



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Akron Symphony Releases World Premiere Recording of Julia Perry's *Fragments*](#)

Akron, Ohio - The Akron Symphony is proud to announce the release of two live recordings of music by Akron composer Julia Perry, including the world premiere of *Frammenti dalle lettere di Santa Caterina (Fragments from the Letters of Saint Catherine)*. The Akron Symphony's performance of Perry's *Pastoral*, a septet for flute and strings, is also now available.

Perry composed *Fragments from the Letters of Saint Catherine* in 1953 at the age of 29, while living in Italy. She created the text using short excerpts of letters by Saint Catherine of Siena, a writer and mystic whose spiritual and moral convictions had a great influence on the Catholic Church of the 14th century. The world premiere performance took place on November 12, 2022, at EJ Thomas Hall in Akron, Ohio. Led by ASO Music Director Christopher Wilkins, the performance features soprano Louise Toppin—founder of the African Diaspora Music Project, and coincidentally, born in Akron—the Akron Symphony Chamber Choir, and the Akron Symphony Orchestra.

Perry composed *Pastoral*, a septet for flute and string sextet, at the MacDowell Colony (now simply MacDowell) in 1959, at the age of 35. The Akron Symphony's performance took place in EJ Thomas Hall on January 14, 2023, on the campus of the University of Akron. It features ASO principal flutist, Barbara O'Brien, and members of the Akron Symphony Orchestra's string section.

These recordings are part of the Akron Symphony's [Julia Perry Project](#), which, together with the [African Diaspora Music Project](#), seeks to promote publishing, performance, research and recording of Julia Perry's music.

"The vast majority of Julia Perry's music is completely unknown. Even among people steeped in our rarefied field, most don't know her music," shared Wilkins. "No current project is timelier than our effort to make her music known throughout the world. Hers is an Akron story through and through. Raised, educated, celebrated, supported—and ultimately ignored—in Akron, it is likely that no more important figure in classical music has ever emerged from this city."

Most of Perry's hundred-plus works have not been published, and few of her works have been recorded. Only a smattering of performances are available on YouTube, Spotify, or Apple Music, and the pieces that have been performed or recorded are only those that have been published, which is a total of about 18 works.

"Julia Perry deserves to be celebrated and remembered. We hope that these recordings will help shine a light on her music and inspire more people to explore her extraordinary body of work," said Wilkins.

The recordings were captured by recording engineer Steve M. Savanyu and edited by Akron Symphony Music Director Christopher Wilkins in post-production. They are now available for streaming on Spotify and Apple Music.

For more information about the Julia Perry Project, including how to access the live recordings, please visit AkronSymphony.org/JuliaPerry.

About the Akron Symphony Orchestra

For more than 60 years, the Akron Symphony Orchestra has been a driving musical force throughout the Greater Akron area. Widely recognized for musical excellence and performance versatility, the Akron Symphony Orchestra is committed to enhancing the quality of life of our community through educational and musical excellence.

The Akron Symphony Orchestra is operated by the Greater Akron Musical Association, Inc. (GAMA). GAMA's vision is to be embraced and sustained as a community treasure that provides a welcoming environment for all people to experience great music. This vision is realized by operating the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Akron Youth Orchestras, Akron Symphony Chorus, and numerous special outreach and educational programs.

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