

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

# 20th CENTURY CONSORT

October 2, 1999

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director and conductor

Elisabeth Adkins, violin  
Robert Aubrey Davis, The Devil  
T.J. Edwards, The Soldier  
Chris Gekker, trumpet  
Martin Goldsmith, The Narrator  
Truman Harris, bassoon  
Thomas Jones, percussion  
Loren Kitt, clarinet  
Robert Oppelt, bass  
Lambert Orkis, piano  
James Primosch, piano  
Milton Stevens, trombone  
  
Susan Schilperoort, manager  
Curt Wittig, electronics  
Marcus Wyche, stage manager



Saturday, October 2, 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 1999-2000 performance series is sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and funded in part by generous contributions 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;  
Martin Goldsmith and Lambert Orkis

## Program

### "Heavens and Hell"

Celestial Mechanics . . . . . George Crumb  
(Makrokosmos IV)

- I. Alpha Centauri
- II. Beta Cygni
- III. Gamma Draconis
- IV. Delta Orionis

Mr. Orkis and Mr. Primosch  
Jan Orkis, assistant

## Intermission

L'Histoire du soldat . . . . . Igor Stravinsky  
(The Soldier's Tale)

Part I

Part II

Ms. Adkins, Mr. Davis, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Gekker, Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Harris,  
Mr. Jones, Mr. Kendall, Mr. Kitt, Mr. Oppelt, Mr. Stevens



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

GEORGE CRUMB (b. 1927)

## *Celestial Mechanics*

George Crumb (b. 1929, Charleston, West Virginia) grew up in a musical family and learned from childhood to play the clarinet and piano. He took his undergraduate degree in composition at Mason College of Music and Fine Arts in his native Charleston, then went to the University of Illinois for his master's degree. In the summer of 1955 he was a composition fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. Meanwhile he was working toward his D.M.A. at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Ross Lee Finney, who, after his father, became the strongest musical influence on him. He was on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania from 1965 until his recent retirement. In addition to numerous grants and awards from the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for *Echoes of Time and the River*. Mr. Crumb's works are performed with great frequency in the United States and Europe, where he is recognized as one of the most important and original voices in twentieth century American music.

Crumb's early music grew out of short musical subjects in which timbre played as important a role as pitch and rhythm. His music has continually been marked by an extraordinarily refined ear for color and astonishing inventiveness in the creation of sounds, often using novel methods of tone production, occasionally with amplification to pick up the delicate overtones that might be lost otherwise. Much of his music has been programmatic, often drawing on a zodiacal cycle or number symbolism or such quasi-dramatic elements as masked performers, to serve the cause of musical illustration with vivid sounds, ranging from the sweet and delicate to the threshold of pain. The piano is frequently the featured instrument in his work, and he has found ways of making it sound far different than audiences could have imagined before he arrived on the scene.

The composer's own notes explain how he thought of *Celestial Mechanics* as a continuation of a splendid tradition.

*Celestial Mechanics*, completed in April 1979, is the fourth in a series of works entitled (or subtitled) *Makrokosmos*. The first two works

were scored for solo piano and the third (*Music for a Summer Evening*) for two pianos and percussion.

I had long been tempted to try my hand at the four-hand medium, perhaps because I myself have been a passionate four-hand player over the years. The best of the original four-hand music—which includes, of course, those many superb works by Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms—occupies a very special niche in the literature of music. The idiom, a strange hybrid of the pianistic and the orchestral, lends itself readily to a very free and spontaneous kind of music—one thinks of the many collections of dances of various types and of the predilection for the “fantasy” genre. The present work, therefore, comprising a suite of “cosmic” dances composed in a rather “fantastic” style, falls squarely within the tradition.

My sole departure from tradition occurs at two points in the score where I have enlarged the medium to six-hands; and so, in the whimsical manner of Ives, the page turner must contribute more substantively to the performance than is his wont.

The title *Celestial Mechanics* was borrowed from the French mathematician Laplace. The titles for the four movements (added after the music was completed!) are the beautiful names of stars of the first through the fourth magnitude. The majestic movement of the stars does indeed suggest the image of a “cosmic choreography” and, in fact, I briefly considered opting for an alternate title (proposed by my brother, punster that he is)—*The Celestial Ballroom*.

—George Crumb

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

## *The Soldier's Tale*

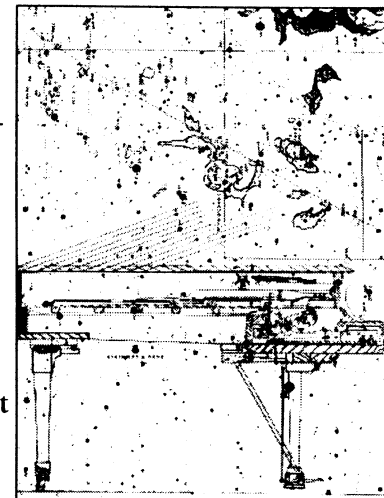
The outbreak of World War I left Stravinsky stranded in Switzerland, cut off from his family estates by war and later by revolution in Russia. He had already composed—and become famous for—his three popular ballets, *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring*, but the war temporarily ended the performances of the Ballets Russes, so he had no royalties coming in. Under the circumstances, large works were utterly impractical. The idea occurred to him to create a small theater piece that could tour on a shoestring and perform almost anywhere, even in the open air (given reasonable weather!). He adapted a scenario from a story by Afanasiev involving encounters between the Devil and a nameless soldier, a sort of Everyman. The story was worked out with a Swiss writer, C.F. Ramuz, into an hour-long theater piece involving a narrator, a pair of actors, and a dancer, accompanied by an ensemble of seven instruments, chosen in such a way as to have one high and one low instrument from each family: clarinet and bas-

soon, cornet à piston and trombone, violin and double bass, plus a percussionist playing high and low pitched side drums, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, and triangle. Stravinsky challenges each of his performers with a part that is demanding, extraordinarily varied, and—in the end—fun to play.

Though derived from Russian folklore, *L'histoire du soldat* (*The Soldier's Tale*) clearly falls into the wider cultural framework of stories that tell of trafficking with otherworldly forces beyond human control, of which the most famous in our culture are the many variants of the traditional Faust legend. In virtually all of these tales, the Devil seems a good enough fellow at first. Here he appears as a harmless old butterfly collector, chasing across the fields, net in hand, in pursuit of specimens. And what he asks for seems innocent, too—the soldier's fiddle, his companion in good times and bad. But this old fellow is a master of disguise, willing to employ any trick to obtain what he wants. The violin—the source of pleasure and consolation—symbolizes the soldier's soul. The old man buys it in return for a magic book that foretells the future, but the soldier soon becomes disillusioned with the wealth he can acquire through his knowledge and tries to get the fiddle back. In one encounter he plays cards with the Devil and plies him with wine until finally the Devil falls unconscious, enabling the soldier to make off with the instrument. He uses it to cure an invalid princess, who dances to his music and falls into his arms. When the Devil attempts to seize him again, he plays wild music on the fiddle, forcing the Devil into contortions and driving him away from the kingdom. Only after the soldier has been married to the princess for several years and she urges him to take her to visit his old home does the Devil get his due; as soon as the soldier crosses the border, the Devil gets control of the violin and marches the soldier away triumphantly.

The first performance, which took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, on September 28, 1918, was a substantial success (though the late Maurice Abravanel, who was present, told me once that, in spite of the accounts of “great success” in books on Stravinsky, there was a fair amount of booing). But the world-wide epidemic of killer influenza closed the theaters and prevented further performances for a time. Stravinsky quickly created a concert suite out of the score, retaining most of the larger musical numbers; Ernest Ansermet led the first performance of the music in that form in London on July 20, 1920. The suite contains those parts of the score that are the most musically self-sufficient; it is the form in which most people know *L'histoire*. But, of course, these musical passages (and the less self-sufficient connecting links) were designed to be part of a theatrical experience, wittily

expanding and commenting on the action. As befits a work aimed at a broad audience, Stravinsky draws upon familiar types of compositions—the soldier's march homeward, the violin solo in which he fiddles merrily, his mock-heroic arrival at the palace, and the dances of the princess (in the popular styles of tango, waltz, and ragtime)—though, of course, these familiar types become purely Stravinskian along the way. Stravinsky himself commented that *L'Histoire* has a characteristic sound—“the scrape of the violin and the punctuation of the drums,” the former representing the soldier's soul and the latter the diablerie. However pleasant *L'histoire du soldat* is as a concert suite, it is in a staged performance—or, at least, a complete performance of the score with narrator—that we can appreciate most fully Stravinsky's theatrical acumen.



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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.

ROBERT AUBREY DAVIS, *The Devil*, is the creator and host for nearly 20 years of Millennium of Music, an early music program currently heard on approximately 200 public radio stations, which explores the evolution of sacred music, east and west, in live and recorded performances by the best ensembles in the field. Mr. Davis' other radio series include *The European Centuries*, *Songs For Aging Children* and a variety of international music specials for public radio nationwide. He is also the host of WETA TV 26's Emmy award-winning weekly arts discussion program *Around Town*, which returns for its 15th season this October. In addition to his broadcasting work, Mr. Davis is a frequent lecturer, moderator and performer with major arts organizations throughout Washington, DC.

T. J. EDWARDS, *The Soldier*, is currently performing in *An Ideal Husband* at Baltimore's Center Stage. He is a former member of Arena Stage's Acting Company where he has appeared in 18 productions. He has done six shows at the Shakespeare Theatre, as well as performing at the Kennedy Center, Fords Theatre, the Denver Center Theatre, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Studio Theatre and the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Mr. Edwards is the founding Artistic Director of the Washington Shakespeare Company. He has received three Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding Actor and, as a playwright, received two Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding New Play. He is delighted to be performing Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* for the fifth time.

CHRIS GEKKER, trumpet, was a member of the American Brass Quintet from 1981-1998. He has also served as Principal Trumpet of the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and performs and records with chamber groups such as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. His recording of *Music for Trumpet Solo by Hovhanness* won the 1994 Best Recording on an Independent Label, awarded by *Billboard* magazine. He has been featured as soloist at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and other venues throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. Mr. Gekker has served on the faculties of The Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, and Columbia University, and is currently Professor of Trumpet at the University of Maryland School of Music.

MARTIN GOLDSMITH, *The Narrator*, has served as the host of "Performance Today," National Public Radio's daily classical music program, since the autumn of 1989. He joined NPR three years earlier as PT's first Music Producer and oversaw the musical side of the program when it first went on the air on January 5, 1987. 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 career in 1971 at commercial classical station WCLV in Cleveland, where his mother was a member of the Cleveland Orchestra. Martin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Johns Hopkins

University in Baltimore. He has played the French horn and sung in the chorus of the Baltimore Opera Company, and once played a small (but key) solo role with the Washington Opera. Martin has also acted in many roles in Washington-area theaters, including Arena Stage.

TRUMAN HARRIS, bassoon, holds a Master of Music degree from Catholic University and has been a member of the National Symphony Orchestra bassoon section since 1974. His teachers have included Loren Glickman, Gerald Corey, and Kenneth Pasmanick. Mr. Harris is currently bassoonist with the Capitol Woodwind Quintet and National Musical Arts, and teaches at several area universities. Prior to joining the NSO, he was a member of the Fort Worth Symphony and the U.S. Air Force Band.

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.

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 faculty 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.

ROBERT J. OPPELT, contrabass, joined the National Symphony Orchestra in 1982 and in 1984 was promoted to assistant principal. After national audi-

tions in 1996, Leonard Slatkin appointed Mr. Oppelt to lead the orchestra's bass section. Since coming to Washington, D.C. in 1982, he has performed regularly with the 20th Century Consort and many other chamber groups in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. He also enjoys performing as soloist and will appear as such with the Millbrook Orchestra of Shepherdstown, WV and Cascade Symphony of Edmonds, WA during their 1997-98 concert season. He is a graduate of North Carolina School of the Arts where he was twice recipient of the Vittorio Giannini Memorial Award, and is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.

LAMBERT ORKIS, piano, was, for eleven years, the pianist with the 20th Century Consort with whom he played many premieres and first performances including Crumb's *A Little Suite and Christmas* and Wernick's *Piano Sonata*. Since that time, he has toured the world in recital with Mstislav Rostropovich, cellist, and also Anne-Sophie Mutter, violinist. Recent recordings of his have been nominated for Grammy Awards in the category of Best Chamber Music Performance. Period instruments have been a major focus with many concerts and recordings to his credit as soloist and with the Castle Trio as well as other artists. His advocacy of modern music continues with the recent release of the Wernick *Piano Concerto*, an upcoming premiere of a new Penderecki work with Anne-Sophie Mutter, and his *Keys to the Future* program. Orkis is Professor of Piano at Temple University and Principal Keyboard of the National Symphony Orchestra.

JAMES PRIMOSCH, piano, is active as a pianist, particularly in the realm of contemporary music. He was a prizewinner at the Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition in Rotterdam, and appears on recordings for New World, CRI, the Smithsonian Collection, and Crystal Records. He has worked as a jazz pianist and a liturgical musician. Since 1988 he has served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, where he directs the Presser Electronic Music Studio. Primosch's instrumental, vocal, and electronic works have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe by such ensembles as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Folger Consort, Collage, the 20th Century Consort, and Speculum Musicae. His *Icons* was played at the ISCM/League of Composers World Music Days in Hong Kong. The Folger Consort and the 20th Century Consort will collaborate in the premiere of Primosch's *Sacred Songs and Meditations* at the Washington National Cathedral on January 14-15, 2000. In 1994 he served as composer-in-residence at the Marlboro Music Festival.

MILTON STEVENS, trombone, has been Principal Trombonist with the National Symphony Orchestra since 1978, and is a past principal of the Denver Symphony and the Columbus Symphony. He has appeared as a soloist with several orchestras, including the Denver, Virginia, and National

Symphony Orchestras. He has been a featured soloist with the U.S. Army Band, the Harvard University Band, and the U.S. Navy Band. An active chamber music performer with the National Symphony Orchestra Brass Principals Quintet, the Theater Chamber Players of Kennedy Center, and Gabriel's Brass, he is also conductor of the Washington Symphonic Brass and the Interservice Trombone Choir. Dr. Stevens is a frequent lecturer and clinician at workshops throughout the United States. He is published in *The Instrumentalist* magazine and the *International Trombone Association Journal*, and is on the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Music.



## 20th Century Consort 1999-2000 Concert Series Upcoming Concerts

November 13, 1999 "Looney Tunes"

Hindemith	<i>Die Serenaden</i>
Schoenfield	<i>Carolina Morning</i>
Schoenberg	<i>Pierrot Lunaire</i>

January 14-15, 2000 "Hail Millennium!"  
(special event at the Washington National Cathedral)

Harbison	<i>Organum</i>
Kuss	<i>The Armed Man</i>
Vaughn Williams	<i>Five Variants</i>
Primosch	<i>Sacred Songs</i>

February 26, 2000 "Tempus Fugit"

Bartok	<i>Contrasts</i>
Jaffe	<i>Four' Songs</i>
Carter	<i>Piano Sonata</i>
Foss	<i>Time Cycle</i>

April 15, 2000 "Simple Gifts"

Cage	<i>Our Spring Will Come</i>
Adams	<i>Shaker Loops</i>
Copland	<i>Appalachian Spring</i>

For tickets call The Smithsonian Associates at 202-357-3030.

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