

Cedille Records

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News

Release date: Sept. 11, 2015

Rachel Barton Pine Performs Vivaldi's Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos on new Cedille Records Album

Violinist partners with period-instrument ensemble Ars Antigua for her first recording of works by the beloved Baroque master

Virtuosa violinist Rachel Barton Pine's first recording of music by Antonio Vivaldi is also her first on the viola d'amore, a Baroque instrument considered unusual even in Vivaldi's time.

On *Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos*, Pine, Cedille Records' best-selling artist, and Ars Antigua, a veteran, Chicago period-instrument ensemble making its Cedille label debut, offer all six of Vivaldi's solo concertos for viola d'amore — a rarely recorded set of pieces — plus his two concertos for viola d'amore with other solo instruments.

Works include the Concertos in D major, RV 392; D minor, RV 393; F major, RV 97, a "chamber concerto" for viola d'amore, two horns, two oboes, bassoon, and continuo; D minor, RV 394; D minor, RV 395; A major, RV 396; A minor, RV 397; and D minor, RV 540, a double concerto for viola d'amore and lute, played by internationally renowned lutenist Hopkinson Smith, making his Cedille Records debut.

Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos will be released September 11 on CD and as a digital download (Cedille Records CDR 90000 159).

'Singularly Sweet' Sound

Pine plays an original-condition Nicola Gagliano 12-string viola d'amore on the album, as she does in concerts of this music.

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A viola d'amore has two sets of strings. One set is played with the bow (or plucked), the other resonates to produce an enchanting, silvery sound. It's believed to be of Middle Eastern descent because of its resonating strings and "flaming-sword"-shaped sound holes.

Grove Music Online says of the viola d'amore, "Its tone, though not as brilliant or powerful as that of the violin or viola, is singularly sweet." Theodore Libbey, writing in *The NPR Listener's Encyclopedia of Classical Music*, says, "The instrument produces a gentle, plangent sound with an ethereal halo." Pine calls it "remarkable," with a "unique sound and beauty."

Cornerstone Repertoire

"There is no doubt that the cornerstone repertoire for the instrument, at least in the concerto realm, lies with Vivaldi," writes Paul V. Miller in the album's liner notes.

With six (or more) bowed strings, a viola d'amore can produce a wide range of notes. And with its non-standard scordatura tuning, "certain chords and barriolage effects were possible on it that would not be idiomatic on a traditional violin," Miller writes. "Vivaldi consistently exploits these effects to good effect in his concertos."

The Finale of the D major concerto, RV 392, takes advantage of the instrument's ability "to play narrow double stops rapidly and accurately, building to a climax in the final solo section where many unison double stops brighten the color of the sound."

As with Vivaldi's concertos for other instruments, those for viola d'amore require virtuosic technique. The second movement of the A minor concerto, RV 397, for example, "showcases the lower reaches of the d'amore, demanding a mastery of perilous string crossings," Miller writes.

Recording Team

Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos was produced by James Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone at sessions in November 2011 and July and August 2014 in Nichols Concert Hall at the Music Institute of Chicago, Evanston, IL.

Rachel Barton Pine and Ars Antigua

“One of the rare mainstream performers with a total grasp of Baroque style and embellishment” (*Fanfare*) and “a most accomplished Baroque violinist, fully the equal of the foremost specialists” (*Gramophone*), Pine has been involved with historically-informed performances of early music for over two decades. She has performed on baroque violin, renaissance violin, and rebec, in addition to viola d’amore, which she has played professionally since 2007.

Her explorations of the Italian Baroque, with her period-instrument group Trio Settecento, include the Cedille albums *Veracini: The Complete Sonate Accademiche*, released in May, and *An Italian Sojourn*, from 2007.

Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d’Amore Concertos is Pine’s 26th career album and her 18th for Cedille Records. Her Cedille discography beyond early music includes violin concertos by Beethoven, Brahms, Clement, Joachim, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, to name a few, plus a wide array of other orchestral, chamber, and solo repertoire.

Her *Violin Lullabies* on Cedille, released in 2013, debuted on *Billboard*’s Traditional Classical Albums chart in the No. 1 position.

More about the violinist at www.rachelbartonpine.com.

Founded in 2000 by double-bass virtuoso Jerry Fuller, Ars Antigua (“ancient art” in Medieval Latin) comprises seasoned early-music veterans from the Chicago area. The ensemble performs music from the Renaissance through Classical eras on period instruments. For more information, visit arsantiguapresents.com.

Based in Basel, Switzerland, American lutenist Hopkinson Smith helped found the award-winning Hesperion XX international early music ensemble with Catalan viol player Jordi Savall. Several of his Naïve label recordings, including a program of J. S. Bach suites, have earned Diapason d’Or awards from French music magazine *Diapason*. His CD of Francesco da Milano

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works won a coveted 2009 Diapason d'Or de l'Année, awarded by a jury of critics and French radio broadcasters. His website is hopkinsonsmith.com.

Cedille Records

Marking its 25th anniversary during the 2014–2015 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 the Naxos network 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). Headquarters are at 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; e-mail: info@cedillerecords.org. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 159)

Concerto in D major, RV 392 (9:08)
Concerto in D minor, RV 393 (8:34)
Concerto in F major, RV 97 (11:15)
Concerto in D minor, RV 394 (9:07)
Concerto in D minor, RV 395 (9:08)
Concert in A major, RV 396 (10:01)
Concerto in A minor, RV 397 (9:21)
Concerto in D minor, RV 540* (12:04)
*Hopkinson Smith, lute

Rachel Barton Pine
Ars Antigua