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**Videmus Inc. Publishes Julia Perry's  
Previously Unavailable Catalog of Music  
Through New Relationship with Boosey & Hawkes**



Julia Perry (Photo: Rider University Libraries' Julia A. Perry Collection); high resolution photos available [here](#).

[www.videmus.org](http://www.videmus.org) | [www.boosey.com/Perry](http://www.boosey.com/Perry)

NEW YORK, NY (December 5, 2024) – **Videmus Inc.** announced today that through a new relationship with **Boosey & Hawkes**, one of the world's leading classical music publishers, it will make available the previously unpublished music of composer **Julia Perry**, whose work fell into obscurity after her death in 1979 and is only now beginning to receive the attention it has so richly deserved. Directed by **Dr. Louise Toppin**, Videmus is a non-profit arts organization dedicated to the promotion of concert works by African American, women, and under-presented composers, providing access to the work of marginalized composers through educational programming, performance opportunities, and scholarly research. **In 2024, Julia Perry's centennial year, the Estate of Julia A. Perry assigned all copyrights for Herb and sq as go to pool pool unpublished work to Videmus Inc.** Perry's music is also currently GRAMMY-nominated for the first time, as part of the *American Counterpoints* album from Experiential Orchestra, music director James Blachly, and violinist Curtis Stewart.

Julia Perry (1924-1979) was an African American composer, born in Lexington, Kentucky and raised in Akron, Ohio. Her early career was filled with promise: she spent two summers at the Berkshire Music Center, studied with Luigi Dallapiccola and briefly with Nadia Boulanger, won the Prix Fontainebleau and two Guggenheim Fellowships, and her *Study for Orchestra* was performed by the New York Philharmonic in 1965. But tragically, many of her roughly 100 compositions remain unknown. Perry suffered a paralytic stroke in 1970. As musicologist J. Michele Edwards writes, "Her letters reveal her effort to walk, talk, and conduct again. She did learn to write with her left hand and resumed composing; however, she endured tragic emotional and financial difficulties."

As a non-profit, mission-based organization, Videmus supports the research, publication, recording, and performances of Perry's music, creating accurate materials serving the practical needs of performers and providing regularly updated editions. Videmus intends for this endeavor to serve as a model for others seeking to bring works of unjustly ignored

composers to light. Additionally, the publication of Perry's works will help scholars to reconstruct her musical and personal journey, providing a valuable resource to future biographers. For distribution of Perry's works, Videmus is proud to partner with Boosey & Hawkes to make Perry's music available worldwide through print, performance, and licensing.

**Louise Toppin** says, "Julia Perry's prominence in music history as an African American woman composer has been erased for too long. Her story as a rising star in the world of composition and conducting during the years of extreme segregation in the United States is both compelling and astonishing. Her compositions (although to date her known output is small) show craftsmanship of the highest caliber that appeal to performers and audiences alike. Many of her compositions remain lost. Videmus is devoted to uncovering any works that still lie in publishers' archives, university libraries, or in public or private collections. The neglect Perry's music has faced is not unique. We hope that this endeavor might serve as a model for others seeking to bring additional works of unjustly ignored composers to light."

"During her too-brief career, Julia Perry's compositions earned praise in every esteemed musical circle from New York to Paris, despite the immense systemic challenges she faced," says **Steven Lankenau**, Senior Vice President of Boosey & Hawkes. "She is an indisputably important figure in the history of 20th-century American music, and Boosey & Hawkes is proud to partner with Videmus to bring her unpublished works to the public as this noteworthy composer's larger legacy continues to unfold."

### **Julia Perry's Works to be Published:**

The Julia Perry catalog published by Videmus, which will be released across multiple years, includes a broad range of works for orchestra, choir, chamber ensemble, songs, and piano music.

### **The following works are immediately available from Boosey & Hawkes:**

[Three Spirituals for Orchestra](#) (1965–67)

[Prelude for Piano](#) (1946/1962)

[Prelude for Strings](#) (Prelude for Piano 1946/1962; arr. for strings by Roger Zahab, 2020)

[Symphony in One Movement for Violas and String Basses](#) (1961)

[Quartette for Wind Quintette](#) (Symphony No. 13 for Wind Quintet) (1963/1976)

[Quinary Quixotic Songs for Bass-Baritone and Five Instruments](#) (1976)

Works planned for future release include *Four Spirituals* for orchestra, *Contretemps* for orchestra, *Hymn to Pan* for choir, and *The Selfish Giant: A Sacred Musical Fable* (piano reduction of a three-act opera).

### **The Path to Publication:**

The path to publication of Julia Perry's catalog was complex and spanned many years, involving a dedicated volunteer working group of musicians and scholars galvanized by a desire to bring her music to a wider public, and brought together by Dr. Louise Toppin at Videmus Inc.

When Julia Perry died without a will on April 24, 1979, twenty-one of her approximately one hundred works had been published, and there was no mechanism to secure permission to publish the rest of her music. Beginning in 2021, the Akron Symphony sought a legal solution, and with the support of Probate Judge Elinore M. Stormer of Summit County, Ohio, an estate was opened in Julia Perry's name on October 12, 2022. Over the course of two years, the estate granted permission for performances and recordings, and ultimately transferred copyrights to Perry's unpublished music to Videmus Inc. in September 2024.

Concurrent to the legal process, **Louise Toppin** brought together a Julia Perry working group in 2021 to coordinate the various efforts underway internationally to promote Perry's music and to share new research with each other. Since then, the core of the effort to publish Perry's music has been the three-person Videmus editorial team of Louise Toppin; conductor **Christopher Wilkins**, music director of the Akron Symphony; and conductor **James Blachly**, music director of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra and Experiential Orchestra.

For over 30 years, Louise Toppin has specialized in performing, promoting, commissioning, and educating students on music by African American composers, including lectures around the world, co-founding and directing the George Shirley Competition, and her creating of the African Diaspora Music Project (ADMP) a digital online catalog including over 3,000 songs searchable by voice type, and over 1,400 works for orchestra. She also brings her decades of experience working with heirs, including her work with the heirs of Margaret Bonds, which ultimately led to the successful publication of Bonds' music in recent years. In co-curating with James Blachly the four-day 2024 Julia Perry Centenary Celebration and Festival in New York, Toppin gathered scholars at The New School to deliver 14 lectures and keynote addresses on Julia Perry's life and music. Through her direction of Videmus, Toppin wrote grants and raised funds for the legal fees as well as engraving and editorial costs.

In Perry's hometown of Akron, Ohio, conductor Christopher Wilkins began researching Perry's works in 2018 and created the Julia Perry Project with the Akron Symphony in 2021, including six archival recordings of previously unheard works, and recorded interviews with violinist, conductor, and scholar Roger Zahab, and Ophelia Averitt, a neighbor and friend of Julia Perry. Since 2021, Wilkins has led multiple reading and recording sessions and performed many of Perry's unpublished works with the Akron Symphony. He also spearheaded the legal effort with Akron attorneys Dave Lieberth and Kevin Davis.

Conductor James Blachly first encountered Perry's music in 2014, and in addition to his work on the editorial team, has championed Perry's music in performances for the past five years. With Louise Toppin, he co-directed the Julia Perry Centenary Celebration and Festival in March 2024. The four-day Festival brought together 140 performers and scholars in New York in the largest Julia Perry celebration in the world to date. Blachly has also brought Perry's music to new audiences through performances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Experiential Orchestra, and Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. His latest album with Experiential Orchestra, *American Counterpoints* on the Bright Shiny Things label, features the first commercial recording of Perry's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra performed with soloist Curtis Stewart, and is currently nominated for two 2025 GRAMMY® Awards in the Classical Compendium and Best Classical Instrumental Solo categories. This is the first GRAMMY nomination for the music of Julia Perry.

In addition to the editorial team of Toppin, Wilkins, and Blachly, the assistance of composer, conductor, violinist and scholar **Roger Zahab** has been essential in the path to publication. Zahab has been researching and creating editions of Perry's music for more than 30 years, including his widely performed arrangement *Prelude for Strings*, and has given several notable premieres of her works both as a violinist and conductor. He is also one of the only musicians alive who had direct communication with Julia Perry during the final years of her life.

### **About Julia Perry:**

Julia Amanda Perry  
Born: March 25, 1924, Lexington KY  
Died: April 24, 1979, Akron OH

Julia Perry is a unique figure in American music. In her twenties, she gained international recognition for her modernist classical compositions, while also publishing vocal and choral works inspired by Black American musical traditions. She composed across nearly every genre, including orchestral and choral works, operas, chamber music, solo instrumental pieces, and vocal compositions. Her eclectic style constantly evolved as she experimented with new forms and responded to the shifting cultural landscape around her.

An accomplished performer, Perry excelled as a mezzo-soprano soloist, orchestral and choral conductor, violinist, and pianist. She trained with some of the most esteemed teachers and institutions in the field. She studied voice and composition at Westminster Choir College, worked with composer Luigi Dallapiccola at Tanglewood, received orchestral conducting training through the extension division of the Juilliard School, and attended Nadia Boulanger's renowned composition class at Fontainebleau.

In November 1951, Perry moved from New York City to Florence, Italy, to continue her studies with Dallapiccola. While in Italy, she gained increasing recognition as a composer, with critics especially praising her setting of the Stabat Mater, noting her sensitivity to the language and her compelling performance as the vocal soloist. Perry spoke fluent Italian, setting an Italian text in a vocal-orchestral cantata and creating an Italian version of her opera *The Cask of Amontillado*. She also wrote original poetry and prose—often composing her own texts and librettos—and translated seventy-eight African fables into English from a book she had acquired in Italy.

Her achievements were recognized through two Guggenheim Fellowships, two Marian Anderson Awards for vocal excellence, a "Grand Prix" in Boulanger's class, prizes from the National Association of Negro Musicians, a National Institute of Arts and Letters award, and eight residencies at MacDowell.

After touring European cities with support from the U. S. Information Service—conducting her own compositions and lecturing on American music—she returned to the United States permanently in 1959. The 1960s began with promise, with support for recordings and more offers from publishing houses. In 1965, the New York Philharmonic performed her Short Piece for Orchestra.

However, despite her efforts to earn a living as a composer, Perry found that doors were not open to her in the United States as they had once been in Europe, and several of her most significant works were never performed or published. After suffering a paralytic stroke in 1970, she continued to compose with her left hand, despite the lack of professional opportunities, until her death on April 24, 1979. Through the research work of Videmus, in partnership with Boosey & Hawkes, many of Julia Perry's unpublished works are now being discovered and made available for performance for the first time.

### **About Videmus Inc.:**

Videmus Inc. is a non-profit arts organization dedicated to the promotion of concert works by African American, women and under-presented composers. The organization's vision is to provide access to marginalized composers through educational programming, performance opportunities, and scholarly research. Videmus produces recordings, created an annual competition for students ages 14-35, created and maintains a scholarly research database, produces concerts and conferences, encourages research and publication in scholarly books and journals, creates editions for publication, and collaborates with other organizations to strengthen the diverse perspectives of our industry.

Videmus Inc. was founded and incorporated (501c3) in Massachusetts (1986) by Vivian Taylor. For the first ten years the arts organization presented concerts in New England and world premiere recordings of African American composers including William Grant Still, Donal Fox, T.J. Anderson, David Baker, Olly Wilson, George Walker, Undine Smith Moore, Florence Price, Julia Perry, Margaret Bonds, and Betty Jackson King.

In 1997, Videmus Inc. appointed Louise Toppin as the Director of the organization and under her leadership, its catalog of recordings expanded to include the world premiere vocal recordings of Leslie Adams and Robert Owens with tenor Darryl Taylor, the world premiere of William Grant Still opera *Highway One, USA*, the first recordings of the Sphinx organization finals, the world premiere recording of Leslie Adams' 24 etudes on two CDs (Maria Corley and Thomas Otten, pianists), and many more.

Videmus's recording strategy has been to fill in historic gaps by documenting the works of well-established composers such as Still, Baker, Bonds, Price, Moore, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Hall Johnson, Adolphus Hailstork, and many others, while presenting world premiere recordings (symphonic, chamber and solo) of newer composers such as Richard Thompson, Stephen Newby, Bill Banfield, Nkeiru Okoye, Robert Morris, and many more. In addition to its own recordings, Videmus has assisted many artists with repertoire, liner notes and introductions for their recordings that have received GRAMMY nominations, including Lawrence Brownlee and Will Liverman.

Videmus continues to curate concerts throughout the United States, has created scholarship programs including the Bridges Award and The George Shirley Vocal Competition; conferences such as "Reflecting on the Past Reaching Toward the Future" and the four-day "Julia Perry Centenary Celebration and Festival" co-presented with Experiential Orchestra, created a database in the African Diaspora Music Project; and published scores of vocal, instrument, chamber and orchestral repertoire with Classical Vocal Reprints, Hal Leonard, Hildegard Press, Carl Fischer and Boosey & Hawkes.

### **About Boosey & Hawkes:**

Boosey & Hawkes, a Concord company, is the world's largest specialist classical music publishing company. Together with its sister company Sikorski, it owns an unrivaled catalog of music copyrights including the works of such major 20th century composers as Stravinsky, Copland, Britten, Bartók, Shostakovich, Prokofieff, Khachaturian, Strauss and Rachmaninoff. In the 21st century, Boosey & Hawkes continues to publish the very best in new music and has exclusive agreements with many of the leading international classical composers of today, including John Adams, Unsuk Chin, Anna Clyne, Sofia Gubaidulina, Karl Jenkins, James MacMillan, Olga Neuwirth, Steve Reich and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

Boosey & Hawkes is a global publisher, with offices in the cultural hubs of New York, London, and Berlin, as well as a network of agents in other countries. It promotes its repertoire throughout the music world and seeks to lead artistic and creative taste, and continue to invest in development towards a fully digital future.

Boosey & Hawkes serves many different customers: licensing and renting music for performance, recording and broadcast; licensing music for film, TV, advertising, video games and online use; and publishing sheet music for purchase.

Boosey & Hawkes's extensive catalog of printed and digital music for the professional, student and leisure markets ranges from instrumental, band and choral to market-leading tutor books and creative teaching materials.

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