



presents

JOHN PERRY, piano

Sunday, April 2, 1995

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Piano Sonata (1961-62)

Allegro

Lento alla siciliano

Molto allegro

Samuel Jones

(b. 1935)

Sinfonia (1989)

Tempestoso

Mesto

Volando

Paul Cooper

(b. 1926)

Piano Sonata (1960)

Comfortably flowing

Fast and precise

Slow, in a free style

Very fast and with vigor

Donald Keats

(b. 1929)

In consideration of the performer and members of the audience, please check audible paging devices with the ushers and silence audible timepieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are prohibited.

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN PERRY, distinguished artist and teacher, was educated at the Eastman School of Music and was a student of Cecile Genhart. During the summers of that time he worked with the eminent Frank Mannheimer. Recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, John Perry continued studies in Europe with Wladyslaw Kedra, Polish concert artist and professor at the Akademie für Musik in Vienna, and Carlo Zecchi, renowned conductor, pianist, and head of the piano department at Santa Cecilia Academy of Music in Rome.

In addition to appearances with major symphony orchestras, Mr. Perry is also a respected chamber musician. He has performed with oboist Ray Still, violinist Steven Staryk, bassoonist Milan Turkovic, cellist Paul Olefsky, and tenor Seth McCoy.

Mr. Perry is the winner of numerous awards including the highest prizes in both the Busoni and Viotti International piano competitions in Italy and special honors at the Marguerite Long International Piano Competition in Paris. His repertoire is broad, and while he is well known for interpretation of Beethoven and Mozart, his performances of the Romantic concerti have been highly praised. In addition, he has successfully introduced several important new works to the piano literature.

As a teacher, he enjoys an enviable reputation and is in constant demand at universities and conservatories throughout the U.S. His students have been prize winners in most of the major competitions, including two first prize winners in the Rubinstein, four first prize winners in the Naumburg, and first prize winners in the National Chopin Competition, the Beethoven Foundation Competition, the Federated Music Clubs, the YKA, the AMSC, and the YMF Competitions, as well as finalists in the Chopin International in Warsaw, the Van Cliburn, the Queen Elizabeth, and the Three Rivers Competitions.

Mr. Perry is on the faculty of The Shepherd School of Music, the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, the Community School for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles, and is a frequent guest faculty member at the Banff Center in Alberta, Canada. During the summer he is an artist-faculty member at the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Sarasota Festival of Music, and the Victoria International Festival. He is also a visiting artist-faculty member at the international music festivals in Alkmaar, Holland, and Grenoble, France. His recordings are available on the Telefunken, Musical Heritage Society, CBC, and Vox labels.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Sonata Samuel Jones

Samuel Jones' Piano Sonata, composed in 1961-62, received its world premiere on October 17, 1963, in Alma, Michigan, in a performance by the composer at Alma College where he was at that time a member of the music faculty as well as music director of the Saginaw Symphony.

The sonata, in three movements, is faithful to the traditional argument of the sonata concept, but with its own points of view. For example, though the first movement presents conflict, as expected, between tonal areas of the principal and secondary themes, the greater conflict exists in the bitonality of the opening idea itself, which becomes a point of fierce contention in the coda, with the C major of the right hand finally winning out in the last moment over the B-flat major of the left. The opening motto contains other salient features as well: though each hand mirrors the neighbouring tone expansion of the other, they have decidedly different ideas of how to go about it, the bass emphasizing regular accents and the treble preferring instead to speak in dotted rhythms. These conflicts find momentary resolution in the development section when a new melodic idea, an offshoot of the lyrical second theme, wends its way with undotted rhythms from the tenor range ever higher, all the while gracefully accompanied by the right hand's dotted lacerations. But the original conflict soon arises, at first surreptitiously then more insistently, leading to the reiteration of the opening materials and finally culminating in the aforementioned struggle in the coda.

The second movement is a graceful siciliano, with the expected gently-rocking six-eight rhythms. The stage is set by a brief prologue, which is repeated at the close of the movement. In between is intoned a simple song-form in which chords built from recurring wheel-fragments support a plaintive melody which seeks seemingly every non-harmonic way possible to escape the tonal dominance of its accompaniment. In the middle section the theme is joined by a canonic partner and the music reaches a peak of intensity, though it does not overturn the rule of the harmonies. They return, and the plaintive melody sings again, alone now, and this time it finds contentment in its surroundings.

The final movement is an ABACABA rondo in which the main theme undergoes a striking transformation from the jaunty innocence it exhibits at the opening to the vehement intensity it has acquired by the time the movement - and the work - ends. The first diversion from the rondo theme is strongly related to the second theme of the opening

movement. The middle diversion is a two part form, the first being a steady expansion of a melody which is initially restricted to two pitches only and which gradually wins for itself a greater freedom, and the second being a quiet chorale (present simultaneously with its mirror an octave lower) which seems to offer momentary thanks for newly won freedoms. But the struggles have deeply affected the main idea, and the transformation mentioned above is immediately noticed upon its return. If one feels at the end a certain desperation, one also senses an unmistakable resolve and a final resolution which expresses a fierce determination to meet any challenge.

— Note by the composer

Sinfonia Paul Cooper

In mid-February 1989, John Perry approached me with the idea of commissioning a work in celebration of Steinway's 500,000th piano. Immediately, I posed two questions: how long a composition was desired, and what was the proposed premiere date. To compose a large-scale work for solo piano in less than four months was both a stimulating and an intimidating assignment. Equally clear was the fact that it needed to be a work that extensively explored the ranges, dynamics, and coloristic possibilities of the keyboard and provided for markedly contrasting tempos.

I rejected several working titles to finally choose that of Sinfonia, which seemed to me to embrace the totality of the work with its sharp contrasts of tempi, moods, and emotions. The work might be compared to a three-act drama with a few principal characters whose identities gradually unfold, entwine with each other, and together, explore the aspects of sorrow and joy, of anger and love.

— Note by the composer

Piano Sonata Donald Keats

The first movement (Comfortably flowing) has two main thematic ideas which are presented in opposition, worked over, and then reconciled. Contrasts of tonal levels, and the use of three-tiered sound (high, middle, and low, exceeding the normal range of two hands) mark this movement. Its mood is lyric.

The second movement (Fast and precise) is a sparse, driving, but controlled scherzo. Its middle section — its foil, meant to set off the scherzo (and in which BACH makes an appearance) — leads to a return, in intensified form, of the scherzo.

The third movement (Slow, in a free style) is lyric and highly expressive, with a certain sense of suspended time. There is much use of trills, and some use of serial technique, freely treated.

The last movement (Very fast and with vigor) is fast and driving, the writing at times virtuoso in style. It is a sort of perpetual motion, meant to press forward to end the movement, and the Sonata, forcefully.

— Note by the composer

