

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

# 20th CENTURY CONSORT

April 10, 1999

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and conductor

Claudine Bigelow, viola  
David Bragunier, tuba  
Mark Evans, cello  
Steven Hendrickson, trumpet  
John Huling, trombone  
David Jones, clarinet  
Thomas Jones, percussion  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano  
Carmen Pelton, soprano  
Marissa Regni, violin  
Sara Stern, flute  
Rudolph Vrbsky, oboe  
Susan Schilperoort, manager  
Curt Wittig, electronics  
Marcus Wyche, stage manager



Saturday, April 10, 1999  
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 generous grants from The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Sigrid Biow, 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

## Program

### "The Good Book"

The Yellow Pages . . . . . Michael Torke  
Mr. Evans, Mr. David Jones, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Logan, Ms. Regni, Ms. Stern

Biblical Songs . . . . . Mario Davidovsky  
I. From the Song of Songs  
II. And Samson Said,  
III. Psalm 137  
IV. Isaac's Blessing  
Mr. Evans, Mr. David Jones, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Logan,  
Ms. Pelton, Ms. Regni, Ms. Stern

## Intermission

Song of Songs . . . . . Karen Tanaka  
Mr. Evans, Mr. Wittig

The Song of Abigail . . . . . Roger Marsh  
Ms. Bigelow, Mr. Bragunier, Mr. Evans, Mr. Hendrickson, Mr. Huling,  
Mr. David Jones, Mr. Thomas Jones, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Logan, Ms. Pelton,  
Ms. Regni, Ms. Stern



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

MICHAEL TORKE

*The Yellow Pages*

Michael Torke (b. Milwaukee, 1961) graduated from the Eastman School of Music in piano and composition in 1984 and pursued further studies at Yale the following year. In the 1980s he was a Fellow in composition at Tanglewood. His teachers have included Martin Bresnick, Christopher Rouse, Jacob Druckman, and Joseph Schwantner. Most of his scores bear titles that include a color word, and the music itself suggests a preoccupation with visual color. Since his 1985 *Ecstatic Orange* attracted the attention of Peter Martins at the New York City Ballet, who choreographed it in 1987, other propulsive Torke works have become dance pieces with choreography by Martins, including *Green Music*; *Purple, Black and White*; *Slate*; and *Asb*. His music is highly kinetic, drawing upon and fusing musical gestures from the worlds of pop and minimalism, while still paying homage to the grandfather of such dynamic music in our century, Igor Stravinsky. Torke did not, however, grow up with the pop music elements that infuse so much of his music; rather, at the time, he says, he was “oblivious” to it. But when he discovered pop, during his years at Eastman, it opened to him a resource that he has used with great imagination.

*The Yellow Pages*, composed for the Yale Contemporary Players in 1985, revolves around a bright G-major chord which the composer associates with the color yellow. But the title is also a double pun—referring, first of all, to the familiar section of the telephone book, and also to a casual remark dropped by one of his Yale professors, who warned his students that if they entered “the pawn-shop of tonality,” they would have to pay a high price. Torke imagined that such a shop would contain a lot of music with “yellowed pages.” The work is scored for that quintessential twentieth-century body, the “Pierrot ensemble” (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano) established by Schoenberg in one of the century’s primal masterpieces. But Torke’s employment of this ensemble owes virtually nothing to Schoenberg and a great deal to Stravinsky. An ostinato bass in the cello derived from a Chaka Khan song sets up the rhythmic motion of the piece, a steady toe-tapping beat. But the remaining instruments have their own

kinetic material so cleverly deployed as to mislead the ear and—delightfully—conceal the foursquare basis of the ostinato. Later the piano takes on the burden of the ostinato, while the other voices appear atomized into tiny stabbing fragments that join the figure for two or three notes, then drop out again, but in a heady kaleidoscope of color. The musical material, while remaining fundamentally the same, develops constantly throughout its seven-minute length, building to a frenetic climax in unisons and octaves, then relaxing to final statements of the original ostinato.

MARIO DAVIDOVSKY

*Biblical Songs*

Mario Davidovsky was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1934; after studies there, he came to the United States, where he worked with Otto Luening and Aaron Copland. He has lived in New York since 1960 and was closely involved for many years with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center and is a Professor of Music at the City University of New York. He now teaches at Harvard. Mario Davidovsky has received many prizes and awards for his work, including Guggenheim and Rockefeller Fellowships, a Koussevitzky Fellowship, a Naumburg Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. He is best known for a series of compositions entitled *Synchronisms*, each of which calls for music on tape combined with one or more live instruments. The very title “synchronisms” hints at one of the main technical difficulties set by the composer: the problem of connecting the fixed and unchanging sounds recorded on tape with the ever-different performances of live musicians. The instrumentalists must often employ extended playing techniques to match the inventiveness of the sonorities on the tape part, sometimes reaching extremes of perception.

Although his reputation has been so closely associated with the combination of live “acoustical” instruments and sounds on tape, Davidovsky has composed—increasingly in recent years—a substantial body of music that does not use tape or other electronic media. He first became interested in the voice in the 1970s, when, upon being asked to compose a chamber opera, he produced a cantata with a Hebrew text from the Song of Songs, *Scenes from Shir-ha-shirim*. The *Four Biblical Songs* likewise draw their texts from the Hebrew scriptures, though here the language he sets is partly English, partly Hebrew.

He composed the *Biblical Songs* in 1990 on a commission from Voices of Change, with funding from Meet the Composer-Reader's Digest. There are four songs of quite varied character, both in the choice of texts (from Song of Songs, Judges, Psalms, and Genesis) and in the varied instrumentation he employs (each song features one or two different instruments).

#### I. From the Song of Songs

"Come my beloved  
let us go into the field,  
let us lodge in the villages.  
Let us get up early to the vineyards  
Let us see if the vine has flowered,  
whether the tender grape appear,  
if the pomegranates are in bloom.  
There will I give my love to you.  
The mandrakes yield a fragrance  
and at our gates are all manner  
of pleasant fruits, new and old,  
which I have kept, my beloved, for  
you.  
Make haste,  
swift as a gazelle  
or a young hart,  
to the hills of spices.

II. And Samson said,  
With the jawbone of an ass  
heaps upon heaps,  
with the jawbone of an ass  
have I slain a thousand men.

#### III. Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon  
There we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
On the willows  
we hanged our harps  
For there they that carried us away  
captive  
asked us for song,  
our tormentors, for amusement.  
How shall we sing the Lord's song  
in a strange land.

IM ESHKAJEJ IERUSHALAIM

TISHKAJ IEMINI.

TIDB K LESHONI LEJIKI IMLO

EZKEREJI

IM LO AALE ET IERUSHALAIM AL

ROSH SIMJATI.

Remember O Lord the Children of  
Edom,  
the day of Jerusalem's fall  
how they cried. Raze it, raze it to her  
very foundation.  
O daughter of Babylon, who has to  
be destroyed.  
Happy shall he be that rewards you,  
as you have served us.  
Blessed shall he be that takes and  
dashes your children  
against the rocks.

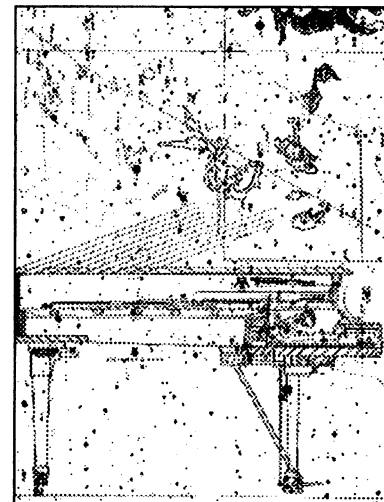
#### IV. Isaac's Blessing

See...Ah...the smell of my son  
is like the smell of the fields  
which the Lord has blessed.  
Therefore,  
God give you of the dew of heaven  
and the fatness of the earth  
and plenty of corn and wine.  
Let the people serve you  
and nations bow down to you.  
Be the lord over your brothers  
and let your mother's sons  
bow down to you.  
Cursed by they who curse you  
and blessed be they who bless you.  
Ah...the smell of my son  
is like the smell of the fields...

#### KAREN TANAKA

*Song of Songs*, for cello and tape

Karen Tanaka was born in Tokyo in 1961 and began her musical training with piano lessons at the age of four, adding formal composition lessons at ten. She took a degree in French literature at Aoyama Gakuin University, then entered the Toho Gakuen School in 1982, where she studied composition with Akira Miyoshi. Her four years of study there were marked by a number of prizes awarded in competitions both in Japan and abroad, including the Viotti and Trieste competitions. In 1986 she moved to Paris (where she still lives) on a French government scholarship to study with Tristan Murail and to work as an intern at IRCAM. In furtherance of her compositional studies she went to the Banff Center in Canada in 1988 for a course in advanced musical studies, and in 1990-91 she studied with Luciano Berio in Florence. She has been regularly associated with IRCAM, where she has realized the electronic parts of many of her works.



Regarding *Song of Songs*, she writes:

The title comes from the Song of Solomon of the Old Testament, which is a beautiful song of love. It begins as follows:

The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

I have attempted to project this sensual song of love onto the sound of cello and computer. My intention was to weave color and scent into the sound while blending the ancient story and today's technology. The sound of cello is consistently gentle and tender. The pitch organization is intentionally very simple, centered around the pitch D and its harmonics.

ROGER MARSH  
*The Song of Abigail*

English composer Roger Marsh studied at the University of York in the early 1970s. His principal teacher was Bernard Rands, who first brought his music to a wide audience with 1972 performances in London of several works. From the beginning Marsh was inclined to music-theater, producing a substantial number of works in quick succession. In 1976 he received a Harkness Fellowship which allowed him to travel to the United States. He spent two years at the University of California in San Diego, where there was a hotbed of avant-garde composition and performance. There he composed his best-known piece, *Not a soul but ourselves...*, for the remarkable Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble. After returning from the USA in 1978, he began teaching at Keele University and began receiving commissions from Electric Phoenix, Vocem, and Lontano, for which he composed *The Song of Abigail* in 1986. It was one of a series of vocal pieces that are based (sometimes quite freely, as in the present instance) on Biblical texts, works that he gathered together in 1989 under the collective title *The Big Bang—a dramatic oratorio*. Marsh has returned to the faculty of his alma mater at York, and he continues to compose pieces of the music-theater type as well as varied abstract compositions for orchestra or other combinations of instruments.

Regarding *The Song of Abigail*, the composer writes:

This is one of a number of Old Testament pieces I composed during the eighties, which together make up *The Big Bang (a dramatic oratorio)*. Students of the Old Testament will tell you that there is no "Song of Abigail"; and this is true. But Abigail's part in the extraordinary showdown between David and the rich and churlish Nabal is of great importance. It seems only proper that the story should be told by her.

In brief, the tale runs like this:

David and his six hundred men are occupying land belonging to Nabal, a wealthy sheep owner. David sends men to demand food and gifts from Nabal, but he refuses. David plans to take his revenge, but Nabal's wife Abigail intercedes and David relents. Ten days later Nabal dies, slain by God, and David takes Abigail as his wife.

*The Song of Abigail* was written for a BBC invitation concert given by Lontano in 1986. The text is adapted from various translations of the Old Testament. The piece lasts approximately 20 minutes. A version was made in 1995 for Boston Musica Viva.

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## About the Artists

CLAUDINE PINNELL BIGELOW, violist, freelances in the Washington, D.C. area. She has played with the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, the National Chamber Orchestra and the National Symphony. Claudine is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree at the University of Maryland-College Park School of Music in viola performance.

DAVID BRAGUNIER, tubist, graduated from Peabody Conservatory in 1961 with highest honors. At Peabody, he was a student of Armand Sarro, with additional studies with Joseph Eger and William Bell. In September of 1961 he accepted the position of principal tubist with the National Symphony Orchestra. He has served on the applied music faculties of the University of Maryland, Catholic University, and at the Peabody Conservatory. At the beginning of the 1976-1977 season, he added to his musical duties the administrative position of personnel manager. He has frequently performed with chamber ensembles in the Washington area, most notably the National Symphony Brass Quintet.

MARK EVANS, cello, was a member of the Florida Philharmonic prior to joining the cello section of the National Symphony Orchestra. He previously served as Principal cellist of the Wichita Symphony and the Kalamazoo Symphony, where he appeared as soloist. He has performed frequently as a substitute musician with the St. Louis Symphony, Chicago Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. His teaching activities have included positions on the faculties of Wichita State University and Indiana-Purdue University Fort Wayne. An active chamber musician, he has been a member of the Fairmount Quartet, the Omega Quartet and the Indiana-Purdue Piano Trio. He holds degrees from Yale University and Indiana University School of Music, where he was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate. His teachers include Fritz Magg, Janos Starker and Aldo Parisot.

STEVEN E. HENDRICKSON is Principal Trumpet of the National Symphony Orchestra, and instructor of trumpet at the Peabody Conservatory. He is a graduate of Luther College in Pechora, Iowa, and studied in Chicago with members of the Chicago Symphony, including Adolf Herseth, William Scarlett and Charles Geyer. He joined the NSO in 1982 as assistant principal trumpet. Mr. Hendrickson is active in the Washington, D.C. area as a recitalist, chamber musician and teacher.

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 the University of Maryland School of Music, the Catholic University, and American University. His principal teachers have been John Swallow, Ron Barron, and Milt Stevens.

DAVID JONES, clarinet, has recently finished his first season as principal clarinet with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, having moved from Chicago where he was a frequent performer with the Chicago Symphony as well as the Lyric Opera Orchestra. In addition to his extensive orchestral experience, David has performed often as a chamber musician as well as on numerous television and radio commercial soundtracks. He lives in Falls Church with his wife, Amanda, and their two young children.

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 served as acting principal pianist for the National Symphony Orchestra, and 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.

CARMEN PELTON, soprano, is known for her powerful interpretations of contemporary music in such venues as the Goodman Theater in Chicago and Da Camera of Houston. She appears regularly with the 20th Century Consort, and is heard on its recent CD of music by Nicholas Maw. Highlights of Ms. Pelton's 1998-99 season include performances of the "Messiah" and Bach's "Magnificat" with the Atlanta Symphony and the late

Robert Shaw, Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" with the Baltimore Symphony, Barber's "Knoxville" and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with the Colorado Symphony, along with other appearances in opera, oratorio, chamber music and summer festivals. Ms. Pelton's recent recording of Barber's "Prayers of Kierkegaard" and Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem" on Telarc with the Atlanta Symphony and Robert Shaw won Grammys for Best Classical Album and Best Choral Album. In addition to her appearances with orchestras such as the San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony and Rochester Philharmonic, she has performed operatic roles with Glimmerglass Opera, Long Beach Opera, Tulsa Opera and Opera Omaha.

MARISSA REGNI, violin, joined the National Symphony Orchestra in September 1996, and 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.

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 March 1999