

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

JOHN HENDRICKSON, piano

*THE SOLO PIANO WORKS
OF PAUL COOPER*

Monday, February 19, 1996

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Cycles (1969)
(twelve short pieces for piano)

Paul Cooper
(b. 1926)

Four Intermezzi (1980)

Sonata for Piano (1962)

Tranquillo diventando agitato
Grave
Vivace
Molto agitato diventando tranquillo

INTERMISSION

Frescoes (1994)

Study in sixths: Calm and reflective
Study in fifths: With quiet energy
Study in fourths: Quietly dramatic
Study in thirds: Fast and aggressive
Study in octaves: Very calm and deeply reflective

Sinfonia for Solo Piano (1989)

Tempestoso
Mesto
Volando

PROGRAM NOTES

Cycles was commissioned by the Kansas Music Teachers for the state convention in 1969. The work was subsequently submitted to the Music Teachers National Association headquarters, where it was judged along with entries from other states. *Cycles* had the distinction of being named the best composition and earning for me the Distinguished Composer of the Year award. The twelve short pieces are of intermediate difficulty and are unified by common melodic materials. New notation and new keyboard techniques are in evidence — introducing young pianists to spatial and proportional notation of the 1950s and 1960s.

Jeffrey Kurtzman, a colleague at the Shepherd School, commissioned the *Four Intermezzi* as a gift for his wife. A double premiere in Houston — Kathi Kurtzman for the Tuesday Musical Club and Gary Smart for the SYZYGY, New Music at Rice series — launched the first of numerous performances in the United States and Europe.

In the early 1960s, numerous colleagues and friends commissioned me for several works resulting in the first violin concerto, two string quartets, and six sonatas. The *Sonata for Piano* is one such composition, commissioned by the supremely gifted young pianist, Ronald Rogers. The work is highly chromatic but also lyrical, and consists of three sections plus a reprise, all played without pause.

As with the *Four Intermezzi*, *Frescoes* was commissioned by Mimi Walker on the occasion of her husband, William Walker's 50th birthday. Each short movement emphasizes a particular interval — thirds, fifths, sixths, etc. *Frescoes* was widely performed in Europe this past summer.

John Perry commissioned the *Sinfonia for Solo Piano* to commemorate the 500,000th Steinway piano. The premiere took place in the Cullen Theater of the Wortham Theater Center in Houston. The fifty or sixty performances have been worldwide — from China to Poland and throughout the United States. It is a large, virtuoso work in classical three-movement form. The outside movements are extroverted while the middle movement might suggest a funeral dirge.

I began notating my compositions when I was about eight years old, and obviously there are more than these five piano pieces. John Hendrickson performs those works that I have included in my publisher's catalogue. The compositions span more than thirty years of creativity and are diverse in style and vocabulary.

— Notes by the composer

BIOGRAPHIES

PAUL COOPER, born in Victoria, Illinois, on May 19, 1926, is acknowledged as one of the country's most distinguished composers. Currently the Lynette S. Autrey Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence at The Shepherd School of Music, he made his professional debut in 1953 with a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Since that time he has built an impressive reputation as a teacher, author, critic, and composer of international stature. He has won nearly every composition prize available in the United States.

In a recent In Tune review of a new compact disc (CRI 687), the writer commented that Paul Cooper is one of the "most individual and idealistic of American composers. Cooper's music is immediately communicative and powerful, although he makes no gestures toward commercial tastes. The music is serial (i.e. twelve-tone), without being doctrinaire about it. Without sounding at all like Berg, the music leans in something of that direction: always highly passionate, exquisitely crafted in every detail, and serious in a dedicated way that's nearly religious. Austere, other-worldly meditations dominate in moods." Paul Cooper's highly selective publisher's list includes six symphonies, six concertos, four oratorios, and more than sixty diverse vocal and instrumental chamber works.

Texas-born pianist JOHN HENDRICKSON exemplifies the best of prominent artists performing today, wielding powerful pianism with interpretive persuasion. Active as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator, Mr. Hendrickson has appeared with many leading orchestras and chamber ensembles in Texas. He currently is on the faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities at Houston Baptist University.

The National Endowment for the Arts awarded a Solo Recitalist Grant to Mr. Hendrickson, in which he video-recorded Chopin's twenty-four etudes as well as other major keyboard works. Along with his passion for traditional repertoire, he has a flair for the contemporary, including numerous premieres by leading present-day composers. Mr. Hendrickson made his debut in New York City at the Merkin Concert Hall. He has been on the Touring Roster of the Texas Commission on the Arts for several seasons. He has received scholarships to the Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara), and the Adamant Festival. His concert appearances include recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and at the Terrace Theatre in the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Hendrickson is an honor graduate of Rice University. He has been a frequent performer on the SYZYGY, New Music at Rice series at The Shepherd School of Music. His teachers include Aube Tzerko, Mary Norris, Jerome Lowenthal, and William Chaisson.