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# News

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Recording release date: August 11, 2017

## McGill/McHale Trio Makes Recording Debut With 'Portraits' on Cedille Records

**Flutist Demarre McGill, Clarinetist Anthony McGill,  
and Pianist Michael McHale Create World-Premiere Recordings  
of Works by Valerie Coleman, Chris Rogerson,  
and Paul Schoenfield**

**Oscar-winning 'Moonlight' actor Mahershala Ali narrates  
on Coleman's "Portraits of Langston"**

The McGill/McHale Trio, whose members are Demarre McGill, principal flute of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra; his brother Anthony McGill, principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic; and Irish pianist Michael McHale, makes its recording debut with *Portraits — Works for Flute, Clarinet & Piano* on Cedille Records.

*Portraits*, available August 11, features world-premiere recordings of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century works for the trio's uncommon instrumentation. These include Valerie Coleman's *Portraits of Langston*, which gives the album its title; Chris Rogerson's *A Fish Will Rise*; and Paul Schoenfield's *Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet and Piano* (Cedille Records CDRF 90000 172).

Other recorded firsts include Philip Hammond's trio version of his *The Lamentation of Owen O'Neil* and McHale's own arrangements of Sergei Rachmaninov's *Vocalise* and the Irish traditional song *The Lark in the Clear Air*. While not a premiere, Guillaume Connesson's *Techno-Parade* for flute, clarinet, and piano is a rarity on recordings.

Rogerson's *A Fish Will Rise* evokes rippling water and sparkling sunlight. The work's title comes from Norman Maclean's Montana fly-fishing memoir, *A River Runs Through It*. Flute, clarinet, and piano seamlessly intertwine and frequently swap roles amid recurring cycles of

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tranquility and surging energy. Rogerson originally scored *A Fish Will Rise* for piano trio as part of his *River Songs* (2014). He re-orchestrated it expressly for the McGill/McHale Trio.

Coleman's *Portraits of Langston* (2007) is a six-movement suite inspired by African-American poet Langston Hughes's verses mirroring the sights and sounds of the Harlem Renaissance and jazz-age Paris of the 1920s. Oscar-winning actor Mahershala Ali (*Moonlight*) reads the corresponding Hughes poem before each movement.

In the suite's first movement, "Prelude: Helen Keller," the clarinet emerges to find light within the darkness. "Danse Africaine" traces the enigmatic gestures of a dancer who is "like a wisp of smoke around the fire." "Le Grand Duc Mambo" depicts a spirited bar fight in Paris's red-light district through a flute and clarinet duet. Hughes dedicated "In Time of Silver Rain" to African-American Broadway playwright Lorraine Hansberry as encouragement during her battle with cancer. The corresponding movement begins as a noble, calm chorale and develops an optimistic, confident outlook. The score of "Parisian Cabaret" instructs performers to play "with a brisk stride piano feel." The sixth and final movement, "Harlem's Summer Night," offers the fullest and richest textures of the entire work as each instrument stakes out its own independent yet compatible path.

Schoenfield's spirited *Sonatina*, from 1994, springs surprises on the Charleston, rag, and jig dance forms. Intricate rhythms, unexpected harmonic patterns, and virtuosic technical demands contribute to a "subversion of expectations," writes Elinor Olin in the album's liner notes.

McHale's arrangement of Rachmaninov's *Vocalise* splits the original vocal line between flute and clarinet, supported by Rachmaninov's original piano accompaniment. Hammond's *The Lamentation of Owen O'Neil* (2011/2016), based on an 18<sup>th</sup>-century air about an early hero of Irish nationalism, and McHale's arrangement of *The Lark in the Clear Air* (2016) are serenely beautiful treatments of irresistible Irish folk tunes. Connesson's *Techno – Parade* (2002) channels the spirit and energy of electronic pop music.

### “Captivating Combination”

Cedille Records founder and president James Ginsburg describes *Portraits* as “an album with an international, all-star ensemble in world-premiere recordings of a rich variety of music scored for a truly captivating combination of instruments.”

Ginsburg also cites the album’s many Chicago connections, which are central to the nonprofit label’s mission of promoting the city’s finest classical performers and composers. “The McGill brothers are hometown musical heroes. They come from a middle-class family on the city’s South Side who made financial sacrifices for their music education. In their youth, they benefited from their involvement with Chicago’s Merit School of Music, a revered community institution, and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. They went on to study at elite music conservatories, win prestigious awards, and become among the very few African-Americans to hold principal chairs in major American orchestras.

“It’s also gratifying to bring the artistry of pianist Michael McHale to a wider audience in North America and beyond,” Ginsburg says. “The recognition is well deserved.”

Ginsburg credits the original impetus for the project to Henry Fogel, former president of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and long-time board member of Cedille Records’ parent organization, Cedille Chicago, NFP. “Henry suggested we find a project to record Anthony and Demarre together,” Ginsburg recalls. “We were already in the process of recording Anthony and the Pacifica Quartet in an album of Mozart and Brahms clarinet quintets. The idea of highlighting both McGills was very appealing. During our discussions, the McGill/McHale Trio came into being, and that ensemble became the focus.”

“It’s a great honor to record this album for Cedille,” Anthony McGill said in an interview for the label. “To have a record company that’s open to new composers and exciting, really wonderful new music that will become standard repertoire for this [instrumentation] is something that’s really amazing.”

## **Recording Credits**

*Portraits* was produced by Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone December 19–21, 2016, at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago. Mahershala Ali's voice tracks for *Portraits of Langston* were recorded March 21, 2017, at Beacon Studios, Venice, Calif. Recording engineer was Rommel Molina.

## **McGill/McHale Trio**

The McGill/McHale Trio was founded in September 2014. The ensemble has won critical acclaim for concerts in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., among other cities. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* proclaimed, “They can play off each other with hair-trigger precision, their blends are . . . amazing, creating a hybrid sonority I don't think I've previously heard.”

Demarre McGill is principal flute of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. He also has served as principal flute of the Dallas and San Diego Symphonies and as acting principal flute of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. A graduate of the Curtis Institute and the Juilliard School, he is the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Website: [www.demarremcgill.com](http://www.demarremcgill.com).

Anthony McGill is principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic. He previously was principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and associate principal of the Cincinnati Symphony. A graduate of the Curtis Institute and recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant, he performed with Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, and Gabriela Montero at the January 2009 inauguration of U.S. President Barack Obama. Website: [www.anthonymcgill.com](http://www.anthonymcgill.com)

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and currently living in London, England, pianist Michael McHale studied at the University of Cambridge and Royal Academy of Music. One of Ireland's leading pianists, he has performed as soloist with the Minnesota, Hallé, Moscow, and Bournemouth Symphonies and all five of Ireland's major orchestras. Website: [www.michaelmchale.com](http://www.michaelmchale.com).

## **Mahershala Ali**

Mahershala Ali recently starred in Barry Jenkins' Academy Award Best Picture drama *Moonlight*, for which he received the 2017 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor. He also starred in the feature *Hidden Figures*, directed by Ted Melfi. He is familiar to many for playing

Remy Danton on the award-winning Netflix series *House of Cards*, for which he received a 2016 Emmy nomination.

### **Cedille Records**

Marking its 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2017–2018 season, Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) has been dedicated to showcasing and promoting 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](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). Website: [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org).

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 classical music markets around the world.

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***Portraits: Works for Flute, Clarinet & Piano***

**McGill/McHale Trio**

**Demarre McGill, flute**

**Anthony McGill, clarinet**

**Michael McHale, piano**

**Mahershala Ali, narrator,**

***Portraits of Langston***

**Chris Rogerson: *A Fish Will Rise* (9:01)**

**Valerie Coleman: *Portraits of Langston* (26:03)**

**Guillaume Connesson: *Techno – Parade* (4:23)**

**Sergei Rachmaninov, arr. Michael McHale: *Vocalise* (5:08)**

**Paul Schoenfield: *Sonatina* (13:59)**

**Philip Hammond: *The Lamentation of Owen O'Neil* (2:50)**

**Traditional, arr. McHale: *The Lark in the Clear Air* (3:51)**

**(Cedille Records CDR 90000 172)**