

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

# 20th CENTURY CONSORT

February 28, 1998

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

# The Smithsonian Associates presents

# **20th Century Consort**

### **Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director**

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Glenn Garlick, cello
David Hardy, cello
John Huling, trombone
Thomas Jones, percussion
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Marissa Regni, violin
Michael Rusinek, clarinet
Lucy Shelton, soprano
Sara Stern, flute
Edwin Thayer, french horn

Susan Schilperoort, manager Curt Wittig, electronics Marcus Wyche, stage manager

Saturday, February 28, 1998
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 1997–98 performance series is funded in part by the Smithsonian Office of the Provost



## **Pre-Concert Discussion**

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort Nicholas Maw and Bruce Wolosoff, composers

## **Program**

### "Jacob's Ladder"

Nicholas Maw

SONATA for Solo Violin
I. Scena
II. March - Burlesque
III. Tombeau
IV. Flight
Ms. Adkins
Intermission
BodhisattvaBruce Wolosoff
Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan, Ms. Regni
Counterpoise
1. "Nature" is what we see
(Emily Dickinson)
2. Salomé
(Guillaume Apollonaire)
3. La Blanche Neige
(Guillaume Apollonaire)
4. I taste a liquor never brewed
(Emily Dickinson)
Mr. Garlick, Mr. Huling, Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Logan, Ms. Regni, Mr. Rusinek, Ms. Shelton, Ms. Stern, Mr. Thayer
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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

### NICHOLAS MAW (b.1935) Sonata for unaccompanied violin

English-born Nicholas Maw (he now lives in Washington, D.C.) was a student of Lennox Berkeley's at the Royal Academy of Music from 1955 to 1958. His generation of composers broke away from the conservative styles of traditional English idioms to discover twelve-tone techniques and serialism. Maw's earliest works reveal his interest in this approach, as does his decision to study privately in France with the Schoenberg pupil Max Deutsch while there officially on a French government scholarship to study with Nadia Boulanger.

It came as something of a surprise, then, when Maw fulfilled a BBC composition for the 1962 Proms with Scenes and Arias (a setting of twelfth-century texts for three sopranos and orchestra), filled with ecstatically songful writing, clearly derived from the native tradition, but enriched with extended harmonic structures that suggested a complex tonality quite different from the total chromaticism of the Viennese school. From that time, his music—highly personal and individual as it is—was found very difficult to pigeonhole stylistically. Though that should be regarded as a positive factor for any composer, it has in practice meant that, unconnected with a "school" of composition, he has not always benefited from the kind of self-promotional activities that such groups undertake. Although none ever disputed the refinement of his work or its expressive qualities, this feeling did not translate into particularly frequent performances or recordings of more than a handful of his works in the United States. (Subscribers to the concerts of the 20th Century Consort are in a happy minority who have rather frequent opportunities to hear his work.)

All that changed a few years ago when Simon Rattle, the popular conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, insisted, as a condition of the renewal of his recording contract with EMI, that he be allowed to record Maw's *Odyssey*, a ninety-minute orchestral score written for the BBS's Promenade Concerts in 1987. One would be hard-pressed to think of any abstract orchestral work of that scope since the time of Mahler, and, given general audience disinterest (to say the least) in contemporary music, it would seem on the face of it that such a recording could only be a financial disaster for

the recording company. But the recording proved to be a surprise success, and it brought Nicholas Maw to the attention of a far wider audience than he had previously enjoyed, and cast attention on his other works as well. (When the British magazine *Gramophone*, one of the world's most highly regarded record review publications, celebrated its seventieth anniversary recently, the editors chose what were in their view the seventy most significant recordings of that period—and Maw's *Odyssey* was the only work by a living composer on the list.)

During the thirty-five or so years since *Scenes and Arias*, Maw has continued to compose voluptuous music that does not turn its back on the traditions of the past, even as it projects his own personal vision. Along with a body of passionate instrumental music (such as the remarkable *Life Studies* for fifteen stringed instruments), he has produced a substantial body of music for voice, ranging from the song cycle *The Voice of Love* for mezzo-soprano and piano to a three act opera, *The Rising of the Moon*, composed for Glyndebourne, and the elegant tribute to Italian love poetry, *La Vita Nuova*, recently recorded by the 20th Century Consort. In 1985 Maw moved to the United States. During the summers he teaches at Bard College, and finds that his music is now just about equally sought after in both England and America.

The composer has provided a detailed explanation of the technical issues and the impetus for composing this sonata:

The literature for solo violin forms a small but significant sub-section of the western musical canon, from the suites and partitas of Bach through such nineteenth century works as the Caprices of Paganini (which through their aesthetic of virtuosity had such a profound effect on musical history), and on up to the present century, with important contributions to the medium by such composers as Ysaye, Bartok and Roger Sessions, among others. I have always been interested in writing for string instruments, and several of my works are for strings alone: three string quartets, *Life studies* for Fifteen Solo Strings, and *Sonata Notturna* for Cello and String Orchestra. This sonata is my first large-scale work for a solo string instrument.

Music for any kind of solo instrument (keyboard instruments excepted) poses a particular kind of challenge to both composer and performer—and, one might add, to the listener as well—owing to the difficulties inherent in achieving true self-sufficiency for a single instrument over what might be called a 'normal' musical time span. Every musical medium has its challenges and limitations, and in solo instrumental music there appear to be three basic interconnected problems to overcome.

Firstly, there is the problem of building satisfying forms from material that, due to the nature of the medium, is almost exclusively linear. In a single-line texture there can only be at most an intermittent sense of bass, and the linearity has a strong tendency to subdue harmonic procedures so that they become more discreet, more 'subterranean' than in concerted or keyboard music. Both of these factors inevitably loosen the musical structure. Then there is the question of acoustical characteristics, which is also related to the somewhat reductive nature of overall linearity, as well as to limitations of instrumental range and timbre. All of these can easily become tiring to the ear unless kept in careful balance, so in this work I have tried to ensure variety in the use of register (high - middle - low) and different kinds of sound (normal, muted, pizzicato, harmonics etc.). Lastly, there is what might be called the technique/technical question. It seems to me that in solo instrumental music a rather special kind of virtuosity is called for on the part of both performer and composer. For the composer, I would say this is a question of writing music that exploits as fully as possible the technical possibilities and characteristics of the instrument in order to reveal its soul in an individual way. This usually means the realization of the work will be technically and musically challenging to a high degree, and it is clearly the task of the performer to be capable of meeting these challenges in a satisfying and convincing manner.

This Sonata was requested by Jorja Fleezanis, to whom it is dedicated. It was commissioned by Minnesota Public Radio, and was completed early in 1997. The first movement, Scena, is a kind of free-wheeling sonata rondo. It is based on two ideas: a high, ghostly theme in harmonics heard at the opening, and following immediately, an animated triple time motive reminiscent of a waltz. After a varied restatement of this material there follows a passage of recitando. The movement then unfolds with gathering tension as an alternation of varied and developed episodes expand these ideas. The short coda is a reminiscence of the opening. The following March-Burlesque begins in a manner that definitely suggests the Burlesque elements. The middle of the movement is largely the March, though with continual interruptions from the Burlesque, and this mocking of the March by the Burlesque remains the activity of the rest of the movement. The third movement, Tombeau, is written in memory of my friend Jacob Druckman. The violin is muted throughout, and as with the first movement, the opening is an alternation and repetition of two ideas: a lyrical line that rises from low to very high, and a nostalgic sighing motive in double stopped tremolo. There then follows a somewhat more dynamic episode that eventually leads via the sighing motive into a passage reminiscent of a funeral march, with a steady, pulsing ostinato played both arco and pizzicato on open strings.

There is a short reprise of the faster music, and the ensuing coda is played as though heard from a great distance. The last movement, *Flight*, is fast and intense, characterized by *tremolando* bowing and continually shifting rhythmic accents. The center of the movement is a more lyrical passage in double stopped texture. After this the music speeds up again to a varied response of the opening section which, gathering tension and momentum, heads precipitously towards the close.

-Nicholas Maw

# BRUCE WOLOSOFF (b. 1955) Bodbisattva, for violin, cello, and piano

New Yorker Bruce Wolosoff began studying the piano at the age of three. He studied classical piano with German Diez, Evelyne Crochet, and Richard Goode, theory with Benjamin Boretz. He received his B.A. from Bard College, where he worked closely with another pianist-composer, Joan Tower. He went on to study at the New England Conservatory, where he received a master's degree in piano, but also pursued studies in improvisation with jazz teacher Charlie Banacos and piano and composition with Jaki Byard. In the early 1980s he returned to New York to work privately with Lawrence Widdoes. At the age of thirty he gave up a career as a concert pianist to devote himself to composition full-time.

Since shifting his primary attention to composition he has produced orchestral, chamber, and vocal music. Recent works include The Emerald Tablet of Hermes for baritone and orchestra, Reflections of the Stone for soprano, clarinet, and piano, and the piano trio Bodhisattva (written for Belgrade Television's "World Premiere" series), Elegy for trombone and piano (written for Art Baron and commissioned by the École Nationale de Musique in France), ...looking for the moon in the sea (for Rebecca Kelly Dance), and Planetary Songs (for the Danish recorder virtuosa Michala Petri). His In Nomine for oboe and string quartet, evoking a musical tradition of the English late Middle Ages, was performed in this series two years ago. As some of these titles suggest, Wolosoff's music often has a programmatic aspect described as "mystical" and "spiritual." He feels particularly the influence of Shostakovich, Bartok, and Messiaen and uses extended modality to evoke one of music's oldest functions, the expression of magic. Now in his early forties, and finding himself in demand as a composer, he lives in relative isolation on Shelter Island and continues to create.

Regarding Bodhisattva, the composer writes:

My piano trio *Bodhisattva* was commissioned by Belgrade Television for their World Premiere series. This coincided with a personal loss for me, the death of Tibetan meditation master Kalu Rinpchoe, to whom the work is dedicated.

A Bodhisattva is someone who renounces entering Nirvana until they can bring all beings with him or her. I thought of all the suffering in the Balkans and wished that the people there would have more compassion for one another. I therefore based this piece on a Tibetan liturgical melody, the one of Chenrezig Puja. Chenrezig is the Bodhisattva of compassion.

In the work, one may hear reference to the wheel of life, the cycle of birth, youth, maturity, old age, sickness, and death. You may also hear elements of the blues, as after all I am an American composer working in the late 20th Century, and in our culture the blues is the musical language of sorrow.

-Bruce Wolosoff

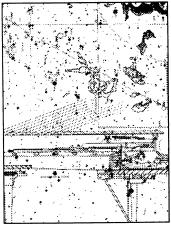
# JACOB DRUCKMAN (1928-1996) Counterpoise, for soprano and chamber ensemble

Jacob Druckman (born in Philadelphia in 1928; died there in 1996) began an active musical life early, studying piano and violin, as well as playing trumpet in jazz ensembles. By the age of fifteen he was already composing, and in the summer of 1949 he studied composition at Tanglewood with Aaron Copland. That fall he entered the Juilliard School, where he worked with Vincent Persichetti, Peter Mennin, and Bernard Wagenaar, returning to Tanglewood for a second summer with Copland in 1950. After further studies in Paris, he joined the faculty at Juilliard, where he taught from 1956-1972. Following four years on the faculty of Brooklyn College, he became chairman of the composition department and director of electronic music at Yale.

Many of his works in the 1950s were for small instrumental ensembles, often with voice. He began to get interested in electronic music in the early 1960s and by 1965 he became associated with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. In 1972 his orchestral piece, *Windows*, received the Pulitzer Prize; after that he wrote extensively and successfully for orchestra. Like many composers of his generation, Druckman grew up at a time when serious music had also to be very complicated, yet he was always interested in the vividness and color of the musical world of Debussy and Stravinsky, as well as such late-romantic figures as Mahler and Ravel. Thus, when he turned in a

major way to orchestral composition, it is no surprise that he wrote music of great instrumental resource and color, even as some of the complexities of the past yielded to an interest in directness of approach to the listener.

Counterpoise was commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1994; it was written for soprano Dawn Upshaw, who gave the first performance on April 28, 1994. A later version for chamber ensemble (to be heard here) was completed in March 1995.



#### 1. "Nature" is what we see

"Nature" is what we see
The Hill the Afternoon
Squirrel Eclipse the Bumble bee
Nay Nature is Heaven
Nature is what we hear
The Bobolink the Sea
Thunder the Cricket
Nay Nature is Harmony
Nature is what we know
yet have no art to say
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

-Emily Dickinson

#### 2. Salomé

Pour qui sourie encore une fois Jean-Baptiste
Sire je danserais mieux que les séraphins
Ma mère dites-moi pourquoi vous êtes triste
En robe de comtesse à coté du Dauphin

#### 2. Salomé

Just to make John the Baptist smile again
Sire, I would dance better than seraphims,
Mother, tell me why you are sad
Dressed as a princess, at a prince's side.

Mon coeur battait battait très fort à sa parole

Quand je dansais dans le fenouil en écoutant

Et je brodais des lys sur une banderole Destinée à flotter au bout de son bâton

Et pour qui voulez-vous qu'à présent je la brode?

Son bâton refleurit sur les bords du Iourdain

Et tous les lys quand vos soldats ô roi Hérode

L'emmenèrent se sont flétris dans mon jardin

Venez tous avec moi là-bas sous les quinconces

Ne pleure pas ô joli fou du roi Prends cette tête au lieu de ta marotte

N'y touchez pas son front ma mère et déjà froid

Sire marchez devant trabants marchez derrière

Nous creuserons un trou et l'y enterrerons

Nous planterons des fleurs et danserons en rond

Jusqu'à l'heure où j'aurai perdu ma jarretière

Le roi sa tabatière L'infante son rosaire Le cur, son bréviaire

et danse

—Guillaume Apollinaire

My heart used to beat, beat powerfully at his words

As I danced in the fennel, listening,

And I wove lilies onto streamers `To float from the end of his staff.

And now for whom should I embroider?

His staff blooms again on the banks of the Jordan

And all the lilies, O King Herod, when your soldiers

Led him away, wilted in my garden.

Come with me, all of you, down to the arbor

Weep no more, you sweet jester; Put this head in place of your jester's scepter

Do not touch his forehead, mother, it is already cold

Sire, march in front, halberdcarriers, behind We will dig a hole and bury it We will plant flowers and do a round dance

Until the hour that I lose my garter

The king his snuff-box The child her rosary The priest his breviary

### 3. La Blanche Neige

Les anges les anges dans le ciel L'un est vêtu en officier L'un est vêtu en cuisinier Et les autres chantent

Bel officier couleur du ciel
Le doux printemps longtemps après
Noël
Te médaillera d'un beau soleil
D'un beau soleil
Le cuisinier plume les oies
Ah! tombe neige
Tome et que n'ai-je
Ma bien-aim,e entre mes bras

-Guillaume Apollinaire

### 3. The White Snow

Angels, angels in the sky One is dressed as an officer One is dressed as a cook And the others sing

Handsome officer, color of sky
The gentle spring, long after
Christmas,
Will decorate you, with a medal;
A bright sun, a brilliant sun
The cook plucks the goose
Ah! falls the snow,
Falls and there's no
Beloved in my arms.

### 4. I taste a liquor never brewed

I taste a liquor never brewed From Tankards scooped in Pearl Not all the Vats upon the Rhine Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of Air am I
And Debauchee of Dew
Reeling thro endless summer days
From inns of Molten Blue

When "Landlords" turn the drunken Bee Out of the Foxglove's door When Butterflies renounce their "drams" I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats And Saints to windows run To see the little Tippler Leaning against the Sun

—Emily Dickinson

[Poems by Guillaume Apollinaire translated by Jacob Druckman. Translation reprinted with permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.]

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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.

GLENN GARLICK, cello, first studied with Dr. Eugene Hilligoss at Colorado University in Boulder. Mr. Garlick later studied cello with Ronald Leonard at the Eastman School of Music and Robert Newkirk at Catholic University, and chamber music with John Celentano and Joseph Gingold. For four years Sergeant Garlick studied Sousa marches in the United States Marine Corps, and also studied law at Georgetown University Law Center. In 1980, he was accepted by Mstislav Rostropovich into the cello section of the National Symphony Orchestra, and in January 1995 he was appointed Assistant Principal Cello. Mr. Garlick is an active teacher and performer in the Washington area. He is a founding member of the Manchester String Quartet, established in 1981, and also serves as president of the National Capital Cello Club.

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.

JOHN HULING, trombone, began playing the trombone at the age of ten. He attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston on a full scholarship and graduated With Distinction. Mr. Huling joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1986 and currently teaches trombone at Catholic

University, the University of Maryland, and American University. His principal teachers have been John Swallow, Ron Barron, and Milton Stevens.

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, ASV, and Smithsonian Collection labels.

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 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.

MARISSA REGNI, violin, joined the National Symphony Orchestra in September 1996, where she holds the position of Principal Second Violin. Before coming to Washington D.C. she was Assistant Principal Second Violin of The Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Leonard Slatkin. Miss Regni has performed as soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Germany and Mexico, and has been a featured artist on National Public Radio and The MacNeil Lehrer Report. She holds her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where she was also awarded the School's Performer's Certificate in Violin. Miss Regni also holds a diploma from the Pre-College Division of The Juilliard School of Music.

MICHAEL RUSINEK, clarinet, joined the National Symphony in the fall of 1991 and became the Assistant Principal Clarinetist the following year. He has studied with Avrahm Galper at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Donald Montanaro at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He has performed as soloist with many orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony, the Royal Conservatory Orchestra and the Belgrade Philharmonic. As a recitalist, Mr. Rusinek has performed extensively in Canada, Israel, and the U.S. He has participated in many summer festivals across the country. Currently, he is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.

LUCY SHELTON, soprano, is an internationally recognized exponent of 20th century repertory. Numerous works have been composed for her by leading composers, including Stephen Albert, Joseph Schwantner, Oliver Knussen and Elliot Carter. She has performed widely in the U.S. and Europe with orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared in performances of chamber music with András Schiff, the Guarneri and Emerson String Quartets, the Da Capo Chamber Players, and Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society among many. Her performances can be heard on Bridge Records, Deutsche Grammaphone, Virgin Classics and others.

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."

EDWIN THAYER, French horn, studied with Willem Valkenier at the New England Conservatory, James Stagliano in Boston and Tanglewood, and Thomas Holden at the University of Illinois. He has been Principal Horn of the National Symphony Orchestra since 1972. Before that, he was an associate professor of music at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, and principal hornist of the Richmond Symphony, Richmond Sinfonietta, and the Richmond Windwood Quintet. He has appeared, performed and recorded with many chamber ensembles and symphony orchestras, and has given solo recitals and master classes throughout the United States.

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