Either/Or: 2021 Fall Season - Concert #1
Talib Rasul Hakim - Early Works

November 23, 8:00pm
Tenri Cultural Institute

CURATOR NOTE

Either/Or is proud to present this portrait concert of extremely rare music by African-American composer, educator, and community organizer Talib Rasul Hakim (1940-88).

The program comprises compositions from Mr. Hakim’s early career in the 1960’s. He was still known as Stephen A. Chambers (Hakim converted to Sufism and changed his name in 1973.) He was deeply ensconced in study during this time, at NYC institutions including Manhattan School of Music and The New School for Social Research, and with teachers such as Margaret Bond, Hal Overton, Chou Wen-Chung, and Ornette Coleman. He gradually gained recognition within the local avant garde community, especially after his music was performed on the influential Music Of Our Time series at Town Hall in 1964 or ‘65. It was immediately after the period represented in this concert that he joined composers Carman Moore, Noel Da Costa, and several others to co-found The Society of Black Composers in 1968.

In addition to Mr. Hakim’s works for solo piano (his most performed piece, Sound-Gone from 1967, which he described as “a poetic-philosophical sketch”), trombone and piano (Prelude), mixed quartets (Profiles & Four, from 1964 & ‘65 respectively), and string quartet (Currents, also from ‘67), the program includes Alma for flute and piano by colleague and recent Pulitzer Prize winner Tania León. Mr. Hakim and Ms. León, along with polymath composer/performer Julius Eastman, collaboratively curated and produced the Brooklyn Community Concerts series in the late 1970’s for Lukas Foss’ Brooklyn Philharmonia (as it was then known.)

I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to the Chambers family for giving Either/Or permission to perform the works on today’s program and to Columbia College Chicago Archives & Special Collections division for providing many of the scores used in this concert from its Center for Black Music Research Collection.

Here are online resources for further inquiry into Talib Rasul Hakim:

- David Baker, Lida Belt Baker, and Herman Hudson; Chapters IV, Talib Rasul Hakim; The Black Composer Speaks, pp.93-107; Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1978

Christopher McIntyre, Program Curator