

# 21st Century Consort

June 25, 2022

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
Washington, DC 20560

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden presents

## 21st Century Consort

Christopher Kendall, Artistic Director  
Boyd Sarratt, Manager

Rick Barber, Double Bass  
Erika Grey, Viola  
Lisa Park, Violin  
Carrie Bean Stute, Cello

Madelaine Kushan, Soprano  
Julie Bosworth, Soprano  
Kerry Holahan, Soprano  
Hannah Baslett, Alto  
Ian Pomerantz, Baritone

Matchstick Percussion:

Ben Hausman  
Corey Sittinger  
Malcolm Taylor  
Zach Wilson

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
Melissa Chiu, Director  
Kevin Hull, Director of Public Engagement

Doug O'Connor, Musical Coordinator  
Michael McCarthy, Vocal Director  
Paul Moon, Filmmaker  
NOMAD, Nathan Cooper, Audio Engineers  
Nathaniel Reichman, John Luther Adams Audio Producer

June 25, 2022

Concert 8:00 p.m.

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The 21st Century Consort's 2021-2022 activities are supported by the Fuller Foundation, Amphion Foundation and Dimick Foundation, and the Board and Friends of the 21st Century Consort. A special thanks to the late Gloria Hamilton and to the Nicolae Bretan Music Foundation for its generous support of this concert.

[www.21stcenturyconsort.org](http://www.21stcenturyconsort.org)

## Program

*Earth and the Great Weather* Music and Text by John Luther Adams  
...a journey through the physical, cultural and spiritual landscapes of the Arctic, in music, language, and sound....

1. The Place Where You Go to Listen
2. Drums of Winter
3. Pointed Mountains Scattered All Around
4. The Circle of Suns and Moons
5. The Circle of Winds
6. Deep and Distant Thunder
7. River With No Willows
8. One That Stays All Winter
9. Drums of Fire, Drums of Stone
10. Where the Waves Splash, Hitting Again and Again

The 21st Century Consort is elated to return to its original Smithsonian home of almost 30 years (1998-2006), The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, to offer an outdoor summer program, and, as plans have evolved, to be part of the Smithsonian's Solstice Saturday. Indeed, the scaffolding of the museum's renovation and the ambient sounds from street and Mall are sure to contribute to the palette of "Earth and the Great Weather;" we embrace these in the translation of a sweeping wilderness tribute to a contemporary urban environment.

The impetus for choosing Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Luther Adam's 1993 epic grew from the work's expression of passionate concern for the environment and native cultures of the far north, now even more urgent than when it was composed. Pristine arctic sounds and images vocalized in Gwitch'in and Inupiaq are woven through waves of sound with complex technologies of digital delay and amplification, punctuated by eruptions of volcanic drumming. What could be more timely, and, on a steamy DC summer evening, more bracing?

We're glad you're here to celebrate the solstice with us, and invite you to join us for inside programs at the Hirshhorn in the year ahead.

– Christopher Kendall

For John Luther Adams, music is a lifelong search for home—an invitation to slow down, pay attention, and remember our place within the larger community of life on earth. Living for almost 40 years in northern Alaska, JLA discovered a unique musical world grounded in space, stillness, and elemental forces. In the 1970s and into the '80s, he worked full time as an environmental activist. But the time came when he felt compelled to dedicate himself entirely to music. He made this choice with the belief that, ultimately, music can do more than politics to change the world. Since that time, he has become one of the most widely admired composers in the world, receiving the Pulitzer Prize, a Grammy Award, and many other honors.

In works such as *Become Ocean*, *In the White Silence*, and *Canticles of the Holy Wind*, Adams brings the sense of wonder that we feel outdoors into the concert hall. And in outdoor works such as *Inuksuit* and *Sila: The Breath of the World*, he employs music as a way to reclaim our connections with place, wherever we may be.

A deep concern for the state of the earth and the future of humanity drives Adams to continue composing. As he puts it: “If we can imagine a culture and a society in which we each feel more deeply responsible for our own place in the world, then we just may be able to bring that culture and that society into being.”

Since leaving Alaska, JLA and his wife Cynthia have made their home in the deserts of Mexico, Chile, and the southwestern United States.

The composer writes:

My music has always been profoundly influenced by the natural world and a strong sense of place. In my recent work, I have begun to explore a territory I call “sonic geography”—a region that exists somewhere between place and culture, between human imagination and the world around us. I hope to move beyond landscape painting in sound toward a music which, in its own way, is landscape—a music which creates its own inherently sonic presence and sense of place.

Several years ago, I was commissioned to produce a work for New American Radio. In the Arctic I recorded natural sounds as well as the music of the wind on the strings of a small Aeolian harp. With those recordings, I composed and produced a half-

hour piece for radio, which also incorporated language and drum rhythms of the Inupiat Eskimo people of Alaska’s arctic coast.

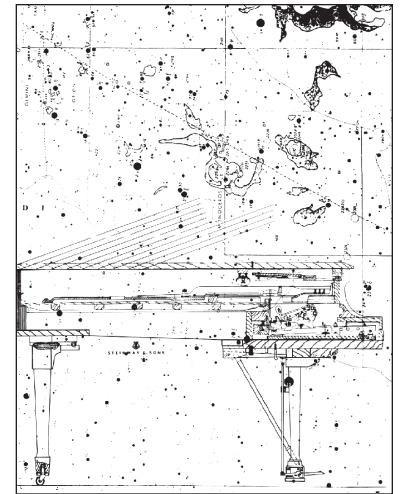
From that beginning, *Earth and the Great Weather* has grown to its present 75’ form, crossing the arctic divide to encompass the boreal forest of the northern interior—the physical, cultural and spiritual geography of the Gwich’in Athabascan people.

Expanding on my work with the wind harp, the musical ground of *Earth and the Great Weather* is a cycle of pieces for strings and digital delay, collectively titled *Aeolian Dreams*. This music inhabits a non-tempered harmonic world, based on the first eight odd-numbered harmonics of a low-D on the doublebass. All the sounds are produced either from retuned open strings, or natural harmonics up to the 105<sup>th</sup> harmonic (the seventh of the fifteenth).

The score makes extraordinary demands on the musicians, including special performance techniques and notation, as well as minute nuances of intonation. Fifteen out of sixteen open strings must be very precisely retuned, and simply tuning the ensemble can take an hour or more.

Rising like the mountain ranges above the Aeolian plains of Earth and the Great Weather are three large pieces for four drummers. These quartets are constructed of asymmetrical rhythmic cells abstracted from traditional Inupiat and Gwich’in dance music, which I have admired for many years.

Gwich’in and Inupiat names speak vividly with deep knowledge and intimate experience, evoking an authentic poetry of place. These have served as inspiration for a set of eight *Arctic Litanies*, composed of the names of places, plants, weather and the seasons of the Arctic.



Indigenous peoples have long understood the extraordinary powers of certain landscapes. For those of us who have lost or forgotten our intimate connections with such places, the Arctic is a vast and enduring geography of hope. Somewhere out in that far country of imagination and desire lie the foundations of my own faith.

*Earth and the Great Weather* is dedicated, with love, to my wife, Cynthia, in celebration of the place where we were married.

...until our ashes blow together across the tundra... John Luther Adams

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden is the national museum of modern and contemporary art, exploring the art and ideas of our time, committed to sharing the power of art—to bring people together, to offer inspiration, to respond to history in real time—with everyone, for free.

Founded in 1975, the then-20<sup>th</sup> Century Consort became resident ensemble at the museum three years later. In its concerts at the Hirshhorn, at historic St. Mark's on Capitol Hill, at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and elsewhere, the Consort has presented exciting and challenging programs frequently related to museum exhibitions, featuring music by an increasingly diverse array of living composers—often world premieres—along with 20th century classics. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort's artistic director is Christopher Kendall, and its artists include members of the National Symphony Orchestra and other prominent chamber musicians from Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. It is managed by Boyd Sarratt. The Consort is exceedingly pleased to be returning to its original Smithsonian home at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden for performances this summer and in the following season.

Christopher Kendall, artistic director of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort since its inception in 1975, is professor emeritus at the university of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance, where he served as dean from 2005-2015. In Washington, in addition to his work with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort, he is also founder of the Folger Consort, ensemble-in-residence at the Folger Shakespeare library since 1977. He was associate conductor of the Seattle Symphony from 1987 to 1992, director of the Music Division and Tanglewood Institute of the Boston University

School for the Arts from 1993 to 1996, and director of the School of Music at the University of Maryland from 1996 to 2005. He has guest conducted many orchestras and ensembles in repertoire from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and recordings of his performances can be heard on the British ASV, Arabesque, Bard, Bridge, Centaur, Delos, Innova, Nonesuch, and Smithsonian Collection labels, as well as on the vast archive of live, concert performances of new music available at <21stcenturyconsort.org>.

Matchstick Percussion is a DC/Baltimore based percussion quartet dedicated to new music and contributing to growing the percussion repertoire. The ensemble recognizes that the field is still young and is intent on helping to push the boundaries of how music is perceived, bringing diverse performances and educational opportunities to a wide range of audiences. Matchstick is committed to helping build equitable and diverse relations within the music community, presenting music from diverse composers, backgrounds, and musical styles, promoting underrepresented artists and artists lacking favorable circumstances, and collaborating with musicians, artists, dancers, and other performers to create new and exciting experiences for all audiences.

## 21st Century Consort Board of Directors

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## Future Programs

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consort invites you to its concerts for the coming season, including performances at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and at historic St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill. All concerts are free and open to the public, beginning at 5:00 PM and preceded by a discussion with composers at 4:00.

### **Put it This Way** ■ SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022

*At the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden*

Music by women composers inspired by the Hirshhorn Museum's exhibition of the same name featuring work from the collection

### **A Christmas Ghost Story** ■ SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022

*At St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 3rd and A St. SE*

The return of Jon Deak's classic of the season, *The Passion of Scrooge*

### **Pickett's Charge** ■ SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2023

*At the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden*

Music inspired by Mark Bradford's epic work on exhibit at the Hirshhorn

### **Music for Earth Day** ■ SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023

*At St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 3rd and A St. SE*

One week after the April 22nd celebration, a musical echo that is environmentally sound

Please sign up for our e-mail list at [21consort.org/contact](http://21consort.org/contact), or visit the Consort at Facebook or on our website at [21consort.org](http://21consort.org) to get news and updates about the coming season.