

1986-87 SERIES

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

THE 20TH CENTURY CONSORT

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Alyce Rideout, Manager

Saturday, January 24, 1987

Lecture-Discussion: 4:30 p.m.

Concert: 5:30 p.m.

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

We don't necessarily set out to do programs of all American music; but it does work out that way from time to time, and this evening's program is a case in point. Although they were composed within a 17-year period in late-20th-century America, one would be hard pressed to identify a unifying element among the works in tonight's concert, except to say that they are all within about five minutes of each other in duration. As we have noted before, it is this very diversity which characterizes new music these days, and allows us to put together programs of recent music with a great deal of variety.

Balancing this variety, and lending continuity to the program as a whole, is a clear progression from the cragginess of the Wernick to the lyricism of the Corigliano. Of course, there is the pair of appearances each by tenor, oboe, and harpsichord, all relatively unusual in programs of contemporary chamber music, that is also a unifying factor. Still, the most salient feature of this group of works is their individuality; there is nothing half-hearted or vague about the character of any of these four pieces. Each makes a strong and distinctive statement. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

A reminder: on February 28th, we will have a special opportunity to experience the music-making of Lambert Orkis and a special guest artist, Fires of London pianist Stephen Pruslin. Following solo appearances by each artist, the two will join forces to conclude the concert with a performance of Igor Stravinsky's epochal *Le sacre du printemps* in the composer's own version for one piano, four hands. The concert promises to be an extraordinary event. Don't miss it!

Christopher Kendall
Artistic Director

The participation of composer Richard Wernick in today's program was made possible in part by a grant from **Meet The Composer**, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, AT&T Foundation, BMI, CBS Inc., Dayton Hudson Corporation, Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., L.A.W. Fund, Inc., Metropolitan Life Foundation, Paul Foundation, Inc., and the Helena Rubenstein Foundation.

THE PROGRAM

MEET THE COMPOSER

Richard Wernick, composer
Maurice Wright, composer

CONCERT

In Praise of Zephyrus (1981)

Richard Wernick
(b. 1943)

- I. "... the Weste wynde aryseth ..."*
- II. Vent galerne*
- III. "... the Lord turned a marvelous strong West wynde."*

Rudolf Vrbsky, oboe
Elisabeth Adkins, violin
James Francis, viola
David Hardy, cello

Cantata (1975)

Maurice Wright
(b. 1949)

For tenor, percussion, and electronic sounds

- 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)*

David Gordon, tenor
Thomas Jones, percussion

INTERMISSION

Fantasy (1973–75)

William Penn
(b. 1943)

For solo harpsichord

Lambert Orkis, harpsichord

Poem in October (1969–70)

John Corigliano
(b. 1938)

David Gordon, tenor	Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Sara Stern, flute	Holly Hamilton, violin
Rudolf Vrbsky, oboe	James Francis, viola
Loren Kitt, clarinet	David Hardy, cello
Lambert Orkis, harpsichord	Christopher Kendall, conductor

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

PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

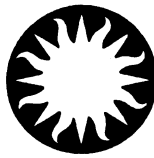
Sponsored by the Resident Associate Program January-February

January 25/11 a.m. <i>The Smith Sisters</i> Brunch Concert	Carmichael Auditorium National Museum of American History 12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
January 25/7 p.m. <i>Robert Dick, flute</i> Pro Musicis Series Opens	Grand Salon Renwick Gallery 17th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
February 1/7:30 p.m. <i>Seamus Heaney</i> Poetry Reading	Auditorium Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden 7th Street & Independence Avenue, S.W.
February 5, 6/7:30 p.m. <i>Gilbert & Sullivan Gala</i> Stars of the D'Oyly Carte	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
February 8/7:30 p.m. <i>John Eaton</i> American Popular Song	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
February 13/7:30 p.m. February 14/3:30 p.m. <i>Very Truly Yours, M.L. –</i> <i>A Visit with Mary Todd Lincoln</i> Starring Nancy Grosshans	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
February 21/7 p.m. <i>Emerson String Quartet</i> Complete Beethoven Quartets Program IV	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
February 22/11 a.m. <i>Washington Dixieland All-Stars</i> Brunch Concert	Carmichael Auditorium National Museum of American History 12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
February 25/7:30 p.m. <i>Tom Rush & Pete Kennedy</i> Folk Music Fest	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.

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

Robert McC. Adams, *Secretary*, Smithsonian Institution
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Marcus L. Overton, *Senior Program Coordinator*, RAP Performing Arts
Penelope P. Dann, *Program Coordinator*, RAP Performing Arts

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.



20th CENTURY CONSORT
1986-87 Series
Program III
Saturday 24 January 1987

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Richard Wernick composed In Praise of Zephyrus in 1981 and it was premiered in the following year. The score bears the inscription "For Phillip West--with hoops of steel." The work's title is a reference to the west wind, and a play on the dedicatee's name and his instrument, the oboe. Each of the work's three movements is subtitled with a phrase referring to some aspect of the west wind. Notwithstanding the word play, however, this is rigorously abstract music; the composer cautions against reading programmatic content into the piece.

In Praise of Zephyrus is scored for oboe, violin, viola, and cello. The composer considers the instruments of the ensemble equal, yet the nature of the oboe's sound has led to its treatment, at times, as a distinct element of the scoring against the strings, which often act as a unit. On the other hand, each of the strings also has passages in which it plays a solo role. Indeed, tightly coordinated independence of each voice is a familiar element of the composer's style, which is thoroughly contrapuntal in approach.

Also characteristic of Wernick's music is the sustained dynamic tension in writing that is demanding, complicated, and dissonant--deeply felt, but never remotely sentimental.

Exactingly engineered, powerful and unyielding, the music fits the image evoked in the dedication, "hoops of steel."

* * * * *

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'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. About the work, the composer himself has written:

My Cantata for tenor voice, percussion, and electronic sound is music about music; a celebration of harmony and sound. I chose these 17th-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.

CANTATA

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 reposes,
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)

William Penn has composed considerable music for the theater, and his Fantasy for solo harpsichord testifies to that fact. As visual and theatrical aspects comprise an integral part of its effect, and heighten the character of outrageous humor that flavors the work.

Penn has written his Fantasy for an instrument with a limited range of color and dynamics--part of its appeal and subtlety--and indeed, an instrument largely associated with an age and temperament quite removed from the composer's. The harpsichord, amplified, accounts for the astonishing timbral and textural range of the work, which counts among its sources the improvisational style of jazz saxophonist John Coltrane, "boogaloo" rhythms, grace-note figurations, and Morse code patterns.

The form Penn has chosen is entropic, running from the tight discipline of the opening figure and runs, to the frenetic and ultimately dissipating energy of the final cadence; the writing itself projects a demonic energy and virtuosity that belie the composer's humorous thrusts. In the tradition of this venerable form, Penn's Fantasy seems free-form and spontaneous, and yet possesses a strong sense of unity resulting from the impeccably paced recurrence of materials, and from the theatrical impulse that drives the work from start to finish.

* * * * *

John Corigliano's Poem in October was commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and received its premiere in 1970. It is an unabashedly lyrical setting of the Dylan Thomas poem of the same title, with instrumental interludes punctuating the seven verses. The composer "sought to convey a pastoral feeling that would match the directness and simplicity of the text, to deal in understatement and succinctness rather than in complexity and theatrical effect."

The work is the second in a trilogy of settings of Dylan Thomas poetry for various combinations of voices and instruments. Corigliano says of his affinity for the work of Thomas: "The thing that most appeals to me is the sound of his words. Phrases from Poem in October like 'a springful of larks in a rolling cloud' and 'the blue altered sky streamed again a wonder of summer' are in themselves musical. Then there is Thomas' incredibly rich and concentrated imagery. Within a single sentence he will have three or four images in addition to the main one, so that a composer has a tremendous amount of material to work with. One finds an instant level of comprehensibility, and then layers of subordinate meanings--concentration balanced with immediate impact.

"Further, I love the cadential irregularity in those Thomas poems that I have set, for it allowed me to write rhythmically irregular music without violating the pulse of the words. And I admire Thomas' organization. For instance, near the end of a

poem, he tends to recapitulate not only words but earlier moments, so that building a musical structure on his text seems an extremely natural undertaking."

* * * * *

POEM IN OCTOBER

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
And the mussel pooled and the heron
Priested shore
The morning beckon
With water praying and call of seagull and rook
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall
Myself to set foot
That second
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

My birthday began with the water-
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name
Above the farms and the white horses
And I rose
In rainy autumn
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road
Over the border
And the gates
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling
Blackbirds and the sun of October
Summery
On the hill's shoulder,
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened
To the rain wringing
Wind blow cold
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail
With its horns through mist and the castle
Brown as owls
But all the gardens
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud
There could I marvel
My birthday
Away but the weather turned around.

It turned away from the blithe country
And down the other air and the blue altered sky
Streamed again a wonder of summer
With apples
Pears and red currants
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
Through the parables
Of sun light
And the legends of the green chapels
And the twice told fields of infancy
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.
These were the woods the river and sea
Where a boy
In the listening
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.
And the mystery
Sang alive
Still in the water and singingbirds.

And there could I marvel my birthday
Away but the weather turned around. And the true
Joy of the long dead child sang burning
In the sun.
It was my thirtieth
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.
O may my heart's truth
Still be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning.

Notes on the Artists

Elisabeth Adkins is currently serving her fourth season as Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. A founding member of both the American Chamber Players and the Chamber Soloists of Washington, she will appear as a soloist this season with both the National Symphony and the Fairfax Symphony.

James Francis is a member of the National Symphony Orchestra, and a former member of both the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Canada, and the Baltimore Symphony. Mr. Francis frequently performs in Washington with National Musical Arts and the Chamber Soloists of Washington.

David Gordon, a tenor equally at home in the opera, oratorio, contemporary, and early music repertoires, attended the College of Wooster in Ohio, and McGill University in Montreal. In the United States, he has appeared in major roles with the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco Opera, and the Washington Opera; while his European engagements have included Germany's Hamburg State Opera. He has appeared as soloist with over 40 major orchestras on four continents, recorded for several labels, and participated in the Mostly Mozart, Salzburg, Spoleto, Casals, and Tokyo festivals.

Holly Hamilton, a graduate of the University of Missouri (Kansas City) Conservatory of Music and Yale University, has been a member of the New Haven Symphony and the Santa Fe Opera orchestra, and is presently a member of the National Symphony Orchestra. She has been selected as a concerto soloist on two occasions for the orchestra, once by Mstislav Rostropovich and, most recently, by guest conductor Christopher Hogwood. Ms. Hamilton was a founding member of the Manchester String Quartet and performed with them from 1981 to 1986.

David Hardy is Associate Principal Cellist of the National Symphony Orchestra. Among the awards he has received is the diploma from the 1986 Rostropovich International Cello Competition in Paris. He is well known to East Coast audiences through his recital appearances, radio and television broadcasts, and appearances with orchestra.

Thomas Jones is a virtuoso percussionist whose performances with the 20th Century Consort both as ensemble musician and soloist have provided many exciting and memorable moments in the Consort's history. Mr. Jones is a graduate of the University of Maryland and pursues a busy free-lance schedule which has included appearances at both the Bayreuth and Spoleto festivals. He is also a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Christopher Kendall, artistic director of the 20th Century Consort, is also founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort, the early music ensemble in residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library. His conducting engagements have included the Seattle Symphony (where he was recently named Associate Conductor), the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Eastman's Musica Nova Ensemble, and the Da Capo Players.

Loren Kitt, Principal Clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra, currently teaches at the Peabody Institute as well. He has been a featured artist at Italy's Spoleto Festival, a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and a frequent soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra.

Lambert Orkis has toured five continents, appeared on nationwide television broadcasts, and premiered solo piano works by Pulitzer Prize winning composers George Crumb and Richard Wernick on past Consort programs. Principal Keyboardist of the National Symphony Orchestra, he also serves as Professor of Piano and Coordinator of the Master of Music Program in Accompanying and Chamber Music at Temple University's Boyer College of Music in Philadelphia.

Sara Stern has performed and recorded a number of world premieres as solo flutist for the Consort, including Maurice Wright's Solos for Flute and Electronic Sounds, which was commissioned for her by the Consort. She is also principal flutist of the Kennedy Center Terrace Theatre and solo flutist with the Rosewood Chamber Consort.

Rudolph Vrbsky studied at Northwestern University with the Chicago Symphony's Ray Still, at the Curtis Institute with Sol Schoenbach, and coached extensively with Marcel Moyse. He has toured the United States as a member of the Aulos Wind Quintet (winners of the 1978 Naumburg Award), the Camerata Woodwind Quintet, and Music from Marlboro. As a soloist, he has appeared at the Spoleto Festival, with the New York String Orchestra, and with the Brandenburg Ensemble under the direction of Alexander Schneider. He is currently Principal Oboist of the National Symphony Orchestra and teaches at the Peabody Institute.