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# News

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CD release date: September 27, 2011

## **Contemporary Sextet eighth blackbird Invites Listeners Into ‘Lonely Motel’**

### **CD Features Songs from Unconventional, Genre-Bending Music-Theater Work ‘Slide’**

*World-Premiere Recording on Cedille Records*

The Grammy Award-winning new-music ensemble eighth blackbird’s fifth and newest album for Cedille Records is *Lonely Motel*, the world-premiere recording of songs from *Slide*, a highly unconventional music-theater work first heard at the 2009 Ojai Music Festival in California that attracted international attention.

*Lonely Motel: Music From Slide*, available September 27, is a concert version of the genre-bending work featuring the same artists who gave the premiere performance and all subsequent productions to date: eighth blackbird, the Chicago-based contemporary classical sextet of winds, strings, piano, and percussion; electric guitarist and narrator Steven Mackey; and singer-actor Rinde Eckert (Cedille Records CDR 9000 128).

Conceived and written by composer Mackey and lyricist Eckert, *Slide* was co-commissioned for eighth blackbird by the Ojai Festival.

A studio album, *Lonely Motel* includes all the songs and an instrumental track from the show. One song, “Addiction,” is a CD bonus. Although part of the original *Slide* score, it was omitted from the live performances. *Lonely Motel* takes its title from the final song in the show (and on the CD), a title eighth blackbird finds evocative of the entire work.

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Eckert sings the role of protagonist Renard, a research psychologist haunted by photographic slides from an experiment in visual perception and by painful romantic memories: In the course of the work, we learn that he was jilted by his fiancé on their wedding day.

The songs are Renard's often-obsessive, stream-of-consciousness recollections of the experiment, interwoven with thoughts of his former beloved. Throughout the work, Renard struggles to keep an objective distance from painful images that his own mind projects.

In the song "Lonely Motel," Renard finds – or seems to find – solace in the sterile, impersonal confines of an ordinary motel room.

In an unusual twist, eighth blackbird can be heard singing on the song "Processional" and at other moments in the show. Ensemble cellist Nicholas Photinas plays electric bass, supplementing eighth blackbird's standard array of acoustic instruments. Other members of eighth blackbird on the recording are flutist Tim Munroe, clarinetist Michael J. Maccaferri, violinist and violist Matt Albert, percussionist Matthew Duvall, and pianist Lisa Kaplan.

"The music," Mackey writes in the CD's liner notes, "is a dish by and for musical omnivores and while the ingredients have been diced quite finely (and there is no quotation), the songs are seasoned with homages to Dowland, Mozart, Stravinsky, Piazzola, and The Beatles."

The songs "are about perception, self-delusion and ultimately about the isolation created by the attachments we develop to our own fuzzy, personal views of reality," Mackey writes.

A multidisciplinary work about the seduction and manipulation of the American psyche, *Slide* was inspired by a published psychological experiment. Participants were asked to view a series of out-of-focus slides and then identify the images when they were brought into focus. The researchers explored how social influence can skew perceptions. The creators of *Slide* see the experiment as a metaphor for contemporary America, where images are used to seduce, persuade, and misdirect.

*Lonely Motel* was recorded at Chicago Recording Company March 18–21, 2010, with producer David Frost and recording engineers Tom Lazarus and Bill Maylone.

### **The Artists**

Founded in 1996, eighth blackbird delivers provocative, mind-changing performances to its burgeoning audiences. Combining bracing virtuosity with an alluring sense of irreverence, the sextet debunks the myth that contemporary music is for a cerebral few. The ensemble has enjoyed widespread acclaim for its four previous Cedille Records CDs. The disc *strange imaginary animals* won a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance. The ensemble's website is [www.eighthblackbird.org](http://www.eighthblackbird.org).

Composer Steven Mackey has been honored with awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and awards from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. As a guitarist, he has performed his own music with the Kronos and Arditti Quartets and London Sinfonietta, among other ensembles and soloists. Mackey is professor of composition at Princeton University. His website is [stevenmackey.com](http://stevenmackey.com).

Rinde Eckert, finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Drama, is a New York-based writer, composer, performer, and director. His Opera/New Music Theater productions have toured throughout America and to major festivals in Europe and Asia. Eckert began a three-year residency at Princeton University in 2009. More on the artist at [www.rindeeckert.com](http://www.rindeeckert.com).

### **Cedille Records**

Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) has been dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from the Chicago area since its launch in late 1989.

In May 2011, audiophile-oriented Cedille began offering better-than-CD-quality 24-bit music downloads in the “lossless” FLAC format, available directly via its website,

www.cedillerecords.org. Cedille albums are also available via the label's website as CD-quality 16-bit FLAC downloads, extra-high-quality (256 Kbps) MP3 file downloads, and physical CDs.

Cedille Records is distributed in the Western Hemisphere by Naxos of America and its distribution partners, by Select Music in the U.K., and by other independent distributors in major international classical music markets.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille is the label of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation. For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, contact Cedille Records, 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; e-mail: info@cedillerecords.org.

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***Lonely Motel: Music from Slide***  
**(Cedille Records CDR 90000 128)**  
**Music by Steven Mackey**  
**Lyrics by Rinde Eckert**

**Slide of Dog (5:40)**  
**Stare Prelude/Overture (3:16)**  
**Depending (5:18)**  
**She Walks as if... (6:53)**  
**Fog (5:55)**  
**Stare (6:03)**  
**Addiction (3:50)**  
**Processional (3:39)**  
**Running Dog 2 (3:14)**  
**Ghosts (4:57)**  
**Lonely Motel (8:13)**

**eighth blackbird**  
**Steven Mackey, electric guitar and narrator**  
**Rinde Eckert, vocals**