For Immediate Release

Two new trios by Constance Cooper will be premiered at a concert on Tuesday, April 20, 2004 at 8PM at Saint Peter's Church in the Citigroup Center, 619 Lexington Avenue at 53rd Street in New York City. A donation of $15 is suggested.

Miss Cooper’s new piano trio, Play Within a Play, will be performed by the group for which it was written, di.vi.sion (Kurt Briggs, violin; Matt Goeke, cello; and Renee Cometa Briggs, piano). In this four-movement work, microtonality dominates, even in the piano, whose microtonal resonances, ordinarily disguised, are here revealed and exploited. During the performance, the players banter about the music and about the composer, speaking, illustrating, then resuming play, causing ad libitum changes in form that are part and parcel of Play Within a Play.

The other new trio by Constance Cooper on the April 20th program is a multi-movement suite of intensely personal pieces with fanciful titles such as Indoor Storm, Backwards March, and Unnamed Street, for organ, electric piano, and improvising acoustic bass. The collective title of these pieces, a verse adapted from a Marianne Moore poem, is Repaying Sin-driven Senators by Not Thinking About Them, expressing what musicians must do when they are working: remain aloof from real-world events that are forever trying to press in. This microtonal work, conceived for the specific organ and architectural space of Saint Peter’s Church, unites classical musicians with jazz improvisation, the dominating force in Saint Peter’s musical repertoire. On April 20, Constance Cooper (electric piano) will be joined by the organist Walter Hilse and the bass player Dominic Duval, whose virtuosic performances in the Cecil Taylor Trio and on dozens of CD recordings are internationally recognized.

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Constance Cooper - Brief Biography

Constance Cooper received first prize in the 2002 Gustav Mahler Competition (Austria) for Acrobat, her double concerto for improvising solo violinist and cellist with chamber orchestra. The premiere on July 27, 2002 was recorded for broadcast on Austrian Radio and Television; an Italian premiere followed. She was a semifinalist in the Queen Elisabeth Competition of 1999 for her piano concerto Carinthia.

The music of Constance Cooper, "astonishingly evocative" (Newark Star-Ledger) and "poetic, with quarter-tones fully integrated into the harmony" (EAR magazine), and which "more than deserved the ovation it got" (Intermission) is "carefully crafted . . . with a sweet longing that shines through like a summer day," and "gives . . . hope that a new generation of composers can find atonality not only compelling but also truly beautiful." (Trenton Times). The first performance of her microtonal opera Easter Eve in September, 1996 was " . . . a strange and affecting evening of music . . . great dramatic effect [and] emotional authority . . . Cooper's music . . . painted every bit as gaudy and crowded a scene as could be imagined." (The Star-Ledger). Her reflections about microtonality on string instruments led to her invention of new hand-positions, notation and a "pizzicato-bow" for Coming From Us, commissioned by the American Composers Forum and premiered in New York City in 2001 -- "Music with life and soul . . . " (Sequentia 21), available as Cadence #5007.

Her piece for two pianos tuned a quarter-tone apart, Where the River Turns Like an Elbow into Dusk, commissioned in 1987 for Opus One Records' first CD, was broadcast over National Public Radio as one of the year's best recordings. Her orchestral works have been conducted by Harvey Sollberger, Steven Mackey, and Lawrence Leighton Smith; solo and chamber works have been read and performed by the Arditti Quartet, Speculum Musicae, the bassist Robert Black and the Brentano Quartet. Poem by Marina Tsvetaeva for electro-acoustical ensemble and voice received its premiere at Merkin Hall in New York City in 1994. Maybe I'm Blue Too was performed by the New Jersey Symphony in April, 1996. Her Divertimento for String Quartet, released in September, 2000, is available on the Princeton CD label. Amoroso, her most recent orchestral work, was recorded by Harold Farberman in April, 2001. In January, 2002, Miss Cooper was the vocal soloist in her Eight Deadly Sins, premiered at Princeton University.

During 2004, her volume of pieces for organ, synthesizer, and improvising acoustic bass, Repaying Sin-driven Senators by Not Thinking About Them, completed during her 2002 residence at ArtOMI, will be premiered at Saint Peter's Church in New York City on
April 20, as will her new microtonal piano trio with dialogue, **Play Within a Play. Easter Eve** will receive its **New York premiere in 2005**; her concerto for improvising French horn and big band will be heard for the first time in 2 Australian cities that same year.

Miss Cooper has appeared as composer, pianist, and singer at Lincoln Center, the Krannert Center of the University of Illinois and the Boston Conservatory of Music with the Princeton University Composers' Ensemble, Continuum, North-South Consonance and the American Microtonal Festival, and produced her own contemporary music recital series in her native New York City for seven years. She gave the Canadian premiere of Charles Wuorinen’s “Piano Sonata (1969)” and the “hometown” premiere of Charles Ives’ Concord Sonata in Concord, Massachusetts. She received her doctorate in composition from Princeton University in 2003.

**di.vi.sion**

**di.vi.sion** was founded in 1997 by its music director, Kurt Briggs. Its programming is based on the philosophy of 17th- and 18th-century British and American pleasure gardens: presenting “ancient” along with newer works. In its numerous concerts in New York and the tri-state area, **di.vi.sion’s 35-member core group sometimes divides into smaller combinations and sometimes expands.**

**di.vi.sion**’s piano trio (Kurt Briggs, violin; Matt Goeke, cello; and Renee Cometa Briggs, piano) currently performs several works of De Fesch, along with those of Mozart, Haydn, Hummel, Dvorak, Ravel, Roussel, Shostakovich, Piazzolla and Frank Bridge. The trio has played at The Hudson River Museum, Bronx Community College, CUNY, The Bronx Museum of Art, The New York Public Library, and throughout the tri-state area.

**di.vi.sion**’s full ensemble is taking part in a complete cycle of the Bach Lutheran masses at The Church of the Holy Apostles, where the group has also performed **Buxtehude’s Membra Jesu**, following historic performance practice by using gut strings, double choir, and a viol consort. Its current repertoire also includes pieces by De Fesch, Haydn, Mozart; works of the second Viennese school; and selections by Janacek, Khachaturian, Strauss, Constance Cooper, Gwyneth Walker, Thad Wheeler, Frank Zappa and Lalo Schifrin.

**Kurt Briggs**

The violinist Kurt Briggs appears with many orchestras and chamber
ensembles in the New York area. In his role as founder/music director of di.vi.sion, he has developed a concert series with The New York State Historical Society of Middlefield, NY. Mr. Briggs has recorded for Sony, Koch International, Newport Classics, Iota, Amphonic, and Hallmark. He is a member of London’s Performing Rights Society and New York’s NARAS.

Matt Goeke

The cellist Matt Goeke performs both traditional and new music with the EOS Orchestra, Musica Sacra, The Collegiate Chorale, the Stamford Symphony, North/South Consonance and the SEM and CrossTown Ensembles. He has worked with Butch Morris, Zeena Parkins, and Elliott Sharp, most recently on a "House Blend" concert at The Kitchen, and plays and records with the bands Church of Betty (Fruit on the Vine) and Voltaire (The Devil’s Bris, Almost Human). His trio Eight Strings and a Whistle (flute, viola, cello) has been heard throughout Maine, on Maine Public Radio and at New York’s Merkin Hall.

Renee Cometa Briggs

The pianist Renee Cometa Briggs recently gave solo recitals at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, also performing in the master classes of Dominique Merlet, Pascal Devoyon, Abdel Rahman El Bacha and Roy Howat, and winning the French Piano Institute’s award for Best Interpretation of a French Composition with her performance of the Debussy Etudes. She has been heard in recital at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., and in chamber works by Raoul Pleskow, Richard Brooks and Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy at the American Composers Alliance Festival at the Kosciuszko Foundation. Ms. Briggs is now a doctoral candidate at SUNY Stony Brook, after completing undergraduate studies at the North Carolina School for the Arts and a Master’s degree at the Mannes College of Music. Tina Dahl, Arkady Aronov and Clifton Matthews were among her teachers. Ms. Briggs has received an award from the Semans Art Fund for further study in Switzerland. She teaches at the Third Street Music Settlement in New York, the Closter Conservatory of Music in New Jersey and the Great Neck Music Center.

Dominic Duval

New Yorker Dominic Duval is one of the finest and most prolific bassists on the contemporary scene. Duval’s tenure with the Cecil
Taylor Trio has cemented his reputation as one of contemporary music's more important figures. He has performed and recorded in any number of genres, including modern classical, jazz and music which defies classification, with the saxophonists Joe McPhee, Ivo Perelman, Glen Spearman and Mark Whitecage; the composers Constance Cooper and Pauline Oliveros; the trombonist Steve Swell; the pianists Joseph Scanni and Michael Stevens; the trumpeter Herb Robertson; and the drummers Paul Lytton and David S. Ware, among many others. Duval leads and co-leads a number of ensembles himself, including the critically acclaimed C.T. String Quartet, Trio X, "The Wedding Band" and the Dominic Duval String Ensemble. Duval's solo bass CD, Night Bird Inventions, was a Top 10 pick in the Coda Magazine critics poll, and his String Ensemble CD, State of the Art, was chosen one of the year's best in the Jazziz Magazine poll. Mr. Duval regularly tours throughout the United States, Europe, Canada and Asia.

(www.dominicduval.com)

Walter Hilse

Walter Hilse is a native of New York City, where he studied at the Juilliard School of Music. He earned his advanced degrees from Columbia University and was valedictorian of Columbia College, class of 1962. His teachers included Bronson Ragan, Nadia Boulanger and Maurice Durufle.

As a solo performer, Walter Hilse has appeared throughout the United States, the Far East and Europe, with his three tours of Sweden (1990, 1994 and 1995) and his organ recital at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris being particularly well received. Also of note are his five critically acclaimed solo organ recitals at New York’s Alice Tully Hall. As organist and pianist he has collaborated with many singers and instrumentalists, as well as with performing ensembles such as the New York Virtuoso Singers, the Florilegium Chamber Choir and the Alliance for American Song.

Mr. Hilse’s published compositions include works for organ, piano, solo voices and chorus. While music director at various New York City churches, he composed more than twenty choral works, many of which have entered the standard repertory in churches such as Saint Luke in the Fields and Saint Peter’s Lutheran. A prize-winning Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, Walter Hilse is a faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music.
Constance Cooper Works

"**" indicates composer performing

** The voice part, if designated "in cabaret range," is lightly amplified.

Part 1 Works without Quarter-tones

Orchestra/Chamber Orchestra

**Acrobat** inspired by a poem of Wyslawa Szymborska, double concerto for chamber orchestra with improvising violin and cello solo, 2002. Recipient of Gustav Mahler Prize (Austria) 2002. Premiered, telecast and recorded in Austria by the Janus Ensemble of Vienna, Christoph Cech, conductor, with Benjamin Schmid, violinist, and Ernst Reijseger, cellist, July 27, 2002

solo violin and cello with fl/picc, cl, Fr, hn, tpt, pno, perc, str  c. 15'

**Spasimi d’Ira, Spasimi d’Amore** 2003  3333 4331 3 perc, hp, str 15'

**Even Your Rest is Restlessness** for chamber orchestra  2002

version 1: 2fl, 2 cl, alto and bar. sax, Fr hn, 2 tpts, ten trb, tuba, perc (2 players), pno, accordion, mandolin, and 3 vns

version 2: 2222 1211 2perc, hp, pno, vln 1&2, vla, and cello div a3  10'

**Amoroso** for orchestra 1999-2000; recorded by Harold Farberman, Spring, 2001

3333 4331 3 perc, pno, hp, str 25'

**Carinthia** piano concerto 1999 (Semifinals, Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Competition)

Piano soloist with 2222 2111 2 perc, str 13'

**Dora Markus** poem by Eugenio Montale, for 2 sopranos, mezzo-soprano and orchestra 1999

3334 4331 perc hp str30'

**Maybe I’m Blue Too** for orchestra; the New Jersey Symphony conducted by Lawrence Leighton Smith, April 24, 1996 2222 2221 2 perc, str  6'

Instrumental Chamber Music

**Acrobat** version for violin, viola, cello, and bass 1999 10’

* **Likelihood of Collision** for piano, two violins, viola and bass, new version commissioned by the Rock Creek Chamber Players; premiered on Dec. 1, 1996 14’

**Likelihood of Collision** original version for piano quintet, composed for Speculum Musicae and performed by its members, May 12, 1993 14’

**String Trio** Manhattan’s String Trio, New York University, December 11, 1988; recorded by the String Trio at Indiana University, November, 1990 13’

Chamber Music With Voice

* **Poems by Eugenio Montale** (in Italian) for soprano and piano

  **Lungomare** 3’ and

  **Su una lettera non scritta** (with cello) Susan Swaney, soprano, John Whitfield, cellist, and Raymond Fellman, pianist, Princeton University, May 14, 1996  7’
Unbeknownst to Me letters and fragments by Franz Kafka (in Czech), for tenor or high baritone, two trumpets and cello 1994;
Michael Willson, baritone, and the Princeton University Composers’ Ensemble conducted by Steven Mackey, March 31, 1994 12’

I’m Going to New York! poem by Frank O’Hara, for coloratura soprano, piccolo and percussion; Princeton University Composers’
Ensemble, February 12, 1992 8’

* The Crow poem by Primo Levi, set in English, for two speakers, chorus, organ, toy instruments and percussion; Westminster
Presbyterian Church, Wash., D.C., April 14, 1991 8’

Solo Songs with Keyboard or A Cappella

Shall I Repine poem by Jonathan Swift, for baritone and piano 1999 4’

Scenario for a Small Angry Cock comic melodrama for organ and speaker, text by Werner Aspenstroem, translated from the
Swedish, 1999 5’

When Amorists Grow Bald from Wallace Stevens’ Le Monocle de Mon Oncle, for mezzo-soprano and piano 1998 7’

* The Sea and the Skylark and Peace poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins; for solo woman’s voice 1997; demo recording by compos-
er 5’

Smanie implacabili text from Cosi fan Tutte, comic aria for coloratura soprano and piano; Susan Swaney, soprano, and Raymond
Fellman, pianist, Princeton University, May 14, 1996 3’

* The Knot poem by Irving Feldman, for soprano and piano; Princeton Univ., Oct., 1993 6’

Solo Instrument

* The Fox for piano, inspired by Philip Levine’s poem 1991; performance by composer 8’

* Prelude, Meditations on “Steal Away” and “Amazing Grace” for organ; premieres in NYC on New Year’s Day, 1989, and spring
and summer, 1991, Wash., D.C. 12’

Merce Cunningham Movie Suite in 5 movements for piano, Dec., 1988, New York 16’

Part II: Microtonal Works

Opera

* Easter Eve opera in one act after the short story by Anton Chekhov (in English translation by the composer) for soprano or high
mezzo-soprano, light soprano, high baritone, organ, and synthesizer; Susan Swaney and Constance Cooper, sopranos, Michael
Willson, baritone, Walter Hilse, organ, and Margaret Kampmeier, synthesizer, Princeton University Chapel, September 27, 1996; New
York premiere scheduled for April, 2005 60-65’

Chamber Orchestra

Promise of Harvest for No One for orchestra 1990 16’
Promise of Harvest for No One version for chamber orchestra, piano and percussion; Music of Our Time Ensemble, Indiana
University, Harvey Sollberger, conductor; June 24, 1991
Chamber Music (Instrumental)

* Repaying Sin-Driven Senators by Not Thinking About Them, pieces for organ and synthesizer (fully composed) and double bass (improvised), 2002; to be premiered at Saint Peter’s Church, New York City, on April 20, 2004, the composer (synthesizer) with Walter Hilse, organ, and Dominic Duval, bass 45-50’

Play Within a Play, piano trio with dramatic dialogue spoken by the performers, commissioned by di.vi.sion; to be premiered at Saint Peter’s Church, New York, 4/20/04 20’

* Coming From Us, book of 30 pieces for string ensembles of different sizes, several for the Hutchins Violin Octet; commissioned by the American Composers Forum and supported by the Aaron Copland Fund; premiered and recorded in New York City on February 10, 2001, the composer conducting; released as Cadence CD #5007 45’

Divertimento for String Quartet read and taped by the Arditti Quartet, Dec. 1, 1992; performed by members of the Cygnus Ensemble, May 20, 1997; CD recording, Dec.,1997 13’

Where the River Turns Like an Elbow into Dusk for two pianos tuned a quarter-tone apart; commissioned and recorded by Loretta Goldberg for Opus 1 Records’ first compact disk, 1987, and premiered by her on Dec. 4, 1987 at the Great Hall of Cooper Union, NYC 8’

Chamber Music with Voice

** Chekhov Letters for woman’s voice in cabaret range** with viola  2004  c15’

** Stendhal by himself and others cycle for woman’s voice 2004 c13’

** The Derrick text by Primo Levi, set in the English translation of William Weaver, for woman’s voice and viola 2003 12’

* ** Dante, Purgatory I set in the English translation of John Ciardi, for woman’s voice with viola and treble violin; premiered Nov. 15, 2002, the composer singing 13’

* ** Eight Deadly Sins (The Eighth is Bravado), song cycle for woman’s voice in cabaret range and two Baroque flutes; commissioned for the Princeton University Composers Ensemble on Jan. 8, 2002, the composer singing 15’

Animals poem by Frank O’Hara, for baritone, winds and strings  1999  10’

Poem Ending with a Line from Dante poem by William Matthews, for baritone and wind quintet 1998  5’

* ** Approached at a Hot-Dog Stand poem by Dan Brown, for speaker-singer and electro-acoustical ensemble, commissioned by FirstAvenue for its fifteenth-anniversary concert on April 10, 1997 in New York City with the composer as speaker-singer 3-4’

Metal Man poem by Barbara Holender, for soprano and chamber ensemble 1997 5’

Conversation with a Stone poem by Wyslawa Szymborska, for solo voice 1997; a different setting of the same poem for solo voice and chamber ensemble 1997 8’

* from The History of England by Jane Austen for two sopranos; Constance Cooper and Susan Swaney, Princeton University, May 14, 1996 6’

* The Poem that Took the Place of a Mountain poem by Wallace Stevens, for soprano or tenor and electronically enhanced oboe, acoustic bass and keyboards; Constance Cooper, soprano, with the FirstAvenue Ensemble providing improvisation controlled by the composer, Princeton University, October 4, 1994 4-6’

Wires poem by Marina Tsvetaeva (Russian and English), commissioned by the Downtown Ensemble with Meet the Composer 1994 6-7’
Poem by Marina Tsvetova (in Russian and English) for soprano, reciter (or tape) and electronically enhanced oboe/English horn, acoustic bass and keyboards, with optional video; premiered by Constance Cooper, soprano, and the First Avenue Ensemble providing improvisation controlled by the composer, New York City, Merkin Hall, March 5, 1994 9-11'

Three Russian Lullabies texts by Anna Akhmatova, Joseph Brodsky, and Tatyana Tolstaya (in Russian and English) for two sopranos, mezzo-soprano, viola and piano in different combinations; Princeton University Composers’ Ensemble, Oct. 12, 1993 12’

Farewell, Wild Woman poem by Lorna Goodison, for soprano-actress, saxophone quartet and piano; Constance Cooper, vocalist, with the Princeton University Composers’ Ensemble, Bryan Rulon conducting, May 10, 1993 10’

Mozart in Heaven for two sopranos and string sextet, poem by Manuel Bandeira (set in English) 1992; Princeton University Composers’ Ensemble conducted by Steven Mackey, February 11, 1992, the composer singing 14’

A Declaration of Rights five excerpts from Shelley for high soprano and flute, 1988; American Landmarks Festival, 1987; revised version, Princeton University, 1991 10’

Shem poem by Primo Levi (in Italian and English) for soprano and string trio, commissioned and performed by Westminster Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., April 13, 1990 8’

Shema revision of above for soprano and string quartet; read and taped by Constance Cooper, soprano, and the Brentano Quartet, May 15, 1994

The Years poem by Dan Brown, for soprano and string quartet 1990 7’

Solo Songs with Keyboard or A Cappella

Waxwings poem by Robert Francis, for women’s cabaret-range voice and piano, 2003 10’

Sweat poem by Stephen Dobyns, for soprano and piano 1998 10’

The Fly and The Silkworm (in Czech) from Bestiary by Milos Macourek for mezzo-soprano and piano 1998 12’

from Three Men, Two Good, One Bad for soprano and piano on texts by Sir Isaak Walton, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens; Susan Swaney, soprano, and Raymond Fellman, piano (Music at Midnight) and Constance Cooper, soprano/piano (Upon Abandoning the Attempt) May 14, 1996; also, The Captain on a text from Cranford by Gaskell 17’

Alleluia on B-A-C-H for soprano (with flexatone) and tap-dancer, 1992; Princeton University Composers Ensemble, February 1992 videotape available 6’

I Alone song cycle, 1988, American Microtonal Festival and IN, Washington, DC 20’

Arie Antiche familiar texts in German and Italian in new settings for unaccompanied voice; Du Bist die Ruh’ O del mio dolce ardor In quelle trine morbide recorded for broadcast by the composer at the studios of WBAI-FM, NYC, July, 1986 6’

Solo Instrument

Two Etudes for solo oboe 1995 6’

Crusoe in England after a poem by Elizabeth Bishop, for acoustic bass (C-attachment preferred); premiered by Robert Black in recital at Princeton University, March 2, 1994 7’
Minute-Operas an evening-long series of brief but intense flare-ups for soloists, orchestra, video and processed sound

Not an Enchantress?! poem by Marina Tsvetaeva (in Russian) for reciter and mime

Some Day the day before for piano, a commission for the Arrau Centenary, 2003

Sumatra to Trampoline 3 movements for orchestra with improvising solo string bass

As You Were piano trio #2

Untitled concerto for solo improvising French horn and big band; for performances in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia in 2005