



Smithsonian Institution

The Hirshhorn Series

20th Century Consort

with the Emerson String Quartet

Christopher Kendall,
Artistic Director

7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 12, 1981

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden

Presented by Smithsonian
Performing Arts

James R. Morris, Director

The Program

A Poison Tree

for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and conductor

Fantasia with Variations and Cadenza

Valse Macabre

Fantasia Ricapitolata

Ms. Shelton, Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Setzer, Mr. Finckel,
Mr. Orkis, Mr. Kendall

Richard Wernick

(b. 1934)

String Quartet No. 5

Allegro

Adagio molto

Scherzo; alla bulgarese

Andante

Finale: allegro vivace

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

Béla Bartók

(1881-1945)

Intermission**Holding Together**

for solo amplified piano

Mr. Orkis

Maurice Wright

(b. 1949)

Folk Songs

for soprano, flute, clarinet, viola, cello, harp,
two percussion, and conductor

Black is the Color of my True Love's Hair

I Wonder as I Wander

Loosin yelav

Rossignolet du bois

A la femminisca

La Donna ideale

Il Ballo

Motetta di tristura

Malurous qu'ò uno fenno

La Fiolaire

Azerbaijan Love Song

Ms. Shelton, Ms. Stern, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Budd,
Ms. Carter, Mr. Jones, Ms. Davenport, Mr. Kendall

Luciano Berio

(b. 1925)

Notes on the Program

Richard Wernick was born in Boston in 1934. He received his BA from Brandeis, and his MA from Mills, studying under Irving Fine, Harold Shapero, Arthur Berger, Ernst Toch, Leon Kirchner, Boris Blacher, Aaron Copland, and others. He has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Chicago, and is currently on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to winning 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. Earlier this season, his *Concerto for Cello and Ten Players* received its premiere on this series.

Of **A Poison Tree**, Mr. Wernick writes:

A Poison Tree, composed to a text of William Blake (from "Songs of Experience"), was commissioned by the Syracuse Society for New Music, and premiered by that group in Syracuse on 20. January, 1980. Neva Pilgrim was the soloist on that occasion.

The piece is in one long movement divided into three principal sections which are played without pause. The first section, entirely instrumental, consists of an introductory fantasia, followed by a set of nine brief variations, in turn followed by a double cadenza for violin and cello. The second section, *Valse Macabre*, is a setting of the Blake text up to the last two lines. The final lines of the poem are worked into a recapitulated version of the first section.

The work was started in April 1979, and completed over the summer; it is semi-autobiographical in nature and is dedicated "to whomever the shoe fits."

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears
Night and morning with my tears,
And I sunned it with smiles
And with soft, deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night
Till it bore an apple bright,
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole:
In the morning, glad, I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

In 1934, Béla Bartók received a commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation (responsible for initiating so many contemporary pieces including, in the quartet category, Schönberg's *Third String Quartet*) for a string quartet, his fifth work in the genre. Since writing the *String Quartet No. 4* in 1928, Bartók had completed only two major works, the *Cantata profana* and the *Second Piano Concerto*, but, with the commission in hand, proceeded at a brisk compositional clip, finishing the quartet in the month between August 6 and September 6, 1934. Despite this speed, there is nothing hasty in the crafting of the piece, which, although perhaps somewhat less complex than the *String Quartet No. 4*, still attains a remarkable unity of conception and architectural structure.

Like the fourth quartet, Bartók's **String Quartet No. 5** is constructed in arch

form, in which the outer movements have strong correspondences and enclose another pair of related (second and fourth) movements, which themselves surround the *Herzstück* or middle movement. In the fourth quartet all movements shared motivic material; in the fifth quartet, the temporal problems of interrelationships of movements are resolved primarily through architectonic means, although a notable amount of thematic exchange and sharing is present.

The first and last movements illustrate this structural concern in their tripartite forms. In both, the recapitulation mirrors the exposition, presenting materials in reverse order. In the opening *Allegro*, the process is refined as Bartók inverts the thematic elements within each part, and inverts the whole score as well, giving the first violin line to the cello, the second violin line to the viola, and vice versa. The relationships may not be immediately perceptible audibly, yet serve to give a unity of design which would be missed were it not present.

The second and fourth movements are both ternary in form, sharing fragmentary motives and general plan. The central movement in the fifth quartet is a rather calm *Scherzo* enlivened by additive Bulgarian rhythms, but characterized by wide-spanning legato lines. The Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo form echoes the symmetry of the entire work.

This symmetry is functioning on an even lower structural level, however, one which, even more than the overall arch form (which was, after all, one of J. S. Bach's favorite devices as well) gives the *String Quartet No. 5* its own special quality. The work may be said to be "on"

B-flat, for it is not "in" any real kind of functional tonality, but rather has related tonal centers. In the outer movements, these centers are B-flat and E, separated by the tritone, the interval which divides the octave into two symmetrical parts. The second and fourth movements move around D and G, respectively, encircling, as it were, the principal pitch center of B-flat. On the atomic level, the vertical combinations which aid in the unfolding of these structures are themselves largely symmetrical, often surrounding semitonal dyads (two-note groups) which serve as "axes of symmetry," giving rise to a system of pitch relationships which offers a rational alternative to both conventional tonality and doctrinaire dodecaphony.

Bartók's genius never allows these technical innovations to become musically limiting, however. Instead, he uses them to forge a work possessed at once of indestructible unity and widely-ranging emotional intensity and variety.

Maurice Wright was born in Front Royal, Virginia, in 1949, and received his musical education at Duke University and Columbia University. Formerly Music Lecturer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, he now is professor of composition at Temple University, where his duties include the direction of a student ensemble for contemporary music as well as overseeing the computer music composition program. 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 has also directed Boston University's Young Artists' Composition Program at Tanglewood. He has recently completed an opera, *The Fifth String*,

and several of his other works, including the *Chamber Symphony*, the *Cantata* for tenor voice, tape, and percussion, and *Basilio's Lament*, have been performed and/or recorded by the 20th Century Consort in previous seasons.

Wright is particularly interested in exploring the relationship between pre-recorded electronically-generated sounds and live performers; the majority of his work to date reflects this artistic orientation. **Holding Together** is no exception, as Mr. Wright's introduction makes clear:

Holding Together means union and the effort required to maintain union. The piano sounds and the electronic sounds change during the composition: a change in one part multiplies change in the other part. The vocabulary of the piece is arrived at through the accumulation of elements: the piece begins with one element which grows out in a circle. From time to time this process of accumulation is halted, and the piece reduces its vocabulary. This reduction provides the starting point for yet another accumulation of ideas, which are now seen in a different frame of reference.

If the listener encounters difficulty in following the seventeen printed sub-titles, they may become a sort of poem to be read during the performance. The composition does not present its message through theme and variations or conventional development techniques, but through a series of sonic episodes held together by various means, including this program note.

The electronic sounds were generated at the Temple University Electronic Studio using a Moog Synthesizer, and at the Bregman Studio for Electronic Music at Dartmouth College using the Synclavier II, a digital sound synthesizer.

As the piece progresses, the pianist is called on to insert various items into his instrument, so that by the end of the work, every note played results in a prepared piano sound. This may be seen as a gradual effort to reconcile the sound of the piano with the electronic sounds produced by the tape.

The tape and live sounds move in and out of synchronization with each other, allowing the listener to grapple with the perceptual problem (already faced by the composer) of hearing both elements in one perceptual space from a variety of auditory angles. As in any multi-sectional work, the structural outlines may occasionally be blurred by the web of detail (here, the seventeen movements or sections occupy only twenty-one minutes), but the energy behind *Holding Together* is never buried.

Part of this sense of immediacy may be a reflection of the composer's experiences in working with the Synclavier II, a sophisticated yet portable unit on which Mr. Wright has concertized. Such concerts take on additional meaning when one realizes that "live" electronic performances were, until recently, quite impossible. In a telephone conversation, Mr. Wright contrasted the realizations of electronic sounds in the *Chamber Symphony* and *Holding Together*:

In the earlier work, one movement is composed of individually-taped sounds joined mechanically by splicing. For the last movement, I used a digital computer with a very long turnaround time, so that I would write some music, then have to wait three to four days to hear what it actually sounded like. The Synclavier, on the other hand, is very quick. It immediately records inside its own memory within the synthesizer, and can play the sounds back to you right away. Therefore, the parts of *Holding Together* which contain many notes went remarkably quickly. I think that Lambert's piece therefore has a spontaneous quality that I wasn't able to tap before—everything used to take so long that one had to be methodical almost to the point of becoming mechanical to get through it all. The Synclavier allows for a certain attitude of spontaneity. This doesn't mean that the music is written with any less care or predetermination, but there is an atmosphere set up when working with that instrument which leads one to accept ideas which occur on a more spontaneous basis.

As implied above, *Holding Together* involved Lambert Orkis, Mr. Wright's colleague at Temple, in many ways during its conception and composition as well as in actual performance.

Luciano Berio's fame rests chiefly on his many remarkable avant-garde works, ranging from compositions for small chamber ensembles to full-orchestra pieces. To those listeners familiar with Berio's more recent productions, the **Folk Songs** may come as something of a surprise. The title page reads: "*Folk Songs/* arranged by Luciano Berio," and it is the verb on which the emphasis falls, for, with two exceptions, the melodic materials incorporated are not Berio's own. The composer's individuality is present, however, in each of the eleven folk song settings, which Berio called "a tribute to the extraordinary artistry" of his wife, the American mezzo-soprano Cathy Berberian. The collection was published in 1968, although several of the pieces are of a considerably earlier date, as Paul Moor's excellent note explains:

One cannot really classify either the first song, *Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair*, or the second, *I Wonder as I Wander*, as a genuine folk song. In fact, John Jacob Niles, the Kentucky-born singer and scholar, whose education included classes with Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, composed them in Elizabethan modes and made them famous by singing and recording them. Berio's suite opens with a viola, free of bar lines and rhythmically independent of the voice, evoking a country fiddler. Harmonics from the viola, cello, and harp contribute toward the "hurdy-gurdy sound" Berio wanted to accompany the second song.

Armenia provided the third song, *Loosin yelav*, which describes the rising of the moon. In the old French song *Rosignolet du bois*, introduced by antique finger cymbals, the nightingale advises an inquiring lover to sing his serenades two hours after midnight and identifies the "apples" in his garden as the moon and the sun. A sustained chord colored by the striking of automobile spring coils bridges this song to the next one, the old Sicilian song *A la femminisca*, sung by fishermen's wives as they wait at the docks.

Like the first two songs, the sixth, *La Donna ideale*, and the seventh, *Il Ballo*, come not from anonymous folk bards but from a trained composer—in this case Luciano Berio, who wrote them in 1949 at the age of 24 for a Fulbright Fellowship voice student in Italy named Cathy Berberian. The old Geonese-dialect folk poem, *The Ideal Woman*, says that if you find a woman at once well-born, well-mannered, well-formed, and with a good dowry, for God's sake don't let her get away. *The Ball*, another old Italian poem, says that the wisest of men lose their heads over love, but love resists the sun and ice and all else.

Motettu di tritura comes from Sardinia and apostrophizes the nightingale: "How you resemble me as I weep for my lover. . . When they bury me, sing me this song."

The next two come from perhaps the most famous of all folk-music arrangements, Joseph Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne*, in *auvergnat* dialect. *Malurous qu'o uno fenno* poses the eternal marital paradox: he with no spouse seeks one, and he with one wishes he had none. A cello echoing the improvisation at the opening of the suite introduces *La Fiolaire*, in which a girl at her spinning wheel sings of exchanging kisses with a shepherd.

Berberian discovered the last song, called simply *Azerbaijan Love Song*, on a 78-r.p.m. 10-inch disk from the Soviet Asian republic of Azerbaijan, sung in that nation's language except for one verse in Russian, which compares love to a stove. The sounds are transcribed, purely by rote, from that scratchy old record.

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 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 pleasures and merits 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.

The Emerson String Quartet

Eugene Drucker, Violin

Philip Setzer, Violin

Lawrence Dutton, Viola

David Finckel, Cello

The Emerson String Quartet, winner of the 1978 Naumburg Award, is appearing in over twenty concerts this season at the Smithsonian Institution. During 1980-81, the Quartet is performing the complete quartets of Béla Bartók in Washington, New York, Cleveland, and at Stanford University. It will appear this summer at the Spoleto Festivals in the U.S. and Italy, as well as the Vermont Mozart Festival, Festival Ottawa, Tanglewood, and the Martha's Vineyard Music Festival.

David Budd, Cello

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

Dotian Carter, Harp

Curtis Institute. Principal Harp, National Symphony Orchestra.

Nora Davenport, Percussion

University of Maryland. Studied with

Leigh Howard Stevens. Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, concert Marimbist.

David Finckel, Cello

Manhattan School of Music. Studied with Bernard Greenhouse, Mstislav Rostropovich, Jacqueline Du Pré. Faculty, Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts. Madison Trio, Emerson String Quartet.

Miles Hoffman, Viola

Yale University, The Juilliard School. Studied with Sol Getzer, Syoko Aki. National Symphony Orchestra.

Thomas Jones, Percussion

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

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, Conductor

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

Loren Kitt, Clarinet

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

Lambert Orkis, Piano

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

Philip Setzer, Violin

Cleveland Institute of Music, The Juilliard School. Emerson String Quartet. A 1976 prizewinner in the Queen Elizabeth Violin Competition.

Lucy Shelton, Soprano

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

Sara Stern, Flute

Studied with Richard Townsend, Merrill Jordan, Marcel Moyse. Romantic Chamber Ensemble, Anechoic Wind Quintet, Washington Philharmonia.



Smithsonian Institution

April/May 1981

Coming Events

Monday, April 13	Classical Quartet (Violins & Viols Series)
Sunday, April 26	Patsy Montana, Pee Wee King, and Redd Stewart (Country Music Series)
Friday, May 1 through Sunday, May 3	Spring Celebration (Special Event)
Sunday, May 3 and Monday, May 4	Smithsonian Chamber Players (Chamber Players Series)
Monday, May 4	20th Century Consort (Chamber Music Series)
Sunday, May 10	Smithsonian Jazz Repertory Ensemble: Music of King Oliver and the Benny Goodman Septet (Jazz Heritage Series)
	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.
