

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

20th CENTURY CONSORT

December 7, 1996

Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium, Freer Gallery of Art

The Smithsonian Associates presents

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Elisabeth Adkins, violin David Hardy, cello Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano Linda Mabbs, soprano



Saturday, December 7, 1996
Lecture-Discussion 2:30 p.m.
Concert 3:30 p.m.
Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium
Freer Gallery of Art



The 20th Century Consort's 1996-97 performance series is funded in part by the Smithsonian Office of the Provost



Lecture-Discussion

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort; Glenn Garlick, Assistant Principal Cellist, National Symphony Orchestra; Carolina Robertson, Professor of Ethnomusicology, University of Maryland School of Music

Program

"Romancing Rostropovich"

Tanand Donnetoin

Three Meditations from MASS for Cello and Piano Leonard Bernstein
Meditation No. 1: Lento assai, molto sostenuto
Meditation No. 2: Andante sostenuto
Meditation No. 3: Presto
Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan
Tema "SACHER" (1976) Benjamin Britten
Lento maestoso
Mr. Hardy
Puneña No. 2, op. 45 Hommage à Paul Sacher (1976)
Wayno Karnavalito
Mr. Hardy
Le Grand Tango for Cello and Piano (1982) Astor Piazzolla
Tempo di Tango
Meno mosso
Più mosso
Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

Intermission

Seven Romances on Verses

by Alexander Blok, Op. 127. Dmitri Shostakovich

Ophelia's song

Hamayun, the prophetic bird

We were together

The city sleeps

Storm

Mysterious signs

Music

Ms. Mabbs, Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan



Every generation has a certain number of musicians who win large audience approval for the skill, imagination, and passion of their performances. And each generation, if it is lucky, has a number of musicians—not a large number—who enthusiastically promote the creation of new works through their technique and enthusiasm, and thus play a major role in shaping future histories of music. And occasionally a generation is lucky to find a musician who also embodies the highest possible standards of personal integrity and courage. But how often do all of these qualities combine in a single person, as they have in Mstislav Rostropovich? This program celebrates Slava at seventy with five very diverse works composed for him, ranging from solo cello (Ginastera and Britten) to concerto (Bernstein) to instrumental duo (Piazzolla) to vocal chamber music (Shostakovich).

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Three Meditations from Mass

No doubt most of those who attended the first performance of *Mass* at the Kennedy Center on September 8, 1971, assumed (from its title) that the work would be essentially another in the long and distinguished line of Mass settings of which the European cultural tradition is so rich (and which Bernstein himself knew so well as a conductor), perhaps especially a work like Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, which combines visionary ecstasy with structural strength. As a conductor, Bernstein was one of the greatest advocates the Beethoven score has

ever had. Such a setting would have been perfectly suitable as a tribute to a Roman Catholic president. But Bernstein's music was always essentially theatrical, and *Mass* was not intended to be merely a concert work, but rather a treatment of the burning issues of American society in the early 1970s placed within the context of the traditional elements of the Latin Mass that composers have been setting to music for at least 700 years. The resulting work treated theological questions of doubt and faith, dramatically cast to suggest the debates of the "God is dead" movement that was much discussed at the time, as well as war and peace, race relations, social and economic justice, and ecological concerns.

The full score of *Mass* moves between extremes of tension and a repose generated by the principal character of the evening, known simply as the Celebrant, who (in the composer's words) "tries to control the situation by saying, 'Let us pray,' and it is at these moments that the *Meditations* are played by the pit orchestra, while the entire company remains motionless in attitudes of prayer, or contemplates cermonial dance." Not long after the premiere, Bernstein arranged the first two meditations for cello and piano for Mstislav Rostropovich, who performed them widely. In 1977 he enlarged the work by creating a third "meditation" out of several passages in the score, and orchestrating the entire piece, so that it could be performed by cello with either piano or orchestra.

The first two movements of the present work are fairly literal arrangements of two passages from *Mass* ("Meditation #1" between the *Confession* and the *Gloria*; "Meditation #2" following the Gloria and preceding the Epistle) with the leading role given to the solo cello. The second of these is a set of four short variations based on a brief eleven-note passage from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (a highly chromatic passage that does not at once suggest Beethoven). During the course of the movement there are two brief, but quite recognizable quotations from the Beethoven work: the opening notes of the famous "Joy" theme, and the simple major chords to which are sung the word *Brüder* ("Brothers").

The third movement has more complex origins. It does not correspond to the passage labeled "Meditation #3," late in *Mass*, but is rather mostly a reworking of the music called the "Second Introit," which consisted of a lively choral dance in 9/8 time (but, typically of Bernstein, the meter is made vigorous and jazzy with alternations of 3/8 and 3/4); a chorale, "Almighty father," in something of a simple congregational hymn-singing style; and Epiphany, an extended solo for

oboe with percussion. For *Three Meditations*, Bernstein rewrote the oboe solo for cello, and placed *Epiphany* first (though it returns at the end to round out the movement).

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Tema Sacher

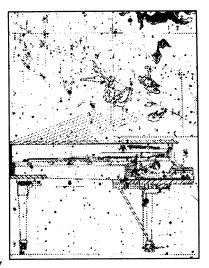
This small work is part of a single larger piece, a set of variations for cello, with a theme by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), and variations composed by Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Hans Werner Henze, Heinz Holliger, and Witold Lutoslawski, to be performed by Rostropovich at a special concert in honor of Sacher's 70th birthday in 1976. Britten was already far gone with the heart disease from which he died in December, and, as he had written to Oliver Knussen in January, he was only able to do "an occasional tiny bit of writing." But he agreed to invent the theme for a set of variations for unaccompanied cello in honor of the man who had premiered his Cantata Academica and been the impetus for the creation of so much great music. No doubt part of the reason he was happy to accede to the request, at a time when any physical effort—even writing—left him exhausted, was the fact that the performer would be his old friend Rostropovich. In September 1960, Britten had heard Rostropovich play the first performance outside Russia of Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto. The event marked the beginning of a deep friendship between the shy English composer and the ebullient Russian cellist, a friendship that eventually resulted in the creation of five major works for cello, as well as this small, but generous-spirited postlude.

ALBERTO GINASTERA

Puneña No. 2, for solo cello

Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) showed precocious musical gifts and began to take piano lessons at the age of seven; by fourteen he was composing, though he eventually destroyed most of his juvenilia. He graduated with highest honors from the National Conservatory of Buenos Aires in 1938; even before graduation he attracted widespread attention with the ballet score *Panambi* (1936), following it up a few years later with *Estancia* (1941); both works dealt with Argentine life and had a strong element of musical folklore enlivened by a brilliant ear for orchestral color and a strong sense of

rhythm. World War II caused him to postpone accepting a Guggenheim grant to study in the United States, but by 1945, as a result of Péron's rise to power, he was dismissed from his position at the national military academy. He spent the next several years in the United States, including a summer studying in Aaron Copland's class at Tanglewood. Though he returned to Argentina and worked at reforming the musical life of his native country, he spent most of his last years abroad, in the United States and Europe, owing to continuing political unrest at home. By



the late 1950s he had established an international reputation, and many of his later works were commissioned by organizations north of the Rio Grande (two of his three operas, for example, had their first performances in Washington).

Ginastera began with an outright nationalistic style, drawing upon folk melodies and dances for his early ballets and other works, while modelling his style on the music of such masters of musical folklore as Bartok and Stravinsky. By the late '40s the early nationalism had come to be presented more often in abstract musical genres rather than folk ballets, and expanded by musical elements current in the international scene. His later music tended toward 12-tone constructional techniques, though they never lost the coloristic imagination that had first captured the world's attention.

Ginastera composed *Puneña No. 2* for solo cello (the previous work of this title was for flute) in Geneva, Switzerland, during February 1976 at the request of Rostropovich, who wanted a piece to celebrate the 70th birthday of the Swiss conductor and patron Paul Sacher. Sacher (who turns 90 this year) is probably responsible for more commissions than any other single figure in this century, and his commissions have included no small number of the great masterpieces of our century. Like many composers who have written to honor him in music, Ginastera found a way to translate Sacher's name into musical pitches. He imaged a small "e" to precede and follow the name, giving this result: eSACHERe. The "es" at the beginning is the German name for E-flat, and the "re" on the end provides D. In between comes A, C, B-natural (which is known as "H" in German), and E.

Rostropovich gave the first performance of the piece in the Zurich Tonhalle on May 2, 1976, at a celebratory concert for Sacher. Regarding the title and structure of the work, Ginastera explained, in a preface to the score:

The Kecuan word "Puna" refers to the highlands or a plateau of 4,000 meters in the Andes. It also means bare and arid ground, as well as a feeling of anguish one can have at high altitudes. "Puneña" refers therefore to the Puna.

Puneña No. 2, Homage to Paul Sacher, is a re-creation of the sonorous world of this mysterious heart of South America that was the Inca empire, the influence of which one can still feel in the north of my country, as well as in Bolivia and Peru.

The work consists of two closely related movements. The first one, *Harawi*, means melancholy love song. It is based on two themes, the first one being eSACHERe and the second one (the other six notes) the metamorphosis of a pre-Columbian melody of Cuzco. Lyric and ardent but at the same time deep and magical, it evokes a haunting solitude, sounds of kenas, murmurs of the distant forest with imaginary birds singing "Sacher!...Sacher!...," and the glittering moon and stars.

The second movement, *Wayno Karnavalito*, is a wild and tumultuous Carnival dance on the principal theme "eSACHERe," full of rhythms of charangos and Indian drums, colored costumes, ponchos and masks, as well as of Indian corn alcohol.

-Alberto Ginastera

ASTOR PLAZZOLLA

Le Grand Tango, for cello and piano

In the United States the tango was a popular dance genre first introduced from Latin America by Vernon and Irene Castle in 1914 and then used for such popular songs as Sigmund Romberg's *Softly as in a morning sunrise* (The New Moon, 1928). Tangos were associated in the popular mind with bordellos and lascivious activity, partly through the films of Rudolph Valentino. By mid-century, they were parodied in Broadway shows (as in *Hernando's Hideaway* from *Pajama Game*, 1954). But in Latin America, the tango went through no such decline. It was and remained a popular form of music-making, often approaching the level of light classics.

The Argentine composer Astor Piazzola studied composition with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, but recognized that he had found his true voice in the tradition of tango. He was extremely popular in his

homeland as a composer of dances and songs, but he also extended the concept of tango to a degree not recognized by many purists, who wished to stick with the old-fashioned tradition. Indeed, it would be fair to compare Piazzolla to a handful of other composers who succeeded in elevating popular dance genres to substantial works of art— Chopin, Johann Strauss the younger, and Scott Joplin. Each of these composers were able to reveal unsuspected riches in a "simple" dance form. The Chopin mazurkas, which evoke an astonishing range of expression from the most exuberant and extrovert to a dark intimacy. perhaps come closest to serving as an analogy to Piazzolla's achievements with the tango. Yet even so the comparison fails to reveal the way in which Piazzolla uses the tango as the basis for works in much larger shapes, and for a wide range of instruments and instrumental combinations. Le Grand Tango, composed for Rostropovich, in the course of some twelve minutes, goes far beyond the style of a popular dance to evoke the entire Latin American world, as a kind of sonorous analogy to the fantasist writings of a Pablo Neruda, Borges, or Vargas Llosa. It is a world in which beauty and magic coexist with harshness and brutality, a world in which (musically speaking) the most fetching melodic riff can turn richly contrapuntal, the most dynamic energy be converted to elegant sweetness (or vice versa), and the simplest harmonic plan can suddenly be sidetracked to create shapes of unsuspected complexity.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Romances after poems of Alexander Blok, Opus 127

Although they remain little known outside of Russia, partly owing to the fact that few singers and perhaps fewer listeners feel at home with the language of their texts, the songs of Dmitri Shostakovich form a significant part of his output—not as spacious and grandiose as the fifteen symphonies, to be sure, but often as intimate, searching, and revealing as the fifteen string quartets. Indeed, sometimes in his songs Shostakovich expressed ideas that were officially unpopular in the Soviet Union and risked public opprobrium or worse to express a sense of wrong and outrage. (Among the most evident examples of his willingness to take a courageous, principled stand are the eleven songs of the set *Popular Jewish Poems*, Opus 79, music that is compassionate and humane, which Shostakovich composed during a time of a growing government-supported anti-Semitism—and it had to wait nearly twenty years for a performance.)

Another of his major works in the field of song—indeed, one of the most powerful and expressive contributions to his entire output—is the cycle of seven *Romances after poems of Alexander Blok*, composed in 1966 and first performed on February 3, 1967, by soprano Galina Vishnevskaya (whose husband, Mstislav Rostropovich, played the cello part in the performance). Blok (1880-1921) has been called "the Russian Verlaine"; he was, like Shostakovich, a native of St. Petersburg, and his poetry evokes the history and mythology of the city with color and vitality.

Shostakovich arranged his setting of seven Blok texts for voice with violin, cello, and piano in a framework that appears purely structuralist at the outset: he begins with three songs written for the soprano with each of the three solo instruments in turn; then come three songs each accompanied by a different duo (comprising all of the possible combinations); finally, in the last song, all four musicians participate together for the first time. The formalism of this approach does not even begin to hint at the power of Shostakovich's musical declamation and the imaginative colors that he draws out of the constantly changing accompaniments. He was determined to let the poetry speak for itself; to that end he set the text syllable by syllable, with no verbal repetition and no elaborate vocal melismas, always reflecting the natural rhythms of the Russian language. Such an approach is rather severe, but in Shostakovich's carefully controlled architecture, it leaves the listener with the feeling of having passed through an experience of almost overwhelming power.

1 P'esnya Ofelii

Razduchayas ye devoi miloi, drug, ti klyalsya mnye lyubit!... Uyezhaya y krai postilii, klyatvu dannuyu khranit!...

Tam, za daniyei spaslivoi, byeryeva tvoi vo mgdye... Val serditii, govorlivii moyot slyozi na skalye...

Milii voni nye vernyotsya, vyes odyetii v serebro... V grobye tyazhko v skolikhnyotsya bant i chornoye pye-ro....

1 Ophelia's Song

When you left me, my dear friend, you promised to love me; you left for a distant land, and swore to keep your promise!

Beyond the happy land of Denmark the shores are in darkness... The angry waves crash over the rocks...

My warrior shall not return, all dressed in silver... The bow and the black feather will lie restlessly in their grave...

2 Gamayun, ptitsa vyeshchaya

Na dladyakh byeskonyechnikh vod, zakatom v purpur oblyechonnikh ona vyeshchayet i poyot, nye v silakh kril podnyat' smyat'ennikh...

Vyeshchayet ivo zlikh tatar, vyeshchayet kaznyei ryad krovavikh, i trus, i golod, i pozhar, zlodyeyev silu, gibel' pravikh...

Pryedvechnïm uzhasom ob'yat, pryekrasnïi lik gorit, lyuvob'yu, no vyeshchei pravdoyu zvuchat usta, zapyekshchiesya krov'yu!

3 Mi bili vmyestye

Mï bïli vmyestye, pomnyu ya.... noch vodnovalas' skripka pyela... Ti v eti dni bïla moya, tï c kazhdïm chasom khoroshela...

Skroz tikhoye zhurchan'ye strui skvoz tainu zhenstvyennoi ulibki k ustam prosilsya potsyelui, prosilis v sertsye zvuki skripki...

4 Gorod spit

Gorod spit, okutan m gloyu, chut' myertsayut finali...
Tam dalyoko, z Nyevoyu, vizhu otblyeski zari.
V etom dalnyem orazheni, v etikh otblyeskakh ognya prita ilos' probuzhden'ye dnei tosklivi dlya menya...

2 Gamayun, the prophet bird

The endless plains of the seas are bathed in the purple of sunset. The bird sings and warns us, too feeble to lift its wings.

It warns us of the wicked tartars, and of the bloody deaths to come, of fear, and hunger, and fire, of attacks by evil forces...

Filled with prophecies of horror, the perfect face burns with love, its lips covered in blood, repeat the dreadful prophecy!

3 We were together

We were together, I remember...
The night was filled with movement...
You were mine then,
more beautiful with each moment...

And to the peaceful murmur of the stream, your lips, hiding a woman's secret, begged to be kissed,

begged to be kissed, like the strings of love in my heart...

4 The town sleeps

The town sleeps, covered in darkness,
the street lights barely flickering...
Beyond the river Neva, in the distance,
I see the coming of dawn.
From the light that reflects

from over there,
I see my days
filled with longing

5 Burya

O, kak byzumno za oknom revyot, bushuyet burya zlaya, nyesutsya tuchi, lyut dozhdyom, i vyeter voyet, zamiraya!

Uzhasna noch! Vtakuyu noch mnye zhal lyudei, lishonnïkh krova, i sozahlenye gonit proch yat'ya kholoda sïrovo!...

Vorotsya s mrakom I dozhdyom, stradaltsyev uchast razdyelyaya... O, kak byezumno za oknom bushuyet vyeter, iznïvaya!

6 Tainïye znaki

Razgorayutsya tainïe znaki na glukhoi, nyeprobudnoi styenye. Zolotïe i krasnïe maki nado mnoi tyagotyeyut vo sne.

Ukrïvayus v nochnïe pyeshcherï I nye pomnyu surovïkh chudyes. Na zarye golubïe khimyerï smotryat v zerkalye yarkikh nyebyes.

Ubyegayu v proshedshiye migi, zakrïvayu ot strakha glaza, na listakh kholodyeyushchei knigi zolotaya dyevisya kosa.

Nado mnoi nyebosvod uzhe nizok, chornïi son tyagotyeyot v grudi. Moi konyets pryednachertannï blizok, i voina, i pozharvpyeredi.

5 Storm

O, how outside my window the storm rages wildly, the clouds fly over, the rain teems down, and the wind whines and moans!

What a dreadful night! On such a night

I pity people without a shelter but my pity rushes only into a cold embrace!

The poor must fight in the night and the rain... Oh, how outside my window the wind blows wildly!

6 Secret signs

The secret signs appear on the impenetrable wall. Golden and crimson poppies blossom in my dreams.

I drown in the caverns of night, and forget the magic of my dreams. My fanciful thoughts are reflected in the bright heavens.

These short moments will disappear, and the beautiful maiden's eyes will close, like the pages of a book.

The canopy of the stars is now low, the darkest dreams lie heavy in the heart.

My end is near, fate has ordained it,

with war and fire that lie before me.

7 Muzika

V nochi, kogda usnyot trevoga, i gorod skroyetsya vo m gdye—o, skolko muziki u boga, kakiye zvukina zyemlye!

Shto burya zhizki, yesli rozi tvoi tsvyetut mnye i goryat! Shto chelovecheskiye slyozi, kogda rumyanitsya zakat!

Primi, Vladïchitsa vsyedennoi, skvoz krov, skvoz muki, skvoz groba poslyednei strasti kubok pyennïi ot nyedostoinovo raba!

7 Music

When the night brings peace, and the city is bathed in darkness, how heavenly is the music, what wonderful sounds can be heard!

Forget the storms of life when you can see such roses bloom! Forget the sorrows of mankind, when you see the crimson sunset.

O sovereign of the universe, accept through pain, through blood, this cup, filled to the brim with the desires of your slave.

—Program notes by Steven Ledbetter ©1996. All rights reserved.

About the Artists

ELISABETH ADKINS, violinist of the 20th Century Consort since 1983, is Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. She received her doctorate from Yale University, where she studied with Oscar Shumsky. A versatile musician, she is active as a recitalist, concerto soloist, and chamber musician. Recent appearances include concertos with the National Symphony, the Springfield Symphony, and the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, and recitals at the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery, and the Phillips Collection. She is a founding member of the American Chamber Players; her recordings with the group can be heard on Koch International Classics. The daughter of noted musicologists, her seven siblings include three violinists, two cellists, and a soprano. The family chamber group, the Adkins String Ensemble, gave its debut concert in 1993 and has completed a CD recording.

DAVID HARDY, cellist of the 20th Century Consort since 1983, achieved international recognition in 1982 as the top American prize winner at the Seventh Annual Tchaikovsky Cello Competition in Moscow. Mr. Hardy is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory of Music. He has studied with Laurence Lesser, Stephyn Kates, Berl Senofsky and Mstislav Rostropovich, making his solo debut with the Baltimore Symphony at the age of 16. In 1981 he became the Assistant Principal Cellist of the National Symphony and the youngest member of that organization, and in 1994, he was appointed Principal Cellist. Mr. Hardy is the cellist of the Opus 3 Trio, and his playing can be heard on recordings on the Melodia, Educo, and Delos labels.

LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN, pianist of the 20th Century Consort since 1987, is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where she received both Bachelor and Master 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 and Richmond Symphonies. As an established chamber musician, Ms. Logan has performed across the globe with such artists as Julius Baker, Eugenia Zucherman, 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.

LINDA MABBS, soprano, is a frequent performer with many leading orchestras in the United States and England, including the Chicago, St. Louis, Minnesota and National Symphonies; the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; Music of the Baroque; and the English Chamber Orchestra. During the 1994-95 season, she made her New York City Opera debut as the Marshallin in a new production of Der Rosenkavalier. She also appeared with the Guarneri String Quartet, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Washington Chamber Symphony, and the Rembrandt Chamber Players. Her 1996-97 season includes performances of Haydn's Harmoniemesse with the Saint Louis Symphony, Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* with Music of the Baroque in Chicago. In addition, her world premiere recording of Argento's Miss Havisham's Wedding Night is soon to be released on the Koch label. Ms. Mabbs is Professor of Voice at the University of Maryland, College Park, School of Music.

The 20th Century Consort gratefully acknowledges the generous support for the current recording project from these Friends of the 20th Century Consort:

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20th Century Consort 1996-97 Concert Series Upcoming Concerts

February 1, 1997

Pictures of Praise

Guest soprano Lucy Shelton—internationally recognized for the power and personality of her interpretations—will return to the 20th Century Consort for a performance of George Rochberg's epic setting of texts *In Praise of Krishna*. Also on the program is Nicholas Maw's brilliant score, *Shahnama*, based on lavish and beautiful illustrations from the Persian national epic, some of which belong to the collection of the museum.

March 8, 1997

Water Ways

TAKEMITSU: Rain Tree

JAFFE: Chamber Concerto ("Singing Figures")

SHENG: The Stream Flows INCE: Waves of Talya

April 19, 1997

Ancient Earth Day

MAHLER: Das Lied van der Erde CRUMB: Ancient Voices of Children

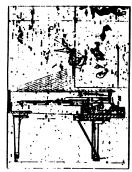


Time Change!

Feb. 1, 1997

concert begins at **5** p.m.

Pre-concert lecture begins at 4 p.m.



We apologize for any inconvenience.