effective mixture of *quasi recitativo* or de-

clamatory writing and wide-spanned lyricism. The word painting accompanying the final lines of text is particularly striking.

TEXTS

Thy Presence Ever Near Me

Thy presence ever near me
My yearning spirit feels;
A heavenly radiance round me
Thine own bright form reveals.
And from my soul's dark waters,
Whose depths thy soul may claim,
Thou risest as tomorrow's sun
To cheer my heart again.

Mirza Schaffy
(English translation—
Austin Hall Evans)

How can I be blythe and glad

O how can I be blythe and glad,
Or how can I be brisk and braw,
When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa'?

It's no the frosty winter wind,
It's no the driving drift and snaw;
But aye the tear comes in my e'e
To think of him that's far awa'.

My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a',
But I have ane will take my part,
The bonnie lad that's far awa'.

Robert Burns

Toys

Come here, little son, and I will play
with you.
See, I have brought you lovely toys
Painted ships,
And trains of choo choo cars.
And a wondrous balloon, that floats,
and floats, and floats,
way up to the stars.

Carl Ruggles

This season, to mark the centenary of Béla Bartók's birth, the Emerson Quartet will present all six Bartók quartets, four on this series, and two as part of the "Three Centuries of Chamber Music" series at Baird Auditorium. The Bartók quartets must be considered the single most important chamber music repertory yet to come out of this century, reflecting a goodly portion of the composer's creative life, and his deep concern for the structural problems with which Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven had grappled. Bartók's vocabulary is, of course, entirely different than that of the Viennese masters, but his music remains much closer in spirit to theirs than to the quartets of the nineteenth-century composers in which the expansive was cultivated at the expense of the more disciplined classical forms.

The *String Quartet No. 1*, Bartók's Op. 7, was completed in 1909; of all the quartets, it draws most heavily upon the immediate past. The first two movements in particular are far removed from the mature style of later works, in which the quasi-improvisatory, romantic characters palpable here would scarcely be tolerated. Yet the work as a whole has a distinctly Bartókian flavor, and a formal structure of which Bartók's contemporary and friend Zoltan Kodály could write:

The unity of the movements, preserved during the nineteenth century by devices which became more and more external, is established here in the manner of the old masters: by the homogeneity of the thematic material, with something more which I would call psychological unity—an intimate drama, a kind of "Return to Life" of one who has reached the brink of the abyss. It is programme music, but does not need a programme, so clearly does it explain itself.

The first movement opens in the style of a double canon, and continues in sinuous contrapuntal fashion. An impassioned viola solo occupies the core of the movement, and includes many of the appoggiatura (sighing) figures whose importance will be established only gradually. The final section of the *Lento* blends into the introduction of the *Allegretto*.

The thematic material of this sonata-form movement consists of two motives. The first four notes presented as a rhythmic ostinato, undergoes considerable manipulation, re-emerging as the main theme of the last movement. The second, a falling tritone containing a minor second, is developed over the ostinato of the first, which itself was generated by the appoggiatura patterns of the *Lento*.

The *Allegro Vivace* is introduced by a cello cadenza in which strong folk influences may be perceived. The main portion of the movement begins with a repeated pedal tone characteristic of later Bartókian procedures. The basic motive of the entire quartet, amplified and extended by a triplet figure, is treated fugally in a wonderful scherzando and stretto, followed by the recapitulation.

Bartók himself criticized the lack of economy of the first *Quartet* in later years, perhaps feeling that in it he was still too tightly bound to his Germano-Hungarian predecessors. It remains, however, a powerfully melodic work in which the embryo of the more refined structure of the later quartets may be perceived.

Kenneth Slowik

Notes on the Artists

20TH CENTURY CONSORT

Anthony Ames, Executive Director

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

The 20th Century Consort is an ensemble of professional musicians drawn from the symphonic, chamber, and solo concert worlds. The Consort, a nonprofit organization, has three fundamental aims: to perform important 20th-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.

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, Conductor

Antioch College, University of Cincinnati. Conducting with Thomas Schippers and Louis Lane. Founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort.

David Budd, Cello

Eastman School of Music. Studied with Ronald Leonard, Robert Sylvester, and Paul Katz. National Symphony Orchestra.

The Emerson String Quartet

Eugene Drucker, Violin

Philip Setzer, Violin

Lawrence Dutton, Viola

David Finckel, Cello

Winners of the 1978 Naumburg Award in Chamber Music, the Quartet was formed while its members were students at The Juilliard School, under the tutelage of Robert Mann, first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet. The Emerson String Quartet is perhaps the only quartet performing today in which two violinists share equally the position of first violin. The Quartet has made two recordings of string quartets by American composers.

Michael Faulkner, Violin

University of Cincinnati. Studied with Dorothy DeLay and Walter Levin. Freelance violinist in Washington, D.C.

Glen Garlick, Cello

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

David Gordon, Tenor

Wooster College, McGill University. Studied with Dale Moore and Luigi Ricci. Lyric Opera of Chicago; Salzburg Festival; Upper Austria State Theater, Linz.

Nancy Denda Hood, Double bass

University of Michigan. Studied with Lawrence P. Hurst and Frank Sinco. North Carolina Symphony; Principal, Richmond Symphony.

Cynthia Kitt, Viola

Curtis Institute. Studied with Max Aronoff and Louise Rood. National Symphony Orchestra.

Julie Kohl, Violin

The Juilliard School. Studied with Ivan Galamian and Dorothy DeLay. Freelance violinist in Washington, D.C.

Bonnie Merz, Viola

Howard University, Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Studied with Raphael Hillyer, Abraham Skernick, and Karen Tuttle. Cincinnati Symphony; National Symphony Orchestra; Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra.

Lambert Orkis, Piano

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

Mary Price, Violin

Washington State University. Studied with Emanuel Zetlin and Berl Senofsky. Smithsonian Chamber Players and Virginia Chamber Orchestra.

William Vaughn, Double bass

Eastman School of Music. Studied with Oscar Zimmerman. National Symphony Orchestra.



Smithsonian Institution

November 1980

Coming Events

Sunday, November 16	Mac Wiseman (Country Music Series)
Thursday, November 20 through Sunday, November 23	Naughty Marietta (American Musical Theater Series)
Sunday, November 23 and Monday, November 24	Smithsonian Chamber Players (Musical Instruments Series)

Coming up in the Hirshhorn Series:

Sunday, December 14	Works by Prokofiev, Roslavetz, Crumb, Bartók, Albert.
Sunday, February 1	Works by Sullivan, Wernick, Yannatos, Bartók.
Sunday, April 12	Works by Wernick, Bartók, Wright, Berio.
Call 357-1500 for ticket information	

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Acknowledgements	The 20th Century Consort wishes to acknowledge the National Endowment for the Arts for its generous support.
Please note	The taking of pictures and the use of recording equipment is strictly prohibited.
	In case of emergency see the house manager or an usher.
Rest rooms	Located in the center lobby.