



The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

April 8, 1995

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## 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

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Elisabeth Adkins, violin  
David Hardy, cello  
Christopher Kendall, conductor  
Loren Kitt, clarinet  
Lynne Edelson Levine, viola  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano  
Rudolf Vrbsky, oboe

Saturday, April 8, 1995  
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 1994-95 performance series  
is funded in part by  
the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency,  
the Aaron Copland Fund for Music,  
and the Smithsonian Office of the Assistant Provost  
for Arts and Humanities.



### Lecture-Discussion

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort,  
David Froom, Composer, Bruce MacCombie, Composer

### Concert

#### "Tributaries"

#### *Contrasts*

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Adkins, Ms. Logan

BÉLA BARTÓK

#### *Quintet*

Mr. Vrbsky, Ms. Adkins, Ms. Levine,  
Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan, Mr. Kendall

DAVID FROOM

### Intermission

#### *Tribute*

Ms. Levine, Ms. Logan

STEPHEN ALBERT

#### *Elegy*

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

BRUCE MACCOMBIE

#### *Trio*

Mr. Kitt, Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

PAUL SCHOENFIELD

The audience is invited to join the artists  
in the Plaza Lobby for an informal post-concert reception,  
sponsored by  
The Friends of the 20th Century Consort.

# The Program

## TRIBUTES

The long tradition of music is filled with many kinds of tributes from one composer to another, from one generation or musical style to another, from composer to patron or performer, from performer to composer, and so on. This program provides examples of all of these types: Bartók's *Contrasts* is performed to mark the 50th anniversary of the composer's death, such anniversary tributes (for the creator's birth or death, or the premiere of a given work) being one way in which we can reconsider and re-evaluate, more or less systematically, our entire musical heritage. Paul Schoenfield's *Trio*, for the same combination of instruments, is in its turn a tribute to the Bartók score. Stephen Albert wrote his *Tribute* for the most personal of reasons, to memorialize a parent; and Bruce MacCombie wrote his *Elegy* for what we might call the next-most-personal of reasons, to memorialize a departed friend and colleague—in this case, Stephen Albert, whose tragically premature death ended a particularly flourishing career. Finally the new work on the program, David Froom's *Quintet*, provides a tribute, on the one hand, to the performing organization that requested the work after playing many of his other pieces, and, on the other hand, to a long history of chamber works for various combinations of instruments that he has chosen to combine uniquely in his new score.

### BÉLA BARTÓK

*Contrasts*, for violin, clarinet, and piano

With one exception, all of Bartók's chamber music is for stringed instruments only, with or without the addition of a piano. Only once did he turn to a wind instrument, and that was occasioned by a commission from Benny Goodman and Joseph Szigeti, to whom *Contrasts* is dedicated. Bartók completed the work in Budapest on September 24, 1938, after having heard some records of the Benny Goodman band that Szigeti sent him. Far from trying to blend the three very different types of instruments into a single complex sonority, Bartók exploits the difference in sound production as much as possible (as the very title of the work suggests). He had long since become a past master of violin effects—multiple stops, bowed and pizzicato notes played simultaneously, glissandi, and so on; now he investigates the possibilities of the clarinet as well, while keeping the piano part (conceived for himself) modestly in the background.

The original plan, according to Goodman's wish, was to have a two-movement work that would fit on a single twelve-inch 78-rpm record, but Bartók found that he needed greater scope for the working out of his material, and the planned two movements became three with the addition

of the slow middle movement. The music is strongly nationalistic, possibly Bartók's musical response to the unchecked advance of Nazism. The *Verbunkos*, or recruiting dance, was a musical genre employed to encourage enlistments in the Hungarian army in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; thereafter it remained as a characteristically Hungarian musical genre featuring sharply dotted rhythms in a slow march tempo with ornamental turns, runs, and arpeggios decorating the melodic lines. In its fully developed historical form, the *Verbunkos* began with a slow section (*lassu*) followed by or alternating with a wild fast one (*friss*), and, indeed, the original two-movement plan of *Contrasts* was designed to reflect this format.

The *Verbunkos* ends with a clarinet cadenza that leads on to the languid slow movement, in which piano and clarinet begin by mirroring one another, while the piano contributes soft percussive tremolos inspired by Balinese gamelan music. The fast dance, *Sebes*, begins with a short passage on a scordatura violin (with the E-string tuned to E-flat and the G-string to G-sharp), following which the violin is directed to return to a second, normally tuned instrument. This is the only example of scordatura in Bartók's entire output. The outer sections of the dance are in a lively 2/4 meter, but the extended middle section uses what is often called "Bulgarian rhythm," which Bartók learned in his folk music studies:  $(8+5)/8$ , or more properly  $(3+2+3+2+3)/8$ . When the original 2/4 returns, the dance gets wilder and wilder (with just a few momentarily tranquil passages and a cadenza for the violin) before reaching its brilliant conclusion.

### DAVID FROOM

*Quintet* for oboe, strings, and piano

Born in Petaluma, California, in 1951, David Froom studied at both the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Southern California before moving to New York for further studies at Columbia University. His principal teachers have included Chou Wen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and William Kraft. He also studied with Alexander Goehr at Cambridge on a Fulbright grant and received a fellowship to study at the Tanglewood Music Center. He has also received fellowships to the Wellesley Composers Conference and the MacDowell Colony. He has taught at Baruch College in New York and the University of Utah. Since 1989 he has been on the faculty of St. Mary's College of Maryland, where he is now Associate Professor and Chairman of the Music Department. In recent years his music has been featured at the 1991 Festival of New American Music in Sacramento, where he was the featured composer and in which seven of his works were performed. His Chamber Concerto shared the first prize in the 1993 Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards with a work by Osvaldo Golijov, and it has been recorded for a forthcoming

release. Regarding his new Quintet, the composer writes:

Although the Twentieth-Century Consort has programmed several works of mine before, this is the first I've written specifically for this splendid group. When Christopher Kendall approached me about writing something for the Consort, I knew that whatever I wrote—using whatever combination of instruments—would receive a stunning performance. I decided to combine three different ideas I had been toying with—an oboe sonata with piano, a quartet for oboe and strings, and a traditional piano quartet—into a single genre. I've since learned that this is an unusual combination (neither my friends nor I can find a precedent for this scoring), but for the life of me, I can't imagine why. It somehow *feels* traditional and natural.

I found it irresistible to make constant reference to the three traditional combinations embedded in this quintet: the work slides freely from oboe plus strings to oboe plus piano to strings with piano. These passages are interlaced with various duos involving the oboe (which sounds marvelous when paired with violin, viola, or cello); and in addition to *tutti* passages, every instrument gets some 'feature' time as well. In fact, in each of these three movements, one of the string players steps forward to play a somewhat more prominent role: viola in the spirited first movement, cello in the lyrical and melancholy second, and finally, violin in the energetic finale (the piano has its big moments in all three movements).

The three-movement layout, another way of embracing tradition, makes reference to traditional forms, though the treatment of these particular forms is highly personalized. Prominent returns of opening material help to articulate sharp sectional divisions—and all material, no matter how diverse sounding, derives developmentally from the opening passages of the first movement. In a similar vein, the material itself makes reference to traditional tonality, especially in the carefully controlled large-scale progression of key areas (which also derive from the opening passages). There is, however, a complete absence of dominant-tonic functionality, which is displaced throughout by a personalized "neo-tonality."

A final comment: it has become increasingly important for me as a composer, when writing music for a particular group of individuals, to derive inspiration from what I perceive to be the spirit of the combined personalities of the players. Thus the result, if I am successful, will be something that, while not outside the realm of my compositional predilections, will be considerably different from one work to another, thus providing me with ways of expanding my thinking about music, and providing the players with something more personal than a simple dedication. This work is my way of showing respect and admiration for the sterling quality of these

individual players, as well as for the series itself, which has had one of the most remarkable histories (especially in terms of audience support for imaginative and daring programming) of any such group in the country.

—David Froom

## STEPHEN ALBERT

### Tribute, for violin and piano

Born in New York in 1943, Stephen Albert began his musical career with the traditional early formal musical experiences. In his teens he began to study composition with Elie Siegmeister and Darius Milhaud, then continued to the Eastman School of Music, where his teacher was Bernard Rogers. In his early twenties he studied in Philadelphia with Joseph Castaldo and George Rochberg. At the time, Rochberg was a leading serialist composer, so this preparation would seem destined to lead Albert into the academy and to a career as a composer-professor, writing hermetic and complicated music that few people cared to hear. But he consciously chose to avoid that route. He found himself outside what was regarded as the mainstream of contemporary musical development for choosing to avoid the mannered complexity characteristic of the music that was "in" when he was completing his studies. In the '60s, no composer who wished to be thought of as a serious artist dared think about what the listener might be capable of comprehending; intellectual rigor was praised more highly than the sound of the music. Composers cloistered themselves in tenured college positions and wrote music of daunting difficulty for performers and for listeners.

In order not to feel forced to compromise his vision of the kind of music he wished to write, Albert left academic life and the kinds of networking that went on there between composers and those performers who are willing to learn their music. He became, instead, a dealer in stamps, living quietly in Newton, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, and continuing to compose. When the awarding of the Pulitzer Prize for *RiverRun* was announced, many people active in Boston's musical life did not even know that the prize-winning composer lived there.

Stephen Albert's music was revealed to the general public, at least, by Mstislav Rostropovich, whose 1985 premiere of the symphony *RiverRun* with the National Symphony Orchestra put the composer on the map, particularly after the work won the Pulitzer Prize a few months later. He became composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony. And he finally found a welcome in the academy as well, when Bruce MacCombie, then dean of the Juilliard School of Music, hired him to teach composition there. He had nearly finished a Second Symphony for the New York Philharmonic at the time of his death in an automobile accident. The orchestration of the work completed by a student and the piece per-

formed last fall, revealing a composer on the verge of a wonderful new synthesis of harmonic ideas, and underlining the loss that all lovers of music have suffered because of that fatal accident.

Albert composed *Tribute* as a memorial to his father, and he describes the work in the following statement:

*Tribute* (in memory of Sidney Albert 1909-1989), a duo in one movement for violin and piano, was commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress and was premiered there on October 28, 1988, by Edna Mitchell and Frank Glazer, to whom I dedicate this work. I wrote *Tribute* during the summer of 1988 and, like most works I have composed in recent years, it came very slowly at first (six weeks to complete the first three minutes) and, mercifully, very quickly in the end (three days to finish off the remaining seven minutes). Not exactly an inducement to build confidence or enthusiasm over the prospect of beginning a new composition, one need hardly add. But strangely enough, starting to sketch out something fresh, something filled as yet with unknown musical potential and co-mingling it with other, perhaps older, sketches that have not, as yet, found a home in a completed work is as intriguing a period of creativity as it is dismaying. In the beginning, it is not the paucity of ideas that frustrates forward progress but rather their abundance that overwhelms and disorients one's capacity to find their interconnecting forms of elaboration and succession within a given musical space. It is even the need to discover to what piece and to what movement within a particular piece a given idea belongs that can create confusion and uncertainty. Simply stated, all efforts at efficient musical thought are undermined during this initial period and steady work in some other occupation seems an enviable prospect.

*Tribute* revolves on a dual axis comprised of two lyrical themes that generate the other musical ideas appearing throughout the one-movement work. The first theme is given over to the piano in the opening, and the second theme is announced by the solo violin on the heels of this opening piano section. Both themes are developed and elaborated upon, woven in and around one another, until they are, at length, transformed into thematic character more dramatic and rhythmically driven than their lyrical forebears. You'll know you're near the end when a hymnlike section commences in the piano after a genuinely loud climactic section, and is then joined by the violin in a concluding moment of that hymn.

—Stephen Albert

## BRUCE MacCOMBIE Elegy

Bruce MacCombie was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1943, and is living in Boston. Though a native of Rhode Island, Bruce MacCombie grew up in nearby Massachusetts and studied composition with Philip Bezanson at the University of Massachusetts, where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees. He earned his doctorate at the University of Iowa in 1971 and also studied in Germany with Wolfgang Fortner. After four years in Europe, he returned to the United States to take a position in music theory at Yale in 1975 and to join the composition faculty there the following year. In addition to his teaching and composing, Bruce MacCombie organized an annual series of six new-music concerts at Yale during his years there. From 1980 to 1985 he was Vice President and Director of Publications for the music publishing firm of G. Schirmer. In March 1986, he became Dean of The Juilliard School, and took up his present position as Dean of the School of the Arts of Boston University in 1992.

Bruce MacCombie's connection with Stephen Albert was long and important to Albert's career. MacCombie had the foresight to recognize the quality of Albert's music and to sign him to an exclusive contract with the music publisher G. Schirmer only weeks before Albert's symphony *RiverRun* won the Pulitzer Prize. Later he hired him to teach composition at Juilliard, and was working on plans to have him move to Boston University at the time of Albert's death. Regarding his *Elegy*, the composer writes:

The tragic death of Stephen Albert in December of 1992 had a major impact on the music world. It marked the loss of an enormously talented composer and a wonderful human being. For me, learning of Steve's death was as if time had suddenly stopped. He had become a great friend and colleague who was an inspiration through his friendship and through his music.

*Elegy*, written for the Aeolian Chamber Players in memory of Stephen Albert, is a brief musical meditation on the sudden departure of this remarkable musician. The opening, a reference to the beginning gesture of his Symphony *RiverRun* (transposed up a half step to A minor, or 'Aeolian' mode), turns abruptly quiet and contemplative, then gradually ascends to connect with the repeating pitches E and G, a reference to the setting of the word 'yonder' from my own soprano-and-orchestra work *Leaden Echo, Golden Echo*, on a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. After reaching again for the opening *RiverRun* chord, the contemplative beginning then becomes the end.

**PAUL SCHOENFIELD**  
Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano

Paul Schoenfield was born in Detroit on January 24, 1947, and lives in Israel. He is one of an increasing number of composers whose music is inspired by the whole world of musical experience—popular styles both American and foreign, vernacular and folk traditions, and the “normal” historical traditions of cultivated music-making, often treated with sly twists. He frequently mixes in a single piece ideas that grew up in entirely different worlds, making them talk to each other, so to speak, and delighting in the surprises their interaction evokes. (Who would imagine Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* turning up in a country fiddle piece? But it happens, in one of Schoenfield’s earliest works to be recorded, *Three Country Fiddle Pieces* for violin and piano.) Schoenfield is a pianist and composer who, he says, “ran away at 16” from his native town; he studied at Carnegie-Mellon Institute and the University of Arizona. After living in Minnesota for about six years, he moved to Ohio, where he joined the faculty of the University of Akron before moving to Israel. Schoenfield’s shorter chamber works with characteristic titles—*Three Country Fiddle Tunes*, *Vaudeville*, and *Cafe Music*—and longer pieces such as a recent piano concerto—often refer to popular styles of entertainment music, often (as in the case of the present Trio) reflecting his own Hassidic tradition, even though Schoenfield transmutes them clearly into concert works—serious compositions with a sense of humor. Regarding his Trio for clarinet, violin, and piano, the composer writes:

In 1986 clarinetist David Schifrin asked me to write a chamber work for violin, clarinet, and piano, but it was not until the summer of 1990 that I was able to begin the project. In addition to the primary goal of composing a work for David, the Trio realizes a long-standing desire to create entertaining music that could be played at Hassidic gatherings as well as in the concert hall. The opening movement, “Frey lakh,” is a joyous dance that is almost frenetic in the intensity of its merry-making. The ‘March’ is bizarre and somewhat diabolical in nature, and the “Nigun” is a slow movement of introspection. The work closes with a lively “Kozatzke” (Cossack Dance).

Each of the movements is based partly on an East European Hassidic melody. The exact source of many of these Hassidic melodies is unknown. Frequently they were composed by the Tzadikim of the 18th and 19th centuries, but, as often as not, they appear to have been borrowed from regional folk songs, Cossack dances, and military marches. In their Hassidic versions, however, the melodies and texts were completely reworked, since the borrowed tunes, which originated in a completely different milieu,

could not satisfactorily express the Hassidic ideal that regarded the exuberant expression of joy as a religious duty.

—Paul Schoenfield

Program Notes by Steven Ledbetter  
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## About the Artists

**ELISABETH ADKINS**, Violinist, is Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. In 1987 she was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Yale University where she studied with Oscar Shumsky. A versatile musician, Ms. Adkins performs in recital as well as soloist with orchestra, recently playing the world premiere of Andreas Makris’ *Concerto Fantasia* for violin and orchestra with Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony. Her many activities in chamber music include the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, the annual Library of Congress Summer Chamber Festival, and regular appearances as solo violinist with the 20th Century Consort. She is a founding member of both the American Chamber Players and the Chamber Soloists of Washington.

**DAVID HARDY**, Cellist. The top-ranking American prizewinner at the Seventh International Tchaikovsky Cello Competition in Moscow, Mr. Hardy is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory. He has studied with Laurence Lesser, Stephen Kates, Berl Senofsky and Mstislav Rostropovich. He made his solo debut with the Baltimore Symphony at the age of 16. In 1981 he became the Associate Principal Cellist of the National Symphony. Performances in Washington have included recitals at the British Embassy, Wolf Trap and the Phillips Collection. He also performs with the Opus 3 Trio. Mr. Hardy has recorded for Melodyia.

**CHRISTOPHER KENDALL**, Artistic Director and Conductor. In addition to his involvement with the 20th Century Consort, Mr. Kendall is founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort. He regularly conducts the symphony and chamber orchestras at the Juilliard School in New York, and from 1987-1992 he served as Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. His recent guest conducting appearances include the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in Canada, Music Today Ensemble, San Francisco Chamber Symphony and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Mr. Kendall has recorded on the Delos, Nonesuch, Bard and Smithsonian Collection labels.

**LOREN KITT**, Clarinetist, is Principal Clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra and a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music. Prior to joining

the National Symphony in 1970, he performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic and was Principal Clarinetist of the Milwaukee Symphony. He has also been a Professor of Music at Oberlin Conservatory and is currently on the Faculty of the Peabody Conservatory. In addition to his activities with the 20th Century Consort, Mr. Kitt is heard frequently in Washington with the Theater Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress Summer Music Festival, and is a regular guest performer with the Emerson String Quartet in their series at the Renwick Gallery.

**LYNNE EDELSON LEVINE**, Violist, attended the Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Joseph dePasquale. She joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1978. A founding member of the Manchester String Quartet, she has performed chamber music at the Phillips Collection, the Washington Cathedral, and the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater. Her concerto performances have included the National Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Virginia Youth Symphony, and the New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony. She recently performed a recital at the National Gallery of Art.

**LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN**, Pianist, is a graduate of the Juilliard School where she received both Bachelor's and Master's of Music degrees as a student of Ania Dorfmann. She has performed in recitals at Alice Tully Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, and appears frequently at the Kennedy Center and National Gallery. She has appeared as soloist with both the Baltimore Symphony and the Richmond, Virginia Symphony. As an established chamber musician, Ms. Logan has performed across the globe with such artists as Julius Baker, Eugenia Zuckerman, Ransom Wilson, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. She has recorded for Pro Arte Records, VAI Audio, and Delos. Ms. Logan is the pianist of the Opus 3 Trio.

**RUDOLPH VRBSKY**, Oboist, studied at Northwestern University with 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 Naumberg Chamber Music Award), the Camerata Woodwind Quintet, and Music from Marlboro. As a soloist, he has appeared at the Spoleto Festival and with the New York String Orchestra and the Brandenburg Ensemble conducted by Alexander Schneider. Principal Oboist with the National Symphony Orchestra since September 1981, Mr. Vrbsky teaches at the Peabody Institute.