

"La Poesia" by Saverio Mercadante (1795-1870) may well be the first work specifically intended for a quartet of celli. Its exact date of composition is unknown, and it is possible that its inspiration could have been the opening of the overture to Rossini's opera, "William Tell". Its rapt lyricism and mellow introspection are quintessentially representative of Italian Romantic style.

**Mike Cole on "The American Dream":** On a walk through Bennington, I began to think about America and what it meant to me; not the fast food, the hard-sell commercials or the slick politicians, but the dreams and ideals that were part of it. I decided to write a piece that would trace the American dream, from the beginning of America to the time of John F. Kennedy. I did not attempt to be scholarly or historically accurate, but instead followed my own instincts about the subjects I wrote about. The piece begins with "The Railroad".

I chose the image of the train because it not only represents the power and the drive that went into colonizing the United States, but also the ignorance of the consequences that power might have. The train runs without stopping, never looking back. This image can be compared to the first people who came to this country. They looked forward and saw hope, opportunity and progress, but they were unable to look back and see the culture they were destroying; unable, in fact, to see that there was anybody there at all. The second movement, "Wounded Spirit", is about Native Americans.

I worked at the Kicking Horse Job Corps on the Flathead reservation in the summer of 1990. It was a very disheartening experience. I was shocked to see that many of the young Native Americans had a flagrant disregard for the environment. On a camping trip, I had to threaten them with what little authority I had to get them to pick up their garbage, and when we saw a deer they threw rocks at it. It struck me then that perhaps the single worst thing the white man had done to the Native American was to destroy his cultural identity. The movement begins with a plaintive Kiowa flute song, which becomes infested with disease, mimicked and is eventually taken over as if the white man is saying, "I understand you better than you do yourself". The song survives, but carries with it pain and the memory of infinite abuse.

The last movement is not so much about John F. Kennedy as about the ideals he represented. I have had many conversations with people who were my age when he was president, and I am always amazed to hear how much they were affected when John F. Kennedy died. Trying to think of a similar analogy for my generation, I can only think of how cynical people have become. I can't imagine, for instance, the same kind of nationwide mourning if George Bush were assassinated. So, broadly, I use the death of John F. Kennedy to represent the death of the innocent belief people in America had before the Vietnam war.

**Carl Gerhardt (1900-1945[?])**, probably the author of this canon, played cello, piano and organ and was prominent in church music in Berlin. Avowedly antiwar, he repeatedly eluded being drafted until the final days of the Second World War, when he disappeared in the fighting around Berlin.



## botticelli

Monday, December 7, 1992  
8:15 PM, Bennington College

John Hendrick [Benn '86]

Allegro

Bela Bartok      4 Pieces from "Music for Children"  
Allegro-Adagio-Allegro-Allegro ironico

J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

Chorale Prelude: Herzlich tut mich verlangen

Juan Encina (1468-1530)      Pues que Jamas \*

J.S.Bach      Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen seien \*

Christoph Demantius

German Dances \*

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1991)      A Simple Song

Jennifer Kubik, soprano

Saverio Mercadante (1795-1870)      La Poesia

Mike Cole [Benn '94]      The American Dream

The Railroad  
Wounded Spirit  
Elegy for John F Kennedy

Carl Gerhardt (1900-1945[?])      Canon

Lou Calabro (1926-1991)      Antiphon Ritmico (1988)

\* from the George Finckel Collection

### The Cellists:

Jonathan Bepler  
Seana Gamel  
Kirstin Kantner  
Jennifer Kubik  
Christine Leight  
Jason McDermott  
Maxine Neuman  
Nathaniel Parke  
Josh Schreiber  
Mary Springer

### Notes on the composers and the program:

John Hendrick's (1964-1988) *Cello Quartet* was written in Bennington and premiered in his senior concert in the spring of 1986. In addition to composing, which he studied with Lou Calabro, Vivian Fine and Jeff Levine, John played harpsichord, piano and recorders. After graduating from Bennington, he continued his education at the University of Redlands in California. On his way back East to visit friends during graduation week in 1988, he died tragically in an automobile accident.

Beginning in 1906, using an Edison phonograph, Bela Bartok (1881-1945) traveled annually throughout Hungary, making recordings and doing research in folk music. Among the many works influenced by his study were the 85 pieces of "Music for Children", a fascinating collection of simple melodies with colorful and varied harmonic treatment.

The respected tradition of multiple cello music at Bennington began with the arrival of cellist George Finckel in 1943. During his long and illustrious career, George developed an impressive literature of unusual and profoundly moving four cello transcriptions which have inspired the community and generations of cellists with a love for this medium.

Tonight's performance of Christoph Demantius' (1567-1643) "*German Dances*" represents the results of very recent research into Renaissance performance practice and ornamentation.

Leonard Bernstein, composer, conductor, pianist and educator, was unquestionably one of the geniuses in American music of this century. His multistylistic Mass, from which *A Simple Song* is taken, is more a theatre piece than a concert work. It was written in 1971 at the request of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.