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News

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Chicago's Baroque Band Goes 'Greene' on New Cedille Records Album

Garry Clarke's Period Instrument Orchestra Revives Inventive Overtures by an Overlooked English Master

Period-instrument orchestra Baroque Band, helmed by British-born violinist and conductor Garry Clarke, revives the instrumental music of England's Maurice Greene, a celebrated composer of the early-to-mid-1700s, on the Chicago-based ensemble's second and newest recording, *Maurice Green Overtures* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 152).

The album, available November 11, includes Greene's *Six Overtures in Seven Parts*, Overture to *Phoebe*, and Overture to *St. Cecilia*. David Schrader, Baroque Band's keyboard player, offers ten selections from Greene's *Lessons for the Harpsichord*, arranged in three sets: pieces in C minor, pieces in A minor, and pieces in G minor.

Chiefly known today for his church music, Greene (1696–1755) held elite positions in the English music world, including organist and composer of the Chapel Royal, professor of music at Cambridge University, and Master of the King's Music. Greene was a friend and colleague of Handel, until a falling out.

Greene wrote few instrumental works. The selections on *Maurice Green Overtures* represent a substantial slice of that output.

His *Six Overtures in Seven Parts* for strings, flutes, oboes, and harpsichord are free-standing compositions, not introductions to large dramatic works. Clarke describes these three- and four-movement suites as precursors to the symphony.

“The overtures are charming and delightful, with whistleable melodies, easy harmony, and inventive counterpoint,” Clarke writes in the liner notes. “They conjure up the charm of the English countryside and the frivolity of the English 18th century.”

The overture to *Phoebe* comes from Greene’s pastoral opera of the same name. His *Ode to St. Cecilia’s Day*, source of the overture on the album, was first presented on July 6, 1730. *The Daily Journal* called the performance “an extraordinary exhibition of musical talent.”

Greene’s *Collection of Lessons for the Harpsichord*, published in 1750, are “charming pieces with an easy gait,” Clarke writes.

Baroque Band

Clarke founded Baroque Band in 2007. Three years later, *BBC Music Magazine* proclaimed it one of America’s top five baroque ensembles. The *Chicago Tribune* credits Baroque Band for “an abundance of style, a crisp esprit de corps, and a palpable affection for its repertoire.”

Clarke’s Baroque pedigree includes the Academy of Ancient Music, The Sixteen, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The King’s Consort, The Hanover Band, and the Scholars, plus work with Christopher Hogwood, John Elliot Gardener, and William Christie.

Baroque Band made its recording debut in 2010 on a Cedille Records album featuring Heinrich Biber’s *Mensa Sonora* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 116), which received critical applause in the U.S. and internationally.

The ensemble’s website is www.baroqueband.org.

Recording Team

Maurice Green Overtures was produced by James Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone, a two-time Grammy nominee, at sessions October 18–21, 2010, at Nichols Hall at the Music Institute of Chicago in Evanston, Ill.; June 9–10, 2014, at College Church, Wheaton, Ill.; and (for the solo harpsichord pieces) June 26, 2014, in the Fay and Daniel Levin Performance Studio at WFMT radio in Chicago.

Cedille Records

Marking its 25th anniversary this season, 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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Maurice Greene Overtures **(Cedille Records CDR 90000 152)**

Six Overtures in Seven Parts

No. 1 in D major (5:45)

No. 2 in G major (5:40)

No. 3 in C major (5:19)

No. 4 in E major (6:30)

No. 5 in D major (6:03)

No. 6 in E-flat major (7:22)

Pieces in C minor from *Lessons for the Harpsichord* (5:07)

Pieces in A minor from *Lessons for the Harpsichord* (5:05)

Pieces in G minor from *Lessons for the Harpsichord* (5:23)

Overture to *Phoebe* (6:23)

Overture to *St. Cecilia* (3:45)

Baroque Band
Garry Clarke, conductor