

## **PAUL COOPER**

### **QUARTET NO. 6 (1977)**

**Shepherd Quartet (Ronald Patterson, Raphael Fliegel, Wayne Crouse, Shirley Trepel)**

PAUL COOPER (b. 1926, Victoria, III.) has taught and chaired departments at the Universities of Michigan and Cincinnati, was a music critic for the Los Angeles *Mirror*, was instrumental in organizing contemporary music series at Ann Arbor and Cincinnati, and has served the Music Teachers National Association as chairman of the American Music Division and as vice-president. His professional awards include two Rackham Research Grants, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Rockefeller Award for Performance, and nine ASCAP awards, as well as the 1977 Award and Citation of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters that made this recording possible. His textbook *PERSPECTIVES IN MUSIC THEORY* has been adopted by approximately 250 colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Since 1974 he has been a faculty member of the Shepherd School of Music in Houston.

The composer has submitted the following notes:

“The QUARTET NO. 6 was completed in December of 1977. It consists of two movements and coda, each portion of which becomes shorter in duration. In its emotional intensity and its emphasis on the pitch C-sharp, the piece is a homage to Beethoven's *Quartet, Op. 131*.

“The first movement opens with an imitation of wind chimes. Later, dense harmonic textures are contrasted with scurrying figures, both derived from the opening bell-like sounds.

“The second movement is a whirl-wind of motion derived from two 3-note cells — one dark, the other bright. Unlike the rhapsodic first movement, this movement resembles a Classical rondo: A B A C A.

“The coda — thirty-nine measures in length — calls for the players to hold and play their instruments like Renaissance viols. The final measures reveal the emotional values of serenity, seriousness, and above all, warmth and spirituality.

“The Shepherd Quartet, to whom the piece is dedicated, premiered the work on January 25, 1978.”

## **PAUL LANSKY**

### **STRING QUARTET**

**Pro Arte Quartet**

**(Norman Paulu, Martha Francis, Richard Blum, Parry Karp)**

PAUL LANSKY (b. 1944, New York City) studied at the High School of Music and Art, Queens College and Princeton University. He has taught at the Mannes College of Music, Swarthmore College, and in 1969 joined the faculty at Princeton University. He is a former member of the Dorian Wind Quintet (French Horn) and is an associate editor of *Perspectives of New Music*. For the past several years his work has consisted alternately of compositions for computer and for instrumental ensembles. His music is recorded on CRI, Columbia/Odyssey and Nonesuch Records.

He writes:

“My *STRING QUARTET*, dedicated to George Perle, began, in 1971, as a determined attempt to deal with some compositional ideas on which I had been working. After hearing its first performance several years later, I realized that I had packed forty minutes worth of music for what should have been a much shorter trip, and that without such heavy baggage it would be a more pleasant and interesting journey. I therefore decided, in 1977, to drastically revise, compress and rewrite it. While I was concerned that six years' distance might obscure some of the original conception, I felt that the experience I had gained in the intervening time would more than compensate for this possibility. As it turned out, the effort was justified since the process of revision was filled with interesting and enlightening experiences and culminated in a series of excellent rehearsals with the Pro Arte Quartet in which a great deal of the string writing and notation was considerably improved by the players' perceptive suggestions. I now have a piece which seems to travel across some interesting landscapes, rather than twist through circuitous mazes.

“The piece is in three movements; two shorter slow and muted outer movements surround a larger and quite active central movement. The first movement quietly and calmly unfolds in a straightforward way without much disturbance. The second movement, a series of fantasy-like episodes using harmonic and motivic material similar in some ways to that of the first movement, consequently provides a more complex resonance for the material of the first movement. Finally, the third movement bears a great deal of surface similarity to the first movement but is much more complicated. One way to view the overall shape of the piece is thus to think of the third movement as an image of the first as seen through the increased range of possibilities offered by the second.”

The *PRO ARTE QUARTET* has continued in a single line of tradition from its first incarnation, in 1912. In the 1930's, this group was the first to have a major career on records. The second incarnation, under the distinguished leadership of Rudolf Kolisch, became the first quartet-in-residence at an American educational institution, the University of Wisconsin, where it has remained. It has retained its stylistic integrity, and its reputation for distinguished interpretations of new music, by the evolutionary rate of change in its personnel. The quartet can be heard playing music of Elston on *CRI SD 289*, and Boykan on *CRI SD 401*.

Since its 1976 debut, the *SHEPHERD QUARTET* has already attracted national attention. Formed of the principal string players of the Houston Symphony, the Shepherd Quartet is an integral part of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. The Quartet provides individual instruction as well as coaching in chamber music to Shepherd School students and is deeply involved in the School's innovative Orchestra Studies Program. The Shepherd Quartet has also recorded Paul Cooper's *STRING QUARTET NO. 5* on *CRI SD 369*.

This record is sponsored by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters as part of its music awards program. Four cash awards and a *CRI* recording are given annually to honor and encourage outstanding composers and to help them continue their creative work. Paul Cooper and Paul Lansky were winners in 1977.

*(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*