



The Smithsonian Associates Presents

20th CENTURY CONSORT

September 19, 1998

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates
presents

20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

Martin Goldsmith, narrator
David Hardy, cello
Loren Kitt, clarinet
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano
Marissa Regni, violin
Susan Schilperoort, manager
Curt Wittig, electronics
Marcus Wyche, stage manager



Saturday, September 19, 1998
Pre-Concert Discussion 4:00 p.m.
Concert 5:00 p.m.
Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden



The 20th Century Consort's 1998-99 performance series is sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and funded in part by The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Friends of the 20th Century Consort.



The Smithsonian Associates

Pre-Concert Discussion

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director, 20th Century Consort
Paul Schoenfield, composer

Program

"Transcendence"

Sparks of Glory Paul Schoenfield
Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan, Ms. Regni

Intermission

Quartet for the End of Time Olivier Messiaen
1. Liturgy of crystal
2. Vocalise for the Angel who announces the end of Time
3. Abyss of the birds
4. Interlude
5. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus
6. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets
7. Jumble of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time
8. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus
Mr. Hardy, Mr. Kitt, Ms. Logan, Ms. Regni



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

Program notes

by Steven Ledbetter

PAUL SCHOENFIELD

Sparks of Glory, for narrator, piano, clarinet, violin, and cello

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, where he became assistant to Nikolai Lipatnikoff; later he studied with Robert Muczynski at the University of Arizona. After living in Minnesota for about six years, he moved to Ohio, where he spent several years on the faculty of the University of Akron before moving to Israel.

Schoenfield’s shorter chamber works with characteristic titles— *Three Country Fiddle Tunes*; *Vaudeville*; *Cafe Music*; and *Elegy, Rag, and Boogie*—and longer pieces such as the piano concerto often refer to popular styles of entertainment music, often reflecting his own Orthodox Jewish tradition, even though Schoenfield transmutes them clearly into concert works—serious compositions with a sense of humor.

Schoenfield has admitted that *Sparks of Glory* is a departure for him, a kind of music out of the normal path for those who are familiar with his work. It is, first of all, a narrative, in which the music is not designed to be free-standing, as it is in his abstract pieces, but rather to support a spoken text, rather like incidental music to a play. The technical term for this is “melodrama,” a word that we most often use these days to refer to cheap emotional effects in a theatrical setting, but which also has a technical meaning: music designed to accompany a spoken, often theatrical, presentation. (In this original sense of the term, every motion picture that has a musical score is a “melodrama.”)

Sparks of Glory was commissioned by the Seacliff Chamber Players of Long Island (New York) and their featured clarinetist Charles Neidich; the ensemble specifically requested a score that would in some way respond to the Holocaust, through the narration of accounts of personal experience in that vast human tragedy, in this case taken from collections of verbatim stories from the holocaust. Schoenfield agreed to stretch himself outside his customary musical approach for this work, less “abstract” than usual for him, and certainly not filled with the kind of wit that generates laughter, but also more dramatic than one has come to expect.

In the composer’s own words:

While composing this work and selecting text I tried to avoid evoking tragedy and despair. I don’t know if I succeeded. I have a problem with the idea of creating art by capitalizing on suffering. It’s too much like gawking. To this end I strove to create a work that would awaken aspirations for peace... Thus, each of the four stories I chose exemplify human strength and courage.

I strove to find stories that would compliment each other, and would formally work well as a whole in a musical composition. I noticed (to my great surprise) after the work was finished, that each story represented a different stage of life, and that the order of the movements reflects this (a 1 out of 24 chance that this should happen). The first piece concerns a baby, the second a boy, the third two adults, and in the fourth movement it was an old person who had the courage to begin singing.

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

Quartet for the End of Time, for piano, clarinet, violin, and cello

Olivier Messiaen was one of the most influential composers of this century. Distinguished composer, teacher, and organist, his musical life continued unabated until his death. He was an active student of rhythm, the aspect of music in which he has perhaps made his most important contributions—not only rhythms that have been employed in traditional European concert music, but also the rhythms of the Greeks and Hindus. But perhaps the central fact of his life, and one that stands at the core of a work like *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps* [*Quartet for the End of Time*] is the one Messiaen described this way:

I have the good fortune to be a Catholic; I was born a believer... A number of my works are dedicated to shedding light on the theological truths of the Catholic faith. That is the most important aspect of my music... perhaps the only one I shall not be ashamed of in the hour of death.

Certainly the circumstances of the work's composition are as harrowing as can be imagined, and needful of some kind of faith to see its completion. In June 1940, a small group of French soldiers was captured by the Germans between Verdun and Nancy; Messiaen was part of that group, and was distinguished from the rest of the captives by the fact that he carried with him in his kit bag a series of miniature scores ranging from Bach to Berg. When he was sent to Stalag VIII A in Saxony, he was allowed to keep his music. In the same camp, Messiaen met a violinist, Jean Le Boulaire, a clarinetist, Henri Akoka, and a cellist, Etienne Pasquier. Boulaire and Akoka, astonishingly enough, had their instruments with them, and Pasquier was soon presented with a cello lacking a string. Messiaen composed a piece for them, which became the fourth movement (Interlude) of the *Quartet for the End of Time*. Soon he envisioned a much larger work, inspired by the Biblical vision of the Apocalypse (a vision that must have seemed to many caught up in the horrors of the war to be coming all too true).

The score was finished by January 1941. Messiaen had composed a piano part for his piece, not knowing whether a piano would be available. But an old, out-of-tune upright was found, and the composer joined his three colleagues in captivity in the first performance, which took place before an audience of five thousand prisoners from France, Belgium, Poland, and elsewhere, a true cross-section of humanity, on a bitterly cold January 15, 1941. Messiaen preceded the performance with remarks on the symbolism of the music, and then played the work. Messiaen later noted that no other audience had ever shown greater attention to or understanding of his music.

The work's title refers first of all to the apocalyptic vision in the tenth chapter of Revelation, of "an angel, full of strength, descending from the sky, clad with a cloud, covered with a rainbow... [H]e lifted his hand to the sky and swore by Him who lives in the centuries of centuries saying: There shall be no time." But in Messiaen's music the title has a technical sense, too, a freeing of the music from a regular pulse either through very slow tempi or irregular rhythms. The scoring changes from movement to movement, so that the variety of colors is quite remarkable. Messiaen's fondness for various kinds of symbolism shows in the number of movements (eight is the number of the Infinite and Endless) and in particular musical gestures linked to Biblical images. The very first entrance of clarinet and violin are marked "like a bird," the earliest instance in Messiaen's output of his fascination with birdsong. The composer's own comments on the

music follow; except where otherwise noted, each movement calls for all four instruments:

1. Liturgy of crystal. Four in the morning, the waking of the birds; a solo blackbird extemporizes, surrounded by sounding dusts, by a halo of trills lost high up in the trees. Transpose this into the religious level: you get the harmonious silence of Heaven.

2. Vocalise for the Angel who announces the end of Time. The first and third parts (very short) conjure the power of this strong angel covered with a rainbow and clad with clouds, who sets one foot on the sea and the other on the earth. The middle section [without clarinet] brings the impalpable harmonies of heaven. The piano's soft cascade of blue-orange chords surround the near-plainsong-like chant of the strings with their distant chime.

3. Abyss of the birds. (For solo clarinet.) The abyss is Time, with its sadness and weariness. The birds are the opposite of Time: our longing for light, stars, rainbows, and jubilating vocalises.

4. Interlude. (Without piano.) A Scherzo, more extrovert than the other movements, with which, however, it has certain melodic ties.

5. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus. (Cello and piano.) Jesus is here considered as the Word. A long and infinitely slow phrase of the cello magnifies with love and reverence the eternity of the powerful yet mild Word, "whose years shall not get used up." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Gospel according to John, I:1)

6. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets. (All instruments in unison.) Rhythmically, this is the most characteristic of the eight movements. Use of the added value, of augmented and diminished rhythms, of non-retrogradable rhythms... [A technical discussion of rhythm occurs here] Listen especially towards the end of the piece to the theme's fortissimo by augmentation, with the changes in register of its different notes.

7. Jumble of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time. This brings back some things from the second movement. The Angel full of strength appears, and above all the rainbow that covers him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, of all luminous and tonal vibration). In his dreams, the author hears and sees classed chords and melodies, familiar colors and shapes; then, after this transitory stage, he passes into the unreal and undergoes with ecstasy a



wheeling, a giratory compenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These swords of fire, these orange-blue flows of lava, these sudden stars: that is the jumble, these are the rainbows.

8. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus. (Violin and piano.) A broad violin solo, the counterpart of the fifth movement's cello solo. This second praise is more specifically addressed to the second aspect of Jesus, to Jesus the Man, to the Word that has become flesh, the immortal reborn one who imparts us his life.

Messiaen's imagery, his coloristic flair (hearing chords, for example, as "blue-orange"), his rhythmic variety and energy, and his expressive range, no less than the dramatic account of its composition and first performance, have made the *Quartet for the End of Time* one of the seminal scores in the composer's output and one of the most extraordinary chamber works of the twentieth century.

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About the Artists

MARTIN GOLDSMITH, narrator, has served as the host of "Performance Today," National Public Radio's daily classical music program, since the autumn of 1989. Prior to his time at NPR, Martin worked at NPR member station WETA-FM in Washington, DC for a dozen years, serving as announcer, producer, music director and, eventually, program director. He began his radio career in 1971 at WCLV in Cleveland, where his mother was a member of the Cleveland Orchestra. As narrator, Martin has appeared twice before with The 20th Century Consort, in Igor Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" and "The Red Cow is Dead" by Michael Finckel. Earlier this year, Martin spoke the verse by Peter Schickele in Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals" at the Virginia Waterfront Festival in Norfolk, and just last week he joined the Virginia Symphony to narrate the world premiere performances of "Thomas Jefferson: Vision of America" by Behzad Ranjbaran.

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, Stephen 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.

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.

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. 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 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 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.

20th Century Consort 1998-99 Concert Series Upcoming Concerts

November 7, 1998	Celebrating Elliott C.'s 90th with a Finn Half His Age	<i>Lonh</i> <i>Cello Sonata</i> <i>Petals</i> <i>Of Challenge and of Love</i>
	Kaija Saariaho Elliott Carter Kaija Saariaho Elliott Carter	
December 12, 1998	NOT the Messiah	<i>Dao Ditties</i> <i>Kaddish Requiem</i> <i>The Passion of Scrooge, or A Christmas Carol</i>
	Lawrence Moss Richard Wernick Jon Deak	
February 20, 1999	Flutes of Fancy	<i>Night Thoughts</i> <i>Slovakian Childrens' Songs</i> <i>Ghost Dances</i> <i>Three Figures and a Ground</i>
	Nicholas Maw Paul Schoenfield Bruce Wolosoff Stephen Jaffe	
April 10, 1000	Good Book	<i>The Yellow Pages</i> <i>Song of Songs</i> <i>Song of Songs</i> <i>Song of Abigail</i>
	Michael Torke Kathryn Alexander Karen Tanaka Roger Marsh	

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