



NEW MUSIC AT RICE

IN MEMORIAM:

PAUL COOPER

1926-1996

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Seventeen Haiku (1987)
(Poems by Claudia Cooper)

Paul Cooper
(1926-1996)

Sumiyo Ender, soprano
Thomas Jaber, piano

Frescoes (1994)

- I. Study in sixths: Calm and reflective
- II. Study in fifths: With quiet energy
- III. Study in fourths: Quietly dramatic
- IV. Study in thirds: Fast and aggressive
- V. Study in octaves: Very calm and deeply reflective

Loreta Kovačić, piano

From the Sacred Harp (1982)

(Traditional texts)

- I. Come on, my friends ... (1869)
- II. O Jesus, my Savior ... (1844)
- III. There is a holy city ... (1844)
- IV. Come on, my friends ...
- V. See how the scriptures are fulfilling ... (1844)
- VI. I want to live ... (1911)
- VII. Come on, my friends ...

Joyce Farwell, mezzo-soprano
Brian Connelly, piano

INTERMISSION

Elegies (1991)

Desmond Hoebig, cello

Brian Connelly, piano

Winter Poems (1984)

(Poems by C. E. Cooper)

I. Dull sky ...

II. Old tree men ...

III. Naked before my mirror ...

IV. Even the broken fences are beautiful ...

V. The wonder of this icy splendor world ...

Sumiyo Ender, soprano

Paula Page, harp

John Thorne, flute

Sinfonia for solo piano (1989)

Tempestoso

Mesto

Volando

John Perry, piano

PAUL COOPER, born in Victoria, Illinois, on May 19, 1926, is acknowledged as one of the country's most distinguished composers. Following his education at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and the Conservatoire National and the Sorbonne in Paris, his teaching posts included the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), the University of Cincinnati, and, since 1974, The Shepherd School of Music, where he was Composer-in-Residence and held the Lynette S. Autrey Endowed Chair. Here he was influential in planning the curriculum and setting the standards for the fledgling school. He was a guest professor at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen. His professional debut came in 1953 with a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. In the intervening years he built an impressive reputation as a teacher, author, critic, and composer of international stature. He won nearly every composition prize available in the United States: a Fulbright Fellowship to Paris, two Guggenheim Fellowships to London, and awards or grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Ford, Rockefeller, and Rackham Foundations, and the National Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, as well as yearly awards from ASCAP since 1966.

His highly selective publisher's catalogue cites nearly eighty compositions, listing six symphonies, six concertos, six string quartets, four oratorios, and a vast amount of instrumental and vocal chamber music. He has substantial listings in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (*International and American*), in the International Who's Who, and in Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians.

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."

In *Profile of a Lifetime*, the dean of American composition, Ross Lee Finney, comments as follows:

I have come to feel that Paul Cooper is one of America's most distinguished composers. His music has deep emotional motivation and at the same time a simplicity and clarity that comes from his mastery of craft. The inner fabric is so subtle and the melodic flow is so natural that on each hearing I find relationships I had not previously noted. Perhaps I like his music so much because his roots are much like my own.

Tonight's concert was planned as part of the celebration of Paul Cooper's 70th birthday next month. It is a source of great sadness that he did not live to receive the expressions of gratitude and praise that event would have brought him. As a teacher, composer, colleague, and friend, he gave unstintingly of himself and will be missed.