



Smithsonian Institution

The Hirshhorn Series

20th Century Consort

with The Emerson String Quartet

Christopher Kendall,
Artistic Director

7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 1, 1981

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden

Presented by Smithsonian
Performing Arts

James R. Morris, Director

The Program

String Quartet No. 4

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Allegro

Prestissimo, con sordino

Non troppo lento

Allegretto pizzicato

Allegro molto

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

Sounds of Desolation and Joy

James Yannatos
(b. 1929)

for soprano

Ms. Shelton

Intermission

Luckystone

Timothy Sullivan
(b. 1939)

for clarinet and tape

Mr. Kitt

Concerto for Cello and Ten Players

Richard Wernick
(b. 1934)

for cello with oboe, trumpet, trombone,
contrabassoon, harp, percussion, violin,
horn, bass clarinet, double bass, conductor

Ms. Haffner with Mr. White, Mr. Flowers,
Mr. Kraft, Mr. Parrish, Ms. Carter, Mr. Jones,
Mr. Kim, Mr. Carter, Ms. Baker, Mr. Vaughn,
Mr. Kendall

Notes on the Program

Béla Bartók's **String Quartet No. 4** represents his highest creative achievement, technically as well as musically. It owes its great cohesiveness to the linear unfolding of motivic kernels, several of which are symmetrical in nature. The entire work is similarly architecturally unified: the first and fifth movements develop the same motives, as do the twin scherzos which constitute the second and fourth movements. The cornerstone of the structure is the middle movement, which, in its tri-partite structure, reflects the symmetrical organization of the quartet as a whole.

The fourth quartet has been termed a work almost without themes. Instead of conventional melodic phrases, the quartet utilizes almost constantly evolving motivic patterns. In the outer movements, this basic pattern first takes the form of a chromatic succession which rises from B to D-flat and then falls back to B-flat. The basic motive is subjected to numerous horizontal manipulations, but is also treated as a vertical sonority. It is this gradual metamorphosis which gives the work its logic; without careful treatment, such a formal design might easily disintegrate into chaos. The motive returns in its original form towards the middle of the last movement, closing the developmental circle for the listener and reinforcing the unity established through evolution.

The treatment of the two basic motives of the second and fourth movements is variational rather than cumulative. The two pieces present surprising contrasts (the first is muted, the second pizzicato, throughout) which tend to obliterate the similarity of their "thematic" materials.

The third movement contrasts the atmospheric "night music" mood common to many of Bartók's later works with rhapsodic, Magyar *tárogató* melodies, in which principal notes are surrounded by groups of chromatic embellishments.

The fourth quartet calls for a considerable battery of non-standard string techniques in addition to more common "special effects" and challenging multiple stopping, demanding sharp concentration from the performers. The listeners are challenged as well, but will find their attention amply rewarded by a work universally acknowledged to be one of the musical masterpieces of this century.

James Yannatos is active both as a composer and as a conductor. His works have received performances in major cities in the United States and Canada, as well as on French National Radio. Four volumes of songs on the words of children, called *Silly and Serious Songs*, have just been published by Sonory Publications, accompanied by a teacher's manual and a series of cassette tapes. His book *Explorations in Musical Materials* is a widely-used text. Mr. Yannatos has conducted many professional orchestras, including the Boston Pops and the Baltimore, Winnipeg, and Edmonton Symphonies, and now serves as musical director of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. He has participated in many summer festivals, including those at Saratoga, Tanglewood, Banff, and Chautauqua.

Sounds of Desolation and Joy was written in 1978. Mr. Yannatos writes of the work:

Sounds of Desolation and Joy, a monodrama for solo voice commissioned by Lucy Shel-

ton, is based on a collage of various well-known texts. The texts, while diverse in language, period, texture, and meaning, contribute to a coherent emotional design, articulated through musical recitative, arioso, and arias. Percussion and percussive sounds are used at various times to complement the voice and highlight the drama. The work is divided into two parts.

Part I, "I Cannot Find My Way," evokes the *night* and the *sleeping whispers* of man's confusion and conflict in a progression of human terror, despair, and helplessness. Musical sections include:

1. Arioso: *Night*
2. *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath)
3. Arioso: *O Douleur* (O sorrow)
4. Aria: *Give Sorrow Words*
5. *Dies Irae* (da capo)
6. Ballado: "Je meurs" (I die)

based on fragments of texts from:

Edwin Arlington Robinson: *Credo*
Dante: *Inferno* (from the Divine Comedy)
Shakespeare: *Macbeth*
Baudelaire: *Les Fleurs de Mal*
Thomas of Celano (?): *Dies Irae*
Villon: *Ballade*

Part II, "I am the poet—who sings the tune without words," illuminates the *awakening day* of man's hope that *never stops* and love that *lifts the soul*—in a progression, from courage and faith to hope and transcendent joy. Musical selections include:

7. Aria: "I am the Poet"
8. Intermezzo: *Hope*
9. Finale: *Gloria*

based on fragments of texts from:

Dante: *Purgatorio*
Robinson: *Credo*
Whitman: *Leaves of Grass*
Goethe: *Das Göttliche*
Emily Dickenson: *Hope is the Thing with Feathers*

Robinson: *Credo*
Goethe: *Faust*
Dante: *Paradiso*

Timothy Sullivan holds degrees from the University of Buffalo and Yale University.

His composition teachers included Ned Rorem, Virgil Thompson, and Bulent Arel. Currently on the faculty of Nazareth College of Rochester, New York, Mr. Sullivan is particularly interested in presenting electronic music in a variety of forms. Recently, he has composed a number of works for solo instrument and tape.

Mr. Sullivan wrote the following notes for *Luckystone* in the autumn of 1979:

A stimulant to the composition of *Luckystone* was that of hearing Irish instrumental folk music, an experience unknown to me until last spring, except perhaps in unsounded memory. In listening to the skip and step interval characteristics of Irish folk melodies, I assumed the skips to be indicative of background voice leadings—the assumption being that whenever arpeggiation exists in melody, it is an indication of background chord progression—hence voice-leading—which can be discovered (or reconstructed). However, continued listening, and some analysis, did not reveal any chord progression, only the existence of a background chord, usually a major chord with added sixth and ninth (which can also be regarded as a pentatonic scale)—the folk melodies being radial expressions of this chord, dancing out from it.

Pitch sets which I have come to use in the past few years are polyphonic, that is to say, any set form consists of a number of voices. In accord with the experience of the static chord folk melodies, I wanted to invent some pitch sets which would have a fair amount of redundancy. So, I placed a pentatonic scale in two voices of a three-voiced set, and a full-step/half-step scale (diminished scale) in the third. The combination of the three, heard purely, produces a chromatic texture with a *sub rosa* pentatonic quality. When I first began to compose using this set, it was a surprise to me that for the first page-and-a-half I repressed the chromatic elements completely, allowing only the pentatonic ele-

ments to sound. Composition, no matter how well planned, is for me quite like an interactive process with someone or something else—perhaps a dialogue with the unrealized piece—in which the composer must always speak first. At around the one-minute point of *Luckeystone*, the chromatic elements are gradually revealed and the set heard in full.

Luckeystone is a linear piece for the ensemble of clarinet and tape recorder, featuring, again under the Irish influence, many melodies played in unison or near-unison.

The performance of melodies in unison may have a purpose beyond the mixing of tone colors or the buttressing of one line with another. In orchestral music or music for the pipe organ, desire for a change in tone color or for an increase in loudness usually accounts for the use of doublings, and this is true also of the use of electronic octave dividers attached to band instruments.

A performance of melodies in unison may have, however, a musical goal beyond that of altering tone color or of increasing volume. When a melody is performed in unison by two instruments, one hears, in effect, two slightly varied versions of the same idea, distantly resembling the heterophony of ancient music-making, in which an ornamented melody was performed along with its unornamented form.

In order to be heard, the "variations"—discrepancies, really—must be measured against something, and, in the case of two instruments playing together, the sound of each is measured against the other—each provides the basis against which the other is compared. To be sure, tiny discrepancies in pitch and time between two instruments are likely to pass by so rapidly that one is not likely to have time to give them conscious consideration. Most of the time such discrepancies will be heard as a thickening of the line.

A quality arises from slightly unsynchronized performance which is quite dif-

ferent from the quality of a perfectly synchronized performance, and wholly different from the quality (indeed the purpose) of a line performed by one instrument. In the slightly unsynchronized performance of melodies in unison, there is always something in the space between the lines, something bounded on either side of micro-seconds of time by varied realizations of the same ideas, something, as it were, "alive," non-objectifiable, and transient.

Luckeystone is, then, a piece of little differences, and this is carried on within the tape part as well as between tape and clarinet.

As for the title, I had images of the piece consisting of something or somethings sharp-edged—a touchstone, a set of stones, crystalline structures, things sticking together. On a camping vacation this past summer I pulled out of the pocket of an old jacket a diamond-shaped stone which had been there for years. My children asked what it was. I told them I had always called it my lucky stone, and the word became identified with the piece. The re-spelling is a matter of play, inviting thoughts about meanings within. This is not without precedent: *Milestones* of Miles Davis had always struck me as "Miles' Tones" as well.

In addition to the pitch sets referred to above, the piece also used pulse sets, which are somewhat shorter. These are always in the foreground and accented in the computer-generated tape. The computer is a good instrument to use for this, in that it can control the amplitude of every tone, and it is bursts of amplitude which created pulse. The tape was realized at the Computer Music Studio of Colgate University in Hamilton, New York.

Richard Wernick was born in Boston in 1934. He received his BA from Brandeis, and his MA from Mills, studying under such teachers as Irving Fine, Harold Shapero, Arthur Berger, Ernst Toch, Leon Kirchner, Boris Blacher, and Aaron Copland. He has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the Uni-

versity of Chicago, and currently teaches at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to the 1977 Pulitzer Prize in music, Mr. Wernick has been honored by awards from the Ford Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has received commissions from the Fromm Music Foundation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Aspen Festival Conference on Contemporary Music.

Mr. Wernick comments on his newly-completed **Concerto for Cello and Ten Players**:

There seems to be a curious inverse proportion in music history that the more well-known a piece of music, the more we generally tend to forget the performer for whom the piece was originally composed. This is unfortunate, for although the creative impulses which are triggered by having specific interpreters in mind can never be measured, the fact of their existence can hardly be denied. That many of these composer-performer relationships have been documented is also insufficient, for the intensity as well as the subtlety of these relationships cannot be communicated verbally (even if historians could appreciate the "chemistry"—which I rather doubt). And while it is also true that any work of art takes on a life of its own, and one that is vastly different from the temporal or historical existence of the composer or performer, the influence of the performer *before the fact* is often one of critical importance.

Although creative vision tends to see the "ultimate" performance in terms of some utopian ideal, I for one cannot sustain that vision for very long. I tend to hear specific instruments in terms of specific players, specific voices in terms of specific singers, and when it came to composing a concerto for cello I found this influence to be, at the same time, inspiring and demanding.

I have had the good fortune to develop close professional and personal relationships with many performers whom I consider to be "kindred spirits," performers whose musical integrity co-exists with an astonishing command of their instruments and a profound understanding and ability to communicate new music. Barbara Haffner, who has been a close colleague and friend for many years and for whom I composed my *Cadenza and Variations III* in 1972, is one of those rare musicians. She is a player of great passion, energy, and subtlety, and even at a distance the *Concerto* was composed with her "looking over my shoulder." The end product, in great part, is a result of this "collaboration," and the *Concerto* is dedicated to her.

The piece was originally conceived in 1979, and was commissioned by the Twentieth Century Consort, with generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts. I spent the greater part of 1980 working on the piece—composing, copying, editing, and revising—all the wonderful (and not so wonderful) aspects of getting a piece into its final shape. The first movement is highly rhapsodic, both in terms of its content and its form. Three principal sections, all harmonically related, are played off against one another in a very loose application of "rondo" style. The second movement is an extended set of variations on an all-interval, chromatically expanding "theme" which is present in some form or other throughout. The principal material of the movement is summed up in the cello cadenza which preceded the recapitulation-coda.

The solo cello dominates both movements. The writing for the soloist is vigorous and aggressive, and while the part is modest in its use of special effects, it is highly demanding and requires an artist in total technical control.

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.

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.

Linda Baker, Bass Clarinet

Indiana University. Lyric Opera of Chicago, Contemporary Chamber Players of Chicago.

Daniel Carter, Horn

Curtis Institute of Music. National Symphony Orchestra.

Dotian Carter, Harp

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

David Flowers, Trumpet

University of Michigan, Catholic University. National Symphony Orchestra.

Barbara Haffner, Cello

Eastman School of Music. Studied with Gabor Rejto, Ronald Leonard, and Janos Starker. Contemporary Chamber Players of Chicago, Music of the Baroque.

Thomas Jones, Percussion

University of Maryland. Contemporary Music Forum, American Camerata for New Music, Theater Chamber Players.

Hyun-Woo Kim, Violin

The Juilliard School, Boston University. Studied with Ivan Galamian, Joseph Silverstein.

Loren Kitt, Clarinet

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

James Kraft, Trombone

Florida State University, Catholic University. Assistant Principal Trombone, National Symphony Orchestra.

Wayne Parrish, Contrabassoon

Peabody Institute, University of Michigan. Studied with Gerald Corby, Bernard Garfield. National Gallery Orchestra.

Lucy Shelton, Soprano

Pomona College, New England Conservatory. Studied with Jennie Tourel, Jan DeGaetani, Gerard Souzay. The Jubel Trio. Winner, 1980 Naumburg Award.

William Vaughn, Double Bass

Eastman School of Music. National Symphony Orchestra.

Richard White, Oboe

Eastman School of Music. National Symphony Orchestra.



Smithsonian Institution

February 1981

Coming Events

Monday, February 2	Smithsonian Chamber Players (Chamber Music Series)
Sunday, February 15	The Lewis Family (Country Music Series)
Sunday, February 22 and Monday, February 23	Dance and the Camera— Sage Cowles and Molly Davies (Dance Series)
Sunday, February 22	Kabuki Dance (World Explorer Series)

Coming up in the Hirshhorn Series:

Sunday, April 12	Works by Wernick, Bartók, Wright, Berio
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Call 357-1500 for ticket information

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	House Manager—Jill Baum
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.