

Cedille Records

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News

Digital release: Sept. 3, 2013

CD release: Sept. 24, 2013

Rachel Barton Pine Continues Her Legacy of Interpreting the Great German Masterpieces on Latest Cedille CD

Billboard Chart-Topping Violinist Featured on 'Mendelssohn & Schumann Violin Concertos' With Christoph-Mathias Mueller Conducting the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester

Internationally acclaimed as an interpreter of the masterpieces of the violin repertoire, Billboard chart-topping violinist Rachel Barton Pine performs early Romantic concertos by Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann with Christoph-Mathias Mueller conducting Germany's Göttinger Symphonie Orchester on the new album *Mendelssohn & Schumann Violin Concertos* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 144).

Following critically praised and commercially successful recordings of the violin concertos of Brahms and Beethoven, this album features Pine interpreting two more major works of the violin literature. Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, has been a favorite of audiences and violinists alike since its premiere in 1845. In contrast, Schumann's late concerto, his last major composition, had to wait until 1937 to receive its world premiere. Written in 1853, it was long suppressed by Schumann's pianist wife, Clara, and violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim, for whom it was written. It has only recently been established as an important work in the repertoire, and Pine describes it as "a deeply satisfying concerto that well deserves repeated hearings."

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The album, to be released as a digital download on September 3 and on CD September 24, also includes both of Beethoven’s Romances for violin and orchestra: No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40; and No. 2 in F Major, Op. 50.

Fresh and Vibrant Mendelssohn

The Mendelssohn Violin Concerto is one of the most frequently performed and most recorded works in the repertoire. “Pine brings it to life with a fresh and vibrant interpretation that is uniquely personal while remaining true to Mendelssohn’s score,” says Cedille President James Ginsburg.

Of a Pine performance of the Mendelssohn with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the *Chicago Tribune* said, “The Mendelssohn is one of those fiddle war horses that every young soloist plays but few can play as beautifully as [Pine]. Without resorting to any musical distortion, she invested the thrice-familiar phrases with a lyrical grace that seemed newly minted. The commanding ease with which she applied fingers and horsehair to the breathless roulades and passage work of the finale was enough to put the crowd in her thrall. . . .”

Pine describes Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto as “a lifelong friend.” One of the first major Romantic violin concertos she learned as a child, it remains among the works she performs most frequently. “When I meet fans after a concert, I’m constantly asked to record it,” Pine shares. As a result, she felt that the Mendelssohn was the obvious choice for the next major German concerto to record.

While Pine continues striving to realize an “unachievable ideal” embodied in the work, she feels that her journey with the concerto over the past three decades has brought significant insights. “I have become increasingly convinced that the Mendelssohn benefits from tempi that are flowing rather than expansive, paired with judicious rubato and a lightness of touch,” she writes. Neither a purely Classical-style concerto nor a full-fledged Romantic work, it calls for what she describes as “the perfect balance between warmth and tasteful purity.”

The Mendelssohn holds “a special place in my heart,” says Pine. “People like to believe that great sorrow is necessary to create great art, but Mendelssohn’s music proves that great joy can be just as profound.”

An Inspired Collaboration

The collaboration between Mueller and Pine was an outgrowth of Pine’s Cedille recording of Joachim’s Violin Concerto No. 2 in D Minor and Johannes Brahms’s Violin Concerto in D major with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Carlos Kalmar. Mueller, impressed with the recording, invited her to perform the same Joachim concerto in Göttingen. The performance was a triumph. Consequently, Mueller invited Pine to perform the Schumann Concerto with him in 2010, even though the piece was not in her repertoire at the time.

In the course of her career, Pine hadn’t given much thought to the Schumann Concerto. “I have a tremendous respect for Maestro Mueller and generally share his musical tastes,” Pine writes in the CD booklet. “I also knew that many people regard the Schumann Concerto highly, so I agreed to do it.”

“Studying the piece closely and collaborating with Maestro Mueller was a revelation,” Pine explains. Mueller’s “detailed and imaginative shaping of the orchestral accompaniment brought the music to life ... Against this backdrop, I was inspired to find new beauty in the solo violin part,” she writes.

The Schumann Concerto requires conductor and orchestra to bring out “dynamic nuances and poetry” that aren’t obvious in the score, Pine said in her Cedille interview. “Of all the concertos I’ve performed, the Schumann is the most dependent on the orchestral playing for a successful performance.”

Of that first concert, Pine wrote “The musical experience was so profound that I left the stage determined to record it with Maestro Mueller.”

“What Would Joachim Do?”

Pine believes that Schumann’s rapidly deteriorating health after completing the Concerto prevented the collaborative process of revisions that typically occurs between composer and dedicatee. She believes Joachim was so affected by the mental illness of his close friend that he chose to suppress the work rather than make unilateral revisions to the solo part.

As a result, the scoring of the solo part presents a variety of challenges, especially in the last movement, where “the technical demands . . . necessitate a slower tempo that results in a stodgy feeling,” Pine writes in the CD booklet. “Increasing the tempo to fit the music renders certain passages unplayable.”

Pine addressed these issues by making numerous “minor changes to various notes and bowings” throughout the score. Pine writes that her decisions were “always guided by the principle of WWJD — What Would Joachim Do?” Pine, who has intensely studied Joachim’s own concerto writing and his suggested revisions to the Brahms Violin Concerto, says she “tried to find the solutions that Joachim might have suggested to Schumann had he had the opportunity.”

Beethoven Romances

The Beethoven Romances were added to the project at the suggestion of producer Steven Epstein when it became evident that the sessions were running significantly ahead of schedule.

Pine writes that “the spare orchestration and chamber-like integration with the solo part of these beautiful pieces made it a special pleasure to collaborate with Maestro Mueller on interpretive details.”

Mendelssohn and Schumann Violin Concertos was recorded August 28–30, 2012, in the Stadhalle Göttingen by multiple Grammy-winning producer Steven Epstein and Cedille’s chief recording engineer Bill Maylone. Thanks to the generous loan from her patron, Pine performs on the 1742 “ex-Soldat” Guarneri del Gesù violin, crafted in Cremona.

Rachel Barton Pine, violin

International concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine is Cedille Records' top-selling recording artist. *Mendelssohn & Schumann Violin Concertos* is her 12th recording for the label as featured soloist.

Pine's Cedille recording *Violin Lullabies*, with pianist Matthew Hagle, released in April 2013, debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Traditional Classical Albums chart.

The Chicago-based violinist can also be heard on Cedille's acclaimed series of four early-music albums with her period-instrument ensemble, Trio Settecento. Pine has also recorded for the Dorian, Hänssler Classic, Cacophony, and Warner Classics labels. Her website is rachelbartonpine.com.

Conductor Christoph-Mathias Mueller

Christoph-Mathias Mueller has been the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester's music director since 2005. Winner of the 2000 Cadaqués Orchestra International Conducting Competition, he served as an assistant conductor to Claudio Abbado in Lucerne. He has guest conducted at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater and with the Czech Philharmonic, Scottish Chamber, Norwegian Radio, Royal Liverpool, and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestras, among other ensembles. For more about the conductor, visit christoph-mathias-mueller.com.

Göttinger Symphonie Orchester

Founded in 1862, the Göttinger Symphony Orchester is one of the most successful symphonic ensembles in central and northern Germany. Its guest conductors and soloists have included Richard Strauss, Ferruccio Busoni, Sir Georg Solti, Wilhelm Kempff, Gidon Kremer, and Martha Argerich. The orchestra has recorded for BIS, Marco Polo, MDG, and other labels. Its website is gso-online.de.

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 fall 1989.

The audiophile-oriented label is releasing the album *Mendelssohn & Schumann Violin Concertos* as a physical CD; a 96 kHz, 24-bit, studio-quality FLAC download; and a 320 Kbps MP3 download.

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 Records is the label of Cedille Chicago, NFP (formerly 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. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Mendelssohn & Schumann Violin Concertos
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 144)

Felix Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 (25:48)
Ludwig Van Beethoven: Romance for Violin and Orchestra,
No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40 (6:56)
Robert Schumann: Violin Concerto in D Minor, WoO 23 (29:36)
Beethoven: Romance for Violin and Orchestra,
Nol. 2 in F Major, Op. 50 (8:33)

Rachel Barton Pine, violin
Göttinger Symphonie Orchester
Christoph-Mathias Mueller, conductor