

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

1580th Concert



NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
RICHARD BALES, *CONDUCTOR*

Sunday Evening, April 6, 1980 at Seven
West Building, East Garden Court

PROGRAM

- Johannes BrahmsSymphony No. 4 in E Minor, Opus 98
(1833-97) (1885)
Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

INTERMISSION

- Jackson HillSangraal (1977)
(b. 1941)
First Washington Performance

- Richard WagnerGood Friday Spell from "Parsifal"
(1813-83) (1882)

- Richard WagnerOverture to "Tannhäuser" (1845)
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Sangraal, which takes its title from a Celtic term for the Holy Grail, is a short symphonic poem that alludes to the mythic quest for the eternal and holy. The widespread reference in medieval literature to a sacred vessel, at once mysterious and magical, has been echoed in modern times by C. F. Jung, who held that the grail legend was a manifestation of even older myths surrounding vessels of stone, the alchemical *lapis*, and the soul-stone—the seat of human spirituality.

Sangraal was written while the composer was reading Mallory, Jung, and *The Secret of the Sangraal* by Arthur Machen, and under the spell of visits to Glastonbury and Tintagel. There are several programmatic elements in the work. The persistent drone on the note D is a device borrowed from Hindu music and may be seen to symbolize the quest. The D serves as a "leading tone" to an increasingly apparent E-flat chord, which anticipates a double chant in that key—a reference to the grail vision.

Sangraal was commissioned by the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra.

Jackson Hill, born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1941, was a Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he received the Ph.D. in musicology in 1970. A composer from age 14, with more than eighty works to his credit, he is also a performer as a violinist, pianist, and conductor, and in 1975, as a countertenor, he served as a choral vicar at Exeter College, Oxford. In 1977 he spent two months in Japan studying Buddhist music as part of a long-term project on music and mysticism in Eastern and Western cultures. He is associate professor of Music at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Music for *Sangraal* is a loan from the Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

This concert is broadcast by Station WGMS 570 AM and 103.5 FM.