



Julia Amanda Perry

3/25/1924 – 10/12/1979

Anna Edwards

Julia Amanda Perry, a terrific black composer whose music should be heard. There are two recordings of “Short Piece for Orchestra,” the first by the New York Philharmonic in 1965

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhIsJ_RKoXg and more recently by the LA Philharmonic (fall 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YYFTBgMZ5E>. The link to the New York Philharmonic has more information on Perry’s life.

Perry was a prolific composer who grew up in Lexington, Kentucky. She studied voice, piano and composition beginning with the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, which led to her Guggenheim Fellowship, which provided her an opportunity to continue her studies with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence, Italy. In 1954, she studied under Nadia Boulanger and was awarded the Boulanger Grand Prix for her Viola Sonata. After five years in Europe, Perry returned to the states to continue her compositional work while teaching at Tallahassee’s Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College and as a visiting artist at Atlanta College.

Short Piece for Orchestra is representative of Perry’s neoclassical style. The beginning offers a frantic feel with lots of syncopation and a musical tug-of-war between the strings and brass. A lyrical string and woodwind section follows. Truly a terrific composition!