



May 10, 1986

**The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
and
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
present**

THE 20TH CENTURY CONSORT

**Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director
Alyce Rideout, Manager**

Saturday, May 10, 1986

Lecture-Discussion: 4:30 p.m.

Concert: 5:30 p.m.

Auditorium

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

On this season's opening program, I suggested that the sentencing of Mitchell, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman, and the movie *Jaws* may have tended to overshadow the advent of the 20th Century Consort 10 years ago. Also shouldered from front-page headlines at that time was the beginning of the Levine School of Music. Like the Consort, however, the Levine School has held its own since 1976, establishing itself as an outstanding element of Washington's cultural life. We salute the School in this program, and wish it many happy returns of the decade.

It is sobering to consider that many of the fine musicians studying at the Levine School don't even *remember* the 10¢ (much less 3¢) first class mail rate, although, naturally, television has seen to it that we are all acquainted with Spielberg's shark. It reminds us that music from the 1970s is no longer the very latest thing. We present three works from that decade today, however, feeling that they remain fresh and quite relevant to the present. There is, in fact, a lyricism, energy, and sense of wonder in the Foss, Schoenfield, and Crumb works, respectively, that make them seem especially right as a tribute to the young conservatory and its youthful students, whom we welcome to our program.

And to all our audience, it has been wonderful having you with us this year. I urge you to take the announcements for next season and distribute them widely among your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and unsuspecting relatives, not forgetting to re-subscribe as quickly as possible yourselves. I venture to project next season to be our best yet, and it just wouldn't be right having it without you.

Christopher Kendall
Artistic Director

THE PROGRAM

MEET THE COMPOSERS

George Crumb, composer
Paul Schoenfield, composer

CONCERT

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

Lukas Foss
(b. 1922)

Lucy Shelton, soprano
Sara Stern, flute
Thomas Jones, percussion
Lambert Orkis, piano

From Three Country Fiddle Pieces

Paul Schoenfield
(b. 1947)

1. *Pining for Betsy*
2. *Who Let the Cat Out Last Night?*

Elisabeth Adkins, violin
Thomas Jones, percussion
Lambert Orkis, piano

INTERMISSION

Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)

George Crumb
(b. 1929)

- I. *Nocturnal Sounds (The Awakening)*
- II. *Wanderer-Fantasy*
- III. *The Advent*
- IV. *Myth*
- V. *Music of the Starry Night*

Lambert Orkis, piano
James Freeman, piano
Thomas Jones, percussion
Ronald Barnett, percussion

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A
BLACKBIRD
by Wallace Stevens

1

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

2

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

3

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

4

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

5

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

6

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

7

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

8

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.

9

When the blackbird flew out of sight
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

10

At the sight of blackbirds
Flying in the green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.

11

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For Blackbirds.

12

The river is moving.
The blackbirds must be flying.

13

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbirds sat
In the cedar-limbs.

Lukas Foss: *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*

Lukas Foss has been one of America's leading avant-garde composers for almost thirty years. He first achieved success in the mid-1940s with neo-classical works, many of which were inspired by biblical or American subjects. In the late 1950s Foss began composing avant-garde works which featured serialism, improvisation, and indeterminacy. One of his first experiments in this style, *Time Cycle* for Soprano and Orchestra (1960), has become a classic of the twentieth-century vocal repertoire.

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird, an evocative sixteen-minute song cycle for soprano, flute, piano, and percussion, combines the lyricism of Foss' early works with some of the avant-garde techniques found in his more recent scores. The idea for this cycle originated when, in 1978, Chicago's radio station WFMT approached Foss to write a new piece for the American Song Festival they were sponsoring. He decided to set Wallace Stevens' popular thirteen-part poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," for he had long been attracted to its humor, mystery, and imagery, as well as its potential for musical interpretation. (Said Foss, "It occurred to me that a poem is musical if it is visual.") In this cycle Foss further explores those performance techniques and instrumental timbres which he had previously used in his song cycle *Three Airs for Frank O'Hara's Angel* (1972) and his chamber work *Ni Bruit Ni Vitesse* (1973). He elaborates: "I decided on a mezzo-soprano; a distant flutist visible or invisible pianist playing now on the keyboard, now inside the piano 'à la autoharp'; and a percussionist playing mostly on the piano strings with triangle beaters, cowbells, Japanese bowls, and other objects. . . . Perhaps this is the typical pattern of the artistic development of a composer: one work contains the seeds of the next."

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird consists of a series of short musical vignettes; the movements are connected by interludes and played without interruption. The score employs a wide variety of textures and musical styles to capture Stevens' vivid poetic imagery. Traditional wordpainting abounds; by turns the audience sees the blackbird's moving eyes, its whirling flight overhead, and the "barbaric glass" of hanging icicles. The blackbird's whistling is heard, as well as the sound of a rushing river, and the howling wind of a snowstorm. *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* also draws upon many well-known avant-garde compositional techniques. Its metric notation is either

measured or unmeasured, and indeterminacy frequently governs its melodic, rhythmic, dynamic, and timbral elements. Extramusical effects, such as key-clicking and unearthly moaning sounds (produced here by running a superball mallet along the piano), are frequently used for dramatic expression. New performance techniques are employed throughout the cycle as well. The flutist "bends" pitches and sings while playing certain phrases, and the pianist, in addition to accompanying the ensemble in a traditional manner, plucks and strums the piano strings and assists the percussionist in producing various effects inside the instrument. Furthermore, the mezzo-soprano utilizes a wide range of vocal colors and gestures to depict Stevens' text, including lyrical song, shouting, *sprechstimme*, whispering, and declaimed speech.

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird was commissioned by radio station WFMT and premiered by them on the air on April 11, 1979. A recording of this work, with RoseMarie Freni (mezzo-soprano), Robert Dick (flute), Jan Williams (percussion), and Yvar Mikhashoff (piano), is available on CRI Records.

Paul Schoenfield: *Three Country Fiddle Pieces*

Three Country Fiddle Pieces, for electric violin, amplified piano, and trap set, is a zany pastiche of classical and popular music. As in many of his other pieces, Paul Schoenfield here parodies numerous popular musical styles of the twentieth century by filtering them through his own whimsical compositional voice. Several recurring structural elements unify the stylistically diverse *Three Country Fiddle Pieces*. The work is characterized by lush jazz harmonies, as well as long, sweeping gestural lines which are frequently interrupted by new compositional ideas. The violin and piano share the melodic interest, with the drums serving as accompanist. Syncopation, an important element in the popular styles Schoenfield mimics, creates rhythmic tension; frequently alternating meters provide further accentual irregularity. *Three Country Fiddle Pieces* is also distinguished in its requirement of extreme virtuosity. In addition to meeting the score's tremendous technical and rhythmic demands, the instrumentalists must perform with an interpretive flexibility similar to that of jazz musicians.

This evening's program includes two of the *Three Country Fiddle Pieces*. "Pining for Betsy," is described by the composer as an "elegaic and nostalgic slow drag." A brief piano solo introduces the germs of its

compositional material before the movement proper begins with an original blues melody in the violin. Cross rhythms and blues riffs decorate the score, as well as slow swing sections and brief passages of "arrhythmic, weird" accompaniment in the drums. This movement, with its chromatic jazz chords and high degree of dissonance, is very advanced harmonically for blues. "Who Let the Cat Out Last Night?" frenetically combines the styles of bluegrass, jazz, blues, and nineteenth-century virtuosic showpieces for violin. It derives its title from the name of the blues tune which is freely paraphrased in the violin and piano over a country hoedown beat. Satirical musical references to scores of George Gershwin, Richard Wagner, and César Franck are also heard.

Three Country Fiddle Pieces was composed in the fall of 1979 for violinist Young-Nam Kim; it was premiered by him, with the composer at the piano and Eric Bilger on drums, in the spring of 1980 at Bowling Green State University's First Contemporary Music Festival.

George Crumb: *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)*

Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III), a 40-minute work for two amplified pianos and percussion, is one of a series of compositions by George Crumb which were inspired by philosophy and deal with themes including the universe, stars, nighttime, and God. Other works in this series include *Makrokosmos, Vols. I and II* (1972, 1973), *Star-Child* (1977), and *Celestial Mechanics: Makrokosmos IV* (1979). In *Music for a Summer Evening*, Crumb pays homage to the composer Béla Bartók: the work's title is adapted from Bartók's multi-volume pedagogical method for piano, *Mikrokosmos*, its instrumentation is based on the Hungarian composer's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, and its eerie evocation of darkness is inspired by Bartók's famous "night music" as heard in the third movement of his *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*.

A clear-cut formal and musical structure governs the five-movement *Music for a Summer Evening*. George Crumb elaborates: (the work) "projects a clearly articulated large expressive curve. . . . The first, third, and fifth movements, which are scored for the full ensemble of instruments and laid out on a large scale, would seem to define the primary import of the work (which might be interpreted as a kind of 'cosmic drama'). On the other hand, the wistfully evocative 'Wanderer-Fantasy' (mostly for the two pianos alone) and the somewhat

atavistic 'Myth' (for percussion instruments) were conceived of as dream-like pieces functioning as intermezzos within the overall sequence of movements." While composing, Crumb drew inspiration from poetic quotations by Salvatore Quasimodo, Blaise Pascal, and Rainer Maria Rilke; he believes that these quotes, which head the work's three principal movements, achieve their "symbolic resonance" in the score. *Music for a Summer Evening's* musical style and compositional technique closely parallel those of Crumb's earlier works, especially *Makrokosmos I* and *II*. The first three volumes of *Makrokosmos* share several thematic figures and are constructed from a limited number of melodic cells which continually reappear in various transpositions and contexts, like tiles in a mosaic design. This score, like all of Crumb's works, employs musical quotations from other composers, and its colorful timbres and textures (produced here by an immense percussion battery) subtly fluctuate to evoke a wide variety of moods and images. A sense of timelessness pervades the work, as motivic repetition and echo replace development and polyphony. However, passages of traditional tonality can also be heard in *Music for a Summer Evening*. Crumb believes that tonality acquires new and special meaning when set in atonal surroundings; hence, sections of overt tonality highlight the work's third and fifth movements. Indeed, this entire score, which Crumb jestingly refers to as "more or less atonal, or more or less tonal," can be defined harmonically in terms of an F#-D# minor (Gb-Eb minor) polarity. *Music for a Summer Evening* demands virtuosic performances as well. The pianists, for example, must pluck the strings and play glissandos and harmonics inside the amplified pianos as well as perform "on the keys." Precise pedalling is also required to catch the vibrating tones' soft resonances. Furthermore, the instrumentalists are called upon to sing, shout, groan, and whistle, and both pianists play additional percussion instruments, such as crotales or guiro (a notched gourd).

"Nocturnal Sounds (The Awakening)," which opens *Music for a Summer Evening* is inspired by a quote from Quasimodo:

*I hear ephemeral echoes, oblivion of full night
in the starred waters.*

This movement, with its ghostly echoes and buzzing energy, introduces and establishes the basic compositional material which Crumb uses throughout the work: three-note chromatic kernels which feature intervals of either a tritone and major seventh or a tritone and a perfect fourth. Since his *Five Pieces for Piano* (1962), much of Crumb's music has used these three motivic

figures as standard compositional vocabulary. "Nocturnal Sounds" also displays Crumb's fascination with certain "magic" or "sacred" numbers; the number of sections in a movement, the number of measures in a section, the durations of rests, and the subdivisions of beats are stereotypically grouped into units of three, five, seven, and thirteen. "Wanderer-Fantasy," the first intermezzo, is framed by the sounds of two echoing slide whistles. Its pentatonic middle section introduces the five-note symmetrical melodic kernel which the alto recorder later presents again during the second intermezzo. "The Advent," the ponderous third movement is derived from Pascal's remark:

The eternal silence of infinite space terrifies me.

Here Crumb juxtaposes melodic ostinatos, which build to a dark and frightening climax, with wordless vocalises and "stark, luminous" figures in the piano and glockenspiel. The movement's solemn organum-like "Hymn for the Nativity of the Star-Child," a transposed and elaborated version of *Makrokosmos II*'s "Hymn for the Advent of the Star-Child," features chordal glissandos over the undamped piano strings. A palindromic symmetry governs the isorhythmic second intermezzo, "Myth," which employs superimposed tales of thirteen, seven, and eleven measures. It is notable for its fascinating array of sounds: quasi-electronic, otherworldly timbres (bowed tam-tam and sizzle cymbal harmonics) contrast with pure, natural sounds (howling wind and alto recorder) and primitive, barbaric music (groaning noises and shouts, African log drum and

thumb piano, claves, tom-toms, and quijada, the jawbone of a donkey). The concluding "Music of the Starry Night," with its cascades of bell-like tones and jubilant "Song of Reconciliation," illuminates a line from Rilke:

*And in the nights the heavy earth is falling from
all the stars down into loneliness. We are all falling.
And yet there is One who holds this falling
endlessly gently into His hands.*

This movement was originally conceived for *Makrokosmos II*'s amplified solo piano, but, as Crumb explains, "it readily became apparent that my 'cosmic' conception was quite beyond the capabilities of ten fingers." A musical quotation from the D# minor fugue from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. II* (given a surrealistic sound by placing paper on the piano strings and doubling the melody with vibraphone) creates a chilling effect; its imagery has been described by writer Richard Steinitz as "humanity . . . made to sound infinitely distant and infinitely desirable, witnessed . . . from an awareness of cosmic space that is vast, inhuman, and frightening."

Music for a Summer Evening was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation; it was premiered on March 30, 1974, for the opening of the Lang Music Building at Swarthmore College by pianists Gilbert Kalish and James Freeman, and percussionists Raymond Des Roches and Richard Fitz, for whom the work was composed. A recording of *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)* by these performers is available on Nonesuch Records.

The 20th Century Consort's performances are supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency. The Consort also gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Mr. Sidney G. Albert.

The participation of composers George Crumb and Paul Schoenfield in today's program was made possible in part by a grant from **Meet The Composer**, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Express Foundation, ASCAP, BMI, Bristol-Myers Company, CBS Inc., Dayton Hudson Corporation, Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., Exxon, Fromm Music Foundation, Grace Foundation, L.A.W. Fund, Inc., Metropolitan Life Foundation, NBC Co. Inc., Paul Foundation, Inc., and the Helena Rubenstein Foundation.

The receptions following this season's concerts are sponsored by the Friends of the 20th Century Consort. For information on how you can become a member of this important group working to further the cause of contemporary music, telephone 298-7545, or write to the 20th Century Consort, 1235 Potomac Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20007.

NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

Elisabeth Adkins is currently serving her third season as Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her appearances with the 20th Century Consort, she is a founding member of the recently-formed American Chamber Players and Washington Chamber Players and has been heard on chamber music series at the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress. A native of Denton, Texas, she received her Master of Musical Arts degree from Yale University where she studied with Oscar Shumsky.

Ronald Barnett currently holds the positions of Associate Professor of Music at the University of Maryland, Timpanist of the Kennedy Center Opera and Ballet Orchestra, and Principal Percussionist of the Chautauqua Symphony. He has also performed with the National and Baltimore symphonies, Theater Chamber Players, and the Maryland Chamber Players. He has presented numerous percussion solo and chamber recitals in the Washington area and was soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra under Antal Dorati.

James Freeman is Professor of Music and chairman of the Department of Music and Dance at Swarthmore College. As pianist, he has performed and recorded frequently in the Philadelphia area; as musicologist, his articles on 19th-century Italian opera have been published in leading scholarly journals. He performs as double bassist with the Boston Pops in the summer, and during the winter with the Penn Contemporary Players and the Philadelphia Opera Company. As artistic director and founder of the Swarthmore Music and Dance Festival, he has commissioned and first performed many new works by younger American composers. He is also the director of the Swarthmore Chamber Orchestra.

Thomas Jones is a graduate of the University of Maryland. A free-lance musician working in the Washington metropolitan area, he has appeared as an extra percussionist with the National Symphony Orchestra and has performed at the Bayreuth and Spoleto festivals. He has recorded most recently with Trapezoid, John McCutcheon, and the Smithsonian Chamber Players. He is currently touring with the company of *42nd Street*.

Lambert Orkis has toured five continents, appeared on nationwide radio and television broadcasts, and recorded for several labels. He has premiered solo piano works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers George Crumb and Richard Wernick on past Consort programs. Principal keyboardist of the National Symphony Orchestra, he also serves as Professor of Piano and Coordinator of the Master of Music Program in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music at Temple University.

Lucy Shelton is one of today's most versatile artists, equally in demand for concerts and recordings. As a member of the 20th Century Consort, she has premiered many works, including compositions by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers Stephen Albert and Joseph Schwantner. A native of California, she studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and later taught at the Eastman School. She holds the distinction of being the only two-time recipient of the Naumburg Award – as a winner of the 1980 Solo Vocal Competition and in 1977 as a member of the Jubal Trio.

Sara Stern is a native of Washington, D.C. As solo flutist for the 20th Century Consort, she has recorded on the Smithsonian label and performed a number of world premieres of significant contemporary compositions, including Maurice Wright's *Solos for Flute and Electric Sounds*, which was commissioned by the Consort. She is also principal flutist of the Kennedy Center Terrace Theatre Orchestra and solo flutist with the Rosewood Chamber Consort.

PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Sponsored by the Resident Associate Program May-June

May 11/11 a.m. <i>Charles Lindsay Foreman</i> , piano Brunch concert	Carmichael Auditorium National Museum of American History 12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 11/7:30 p.m. <i>Music of Thelonious Monk</i> Great Composers Jazz Series	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 13, 14/8 p.m. <i>Smithsonian Chamber Players</i> 18th-Century French Chamber Music	Hall of Musical Instruments National Museum of American History 12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 15/7 p.m. <i>Menahem Pressler</i> , piano Lecture and Recital	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 17/7 p.m. <i>Way Down East</i> Griffith's Famous Film with Live Orchestra	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 20, 21/8 p.m. <i>Smithson String Quartet</i> All-Schubert Program	Hall of Musical Instruments National Museum of American History 12th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
May 28/7 p.m. <i>John Cephas & Phil Wiggins</i> Courtyard Concert	Courtyard National Museum of American Art 8th & G Streets, N.W.
June 6/7:30 p.m. <i>Lisa Rich</i> and her Trio	Baird Auditorium National Museum of Natural History 10th Street & Constitution Avenue, N.W.
June 13, 14/7:30 p.m. <i>Songs I Learned at my Mother's Knee & Other Low Joints starring Patsy Englund</i>	Great Hall National Portrait Gallery 8th & F Street Mall, N.W.
June 15/7 p.m. <i>Diane Monroe</i> , violin Pro Musicis Series	Grand Salon Renwick Gallery 17th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

For information about these and other RAP activities, telephone 357-3030

Robert McC. Adams, *Secretary*, Smithsonian Institution
James T. Demetron, *Director*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Janet W. Solinger, *Director*, Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
Marcus L. Overton, *Senior Program Coordinator*, RAP Performing Arts

Please note: The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly prohibited.
Rest rooms are located at either side of the cloakroom in the lower lobby.