



April 20, 1985

**The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program  
and  
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
present**

## **THE 20th CENTURY CONSORT**

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**Saturday, April 20, 1985**

**Lecture-Discussion: 4:30 p.m.**

**Concert: 5:30 p.m.**

**Auditorium**

**Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden**

This evening we continue our exploration of *Pops and Classics*, inspired by the Jim Dine exhibition currently on view here at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. In this program, the distinction between pops and classics is blurred, much as the line between pop and expressionism is blurred in Dine's work. Indeed, in time, pops *become* classics.

*Circles* has become a classic in its own right since its first appearance at the edge of the musical avant-garde 25 years ago. Still, it continues to present a quirky and magical impact on stage, and, for the musicians, formidable challenges with its tantalizingly ambiguous notation and intricate interplay among the performers.

In the *String Quartet* of Claus Adam, one encounters a powerful and affecting work which seems certain to take its place among the really important string quartets of this century. Neil Rolnick's *Ever-livin' Rhythm*, on the other hand, sets out after altogether different ends, and as the tone of its title suggests, shares with the best of pop art an audacious, virtuosic flair.

We are again most fortunate to have a work by Jon Deak, not to mention the composer himself as performer, on the program. As in so many of Deak's pieces which reveal a strong kinship with the pop aesthetic, *Ugly Duckling*'s irresistible good humor is only the tip of the iceberg. We also find here the timing of a great comic, painstaking attention to detail, wit, satire, just plain enchanting music, and, behind it all, a real humanity and touching realization of the Hans Christian Andersen tale.

It is a great pleasure to welcome the American String Quartet again to our series. We always find it immensely rewarding to work with this wonderful ensemble. Please join us at the reception following the concert on the Plaza level, sponsored by the Friends of the 20th Century Consort.

We close with an enthusiastic invitation to join us again next season. Please use the enclosed form to sign on; it's our 10th Anniversary, and it wouldn't be right to celebrate without you!

Christopher Kendall  
*Artistic Director*

Alyce Rideout  
*Manager*

## THE PROGRAM

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### LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, Department of Education  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Jon Deak, composer, *Ugly Duckling*

### CONCERT

#### **Circles (1960)**

**Luciano Berio**

(b. 1925)

- I. stinging gold swarms*
- II. riverly is a flower*
- III. n(o)w*
- IV. riverly is a flower*
- V. stinging gold swarms*

Lucy Shelton, soprano  
Dotian Carter, harp  
Thomas Jones, percussion  
Albert Merz, percussion

#### **String Quartet (1975)**

**Claus Adam**

(1917-1983)

- Prima parte*
- Secundo parte*

The American String Quartet  
Mitchell Stern and Laurie Carney, violins  
Daniel Avshalomov, viola  
David Geber, violoncello

### INTERMISSION

#### **Ever-livin' Rhythm (1977)**

**Neil B. Rolnick**

(b. 1947)

Thomas Jones, percussion

#### **Ugly Duckling (1981)**

**Jon Deak**

(b. 1943)

- Part I*
- Part II*

Lucy Shelton, soprano  
The American String Quartet  
Mitchell Stern and Laurie Carney, violins  
Daniel Avshalomov, viola  
David Geber, violoncello  
Jon Deak, contrabass

### Luciano Berio: *Circles* (1960)

Luciano Berio's *Circles* is one of the classics of the avant-garde vocal literature. This eighteen-minute cycle comprises settings of three poems by e.e. cummings, and combines three of Berio's favorite instruments — female voice, harp, and percussion. It examines non-traditional structural form and musical syntax, as well as the symbiotic relationship between words and music. As the title suggests, repetition is integral to *Circles*; constant repetition and variation occur in circular patterns and affect all of the compositional elements. Berio exploits these musical and textual components by transforming relatively simple forms into extremely complex and disassociative ones; coherence is only then gradually restored.

*Circles* is written in five continuous sections which are cast in a large, palindromelike form: A-B-C-B'-A'. A setting of the poem "stinging," for voice and harp, opens the work. Its melismatic lines feature the virtuosity, spiky intervals, and extremes of dynamics which will appear throughout the entire work. Pitch is precisely notated in this section; the rhythmic notation is conventional, although unmetered. As scholar Misha Donat has observed, pitch structure in the vocal line of *Circles* is built almost entirely from a three-note melodic cell and its permutations. This cell, in its most basic form, consists of a major or minor third, followed by a major or minor second moving in the same direction. Onomatopoeic sounds are frequently heard in *Circles* as well; the sandblocks and maracas enter for the first time, with a hissing noise, as the soprano sustains the "s" of the first poem's final word, "dream." Other wood percussion instruments gradually enter in the subsequent instrumental bridge which leads to the work's second section, "riverly is a flower." Here Berio demonstrates two of his primary methods of articulating structural form in *Circles*: contrasting instrumentation and vocal styles. Skin percussion instruments are heard for the first time at the beginning of this second song; Berio introduces metal percussion instruments at its conclusion. To further delineate this song's boundaries, Berio uses a more syllabic text setting, as well as a less definite pitch structure. The soprano also employs *sprechgesang*, breathy tones, and fragments of spoken text as part of her vocal palette. Near the end of this metric song, Berio introduces a rhythmic leitmotif consisting of a series of repeated notes played by the percussion. This figure, played with either a *crescendo* or a *diminuendo*, is heard throughout the rest of the piece. The climactic third section, a setting of the poem "n(o)w," is the most fragmented part of *Circles*. Its music gradually transforms into increasingly percussive

noise; its text disintegrates into disjointed, meaningless syllables and phonetic grunts. Here, as in many of his works, Berio treats words as abstract sounds rather than meaningful linguistic units. Rhythm also becomes fragmented. Improvisation boxes instruct the percussionists to play specific pitches as fast as possible on particular instruments at designated dynamic levels; the rhythmic interpretation is left to the performers. (Such passages are not truly aleatoric, as Berio allows improvisation with only one compositional element.) The soprano gradually begins to interact more and more with the instrumentalists, as witnessed by the score's intensifying wordpainting (on such words as "roll," "collide," and "rain"), and the percussionists' own vocal declamation of phonetic sounds. Near the end of this section, the soprano changes her position onstage, drawing closer to the harpist and percussionists. This dramatic gesture not only underscores Berio's integration of the four performers into one cohesive unit, but reflects his belief that music and theatricality are inseparable.

The musical material presented thus far in *Circles* is so dense and complex that Berio felt it imperative to repeat the first two poems. However, their music and poetry are interchanged upon repetition. A sudden shift away from the turbulent, *fortissimo* ending of the third section leads directly into the *pianissimo* opening of *Circles*' fourth section, which is a setting of the poem "riverly" for voice and harp. The text is set this time, however, to a recapitulation, albeit slightly varied in rhythm and instrumentation, of the music which previously underscored the first poem, "stinging." Metric groupings again govern the music, which increasingly regains coherence. At the end of this section, the soprano moves again, this time assuming a position between the harpist and percussionists. Block rhythmic chords are heard in the percussion for the first time during the fifth, and final, section of *Circles*, which juxtaposes the poem "stinging" with an adaptation of the music from the work's second section. Although the soprano incorporates into her phrases some of the third section's arbitrary pitch production, this section is undeniably linked with its musical precursor. The recurrence of a specific melismatic figure on the word "rose," the reiteration of the vocal line's characteristic three-note melodic cell, and a final onomatopoeic gesture on the last word's concluding "s" help complete *Circles*' palindromic formal structure.

*Circles* was written for Berio's first wife and frequent collaborator, the late soprano Cathy Berberian, who premiered the work in 1960 at the Tanglewood Music Festival. Miss Berberian's recordings of *Circles* are available on both the Candide and Wergo labels.

**Poems by e.e. cummings**

stinging  
gold swarms  
upon the spires  
silver

          chants the litanies the  
great bells are ringing with rose  
the lewd fat bells  
                    and a tall

wind  
is dragging  
the  
sea

with  
  
dream

-S

"stinging" (from *Tulips & Chimneys*, 1923): Copyright,  
1923, 1951, by e.e. cummings. From his volume COM-  
PLETE POEMS 1913-1962 by permission of Harcourt  
Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

riverly is a flower  
gone softly by tomb  
rosily gods whiten  
befall saith rain

anguish  
of dream-send is  
hushed  
in

moan-loll where  
night     gathers  
morte carved smiles

cloud-gloss is at moon-cease  
soon  
verbal mist-flowers close  
ghosts on prowl gorge

sly slim gods stare

"riverly is a flower" (from *&*, 1925): Copyright, 1925, by  
e.e. cummings. From his volume COMPLETE POEMS  
1913-1962 by permission of Harcourt Brace  
Jovanovich, Inc.

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n(o)w

the  
how  
dis(appeared cleverly)world

iS Slapped:with;liGhtninG  
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which(shal)lpounceupcrackw(ill)jumps

of

THuNdeRB  
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)Whoshout(Ghost)atOne(voiceless)O

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—sing  
)all are aLl(cry alL See)o(ver All)Th(e grEEen

?earth)N,ew

"n(o)w" (from *W [i.e. ViVa]*, 1931): Copyright, 1931,  
1959, by e.e. cummings. From his volume *COMPLETE  
POEMS 1913-1962* by permission of Harcourt Brace  
Jovanovich, Inc.

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## Claus Adam: *String Quartet* (1975)

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Claus Adam had already begun sketching compositional ideas for a sequel to his *String Quartet #1* (1947) when members of the Naumburg Award-winning American String Quartet approached him to write a work specifically for them. The resulting composition, *String Quartet*, is a haunting twenty-one-minute work filled with a wide variety of emotions and colors.

*String Quartet* is scored in two movements, each of which is subdivided into three distinct sections. The first movement, *Prima parte*, opens with an eerie *Lento tranquillo*. Here Adam contrasts pizzicato and spine-tingling harmonics with warm, lush chords, and reveals numerous compositional ideas to be developed throughout the movement. An increasing intensity and an *accelerando* lead directly into the next section, *Allegro inquieto*, which is itself an independent movement in free sonata form. Its extended tonality and its quality of *Weltschmerz* immediately remind one of the early works of Alban Berg, whose music greatly influenced Adam. Melodic imitation and variation, intervallic symmetries, and continual tempo and dynamic fluctuation characterize this section, whose technically difficult, although idiomatically conceived, string writing explores every register of the instruments' ranges. A poignant cello solo ushers in the elegiac third section, *Largo dol-oroso*, written in memory of Stefan Wolpe, one of Adam's teachers. A brief recall of motivic ideas from the work's beginning completes a large formal arc and ends the first movement.

In *Moderato statico*, the first section of the work's *Secundo parte*, Adam, a native of Sumatra, imitates a Javanese gamelan ensemble. Pointillistic pizzicato, articulated at a variety of dynamic levels, effectively recreates the metallic and somewhat hollow timbre of these bands. *Scordatura* tuning (two strings on each instrument are altered by one half step) makes available all twelve notes of the chromatic scale on open strings or with natural harmonics; new possibilities for doublestop combinations are also generated. The subsequent, contrasting *Presto misterioso* passages feature slurred, *arco* bowing, and further develop compositional ideas from the movement's first section through a variety of techniques. Details of the work's formal plan, such as its melodic variation and structural repeats, are clearly audible here. (Even so, Adam firmly believed that the listener should not have to understand or be consciously aware of structural complexities in order to enjoy a piece. He said, "I dislike complicated 'roadmaps' which really do not describe the landscape.") *Veloce e vivace*, the work's fiery concluding

section, consolidates motivic ideas from the entire work. Shrill *sul ponticello* bowing contrasts with rich, undulating waves of sound; doublestops and tremolo thicken the texture. For the first time in the second movement, pitches are produced here by actually fingering the notes on the fingerboard, in addition to merely using open strings and harmonics.

Claus Adam's *String Quartet* was commissioned by the Naumburg Foundation for the American String Quartet, who premiered the work in the summer of 1978 at the Aspen Music Festival. A recording, featuring the American String Quartet, is available on CRI Records.

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## Neil B. Rolnick: *Ever-livin' Rhythm* (1977)

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*Ever-livin' Rhythm* is an exotic nine-minute work for solo percussionist and computer generated tape. The composer writes:

"Much of the musical material for *Ever-livin' Rhythm* is derived from the vocal music of the Ba-Benzele pygmies of Central Africa, and there are several quotes which figure prominently in both the surface texture and developmental structure of the piece. In contrast to the relatively simple nature of the motivic material, the piece requires an unswerving technical virtuosity on the part of the percussionist. The tape part, in turn, was realized using one of the most sophisticated music synthesis systems in the world, the PDP10 system at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University.

"My use of the computer in this piece is characterized by the instrumental nature of the tape part. Rather than looking for new sounds and sonorities (which, after all, are only new until they've been heard once), I concentrated on exploiting the subtle controls of timbre, tempo, pitch, and rhythm which are uniquely possible through the use of the computer. For example, the gong-like sounds at the beginning of the tape part of *Ever-livin' Rhythm* are actually made up of one of the primary melodic motives of the piece at varying tempi of up to a quarter note equal to a metronome marking of 3000, but with no transposition of pitch. The control of musical phrasing which is possible through computer sound generation is particularly exploited in the middle section of the piece, in which the percussionist accompanies the computer's 'song.' The final section of the piece is made

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feasible only by the computer's accurate control of pitch and rhythm. Here the tape and percussionist each play part of a steady, complex polyrhythmic pattern. At the same time, both the tape and the performer also play a constantly accelerating melodic figure in parallel tritones."

A recording of *Ever-livin' Rhythm* with percussionist Gordon Gottlieb is available on 1750 Arch Records.

## **Jon Deak: *Ugly Duckling* (1981)**

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Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Ugly Duckling" has long intrigued Jon Deak. Since childhood he has had an ever increasing appreciation of the tale's complex gamut of emotions, which range from love, sadness, joy, pride, and despair to fear, bravery, tenderness, humor, and ecstasy. In 1980 Deak conceived and wrote a twenty-minute chamber work for soprano, contrabass, and string quartet entitled *Ugly Duckling*; it presents Andersen's story in the lighthearted and naive manner in which Deak perceived it as a child. Collaborator Richard Hartshorne also retranslated the tale from the original Danish, so that Deak could remain as faithful as possible to Andersen's intentions and capture many of his subtle philosophical implications.

Deak's picturesque musical setting of *Ugly Duckling* skillfully mirrors the warmth and humanity of Andersen's fairy tale. He does not draw any righteous morals in this work, but concentrates instead on characterizing the ugly duckling's innermost feelings. The soprano narrates the story with poignant melodies, *sprechstimme*, and onomatopoeic barnyard sounds; the contrabass employs countless graphic sound effects to accompany scenes from the ugly duckling's traumatic life.

A brief prelude opens *Ugly Duckling*, and introduces kernels from all the work's musical motives. It is a lovely summer day in the countryside, and a mother duck patiently sits on her nest near a deep lake, waiting for her

eggs to hatch. After an agonizing and seemingly endless wait, the eggs hatch and a group of squealing chicks emerges. Yet one egg, the largest, doesn't hatch. Could it possibly be a young turkeycock? Finally, it too cracks open, and a large and ugly bird pops out. But the creature isn't a turkeycock — it assimilates far too easily into life at the duckpond. When the mother duck introduces her new chicks to the other farm birds, they harass the ugly duckling and try to peck him. And though she truly loves her strong and upright youngest child, the mother duck cries out in melancholy anguish, "if only I hadn't hatched you!" In a fit of despair, the ugly duckling runs away from home. Part II describes the ugly duckling's brave adventures on his own in the world. Life is not kind to him. The wild ducks at the marsh make fun of him, hunters shoot at him, and a fierce tracking hound catches him. The ugly duckling is petrified. He sneaks into an old woman's decrepit hut, but her old cat and hen torment him. An overwhelming urge to swim finally takes the unhappy duckling back to a pond. Winter icily descends, and he is forced to swim continuously in order not to freeze in the water. But when springtime arrives, a group of noble swans returns to the pond from warmer climates. The ugly duckling summons up all his courage and swims over to them, hoping that they will put an end to his misery by pecking him to death. Suddenly he sees his reflection in the water. No longer is he an ugly duckling — he has become a beautiful white swan (and the contrabass has become a lush string quartet)! The village children declare him to be the most beautiful swan of all, and he soars into the sky singing joyfully.

*Ugly Duckling* (Part I) was written for soprano Lucy Shelton and contrabassist Richard Hartshorne, who premiered it in October 1980. Part II was commissioned by Mark Malkovich of the Newport Music Festival; the complete work was premiered at the festival in the summer of 1981 by the Audubon String Quartet, soprano Julia Lovett, and the composer on contrabass. A recording of *Ugly Duckling*, with Shelton, Hartshorne, and the Audubon String Quartet, is available on Opus One Records.



## NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

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**The American String Quartet** — Mitchell Stern and Laurie Carney, violins, Daniel Avshalomov, viola, and David Geber, violoncello — was founded in 1974 and in its first year won both the prestigious Naumburg Award and the Coleman Competition. In addition to concert performances throughout the world, the Quartet is in residence at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, and at Houston's Rice University. In addition to their engagements as guests of the 20th Century Consort, they have appeared often in Washington at the Library of Congress, most recently at the First Festival of American Chamber Music in 1984.

**Dotian Carter** is principal harpist with the National Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, she studied with Carlos Salzedo. She has also performed with the Philadelphia Lyric Opera, the Pennsylvania Ballet, and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

**Jon Deak** holds degrees from the Juilliard School and the University of Illinois, where he was active in a circle of composers surrounding John Cage and Sal Martirano. A former Fulbright scholar in Rome, Mr. Deak's compositions have been premiered by the New York Philharmonic (conducted by Zubin Mehta and Pierre Boulez), in which he is currently associate principal bassist, as well as by the 20th Century Consort. As a performer, he has appeared as street musician, recitalist, and lecturer, in settings ranging from formal concert halls to wharfside bars on four continents.

**Thomas Jones** is a graduate of the University of Maryland. A free-lance percussionist, he is a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, and has performed professionally with both the Bayreuth and Spoleto Festivals.

**Albert Merz** is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Catholic University. An active free-lance artist, he often performs with the National Symphony Orchestra and is a member of the Theatre Chamber Players at the Kennedy Center.

**Lucy Shelton** is one of today's most versatile artists, equally in demand for orchestra, recital, and chamber music engagements. A native of California, she studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and later taught at the Eastman School. She holds the distinction of being the only two-time recipient of the Naumburg Award — as a winner of the 1980 Solo Vocal Competition, and in 1977 as a member of the Jubal Trio.

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The participation of **Jon Deak** in today's program has been made possible in part by a grant from **Meet The Composer**, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Express Foundation, Avon Products Foundation, BMI, Bristol-Myers Company, CBS Inc., Dayton Hudson Corporation, the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., Exxon, Ford Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, Grace Foundation, L.A.W. Fund, Inc., Metropolitan Life Foundation, and the Helena Rubenstein Foundation.

The 20th Century Consort's Washington residency and touring performances are supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.

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## PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

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### Sponsored by the Resident Associate Program

April-May-June

April 21/7:30 p.m.

*Joanne Brackeen, Dick Wellstood,  
Kenny Barron*  
Solo Jazz Piano Masters

Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

April 23, 24/8 p.m.

*Smithsonian Chamber Players*  
17th Century Italian Music

Hall of Musical Instruments  
National Museum of American History  
12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

April 28/7:30 p.m.

*Stage and Film Star Hurd Hatfield*  
*Reads James McNeill Whistler*

Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

May 5/7:30 p.m.

*A Tribute to Count Basie*  
*Starring Joe Williams*

Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

May 7, 8/8 p.m.

*Smithson String Quartet*  
Mozart, Schubert, Haydn

Hall of Musical Instruments  
National Museum of American History  
12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

May 17/8 p.m.

*Smithsonian Salutes Washington Dance*  
Jan Taylor, Tish Carter & Nancy Galeota

Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

May 19/11 a.m.

*Charles Lindsay Foreman*, pianist  
Ragtime Brunch Concert

Carmichael Auditorium  
National Museum of American History  
12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

May 29/7 p.m.

*Allen Houser Sextet*  
Courtyard Concert

National Portrait Gallery  
National Museum of American Art  
8th & G Streets, N.W.

May 31, June 1/7:30 p.m.

*Walt Whitman: Liberal and Lusty as Nature*  
Starring Will Stutts

Great Hall  
National Portrait Gallery  
8 Street & F Street Mall, N.W.

June 7/8 p.m.

June 8/4:30 p.m.

*Theatre de Banlieue*  
Avant-garde Theatre from Belgium

Baird Auditorium  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

For information on these and other RAP activities, telephone 357-3030

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Robert McC. Adams, *Secretary*, Smithsonian Institution  
James T. Demetron, *Director*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
Janet W. Solinger, *Director*, Smithsonian Resident Associate Program  
Marcus L. Overton, *Program Coordinator*, RAP Performing Arts  
Alyce Rideout, *Manager*, 20th Century Consort

Please note: the taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly prohibited.  
Rest rooms are located at either side of the cloakroom in the lower lobby.