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News

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Pianist Jorge Federico Osorio Unfurls a Russian Recital on New Cedille CD

Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' anchors program that includes works by Prokofiev and Shostakovich

For his first-ever recording of Russian music for solo piano, Mexican-born international concert artist Jorge Federico Osorio has fashioned a recital that includes two colorful works better known as orchestral showpieces: Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* from *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75.

Russian Recital, Osorio's sixth and newest Cedille Records album, also offers Prokofiev's expansive Piano Sonata No. 6 in A Major and Dmitri Shostakovich's Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D Minor from *24 Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 87. The album will be released February 10 on CD and as a digital download (Cedille Records CDR 90000 153).

Osorio says the album originated with his desire to record Mussorgsky's epic suite, a piece he added to his concert repertoire relatively recently — in the 2000s — and somewhat on impulse. In an interview with Cedille Records, Osorio recalled hearing a striking performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra that prompted him to learn the original piano version. "I found it so refreshing," he said. "I felt compelled to play it."

Mussorgsky composed his popular and evocative suite after visiting an exhibit of drawings and watercolors by his late friend, the artist and architect Viktor Hartmann.

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Osorio recently performed *Pictures at an Exhibition* at Orchestra Hall in Chicago and for the University of California at Berkeley's Cal Performances Series. The *Chicago Tribune* applauded his "unruffled mastery," while *San Francisco Classical Voice* admired his "remarkable ability to navigate a sea of ardor without losing control."

Osorio first learned the album's other large work, Prokofiev's often sardonic Sonata No. 6, for the 1970 International Tchaikovsky Competition at the suggestion of one of his Paris Conservatory teachers, Bernard Flavigny. Osorio, who won a diploma in the competition's second round, recalled that Prokofiev's widow complimented him on his performance. Osorio played the Sonata as the finale to his formidable 1997 New York recital debut. *The New York Times* wrote that "even in his spectacularly energetic, hard-driven rendering of the Vivace finale, one could sense the spark of passion that had enlivened all the other works."

Shostakovich's D-Minor Prelude and Fugue is from a 1950s cycle inspired by J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Osorio said he first encountered the piece during his youth in Mexico City. "I had a friend who played it beautifully, and I wanted to learn it." He proceeded to do just that during his Paris Conservatory years. "The meditative character, the depth and calmness are very striking," Osorio says. "It's a big piece, but I find it light and optimistic – a very good prelude to *Pictures*."

During his subsequent years at the Moscow Conservatory, Osorio said he often attended the Bolshoi Ballet, where he experienced a particularly affecting production of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. "It was so inspiring and moving," Osorio recalled. "It prompted me to get more acquainted with this music." He began playing the piano scores privately, for his own pleasure, and only recently added *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* to his concert repertoire.

In a 2012 *Fanfare* magazine interview, Osorio addressed how he assembles his recitals: "I choose works that I believe should be heard together, either because they complement each

other or because I want to explore a particular connection that may not be apparent in the first instance.”

Jorge Federico Osorio

“One of the more elegant and accomplished pianists on the planet” (*Los Angeles Times*), Jorge Federico Osorio has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras and conductors.

Osorio’s pianism is a cosmopolitan blend of Russian and French influences. After graduating from the National Conservatory in his native Mexico City, Osorio worked with Jacob Milstein at the Moscow Conservatory and, before that, with Flavigny and Monique Haas at the Paris Conservatory. He also studied with Nadia Reisenberg and Wilhelm Kempff.

His international prizes and awards include the prestigious Medalla Bellas Artes, the highest honor granted by Mexico’s National Institute of Fine Arts; the Dallas Symphony Orchestra’s Gina Bachauer Award; and First Prize in the Rhode Island International Master Piano Competition.

Russian Recital joins a distinguished discography that includes Osorio’s releases on the Artek, ASV, CBS, EMI, IMP, and Naxos labels.

His website is jorgefedericoosorio.com.

Recording Team

Russian Recital was produced by James Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone, a two-time Grammy nominee, at sessions June 23–25, 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.

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Russian Recital
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 153)

Sergei Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82 (27:07)
Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* (7:41) from *Ten Pieces*
from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75
Dmitri Shostakovich: Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D Minor (11:47)
Modest Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (31:22)

Jorge Federico Osorio, piano