

[Voiceover] Michigan State University presents the second program in the series Music Workshop, devoted to early and contemporary music, with Dr. Hans Nathan of the Department of Literature and Fine Arts. The following students will participate in the program. Joan Pierce, soprano and soloist in the Stravinsky work to be performed. Carol Murdoch, soprano. Mary Savage, alto. Dwain Mitchell, flute, and Carolyn Mawby, trumpet. And the following faculty members, Helen Niblock, viola, Stanley Finn, clarinet, Byron Autrey, trumpet, and Merrel Sherburn, trombone. [Dr. Hans Nathan] Our concert opens with a part of a mass by Johannes Ciconia, a composition written around 1400. [Musicians and vocalists performing Ciconia excerpt] [Dr. Hans Nathan] What you have just heard was Et in Terra Pax, a part of a mass by Johannes Ciconia. We will now perform a composition written more than 500 years later, Stravinsky's song from William Shakespeare, composed in 1953. The texts were chosen not only for their excellence, but also because they are capable to sustain three distinctive movements that complement each other. The emphasis, it seems, is on the music, not only on the voice parts, on the voice part, but on all four melodic lines together, poignant as they are. And yet, in spite of what impresses us as a true chamber music style, the poetic imagery breaks through in many places. The composer's idiom here is novel, even to the student of his work. Before we have attuned ourselves to it, our attitude should be one of expectancy and of reverence for one of the most penetrating and most creative musical minds of the century. [Musicians and vocalists performing Stravinsky work] [Dr. Hans Nathan] Although one may quickly discover consistency of style in Stravinsky's Shakespeare songs, even when listening for the first time, it is obvious that details reveal the meaning only after a more careful study of the score. Stravinsky has incorporated into the score elements of composition which have gained wide acceptance among young composers during the last ten years. He builds up each movement, that is the first two, from nothing but a limited number of tones, what is called a tone roll. This he repeats over and over with many ingenious permutations so that the rose almost forgotten in the wealth of new patterns. The structure is very dense, dense to the point of austerity, and there are various aspects such as the large leaps in the melodic lines that cannot be associated with tradition. You will now hear the same piece a second time. [Musicians performing Stravinsky work] [Dr. Hans Nathan] Before repeating the composition by Johannes Ciconia, a few remarks about its performance may be of interest. You see, or you will see, three brass instruments that double the same number of voices. This mixture of vocal and instrumental sonorities was frequent at the time of Ciconia, the choice of instruments being optional. The trombone existed in the early 15th century, but the ordinary trumpet, which had no valves, was only good for fanfares. However, on various paintings of the period, you can see slide trumpets, and these, of course, had many tones at their disposal. Ciconia's piece, medieval as it is in various ways, cannot be performed with a vocal technique as it exists today. For observing rigidity and volume, note values, tempo and timbre, you hope to attain a quality which, at least by approximation does justice to the start of the work [Musicians and vocalists performing Ciconia] [Voiceover] You have been listening to Music Workshop, a program devoted to early and contemporary music, with Dr. Hans Nathan of the Department of Literature and Fine Arts. The following students have participated in this program: Joan Pierce, soprano and soloist in the Stravinsky work, Carol Murdoch - soprano, Mary Savage - alto, Dwain Mitchell - flute, and Carolyn Mawby - trumpet, and the following faculty members, Helen Niblock, viola, Stanley Finn, clarinet, Byron Autrey, trumpet, Merrel Sherburn, trombone. This program was directed by Lee Frischknecht and produced by Don Pash. Music Workshop has been a presentation of Michigan State University Television.