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News

Digital release date: April 1, 2014

CD release date: April 29, 2014

Violinists Jennifer Koh and Jaime Laredo Join Forces for Bach-Inspired 'Two x Four' CD From Cedille Records

Album of four double-violin concertos offers J.S. Bach's Concerto for Two Violins, Philip Glass's 'Echorus,' and world-premiere recordings of Anna Clyne's 'Prince of Clouds' and David Ludwig's 'Seasons Lost'

Celebrated violinists Jennifer Koh and Jaime Laredo, Koh's esteemed mentor, perform J. S. Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor, BWV 1043, and three works inspired by it on *Two x Four*, an album devoted to double-violin concertos. It's the first joint recording for these long-time collaborators, who are distinctively different, yet highly compatible, violinists.

The album comprises the "Two x Four" concert repertoire Koh and Laredo have performed with string orchestras coast-to-coast. In addition to the "Bach Double," the album includes Philip Glass's *Echorus* and world premiere recordings of two works written expressly for the project: Anna Clyne's *Prince of Clouds* and David Ludwig's *Seasons Lost*. Vinay Parameswaran conducts the Curtis 20/21 Ensemble (Cedille Records CDR 90000 146).

Two x Four will be released on CD April 29. The album was released as a digital download on April 1.

Two x Four pays homage to Bach, whose music, a Koh touchstone, is also the basis for her ongoing "Bach and Beyond" solo recitals and recordings that connect Bach with later composers. This new project expands the relatively sparse repertoire of double-violin concertos with newly commissioned works while celebrating the violinists' mutual admiration.

'Generous Dialogue'

Koh holds special affection for Bach's double violin concerto. She first performed the late-Baroque masterpiece with Laredo while she was his student at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. "It has stayed with her as a reminder of the generous dialogue between student

and mentor,” writes Katherine Bergstrom in the CD liner notes.

While Bach (1685–1750) wasn’t the first to write a double concerto, he pushed the boundaries of the form, introducing new ways for two solo violins to converse with each other and with the orchestra. In the first movement, the violins pass the melody and counter-melody back and forth, as if conversing. In the second, they take turns in lead and supporting roles. The fast-paced finale is akin to a frantic footrace, with one violin at the heels of the other while the orchestra has the final say.

Clyne (b. 1980), a Chicago Symphony Orchestra composer in residence, wrote *Prince of Clouds* (2012), her first concerto, while contemplating the idea of musical lineage passing from one generation to the next. Clyne sees this time-honored process as “a beautiful gift.” The *New York Times* called *Prince of Clouds* “ravishing,” while the *Chicago Tribune* described it as “music one can listen to again and again and find new things to appreciate each time.”

Philip Glass (b. 1937) wrote *Echorus* (1995) for the fabled collaboration of violinists Yehudi Menuhin and his protégé Edna Mitchell, who commissioned works addressing the theme of universal human compassion. *Echorus* is a characteristically attractive, hypnotic, undulating Glass score.

A composer based at the Curtis Institute, Ludwig (b. 1974) wrote his evocative *Seasons Lost* (2012) as a contemporary counterpart to Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, informed by his concerns about climate change. Ludwig’s double violin concerto is “full of beautiful ideas contrasting with playful/menacing Vivaldian gestures” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*).

Two x Four is Koh’s ninth recording for Cedille Records and Laredo’s Cedille label debut. Koh’s *Bach & Beyond Part 1* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 134) was named a *New York Times* best classical recording of 2012. Her *String Poetic* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 103) was nominated for a Grammy award.

The Artists

Highlights of Jennifer Koh’s 2013–14 season include “Bach and Beyond” recitals worldwide and “Two x Four” concerts with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In its concert review, the *Los Angeles Times* said, “Koh has become one of the most impressive and expressive violinists on the scene.” She performed the role of Einstein in Philip Glass’s *Einstein on the Beach* in Los Angeles and Berlin and made her Munich Philharmonic debut with Lorin Maazel. A champion of innovative contemporary music, Koh

gave the U.S. premiere of Kaija Saariaho's *Frises* for violin and electronics and the New York premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *The Singing Rooms*, a concerto for violin and chorus. Her website is jenniferkoh.com.

During his five decades as an international concert artist, Laredo has recorded nearly 100 discs and garnered seven Grammy nominations. His recordings include Bach's complete sonatas with the late pianist Glenn Gould. He is a member of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2002. In addition to Koh, Laredo's students include violinists Leila Josefowitz and Hillary Hahn, among other well-known names. Since 2012, Laredo has been on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music. For a biographical profile, visit the Institute's website, www.cim.edu.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, young conductor Vinay Parameswaran studied with Paul Phillips at Brown University and Otto-Werner Mueller at the Curtis Institute. He is assistant conductor of the Nashville Symphony under its music director, Giancarlo Guerrero.

The Curtis 20/21 Ensemble has collaborated with top-tier artists such as conductor Charles Dutoit, new-music sextet eighth blackbird, and composer-conductor Matthias Pintscher. *The New York Times* reviewed the ensemble's Joan Tower portrait program, saying "Ms. Tower could hardly have hoped for more passionate performances."

Recording Information

Two x Four was recorded in March 2013 in the Miriam and Robert Gould Rehearsal Hall at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. It was produced by multiple Grammy award-winner Judith Sherman and engineered by George Blood.

Cedille Records

Approaching its 25th anniversary this fall, 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 debut in November 1989.

The audiophile-oriented label releases every new album in multiple formats: a physical CD; a 96 kHz, 24-bit, studio-quality FLAC download; and a 320 Kbps MP3 download.

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Two x Four
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 146)

J. S. Bach: Concert for Two Violins in D Minor, BWV 1043 (15:07)

Anna Clyne: *Prince of Clouds* (13:28)

Philip Glass: *Echorus* (7:07)

David Ludwig: *Seasons Lost* (16:06)

Jennifer Koh and Jaime Laredo, violins
Curtis 20/21 Ensemble,
Vinay Parameswaran,
conductor