

# PAUL REALE

1943 – 2020

Paul Reale, composer of classical concert music, was born March 2, 1943, and passed away July 22, 2020, from prostate cancer. His vast output includes music for nearly every musical instrument. There are four piano concertos, a triple concerto, a violoncello concerto, a violin concerto, the “Columbus” concerto for organ, a concerto for three trumpets and another for seven trumpets, two piano trios and a clarinet trio. A professional pianist himself, Reale wrote countless solo keyboard pieces including 12 piano sonatas, a CD’s worth of music for two pianos and duets (actually much more), chamber music, dramatic and choral works, song cycles and music for wind ensemble.

Almost denied tenure at UCLA, Reale considered opening the first McDonald’s franchise in Paris around 1973 until the likes of composer Roy Harris and cellist Gregor Piatagorsky wrote letters supporting him. His teachers included Chou Wen-Chung at Columbia College and George Rochberg at the University of Pennsylvania. Reale retired from UCLA in 2004 after have been there for 35 years. In 1995, he received the Charles and Harriet Luckman Award for Distinguished Teaching. He won many prizes and competitions that one can read about on his website.

Reale loved teaching music and adored his students, many of which have described him as a wonderful mentor and friend. A substantial amount of his brilliant students have gone on to have successful careers in classical composition, film composition, performance and education. His colleagues have described him as a “force of nature,” an “inspiring teacher,” “a mighty maestro” with a “unique expressive voice,” “the greatest teacher of music I ever knew” and a “trouble maker.”

Having been largely ignored by the professional music world in his hometown of Los Angeles, Reale’s career blossomed in the later years of his life. Productive right up to the end, his final two pieces: *Three Graces* for three cellos was completed in April, 2020, and a final concert etude, *Thirteenth Floor* for solo piano (which would have been his 13<sup>th</sup> piano sonata) was completed in May, 2020. His recordings are available commercially on the Naxos, MSR Classics and Music & Arts labels.

Reale was also a master architect and designed and built his dream house himself over many summers and sabbaticals. He designed his living room to maximize the enjoyment of music played through his sound equipment and built a vast music library. He renovated at least four classic BMW motorcycles, a Bugatti “VW kit” and a 1950s Jeep. His garden is second to none and exemplifies the statement by Cicero, the Roman philosopher, “If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need.” Reale’s additional passions included art, electronics and computers.

A loquacious man, he radiated ideas on every subject, writing articles to provoke discussion with essays on many musical subjects. One of these, “Musings on Populist Modernism,” was just published in the July/August 2020 issue of Fanfare Magazine. Many of these writings can be found on his website and the Professorial Page has an extremely brief and amusing “compositional lesson.” The website also includes his humor column, “Confessions of a Selfmade Misfit,” written in 1996-1997, on such topics as the pressure of Halloween and being an incompetent civil servant in his youth.

Reale was also well-known as a marathon bicyclist and enjoyed the riding training route in 1984 and beating members of the US Olympic bicycle team. A regret of his was not trying out for that year’s Olympics. Children recognized him at Trader Joe’s saying, “Look, Mom, that’s the famous bicycle man!”

Reale leaves behind his cats and his loving wife, Claire Rydell. The 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, Rumi, provides some comfort in these words: “Somewhere beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing there is a garden; I will meet you there.”