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# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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## LUKAS FOSS NAMED 1986 ANDREW W. MELLON LECTURER

WASHINGTON -- Internationally-renowned composer and conductor Lukas Foss has been named the 1986 Andrew W. Mellon Lecturer in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, where he will deliver a series of six lectures, from April 13 through May 25.

Since 1952 the Mellon lecture series has served to recognize an individual who exemplifies excellence in the history, criticism and theory of the visual and performing arts. The lectures are published through the National Gallery of Art and Princeton University Press as part of the Bollingen Series. The Sunday afternoon lectures will take place in the East Building Auditorium of the National Gallery at 4 p.m. and are free and open to the public. The series title is "Confessions of a 20th Century Composer." Individual lectures are as follows:

- April 13: Looking at the Creative Process
- April 20: A Composer's Thoughts on Classical Music
- April 27: Ives, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartok and Hindemith
- May 11: Composing in 1986
- May 18: A Composer's Thoughts on Current Performances
- May 25: Tomorrow?

A vital force in American music for more than 40 years, Foss's compositions have been performed and recorded by some of the foremost musicians in the world. He has conducted virtually all major orchestras in the United States, as well as such international organizations as the

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Mellon Lecturer . . . add one

Berlin Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Leningrad Symphony and Tokyo Philharmonic. He is currently principal conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonia and music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Berlin, Aug. 15, 1922, Foss emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1937, at which time he enrolled in the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. There he studied piano with Isabelle Vengerova, composition under Rosario Scalerò and conducting with Fritz Reiner. He later studied composition with Hindemith as a special student at Yale (1939-40) and conducting with Koussevitzky during summers at the Berkshire Music Center (1939-43).

Foss began composing at the age of 15 and made his conducting debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony in 1939. At 22 he won acclaim for the cantata Prairie (1944), based on Carl Sandburg's poem. He performed as piano soloist in the premiere of his Piano Concerto No. 2 at Venice in 1951, an event which further enhanced his international reputation. The American debut of the work, by the Boston Symphony under the direction of Charles Munch with the composer again at the piano, occurred in November of the same year.

Lukas Foss is recognized as an ardent champion of modern music. As a composer he has excelled in a formidable succession of styles, idioms and techniques. His early works reflected the spirit of Romantic lyricism, and later the neo-Classical formulas of Hindemith and Stravinsky. However, since the mid-1950s, Foss has been in the forefront of the musical avant-garde, as both composer and conductor. In composition he has abandoned tonality and fixed forms in favor of serialism, indeterminacy and graphic notation. His experiments with ensemble performance have led to what he has called "system and chance music," a kind of controlled improvisation.

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According to Baker's International Dictionary of Music and Musicians(7th edition): "During the past 40 years there has been a continuous procession of compositions from the pen of Foss embracing virtually all of the stylistic tendencies surfacing during our century. In this sense, he has, perhaps more than any other single composer, reflected the stylistic evolution and revolution that often our musical language has been subject to."

In 1953 Lukas Foss succeeded Arnold Schoenberg as professor of music (composition and conducting) at the University of California at Los Angeles, where in 1957 he founded the influential Improvisation Chamber Ensemble. From 1963 until 1970, he served as music director and conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic, where he also founded the Center for Creative and Performing Arts, S.U.N.Y., Buffalo (1963). He was a faculty member at Harvard University from 1970 through 1971 and held the title of composer-in-residence at the Manhattan School of Music, 1972-73. Since 1971 he has served as principal conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonia, concurrent with his role as music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, a position which he assumed in 1980.

Lukas Foss has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the New York Music Critics Award (1945, 1954, 1961 and 1963), the Horblit Award (1951), Naumberg Recording Award (1957), Ditson Award for the conductor who has done the most for American music (1973), ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming (1979) and the CRI Recording Award (1979). In addition, he has been a Guggenheim Fellow (1945) and a Fulbright Fellow (1950-52), and is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

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