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News

Recording release date: Sept. 9, 2016

Jennifer Koh Plays Tchaikovsky's Complete Violin and Orchestra Works on New Cedille Album

Recording reunites Musical America's 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year with composer, conductor, and orchestra close to her heart

On her highly anticipated, first-ever recording of Tchaikovsky's music, violinist Jennifer Koh, *Musical America's* 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year, performs the great Russian Romantic composer's complete works for solo violin and orchestra, including the Violin Concerto in D Major with which she won the 1994 International Tchaikovsky Competition.

On *Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra*, available September 9 on Cedille Records, Koh plays Tchaikovsky's *Sérénade mélancolique* in B Minor, Op. 26; Valse-Scherzo, Op. 34; Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35; and Alexander Glazunov's orchestration of *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, Op. 42, with a conductor and orchestra with whom she developed close bonds early in her career: Russian conductor Alexander Vedernikov and Denmark's Odense Symphony Orchestra (Cedille Records CDR 90000 166).

In her preface to the album's liner notes, Koh writes that the project represents "a wonderful circular process and an important part of my personal history that began nearly 25 years ago."

She first met Vedernikov in 1992, when she was only 15 years old, as her conductor in the last round of the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. She first played with the Odense Symphony in 1992, and made her first-ever recording with the orchestra in 1996, performing the Nielsen Violin Concerto under Osmo Vänskä.

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In 2011, she performed with the Odense Symphony and Verdernikov, who had become its principal conductor. In 2014, “the circle was complete when I performed the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with maestro Vedernikov — for only the second time — and the NHK Symphony.”

In recent years, Koh has also performed the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the Munich Philharmonic under Lorin Maazel, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Carlos Miguel Prieto, and the Odense Symphony Orchestra under Christoph Poppen, among others.

Koh earned the top prize awarded in the 1994 Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow, where she played the Tchaikovsky and Brahms concertos and won three special prizes, including for the best performance of the Tchaikovsky.

“Tchaikovsky’s music has been in my life since I was a child, and I am pleased to reconnect with these musical partners who have also been a part of my life from before I began my professional career as a musician.”

Tchaikovsky Hallmarks

Tchaikovsky’s works for solo violin and orchestra, though few in number and written within just three years, “contain the hallmarks of Tchaikovsky’s language — above all, melodic and dramatic instincts that shake the listener to the core — that have enshrined him among the repertoire’s most cherished voices (and, among his countrymen, as the most revered composer bar none),” writes Patrick Castillo in the album’s liner notes.

The subdued *Sérénade mélancolique*, from 1875, the composer’s first work for violin and orchestra, illustrates his ear for orchestral color. The delicate Valse-Scherzo (1877) melds old-fashioned elegance with spirited playfulness. The Concerto in D Major, from 1878, is one of the most celebrated and daunting works in the violin repertoire. Its original dedicatee, the legendary violinist Leopold Auer, turned his nose up at it, labelling it unplayable. Castillo calls it “the jewel among Tchaikovsky’s music for violin and orchestra” and “one of his most rapturous creations.”

In *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* (“memory of a beloved place”), also from 1878, a poignant, nostalgic mood gives way to a delightful finale. The *Méditation* movement was originally intended as the Violin Concerto’s slow movement. *Souvenir*’s other two movements, originally written for violin and piano, were orchestrated by Glazunov, whose versions are performed on the recording.

Recording Dates and Venues

Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra was produced by multiple Grammy award-winner Judith Sherman at sessions on September 14–17, 2015, in the Odense Concert House’s Nielsen Hall, Odense, Denmark. Session engineer was Viggo Mangor, with post-production engineering by Bill Maylone.

The Artists

Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra is the eleventh Cedille Records album for Jennifer Koh, the “remarkable . . . thoughtful and vibrant” (*The Strad*) American violinist. Her Cedille catalog includes the Grammy-nominated *String Poetic*, featuring the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s composition of the same name, performed with pianist Reiko Uchida. *Portraits*, an album with the Grant Park Orchestra conducted by Carlos Kalmar, included works by Szymanowski, Martinü, and Bartók. More recently, her *Bach & Beyond* albums explore connections between J.S. Bach and later composers, including those of the present day. She’s also recorded for Telarc, Chandos, BIS, and Kontrapunkt. Her website is jenniferkoh.com.

Moscow-born and -trained conductor Alexander Vedernikov is currently chief conductor of the Odense Symphony Orchestra in Denmark. Among his many accomplishments is having served as music director and chief conductor of the Bolshoi Ballet from 2001 until 2009. Since 2003 he has been a member of the conductors’ collegium of the Russian National Orchestra, with which he has toured in France, Germany, and the United States, including his conducting debuts at New York’s Carnegie Hall and Washington, D.C.’s Kennedy Center. More information is available at http://imgartists.com/artist/alexander_vedernikov.

The Odense Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1946, is one of Denmark's five regional orchestras and hosts an International Carl Nielsen Competition and Festival. Its discography includes more than 60 recordings. The orchestra's website is <http://odensesymfoni.dk/>.

Cedille Records

Marking its 27th anniversary during the 2016–2017 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. 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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Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 166)

Sérénade mélancolique, Op. 26 (10:32)
Valse-Scherzo, Op. 34 (6:20)
Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35 (38:06)
Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42* (18:55)
***Orchestration by Alexander Glazunov**

Jennifer Koh, violin
Odense Symphony Orchestra,
Alexander Vedernikov, cond.