

The Smithsonian Associates Presents

## 20th CENTURY CONSORT

April 21, 2001

Marion and Gustave Ring Auditorium,  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Smithsonian Associates  
presents

# 20th Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director

David Gordon, tenor  
David Hardy, cello  
Thomas Jones, percussion  
Lisa Emenheiser Logan, piano  
Sara Stern, flute

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

Saturday, April 21, 2001  
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 2000-2001 performance series is sponsored by The Smithsonian Associates and funded in part by generous contributions from 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, Maurice Wright, Curt Wittig

## Program

### "Benzino Returns"

Six British Folk Songs . . . . . Paul Schoenfield  
Jack Tar  
Basket of Eggs  
Gypsy Ladie  
The Parting Kiss  
Lousy Tailor  
A Dream of Napoleon

Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan

Cantata for Tenor, Percussion and Electronic Sounds . . . . . Maurice Wright

- I. To Music, to Becalm His Fever
- II. To Lucia Playing on Her Lute
- III. The Commendation of Music
- IV. Wit Predominant
- V. To Music, to Becalm His Fever

Mr. Gordon, Mr. Jones

## Intermission

And the Whole Air Was Tremulous . . . . . Kathryn Alexander  
Ms. Stern

Voice of the Whale (Vox Balaenae) . . . . . George Crumb  
Vocalise (...for the beginning of time)  
Variations on Sea-Time  
Sea-theme

Archeozoic (Var. D)  
Proterozoic (Var. II)  
Paleozoic (Var. III)  
Mesozoic (Var. IV)  
Cenozoic (Var. V)

Sea-Nocturne (...for the end of time)

Mr. Hardy, Ms. Logan, 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

PAUL SCHOENFIELD

*Six British Folk Songs* (1985)

Paul Schoenfield was born in Detroit on January 24, 1947, and lives in Cleveland, Ohio. 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 Schoenfield's best-known work to date, *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 and the University of Arizona. After living in Minnesota for about six years, he moved to Ohio, where he now teaches at the University of Akron.

About this work, the composer has written:

The suite of *Six British Folk Songs* was written in the summer of 1985 as a tribute to Jacqueline du Pre. Commissioned by the Fred Sewell family through the Composers Commissioning Program of the Minnesota Composers Forum, the idea for the work was suggested to me by the Sewell family and marks my third group of folk settings for concert use. While each of the movements in this work is a complete piece in itself, there are various perceptible motivic elements used throughout which provide cohesion to the suite as a whole. To this end the listener might also perceive some of the other devices which are utilized to guide the work's overall dramatic design, the most obvious being the gradual increase in tempo of the odd-numbered movements and the gradual decrease in the even-numbered. Although the movements steadily increase in length, the ratio of durations between adjacent movements remains constant throughout.

This description recalls the large-scale shaping of Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*, in which the slow and fast movements alternate, the former getting progressively slower, the latter progressively faster. The interest in proportionate duration between movements also sounds very Bergian. But as long-time subscribers to these concerts already know, Paul Schoenfield is very much his own composer and, despite such apparent homages to the earlier masters of our century, his music is not likely ever to be confused with theirs. *Six British Folk Songs* shares with other Schoenfield works (*Three Country Fiddle Tunes*, *Vaudeville*, and *Cafe Music* are some examples) a characteristic title that refers to popular styles of entertainment music or folk song. But Schoenfield's own pieces are conceived as concert works—serious compositions with a sense of humor, taking familiar gestures, even familiar tunes, and shaping them into something fresh and new.

MAURICE WRIGHT

*Cantata*

Maurice Wright (born in Front Royal, Virginia, October 17, 1949) studied composition at Duke University with Iain Hamilton and then at Columbia University with Mario Davidovsky, Jack Beeson, Vladimir Ussachevsky, and Charles Dodge. As his educational lineage might suggest, Wright's earlier work made considerable use

of twelve-tone techniques in the approved academic style of the period. He was also active in the composition of electronic music and of works that combined electronic and acoustic instruments, such as the *Chamber Symphony for Piano and Electronic Sound*. By the late 1970s he began working in a more tonal, lyrical idiom, with less use of serial precompositional planning.

Wright taught at Columbia University in the mid-1970s, then spent a year at Boston University (1978-79); the following summer he was the composition teacher in the Young Artists Program of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Since 1980 he has been on the faculty of Temple University in Philadelphia. His works range widely from purely electronic music to a wide range of chamber scores, songs, orchestral works, and two operas, one (still unperformed) based on John Philip Sousa's Faustian novel *The Fifth String* and the other, *The Trojan Conflict*, treating the events of the Trojan War in a parody of television news reports in which a quartet of Greek gods and goddesses play in a quartet as they watch the war taking place on their television screens. Maurice Wright's output includes several works for percussion instruments, including *Marimba Music of 1981* for marimba with electronic sound and a marimba concerto premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

His *Cantata* blends live music with electronically-generated sounds following a tradition established primarily by his teachers at Columbia University through the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, which was a focus for this type of composition from the 1950s. The tape part contains both computer-generated sounds (including synthetic speech programmed by Charles Dodge) and other material that uses the "classical" techniques of manipulating sound on analogue tape. Wright prepared a meticulously notated "score" from the tape part so that the live musicians could coordinate their parts with it precisely.

Regarding the piece, the composer comments:

My *Cantata* for tenor voice, percussion, and electronic sound is music about music: a celebration of harmony and sound. I chose these seventeenth-century texts because they sing so well about the effect of music in moments of passion and in times of quiet reflection. The singer is joined by a kind of "ghost chorus" in the first

piece and is taken through a series of dream images in the ensuing movements.

Computer-synthesized plucked strings represent Lucia in the second piece, while in the third piece soft bell-like sounds are transformed into robust blasts as the soul is "changed" for harmony.

The witty quality of the text calls for a different style in the fourth song, and an extended electronic interlude is offered to bring back the subdued spirit of the opening poem. This time the ghost chorus joins the singer in the form of a computer voice singing computer proverbs (MELT WITH EASE/FALL LIKE THE FLOWERS/WITH THIS MY HEAVEN) drawn from the human text. A brief but noisy coda concludes the dream and returns the singer to his silence.

The electronic sound serves as an accompaniment of accordion-like dimension. It is full and complex in one instance, while simple and intimate in another. The various percussion instruments also were chosen for their particular points on lines spinning pitched and unpitched sound, focused and diffused articulation. In this way the two parts sometimes support the voice with polite background, but also often challenge it, race with it, mimic it.

—Maurice Wright

## I. TO MUSIC, TO BECALM HIS FEVER

Charm me asleep, and melt me so  
With thy delicious numbers,  
That being ravished, hence I go  
Away in easy slumbers...

...  
Melt, melt my pains,  
With thy soft strains;  
That having ease me given,  
With full delight  
I leave this light,  
And take my flight  
For Heaven.

—Robert Herrick (1591-1647)

## II. TO LUCIA PLAYING HER LUTE

When last I heard your nimble fingers play  
Upon your lute, nothing so sweet as they  
Seemed: all my soul fled ravished to my ear  
That sweetly animating sound to hear.

My ravished heart with play kept equal time,  
Fell down with you, with you did Éla climb,  
Grew sad or lighter, as the tunes you played,  
And with your lute a perfect measure made:  
If all, so much as I, your music love,  
The whole world would at your devotion move;  
And at your speaking lute's surpassing charms  
Embrace a lasting peace, and fling by arms.  
—Samuel Pordage (1633-1691)

### III. THE COMMENDATION OF MUSIC

Oh, lull me, lull me, charming air!  
My senses rock with wonder sweet;  
Like snow on wool, thy fallings are,  
Soft as a spirit's are thy feet.  
Grief who need fear  
That hath an ear?  
Down let him lie  
And slumbering die,  
And change his soul for harmony.  
—William Strode (1602-1645)

### IV. WIT PREDOMINANT

Ah! lay by your lute;  
Ah! Lucasia, forbear.  
Whilst your tongue I may hear,  
Other music is mute.  
Ah! lay by your lute,  
For the heavens have decreed  
that my heart should submit  
To none but the charms of your wit.

The conflict was hot  
When first I met your eyes;  
Yet my heart would still rise  
Though through and through shot.  
The conflict was hot;  
But your wit's great artillery  
when drawn to the field,  
Oh then, 'twas my glory to yield!

To satisfy all,  
When an empire is due  
To each beauty in you,

The world is too small,  
To satisfy all.  
With the rest you in triumph  
shall sit and survey;  
But give wit all the spoils of the day.  
—Thomas Rymer (1641-1713)

### V. TO MUSIC TO BECALM HIS FEVER (continued)

Thou sweetly canst convert [a pain]  
From a consuming fire  
Into a gentle-licking flame,  
And make it thus expire.  
Then make me weep  
My pains asleep,  
And give me such repose,  
That I, poor I,  
May think, thereby,  
I live and die  
'Mongst roses.

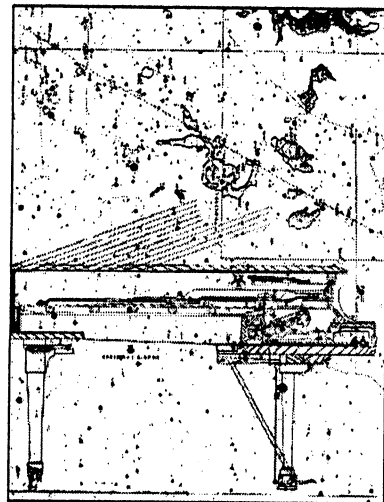
Fall on me like a silent dew,  
Or like those maiden showers,  
Which, by the peep of day, do strew  
A baptism o'er the flowers.  
Melt, melt my pains,  
With thy soft strains;  
That having ease me given,  
With full delight  
I leave this light,  
And take my flight  
For Heaven.  
—Robert Herrick

(Derived text)  
WITH THIS MY HEAVEN  
a pain, a fire, my sleep  
MELT WITH EASE  
FALL LIKE THE FLOWERS  
WITH THIS MY HEAVEN.

KATHRYN ALEXANDER  
*The Whole Air Is Tremulous* (1985)

Kathryn Alexander (born Waco, Texas, 1955) was a flutist before she became a composer. Coming from a musical family, she found it natural to be involved with music from a very early age, and she eventually completed her bachelor's degree at Baylor University as a flutist, then went to the Cleveland Institute of Music for graduate study in flute. While there she made the acquaintance of composer Donald Erb, who, taken with her musicality, encouraged her to compose. So, at the age of twenty-five, she started off on that new track. But Erb's intuition was clearly well founded; having barely finished her doctorate in composition at the Eastman School of Music, she won the Prix de Rome, which allowed her to spend a year at the American Academy in Rome, composing full time. In addition to Erb, her teachers have included Barbara Kolb and Joseph Schwanter. She has taught at Dartmouth College and is now on the faculty of Yale University. Much of her work involves electronically generated sounds. This is the case with *And the Whole Air Is Tremulous*, in which the tape part enlarges and expands the capabilities of the solo flute, so that together tape and human player become a "superflute." When the work received its first performance at Tanglewood, on 15 August 1985, the composer wrote the following commentary:

Many works for instrument and electronic tape pit a live performer against a collage of synthetic sounds. *And the Whole Air Is Tremulous*, however, uses only acoustic sounds from the piccolo, C flute, alto flute, and bass flute. The contemporary flute techniques employed by both the live performer and tape include: glissandi, quarter-tones, trills, glissandi trills, key clicks, jet whistles, flutter tonguing, harmonics, and whistle tones. The taped sounds are then manipulated and processed using both traditional and contemporary musique concrète techniques, resulting in an extension of the flute itself. The intent is purely musical: the live performer



and tape unite to create a greater whole. Although the piece is not programmatic, the following poem, inspired by a passage from Virginia Woolf's novel *Jacob's Room*, reflects the nature of the work:

and the whole air is tremulous  
stretching, bending; twisting, turning  
restless  
unable to still  
gliding, slipping, sliding  
escape?  
shaking, trembling, vibrating  
sparkling and glinting  
—water dances  
cerebral plates juxtapose  
grating, grinding; pressing, tensing  
a spirit roams, creates, divides  
and a fine wind roars—  
then blow...  
sunlight scintillates on leaves  
shining and glowing  
—iridescence

GEORGE CRUMB  
*Vox Balenae* (1971)

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 has been on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania since 1965. 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*.

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 to serve the cause of musical illustration with vivid sounds, ranging from the sweet and delicate to the threshold of pain.

Many of Crumb's works, including *Vox balenae* ("The Voice of the Whale"), make use of overtly theatrical elements: the players may need to wear masks, to move around on the platform in specifically defined ways, to interact with one another or with the audience the way an actor does, rather than to remain firmly fixed in a seat with their eyes on the printed part. Very often the dramatic element comes through the use of ritualistic gestures that suggest the operation of primordial myths.

*Vox balenae* was inspired by the eerily beautiful singing of humpback whales, recorded by oceanographers for the first time in the 1960s. Crumb heard a tape of this "singing" in 1969, and it strongly shaped his image of the piece, which "can be performed under a deep-blue stage lighting, if desired" to enhance the effect of hearing something that comes from the depths of the ocean, the ever-ongoing quality of which is suggested in the composer's evocative movement titles. The following comment by the composer is drawn from the book *Profile of a Composer: George Crumb*, issued by his publisher C. F. Peters:

The form of *Voice of the Whale* is a simple three-part design, consisting of a prologue, a set of variations named after the geological eras, and an epilogue.

The opening *Vocalise* (marked in the score: "wildly fantastic, grotesque") is a kind of cadenza for the flutist, who simultaneously plays his instrument and sings into it. This combination of instrumental and vocal sound produces an eerie, surreal timbre, not unlike the sounds of the humpback whale. The conclusion of the cadenza is announced by a parody of the opening measures of Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

The *Sea-Theme* ("solemn, with calm majesty") is presented by

the cello (in harmonics), accompanied by dark, fateful chords of strummed piano strings. The following sequence of variations begins with the haunting sea-gull cries of the *Archeozoic* ("timeless, inchoate") and, gradually increasing in intensity, reaches a strident climax in the *Cenozoic* ("dramatic, with a feeling of destiny"). The emergence of man in the Cenozoic era is symbolized by a partial restatement of the Zarathustra reference.

The concluding *Sea-Nocturne* ("serene, pure, transfigured") is an elaboration of the Sea-Theme. The piece is couched in the "luminous" tonality of B major and there are shimmering sounds of antique cymbals (played alternately by the cellist and flutist). In composing the *Sea-Nocturne*, I wanted to suggest "a larger rhythm of nature" and a sense of suspension in time. The concluding gesture of the work is a gradually dying series of repetitions of a 10-note figure. In concert performance, the last figure is to be played "in pantomime" (to suggest a diminuendo beyond the threshold of hearing!).

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# About the Artists

DAVID GORDON, tenor, attended the College of Wooster, OH and McGill University. He is currently on the voice faculty at the University of California, Berkeley. Mr. Gordon has been an opera and concert soloist with leading orchestras, operas, and festivals on four continents. He has appeared as soloist with the orchestras of Boston, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, St. Louis, Atlanta, Toronto, Vancouver, Berlin, Weimar, Prague, Vienna, Salzburg, Paris, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Tokyo and many others. He has given 700 performances of 60 principal roles with San Francisco Opera; Metropolitan Opera; Washington Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Hamburg Opera, Germany; Houston Grand Opera; and others. Mr. Gordon's performances can be heard on the Telarc, RCA Red Seal, London-Decca, Smithsonian Collection and Delos labels.

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 on the faculty at the University of Maryland School of Music and is the cellist of the Opus 3 Trio. His playing can be heard on recordings on the Melodia, Educio, 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. He recently conducted in the University of Maryland's month-long Copland Festival and conducted the Da Capo Chamber Players in tributes to composer Stephen Albert at Bard College and in New York City. His performances can be heard on the Delos, CRI, Bard, ASV, innova, 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 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.

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."



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