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# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## VENERABLE VERMEER QUARTET RECORDS RARITIES BY TCHAIKOVSKY

The internationally celebrated Vermeer Quartet, known for its extensive, major-label recordings of standard repertoire, has turned to its hometown record label, Chicago's Cedille Records, for a program of important yet surprisingly neglected Tchaikovsky works.

The disc offers Tchaikovsky's profoundly moving Quartet No. 2, available on CD for the first time outside a multi-disc set, and the eloquent *Souvenir de Florence*, performed in its less-often recorded -- but more intimate and effective -- original version for string sextet (CDR 90000 017).

It was Cedille's artistic and sonic reputation and its interest in less-familiar works that attracted the attention of the Vermeer Quartet. "I have little doubt that Cedille will become a very important player in the CD world, and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to do something with them," says Vermeer violist Richard Young.

The Vermeer's other members are Shmuel Ashkenasi, violin; Mathias Tacke, violin; and Marc Johnson, cello. For the sextet, they're joined by Rami Solomonow, principal violist of the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra, and John Sharp, principal cellist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The Vermeer recording is Cedille's first release as a not-for-profit label, operating under the auspices of the newly formed Chicago Classical Recording Foundation.

The quartet, formed in 1969 at the Marlboro Festival, has since performed at virtually all the

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world's most prestigious festivals and in every major city in North America and Europe.

The Vermeer is "acclaimed for solid performances of repertory of all periods," notes *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*.

The *Chicago Tribune* named the Vermeer "Outstanding Artists of the Year" for 1993. "Never sounding better, this venerable chamber group is one of Chicago's prime musical exports," the newspaper said.

*The Strad* magazine said they play with "a precision and accuracy that is rare even among today's virtuoso chamber groups." *Stereo Review* applauded the Vermeer for a "lean and focused sound" and interpretations devoid of "artificially pumped-up drama," which make the music's internal workings the star attraction. *Musical America* described the quartet's tonal richness as "a deeply burnished collective sonority that fully suggests their namesake -- in other words, what connoisseurs tend to think of as 'European.'"

The Vermeer's clear-minded artistry was captured in vivid detail at the Great Hall of the First United Methodist Church, Evanston, Ill. The hall's warm, reverberant acoustic is highly complimentary to strings in general and to the music's full-bore sonorities.

The quartet's next U.S. concert appearances are in Ithaca, N.Y., April 7-8; Philadelphia, April 28; Chicago, May 15; and Albuquerque, June 17-18.

Cedille CDs are distributed by Bayside Distribution and JEM Music Corp. and are available nationally at finer classical record stores. For a free catalog and the whereabouts of local retail outlets, consumers are invited to write to Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, or call (773) 989-2515.

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Tchaikovsky: String Quartet No. 2 in F major, Op. 22;  
String Sextet in D minor, Op. 70 "Souvenir de Florence"\*  
Vermeer Quartet,  
\*with Rami Solomonow, viola, and John Sharp, cello  
Cedille Records CDR 90000 017