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News

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Soprano Patrice Michaels Explores ‘Intersection’ of Jazz and Classical Song on New Cedille CD

**Collaborators are rising jazz violinist Zach Brock,
cellist Nicholas Photinos of eighth blackbird,
and collaborative pianist extraordinaire
Kuang-Hao Huang**

*Two-disc set serves up 30 tracks from the 1920s to today by
Tibor Harsányi, Francis Poulenc, Laurie Altman, Nikolai Kapustin,
George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Lee Hoiby, John Musto,
Patrice Michaels, Randall Bauer, Nils Lindberg, Chuck Israels,
Andrés Beeuwsaert, and Antonio Carlos Jobim*

Versatile lyric soprano Patrice Michaels, whom the *New Yorker* called “a formidable interpretative talent,” is a veteran of opera, concert, and recital stages coast to coast and overseas. She has made more than 20 recordings for Cedille, Albany, Amadis, London/Decca, and other classical labels.

Throughout her career as a classical singer, her love for jazz, she says, has been “hugely influential and inspiring” but, until now, always “sort of a silent partner” in her work.

The admired, Chicago-based singer’s enthusiasm for this genre finally comes to the foreground on her enterprising new Cedille Records album, *INTERSECTION: Jazz Meets Classical Song*. She explores the influence of jazz on classical art songs through an eclectic and cohesive program of 30 compositions from the 1920s to the present day, including rarely heard works and world-premiere recordings.

INTERSECTION was released August 12 on CD and as high-resolution MP3 and FLAC digital downloads. The project is a two-disc set priced as a single CD (Cedille Records CDR 90000 149).

Imaginative Program

The program ranges stylistically from jazz-influenced classical works of the 1930s by Hungary’s Tibor Harsányi and France’s Francis Poulenc to contemporary commissioned works

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by Americans Randall Bauer and Laurie Altman. Michaels' own 2013 composition "Anita's Story" is among the songs receiving their world premiere recording on *INTERSECTION*.

Contrasting pieces by Lee Hoiby and John Musto — masters of post-Romantic American song — share billing with jazz classics by Swing Era legends George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, and Billy Strayhorn. From composer Chuck Israels, who played bass in pianist Bill Evans' band, come piano and voice settings of three American folk songs.

Two pieces by Nils Lindberg bring a Scandinavian sensibility to settings of a Shakespeare sonnet and poetry by American jazz bassist Red Mitchell. The program closes on a Latin note, with music by Argentinian composer Andrés Bieusart and Brazil's Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Four short piano works in a classical-meets-jazz spirit by Ukrainian-born jazz pianist, composer, and arranger Nikolai Kapustin serve as "intermezzos" between song sets.

Exceptional Ensemble

Michaels' collaborators are Zach Brock, *Downbeat* magazine's 2013 "Rising Star" violinist; cellist Nicholas Photinos, a founding member of the three-time Grammy award-winning new music ensemble eighth blackbird; and pianist Kuang-Hao Huang, a member of the Fulcrum New Music Project who has also performed on the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW contemporary music series. Brazilian percussionist Dedé Sampaio, who has performed with Miles Davis and Lionel Hampton, guests for the last selection on the recording.

The double-album's 32-page booklet includes an introductory essay by Michaels, song lyrics, and program notes by Neil Tesser, veteran jazz critic, writer, and radio host; author of *The Playboy Guide to Jazz*; and winner of the 2014 Grammy award for "Best Album Notes."

Singer Swings

Tesser writes that "even within the confines of the written page, a condition that characterizes all the pieces on this album, [Michaels] finds that hidden lilt, whether within an angular phrase or a single note.

"It's her ability to inhabit this music's rhythmic essence that provides the bonus here, allowing her to connect the classical and jazz aesthetics with refinement as well as soul," he writes.

Recording Information

INTERSECTION was produced by James Ginsburg, Cedille's founder and president, and engineered by Cedille's chief recording engineer Bill Maylone during sessions January 8–11,

February 18, and March 23, 2014, at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago.

Patrice Michaels

The *Chicago Tribune* describes Patrice Michaels as a soprano who possesses “a supple voice with the ring of Waterford crystal, and seems to be able to sing anything effortlessly.” Michaels has made a host of concert appearances with major orchestras, including the Shanghai, Czech National, St. Louis, Atlanta, Milwaukee, and Minnesota Orchestras. She has been heard in opera roles at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Cleveland Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Colorado’s Central City Opera, and other houses. Recital appearances have taken her to Austria, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, and cities across the U.S. and Canada. With pianist John Browning, she sang for Music at the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. Her work as a Mozart specialist has been featured on BBC Radio. Website: patricemichaels.com.

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.

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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INTERSECTION: Jazz Meet Classical Song **(Cedille Records CDR 90000 149)**

Disc One

Tibor Harsányi: Vocalise* (2:06)
Francis Poulenc: Violon (4:02)
Laurie Altman: *Two Re-Imaginings*
Per la gloria d’adorarvi* (4:33)
Danza, danza, fanciulla gentile* (4:11)

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Nikolai Kapustin: Prelude in Jazz Style, Op. 53, No. 18 (2:16)
George Gershwin: Liza (3:11)
Duke Ellington: Paris Blues (4:45)
Billy Strayhorn, arranged by Peter Labella: *Suite Strayhorn* (6:19)
Chelsea Bridge (3:09)
A Flower is a Lovesome Thing (3:10)
Kapustin: Prelude in Jazz Style, Op. 53, No. 4 (1:24)
Lee Hoiby: Insomnia (2:52)
John Musto: Penelope's Lament* (3:16)
Patrice Michaels: Anita's Story* (4:13)

Disc Two

Randall Bauer: *Neighborhood Music** (12:16)
Where Has He Gone (3:05)
Rossini's Got Nothin' on Us (3:18)
The Local Record Producer (2:09)
When I Could Hear the Train Again (3:37)
Kapustin: Prelude in Jazz Style, Op. 53, No. 23 (1:55)
Nils Lindberg
As you Are (4:22)
Shall I Compare Thee** (2:55)
Chuck Israels
He's Gone Away (2:59)
Balm in Gilead (3:04)
Frankie and Johnny (3:24)
Kapustin: Prelude in Jazz Style, Op. 53, No. 19 (1:21)
Altman: *Gig Songs** (17:32)
I Didn't Know What Time It Was/Where or When (6:49)
Always (2:20)
While We're Young (5:17)
Come Rain or Come Shine (2:58)
Andrés Beuwsaert, transcribed by Patrice Michaels: Sonora** (3:00)
Antonio Carlos Jobin, arranged by Jovino Santos Neto: Lamento non morro*** (3:56)

*World premiere recording

**Patrice Michaels, piano

***Dedé Sampaio, percussion

Patrice Michaels, soprano
Kuang-Hao Huang, Piano
Zach Brock, violin
Nicholas Photinos, cello