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News

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Third Coast Percussion Makes Cedille Label Debut with Tribute to Steve Reich

Ensemble Performs Reich's 'Mallet Quartet,' 'Sextet,' 'Nagoya Marimbas,' and 'Music for Pieces of Wood' on Album Celebrating Composer's 80th Birthday

Third Coast Percussion, a vibrant, virtuosic ensemble devoted to exploring and expanding the sonic possibilities of the percussion repertoire, makes its Cedille Records debut with an album celebrating the 80th birthday of Pulitzer Prize-winning contemporary American composer Steve Reich, a founding father of musical minimalism.

The album *Third Coast Percussion | Steve Reich*, available February 12, offers four of the composer's most celebrated works for percussion, spanning four decades of his career: *Mallet Quartet*, *Sextet*, *Nagoya Marimbas*, and *Music for Pieces of Wood* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 161).

"When we formed Third Coast Percussion ten years ago, it was inevitable that Reich's work would be part of our repertoire," writes ensemble member Robert Dillon in the album liner notes. "Each of us could recall formative artistic experiences with this music that had helped lead us toward lives of championing the modern.

"While most composers now welcome our instruments on the concert stage, only a few have shown audiences how percussion can be absolutely essential," Dillon writes. "The rhythmic drive, articulated melody, and perpetual cycle of Reich's music seems to have marimbas and vibraphones in its very DNA."

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In *Mallet Quartet* (2009) vibraphone melodies unfold over marimba rhythms. *Sextet* (1985) is almost symphonic in scope with two pianos added to the percussion battery and lots of sonic surprises. Pianists David Friend and Oliver Hagen join the percussionists for the 28-minute work. The short, Japanese-commissioned *Nagoya Marimbas* (1994) exhibits pentatonic coloration.

Third Coast Percussion is joined by Eighth Blackbird's Matthew Duvall for *Music for Pieces of Wood* (1973), played on five wooden slats tuned to specific pitches for an astonishing variety of sounds.

“A lively mind”

Born Oct. 3, 1936, in New York, Reich (pronounced RYE-sh) is widely considered “among the greatest composers of the century” (*The New York Times*), with an influence reaching deep into both the contemporary classical and popular music worlds. Grove Music Online observes how Reich “has consistently broadened and developed his musical world without compromising the streamlined efficiency and precision of his technique. Repetitive, pulse-driven figures have remained a characteristic, but so have the slips and leaps of a lively mind.” His official website is www.stevereich.com.

Third Coast Percussion

Comprised of percussionists Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore, Chicago-based Third Coast Percussion is noted for its “virtuosity and deft, precisely timed wit” (*The Washington Post*). Founded in 2005, the “commandingly elegant” ensemble (*The New York Times*) has performed hundreds of concerts around the globe and commissioned dozens of new works by composers including drummer Glenn Kotche from the revered rock band Wilco, Donnacha Dennehy, and Augusta Read Thomas. The group is ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. More at www.thirdcoastpercussion.com.

Recording Dates and Venue

Third Coast Percussion | Steve Reich was produced by Jesse Lewis and engineered by Dan Nichols December 15–19, 2014, at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, Notre Dame, Ind.

Cedille Records

Marking its 26th anniversary during the 2015–2016 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: physical CD; 96 kHz, 24-bit, studio-quality FLAC download; and 320 Kbps MP3 download.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille Records is the label of Cedille Chicago, NFP (formerly The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation). Sales of physical CDs and digital downloads and streams cover only a small percentage of the label’s costs. Tax-deductible donations from individual music-lovers and grants from charitable organizations account for most of its revenue.

Headquarters are at 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; email: info@cedillerecords.org. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Third Coast Percussion | Steve Reich
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 161)

Mallet Quartet (14:58)

Sextet (28:23)

Nagoya Marimbas (4:48)

Music for Pieces of Wood (14:20)

Third Coast Percussion