

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

20th CENTURY CONSORT

March 8, 1997

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

The Smithsonian Associates
presents

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and Conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Ronald Barnett, percussion
Jennifer Cline, viola
Michael Gatti, percussion
David Hardy, cello
Thomas Jones, percussion
Loren Kitt, clarinet
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano, celesta
Edward Newman, harpsichord, celesta
Sara Stern, flute
Rudolph Vrbsky, oboe

Susan Schilperoort, Manager



Saturday, March 8, 1997
Pre-Concert Discussion 4:00 p.m.
Concert 5:00 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 National Endowment for the Arts, a
Federal agency, and Smithsonian Office of the Provost



Pre-Concert Discussion

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort,
Stephen Jaffe, composer

Program

"Water Ways"

In Memory of Toru Takemitsu

Rain Tree Toru Takemitsu
Mr. Barnett, Mr. Gatti, Mr. Jones

Chamber Concerto ("Singing Figures") Stephen Jaffe
for Oboe and Six Instruments

- I. Dance Prelude
- II. Water Music
- III. Finale

Ms. Adkins, Ms. Cline, Mr. Hardy,
Mr. Kendall, Ms. Logan, Mr. Newman, Mr. Vrbsky

Intermission

The Stream Flows Bright Sheng
Ms. Adkins

Waves of Talya Kamran Ince
Ms. Adkins, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Jones,
Mr. Kendall, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan, Ms. Stern



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

Program Notes

by Steven Ledbetter

TORU TAKEMITSU

Rain Tree

Toru Takemitsu was born in Tokyo on October 8, 1930, and died there in February 1996. At the time of his death he was Japan's best-known composer, both at home and in the West. His career came about as an unlikely result of an accident that occurred when he was sixteen. While mountain climbing, he dropped his camera into a waterfall. In trying to retrieve it, he caught pneumonia, and was forced to spend a long period convalescing at home. There he listened to music on the radio for hours on end and—though he had never studied music up to that time—decided to be a composer. He bought scores and taught himself to play the piano. Though he became the private pupil of Kosuji Kiyose at the age of eighteen, he is largely self-taught as a composer. Within three years he had organized Tokyo's Experimental Workshop, a society for the performance of avant-garde music, and in 1966 he created, with Seiji Ozawa and Toshi Ichihyanagi, the group Orchestral Space. His work shows an independence of schools of composition, drawing eclectically from East and West, including many of the most recent musical developments (John Cage, the Viennese serialists, the French impressionists), though he makes almost no use of traditional harmonic or metric gestures or of traditional forms. Rather, each composition fills a certain acoustic space, evolving out of its own materials. Takemitsu has created music employing combinations of Japanese and European sound ideas, occasionally employing traditional Japanese instruments in works largely written for traditional Western ensembles.

Inspiration from nature has for centuries been one of the most characteristic features of Japanese art, whether in poetry or the visual arts or—as so often in Takemitsu's work—music. He found a kindred spirit in Claude Debussy, whose use of color and light, rather than line, as a basic approach, and whose frequent translation of visual images into musical form were most congenial to Takemitsu. A quick survey of titles makes clear his passion for evocations of nature (sometimes through the mediation of lines of poetry): *Rain Coming*, *Garden Rain*, *Rain Spell*, *Waterways*, *Waves*, *Rain Tree*, *Rain Dreaming*, *Water Music*, *Music of Trees*, *Tree Line*, *And Then I Knew 'Twas Wind*, *Eucalyptus*. In a collection of essays published in 1962,

Takemitsu wrote of the implications to his work of the word "nature," expressing the feeling that urban society, which is largely isolated from nature, is reflected in a great deal of contemporary music, both having lost a "natural balance." He feels that human life and art will eventually harmonize with nature.

Rain Tree is thus part of a "rain series" that includes *Garden Rain* for brass ensemble, *Rain Spell* for two violins, *Rain Coming* for fourteen instruments, all forming a "waterscape." In the composer's words, "they go through various metamorphoses aiming at the sea of tonality just like water which circulates in the universe." *Rain Tree*, for three percussion players, was composed in Tokyo and completed on May 10, 1981. The first performance took place in Tokyo on May 31 that year. Takemitsu's score quotes a passage from the novel *Atama no ii, Ame no Ki* by Nobel Prize-winner Kenzaburo Oé: "It has been named the 'rain tree'; for its abundant foliage continues to let fall rain drops collected from last night's shower until well after the following midday. Its hundreds of thousands of tiny leaves—finger-like—store up moisture while other trees dry up at once. What an ingenious tree, isn't it?"

STEPHEN JAFFE

Chamber Concerto (Singing Figures)

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1954, Stephen Jaffe studied at the University of Pennsylvania, where his teachers included George Crumb, George Rochberg, and Richard Wernick. In 1979 he was a Fellow in composition at the Tanglewood Music Center. He also worked at the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland, where he received the institution's Première Médaille. In 1989, citing his "eloquent and individual voice," Brandeis University awarded him its Creative Arts Citation, and his *First Quartet*, composed in 1990-91 for the Ciompi Quartet, received a 1991 Kennedy Center Friedheim Award. Jaffe is also active as a pianist and conductor. He now lives in Durham, North Carolina, where he is on the faculty of Duke University. Regarding his Chamber Concerto, the composer writes:

My *Chamber Concerto*, subtitled *Singing Figures*, is at once a full concerto with an extended part for the oboist and a divertimento in which the discourse is positively light and airy. The size and smaller forces of the piece recall the *Brandenburg Concerti*, but in language and conception, my piece is very much of this time. The Chamber Concerto is scored for oboe solo and five instruments: two keyboard

players sharing three instruments (piano, harpsichord, and celesta), violin, viola, and cello. The score calls for the members of the ensemble to play with exuberance and precision, and with the poetry of *pianissimo*, as each is asked at times to detach from the *tutti* and participate as a soloist.

There are three movements of equal length and weight: *Dance Prelude*, *Water Music*, and *Finale*. The *Dance Prelude* takes off from a characteristic rhythm that might be a funny kind of reggae, against which the oboe plays a long line, and a leaping scherzando figure, which is introduced about one minute into the piece. *Water Music* is very fluid, in contrast to the very clean articulations of the first movement. The title was not suggested by Handel, but by Robert Cresley's poem of the same title ("Water music/loud in the clearing/of the boats, birds, leaves.") In the middle section, the oboe's recurring arabesque is heard over the darkly undulating color modulations of the ensemble, which I imagined shifting in and out of the background, sometimes a watery scrim, sometimes a participant in the oboe's more plaintive rhetoric. The *Finale* is marked "Decisively rhythmic (Slightly eccentric, jubilant)." It is a *moto perpetuo* whose quick tempo allows for many fanciful shifts in rhythm and articulation, including machine-like *ostinati*, the grotesque, lyrical, the brash, etc.

The concerto's three movements are inter-related thematically, and each features a cadenza for oboe. The *Chamber Concerto* was commissioned by the Orchestra of St. Luke's for the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble; the first performance took place on April 10, 1996 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York with Melanie Feld, oboe soloist, and the composer conducting.

BRIGHT SHENG

The Stream Flows

Bright Sheng (born Shanghai, China, 1955) started piano studies at the age of five. After graduating from high school during the Cultural Revolution, he went to work as a pianist and timpanist in a music-dance company in Changhai, the province that borders Tibet, where he had his first opportunity to study and collect Chinese folk music. After the Cultural Revolution, he was one of the first students accepted by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he earned his undergraduate degree in composition.

In 1982 he moved to New York, where he attended Queens College, CUNY, and Columbia University. Among his major influences there were Chou Wen-Chung, Leonard Bernstein, George Perle, and

Hugo Weisgall. He was also a Tanglewood composition fellow in 1985. He has received a number of prizes both in China (in chamber music and art song composition) and in the United States (including the National Endowment for Arts and Letters and the Naumburg Foundation). His orchestral work *H'UN (Lacerations): In Memoriam 1966-1976* was runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize in 1989, as was the *Four Movements for Piano Trio*, composed for the Peabody Trio, in 1991. As composer-in-residence with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, he wrote the opera *The Song of Mainun* with librettist Andrew Porter, and in 1992 he began a term as composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony.

The solo violin work *The Stream Flows*, like many of Sheng's works, is based on Chinese folk songs. It was commissioned by the Foundation for Chinese Arts in Boston for Nai-Yuan Hu, who gave the first performance in Boston's Jordan Hall on October 20, 1990. Sheng has dedicated the work to his teacher Hugo Weisgall, himself a noted user of (Jewish) folk material. Regarding this piece the composer has written:

The first part of *The Stream Flows* is based on a famous Chinese folk song from the southern part of China. The freshness and richness of this tune deeply touched me when I first heard it. Since then, I have used it as basic material in several of my works. Here I hope that the solo violin evokes the timbre and tone quality of a female folk singer. The second part of this piece is a fast country dance based on a three-note motive.

—Bright Sheng

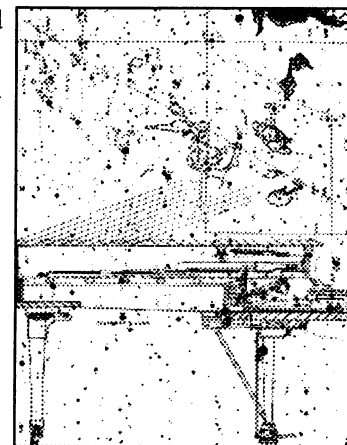
A translation of the text of the folksong used for the opening of the piece runs as follows:

THE STREAM FLOWS

The rising moon shines brightly
It reminds me of love in the mountains.

Like the moon, you walk in the sky,
As the crystal stream flows down the mountain.

A clear breeze blows up the hill,
My love, do you hear I am calling you?



KAMRAN INCE

Waves of Talya

Kamran Ince, currently teaching composition at Memphis State University, has an unusual, multicultural musical background. He was born in 1960 in Montana to American and Turkish parents and began his musical training in Turkey at the conservatories of Ankara and Izmir. He did his undergraduate work at the Oberlin Conservatory and later earned a doctorate from Eastman. His teachers include Joseph Schwantner, Christopher Rouse, David Burge, and Samuel Adler. He has written a number of orchestral works, including *Ebullient Shadows* for the Minnesota Orchestra and *Deep Flight*, an ASCAP and Meet-the-Composer commission to honor Leonard Bernstein on his seventieth birthday. His ballet *Lipstick* was premiered by Ballet Met in Columbus, Ohio, and later performed in New York. From 1991 to 1993 he was Composer-in-Residence with the California Symphony (San Francisco). He has recently completed his *Symphony No. 3, Siege of Vienna* and a *Piano Concerto*, which are due to be recorded by the Albany Symphony Orchestra this spring. He has worked with the Milwaukee-based new-music ensemble Present Music and will soon compose for them a concerto for new-music ensemble and orchestra, on a consortium commission from the Milwaukee Symphony, the Dayton Philharmonic, and the Albany Symphony.

Waves of Talya is a sextet composed in October 1988 on a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation; it is dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky. It was premiered in 1989 at the Weill Recital Hall in New York. Regarding this piece, the composer writes:

One of the composers I admire most is Brahms. For me the driving force behind his music is great passion and a sense of rebellion to an extent that I cannot find in any other composer. The main inspiration for my chamber music is also intense passion and rebellion. When I write for chamber groups I find the two feelings mentioned above the most irresistible ones, and *Waves of Talya* is a good example of this.

Talya is the old name of Antalya, the Mediterranean port city in southern Turkey. As a child I went there on vacations and was always fascinated by the powerful waves and the sound effects of the pebbles moving with the tides. The inspiration behind many of the sections of *Waves of Talya* are the waves of Antalya, their shapes, movements, and sounds.

Waves of Talya is in three continuous movements. The first and last are dominated by the endless poundings and after-effects of the waves. This endless energy calms down in the second movement,

where the sea becomes very gentle and motionless. The peacefulness of the second movement is suddenly broken by the arrival of the third movement, again containing the endless energy of pounding waves and their after-effects.

—Kamran Ince

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About the Artists

ELISABETH ADKINS, violin, 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. Ms. Adkins is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.

RONALD BARNETT, percussion, plays timpani at the Kennedy Center and appears frequently in performances throughout the Washington, DC area. He is also percussionist in the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra and is Professor of Percussion at the University of Maryland School of Music.

JENNIFER CLINE, viola, joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1995. Before that, she was a member of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra for two years. She studied with Peter Slowik at Northwestern University from 1990 to 1992. In 1993 she began studies with Heidi Castleman at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she was awarded a degree in 1995. She has attended the Aspen Music Festival as a fellowship student and the National Repertory Orchestra Festival.

MICHAEL GATTI, percussion, is a member of the Fairfax Symphony and extra percussionist with the Arlington Symphony Orchestra. He has performed on the marimba at the Kennedy Center and has recently recorded Stuart Saunder Smith's *The Noble Snare*. He maintains an active teaching sched-

ule as percussion instructor at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, DeMatha Catholic High School, and as Instructor of Percussion at Frederick Community College. Mr. Gatti is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in percussion performance at the University of Maryland-College Park School of Music.

DAVID HARDY, cello, 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 under the Melodia, Educo, and Delos labels.

THOMAS JONES, percussion, graduated from the University of Maryland and is a freelance musician who enjoys playing many styles of music. He plays drums and is percussionist at the Kennedy Center, National Theater and Wolf Trap. He is the timpanist with the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, percussionist with the 20th Century Consort and works regularly as the drummer in a variety of bands. He has long experience in recording studios as a drummer and percussionist.

CHRISTOPHER KENDALL, Artistic Director and Conductor, is Director of the School of Music at the University of Maryland and founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort. From 1987 to 1992, he was Assistant, then Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony, and from 1993-1996 directed the music programs at Boston University and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Guest-conducting engagements include the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Boston's Collage and Dinosaur Annex, New York Chamber Symphony, Annapolis Symphony, Dayton Philharmonic, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the Symphony, Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of the Juilliard School. His performances can be heard on the Delos, CRI, Bard, and Smithsonian Collection labels.

LOREN KITT, clarinet, 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 faculties of the School of Music at the University of Maryland and the Peabody Conservatory. Mr. Kitt was a featured artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He is heard frequently in Washington with the Theater Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center, The

Romantic Chamber Ensemble, and 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.

LISA EMENHEISER LOGAN, piano, 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 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.

EDWARD NEWMAN, piano, received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School. The first prize winner in the Robert Casadesu International Piano Competition, Mr. Newman has given critically acclaimed performances in Europe, Australia, and across the United States, including appearances with the Boston Pops. He joined the American Chamber Players in 1993, and makes frequent tours with the group along with his wife, violinist Elisabeth Adkins. Mr. Newman also serves on the music faculty of George Mason University.

SARA STERN, flute, has performed much of this century's most important solo and chamber music and has premiered and recorded significant new compositions as solo flutist with the 20th Century Consort. Other positions she currently holds are Principal Flute with the Virginia Chamber Orchestra and the Washington Concert Opera. Ms. Stern's musical evolution has included such diverse turns as the Afro-Cuban "Kwane and the Kwanditos," the San Francisco street trio "Arcangelo," recitals at Carnegie Hall and the Terrace Theater, and guest-artist appearances with the Emerson String Quartet and the American Chamber Players. She is also a member of the flute and harp duo "Stern and Levalier" with NSO Principal Harpist Dotian Levalier, and solo flutist with the woodwind-based "Eastwind Consort."

RUDOLPH VRBSKY, oboe, 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 is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music and teaches at the Peabody Institute.

The 20th Century Consort gratefully acknowledges the generous support
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Compiled February 1, 1997



20th Century Consort 1996-97 Concert Series Upcoming Concerts

April 19, 1997	Ancient Earth Day
4:00 pm Pre-Concert	MAHLER: Das Lied von der Erde
5:00 pm Concert	CRUMB: Ancient Voices of Children