



# 20TH CENTURY CONSORT

DECEMBER 9, 1989

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

**present**

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**The 20th Century Consort**

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Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Truman Harris, bassoon

Loren Kitt, clarinet

Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano

Orrin Olsen, horn

Sara Stern, flute

Rudolph Vrbsky, oboe

Guest Artist

William Sharp, baritone

**Saturday, December 9, 1989**

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

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

**Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium**

**Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden**

The 20th Century Consort's 1989-90 performance series is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.

The participation of Jon Deak and James Willey in today's program is made possible in part by a grant from MEET THE COMPOSER's Composers Performance Fund, which is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts; Broadcast Music Inc.; and the Getty, M & V Dreyfus, Metropolitan Life, Xerox, Dayton Hudson, and Helena Rubinstein Foundations.

# THE PROGRAM

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## LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Christopher Kendall, 20th Century Consort  
Edward P. Lawson, Chief, HMSG Department of Education  
Jon Deak, composer  
James Willey, composer

## CONCERT

### ***Sad Songs and Chilling Harmonies*** (1989)

**James Willey**  
(b. 1939)

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan

### ***The Bremen Town Musicians*** (1985)

**Jon Deak**  
(b. 1943)

Mr. Harris, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Olsen, Ms. Stern, Mr. Vrbsky

## INTERMISSION

### ***The Marriage Ring*** (1989)

**William Doppmann**  
(b. 1933)

*A Cycle of Eight Songs for  
Baritone, Piano, and Oboe Obbligato*  
World Premiere

- I. Heart's Love*
- II. August Moon*
- III. Song of the Lizard*
- IV. Nothing Like . . .*

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- V. Song of the Oak*
  - VI. The Onion Song*
  - VII. Invocation*
  - VIII. Song of the Girl*

Mr. Sharp, Ms. Logan, Mr. Vrbsky

### ***Sextour*** (1930-32)

**Francis Poulenc**  
(1899-1963)

Mr. Harris, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan, Mr. Olsen, Ms. Stern, Mr. Vrbsky

The audience is invited to join the artists in the Plaza lobby after the concert for a wine-and-cheese reception, sponsored by the Friends of the 20th Century Consort.

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## 1989-90 Concert Series — 20th Century Consort

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### **October 21** — *Count the Echoes*

Music by Claude Debussy, George Crumb, Henri Lazarof,  
and Bruce MacCombie

### **December 9** — *Winter Winds*

Works by James Willey, Jon Deak,  
William Doppmann, and Francis Poulenc

### **January 27** — *Child's Play*

Music by Chinary Ung, Maurice Ravel,  
and Frank Bridge

### **March 3** — *Songs, Dances, and Icons*

Compositions by James Primosch, Charles Fussell,  
Robert X. Rodriguez, and Nicholas Maw

### **April 14** — *A Distant Mirror*

Guest Artists: **The Folger Consort**

Music by Peter Maxwell Davies, Charles Wuorinen,  
John Harbison, Luciano Berio, and Dan Welcher

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#### **20th Century Consort**

Christopher Kendall, *Artistic Director*  
Alyce Rideout, *Manager*

James D. Allnutt, *Production Assistant*  
Susan Chalifoux, *Reception Coordinator*  
Curt Wittig, *Recording Engineer*

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#### **Smithsonian Institution**

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The Resident Associate Program is the continuing education, cultural, and membership arm of the Smithsonian Institution for metropolitan Washington, and relies on the support of its more than 50,000 members to support its activities. The Program brings distinguished performing artists to the Washington area in more than 100 performances annually. Please telephone 357-3030 for membership information.

#### **Please note:**

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment  
are strictly prohibited.

Restrooms are located in the lower lobby adjacent to the escalators.



## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

### Sad Songs and Chilling Harmonies

JAMES WILLEY

James Willey began composing at an early age. His formal studies included stints with Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood (where Willey was a 1964 composition fellow), and with Howard Hanson and Bernard Rogers at the Eastman School, where he received his doctorate in composition in 1972. Currently Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Geneseo, Willey has written a great deal of chamber music, including five string quartets. Sad Songs and Chilling Harmonies is related to his two most recent compositions, Hymnal and Five Pieces for Dark Times, both of which were also premiered under the direction of Christopher Kendall. The composer has provided the following commentary on his piece:

Composed between August 1988 and January 1989, Sad Songs and Chilling Harmonies had a rather peculiar genesis. In the course of practicing for a performance of my Little Quartet at Skidmore College during August of 1988, I had access to a piano in which the hammers had bits of tape attached to them identifying the pitches associated with their strings. For whatever reason, a sequence of six pitches immediately came to mind which could be easily plucked, and which seemed to me curiously moving, both haunted and haunting. The sequence—C, B-flat, A, F-sharp, G, F-sharp—became an obsession, moving me to experiment with fragments of the sequence which yielded, among other things, a succession of harmonies, a string of pitches winding out in rapid sixteenth notes, two hymn-like tunes with supporting harmonies, a clarinet melody of screaming, wailing sadness, two reference pitches (C and F-sharp), with attached harmonies (C-F-sharp-G and F-sharp-A-B-flat), all of which taken together suggested to me a coherent expression of some sort of grief, fear, and shimmering blackness.

That this work was composed directly after my orchestral work Hymnal and against my Five Pieces for Dark Times has some significance, since the formal structure of Sad Songs and Chilling Harmonies is almost exactly that of Hymnal: 1) a simple statement of the work's basic materials, set out in stark and contrasting manner, followed by 2) a development at very fast tempos, 3) a short, generally slow middle section suggesting the substance of the work's close, 4) a return to fast tempos but with materials treated in more fragmented and agitated fashion, and 5) a dark, slow conclusion in which materials are made more dense, first by cross-sectioning fast with slow tempos (more notes within time, fast strings of clarinet sixteenth notes against slow, chilling piano harmonies), then by increasing the harmonic density (more notes at a time). Sad Songs shares with Five Pieces for Dark Times the use of a technique which I call "ghosting," the surrounding of an idea with a haze of major seconds to produce new structures. In the case of the piano solo contained in the concluding section of Sad Songs, ghosts almost bury the song as they are built up, reshaped, and pitted against the work's opening "chilling harmonies" hammered out in the extreme upper register of the piano. The work ends in quiet, the figure which set the whole thing in motion landing in the clarinet, played at near inaudibility.

### The Bremen Town Musicians

JON DEAK

Since 1970, Jon Deak has been a member of the double bass section of the New York Philharmonic. Spending much of his professional life as a performer, rather than as an academic, the more common professional role for composers these days, has no doubt contributed to his interest in what is known as "performance art"—a loosely

defined philosophy of artistic creation that involves more than simply the notes or words on the page, that comes alive only in the person of the executants.

Of course, all music is really a performance art: the printed score is not the work itself, only a blueprint of it. But Jon Deak's The Bremen Town Musicians is a performance score in a different sense; the work has a visual and theatrical element that transcends the customary relationship of pitch and rhythm. It is a kind of "story theater" in which the performers relate a familiar folk tale from the Brothers Grimm in a musical way.

Although Deak is particularly fond of folk tales and has used them as the basis for earlier works (The Ugly Duckling and Lucy and the Count are examples), the story of the Bremen town musicians was attractive to the composer for another reason as well: it is an inversion of the situation so often found in popular television today, which glorifies youth and implies that older people are either villainous or useless. In the Grimm story, however, it is the characters who are considered "too old to be useful" who band together to find a solution.

The music of The Bremen Town Musicians is flexibly inclusive, containing elements of pop music such as, for example, the passage described by Deak as a "slowed down version of a rap tune for clarinet, which is later taken at speed. Musically, it has very little to do with Bremen in the nineteenth century."

The work was composed in 1985 on a commission from the New York Woodwind Quintet and Purdue University with aid from the National Endowment for the Arts; the Quintet premiered the piece at Purdue on 21 November 1985. In the notes that accompanied that performance, Deak had this to say about the piece:

I have always loved fairy tales with their wild flights of fancy and their directness of expression. I distinctly remember my mother reading "The Bremen Town Musicians" to me at age five or six. I loved its absurdity and felt so sad—then excited—for the four animals who, being cast out by their cruel masters, decided to band together as musicians and wind up driving a den of thieves from their hideout.

As I started to write the music, the characters sprang into a vividness for me that reading and re-reading the three-page story as an adult never accomplished—at least on the conscious level. Of the four musicians, the donkey seemed to emerge as a sort of moral leader: the sacrificing humble beast-of-burden who rises to wisdom. The hound I thought of as a broken-down playboy, dreaming of past glories of the hunt: he becomes the donkey's knight in armor. The cat, sensual and lazy, just can't understand how her mistress had the nerve to drive her out; but as a musician she learns to use her grace and cunning to the group's benefit. The cock, a prima donna whom we first meet crowing at the top of his voice to hear himself one last time before the axe falls, is rather hard to shut up once he joins the group, but unquestionably adds great value with his virtuosity.

Not only the protagonists, but their respective masters began to take life: the one a greasy, whining, squat sort of boss; the next as a stuffed shirt—a wealthy degenerate who takes all the credit for the work his hounds do; another is a spindly, repetitive, frustrated hausfrau with a knife-like tongue; and the last—a buxom, complaining social climber, a sort of chubby Emma Bovary. All these villainous characters, later combined in the thieves, are delineated by the oboe.

Reading in some depth about the genesis of these tales was also helpful to me; at first I was going to be liberal in changing words and even events around to suit myself, but I learned that the texts of these tales were taken quite seriously in their day. Handed down verbally from the women, mainly, of one generation to another, they were painstakingly memorized word for word (before they were finally faithfully transcribed by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm around 1806.) We really do denigrate them in our country and consign them to children only. Even the term "fairy tales" denotes this, and is not really a good translation of the

German "märchen" which is closer to a "fantastic story" or simply, "story."

How, then to convey this story by five musicians on a stage ? I wanted to do more than just "set" a text to the accompaniment of music. Just as common speech contains music—pitch, dynamics, articulation, rhythm—so music conveys meaning, even literal meaning. I love to mix up the two—to imbed one into the other, as it were. Thus the musicians and their instruments tell the story and, conversely, the rhythm of the story's text, on all its various levels, becomes the music.

#### THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

Text adapted from the original by the composer.

Words appearing in brackets are not spoken by the performers  
but are represented musically on their instruments.

"Take that! You good-for-nothing! [Take that!]  
Come back here, you [good-for-nothing]...

Once upon a time, there was an old donkey who had served his master faithfully for many long [years]. But his master was [cruel] and [mean], and now that the [donkey] was very [old], his [master] wanted to [chop him up into] [soup bones] and [glue]. Horrors! And so, as you have seen, the poor [donkey] ran away.... And, as he walked along, he thought: "How am I to earn my living ?" And then it came to him: "I shall go to Bremen! And become a musician!" So, in this mood, he walked along until he saw a hound who cried [mournfully].

["What's the matter, Growler ? Why do you moan and cry so ?"]

"I can no longer hunt," [answered the hound]. "Ah, but in the old days (if I say so myself), you should have seen me....Ah, the hunt!"

[The hound describes the hunt.] "...but just then, as always, my [master] would come and take all the credit....and this time, he even threw me out because I wasn't fast enough."

["Growler," said the donkey, "why don't you] come with me?"

["Come with you?"]

"Yes! To Bremen. And we shall become [musicians]!"

[So, in this mood, they walked along] until they spied a cat on the path with a face as long as three wet days.

["What's the matter, little one? Why do you look so sad?"]

["Well, I'll tell you boys. Ah, it was a case of pure ingratitude! Oh, that's what it is, that's what it is. Now, I'll tell you again: Well, I kept the house in purr-fect cleanliness! Yes I did, all my life I did. No mess, no fat, no mice, no rats, no rodents, no roaches, nor anything that crawls, or that's greasy or dirty or messy or slimy—in short—anything that my mistress didn't want in the blah, blah ...etc. And I was so beautiful, so beautiful.... I kept myself purr-fectly clean and purr-fectly shiny. Ah, I was so beautiful."]

"Oh, wow," [said the hound, quite impressed].

["I used to lie on the hearth and purr, and she would pet me. But one day, one terrible, terrible day, my MISTRESS found a rat."] "A rat!?" ["AK! EEK!" she screamed. "Get out! Get out!] Get out!"

[The hound and the donkey try to comfort the cat, and then they tell her of their plans.]

["To where?" she asks.]

["To Bremen!" they answer. "And we shall become musicians!"]

[So, in this mood, they trotted along] until [they heard a most frantic crowing and screaming.]

["What's that racket?" asked the cat.]

["I don't know," said the hound.]

["Now then, cock-a-doodle-doo," said the donkey, "now calm down and tell us."]

[The rooster's story:]

["Well, you want to know why I'm crowing? 'Wannaknow, wannaknow, wannaknow?' Well, that is what you want to know now, isn't it, isn't it, isn't it?"]

"Uh-huh! So tell us!"

["Ahem. Well, I can tell you why 'cause I can see you're all so interested, I thank you, I thank you, I thank you. Now, I've been doing my job forecasting fine, fine weather. I have been doing my job because of it being the day that our lady was the dear little Christ-child's shirts and wants to dry them well! So, in spite of the fact that I've been up here doing a heckuva job, my MISTRESS not only doesn't appreciate it, she wants to chop my head off!"]

"Horrors!"

["And all just because she has some very important guests arriving today...AWK!! ARRIVING TODAY!! And I'm supposed to be-in-the-soup! AWK!"]

["Now calm down...."]

["Oh, I'm scared. Even now, I can hear her, sneak-ing-up-on-me. Ssh! Here she comes now."]

["Oooh, Redd-Cooooomb...Come here, my sweet, fat pet. I have a surprise for you, you good-for-nothing...."]

"Look out!" "Run for it!"

[And just as the hatchet-wielding mistress is about to catch the rooster, the other animals make their appearance and chase her off! As the four friends run along the road together, the rooster asks: "Where are we going?"]

["To Bremen!"]

["To Bremen? Well, I want to know why we're going, after all...."]

["With your fine voice, you shouldn't need to ask!" answer the animals.]

"After all, if we make music together, it would be of some quality!"

END, Part I

The Marriage Ring  
WILLIAM DOPPMANN

Trained in Louisville and Cincinnati as both a pianist and a composer, William Doppmann took degrees in both at the University of Michigan. Even before graduation, however, as a sophomore in 1953, he won the Naumburg Award and the Michaels Memorial Award (in Chicago) as a pianist, and continues to be active as a concert artist in that field even today. Following his military service in the late 50's, he began to teach at the universities of Iowa and Texas. Currently on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1987-88.

The Marriage Ring is the first of three works by Doppmann that will receive their premieres this season: a new chamber work will be heard in Seattle at the end of January, and the composer himself will play a new piano piece in Detroit in April. The Marriage Ring is a National Endowment for the Arts consortium commission which will receive, in addition to Washington, Chicago and Houston performances as well. The composer feels that, in its structure and instrumentation, this work serves as a complement to his Spring Songs, performed by the Consort on 4 April 1982.

If a tear or a smile  
Will a man beguile,  
If an amorous delay  
Clouds a sunshiny day,  
If the step of a foot  
Smites the heart to its root,  
'Tis the marriage ring...

— William Blake —



I. Heart's Love Words by Willa Doppmann

My Heart's love—touch me when daffodils bloom  
and sun dances...dances on sea —  
When I smile still touch me—if I turn my eyes  
from you especially then, for your touch brings  
me back from worlds where fear and fantasy  
hide the truth.

My heart's love—kiss me deep inside the garden  
while the sun is shining—even if I'm smiling.

II. August Moon Words by William Doppmann

The Blue Moon and all ends well!  
In a month so doubly blest,  
Paired lions pace its perimeters.  
Blind comets, star-flung, unfurl  
palindromes across its wastes!

The Dippers are both deep-drowned;  
Winds gust softly;  
Dogs...twitch...in their pens...

As I sing the Blue Moon!

III. The Lizard's Song Words by Donald Barthelme

The snow is coming. Soon it will be time.  
Together then as in other snow times.  
Drinking busthead 'round the fire.  
Truth is a locked room.  
We break the locks, then board it up again.  
Tomorrow you will hurt me,  
and I in turn will tell you that you have done so.  
The devil take it!  
Come, viridian friend, come and eat red cabbage  
and pork with me.

The story ends. It was written for several reasons.  
Nine of them are secrets.  
The tenth is that we should never cease considering  
human love.  
Which remains as grisly and golden as ever,  
No matter what is tattooed upon the warm tympanic page.

IV. Nothing Like Words by William Shakespeare  
(Ma-may-mee-mo-moo.....) from Sonata 130

My mistress' eyes  
Are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires, black wires glow  
on her head.

I have seen roses, damask'd, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks

(J'aime ecouter sa voix)

I love to hear her speak,  
Yet well I know that musick hath a  
far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go--  
My mistress when she walks  
Treads on the ground.  
And yet by heaven,  
I think my love as rare  
As any she belied  
With false compare

V. Song of the Oak Words by Willa Doppmann

O Wooden heart that waits, petrified, for spring  
Inside the fibrous memory of tree, branch, and leaf.  
Nothing breathes. Stillness...waiting...Others live:  
Winter rustlings scratch at the door of my woodenness.

All this would time allow a permanence - bleak, eternal,  
Had you not come to light my lights,  
Ignite my song that penetrates this heart, my heart,  
At long last.  
(Liebchen...?)

VI. Onion Song Words by Willa Doppmann

Imagine the onion with slender concern  
Refusing to eat, shedding her layers  
One...by one...like a tree growing backwards  
Until one day. her bulk gone, discarded by vanity,  
She feels...transformed:

"I've discovered my essence,"  
She smiles to the sun  
As a hand plucks her from the garden and,  
Thinking her a garlic (garlic...  
...garlic!), into the stew.

(Imagine a garlic...)

VII. Invocation (Anonymous)

God of garlic, strike me dead!  
I love you coupled in your bed.

VIII. Song of the Girl Words suggested from lines by Ralph Waldo Emerson  
("Give all to love") and Rudyard Kipling (Children of the Zodiac)

(Spoken prologue:)  
Though thou love her as thyself,  
As a self of purer clay,  
Though her parting dim the day,  
Stealing grace from all alive—

Heartily know:  
When half-Gods go,  
The gods arrive....

(Sung)  
And once again I will leave your side  
and go to a place far away  
Where the days are forever bright  
and the sun never fades.  
But my eyes will no longer gaze upon its brilliance  
nor will I bask in the warmth of its rays—  
(Your hand, of an independent force, rises again  
to touch my face and bid me stay...)

Sextuor  
FRANCIS POULENC

Critic Claude Rostand once wrote of Poulenc that he was "part monk, part guttersnipe," a neat characterization of the two strikingly different aspects of his musical personality. Much of his work from the early 20's, when he was associated with the highly publicized Groupe des Six is lighthearted, even frivolous, sometimes bawdy, and thoroughly Parisian. An opposing strain appeared in his musical character in the middle 30's, when the death of a close friend prompted the composition of a sacred choral work. Thereafter, sacred and secular mingled almost equally in his output, and he could shift even within the context of a single phrase from melancholy or somber lyricism to nose-thumbing impertinence. As Ned Rorem said in a memorial tribute, Poulenc was "a whole man always interlocking soul and flesh, sacred and profane."

Possessing the least formal education of any noted composer of this century, Poulenc learned from the music he liked. His own comment is the best summary:

The music of Roussell, more cerebral than Satie's, seems to me to have opened a door on the future. I admire it profoundly; it is disciplined, orderly, and yet full of feeling. I love Chabrier: Espana is a marvelous thing and the Marche Joyeuse is a chef-d'oeuvre ...I consider Manon and Werther [by Massenet] as part of the French national folklore. And I enjoy the quadrilles of Offenbach. Finally, my gods are Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Chopin, Stravinsky, and Mussorgsky. You may say, what a concoction! But that's how I like music: taking my models everywhere, from what pleases me.

Originally composed for piano and winds in 1932, the Sextuor dissatisfied Poulenc, and he rewrite it entirely in 1939. In his typical way, Poulenc builds up his musical forms through the reiteration of small ideas in clearly demarcated sections; the large forms, too, are sectional—ternary for the first and second movements, and a rondo for the finale. The Sextuor is a composition of enormous charm, hardly profound, but brilliantly written for the participating instruments. The piano (Poulenc's own instrument) is without doubt the leader; it scarcely has a measure of rest in the entire work. The winds carry on a cheeky dialogue throughout. The work is essentially a divertissement, but sudden turns of mood and feeling recall the serious side of the composer. Yet, its spirit remains fundamentally lighthearted.

— Notes by Steven Ledbetter —

