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News

Recording release date: Nov. 10, 2017

Eighth Blackbird Unveils ‘Olagón’ on Cedille Records

***Grammy-winning new-music sextet teams up
with renowned Irish singer Iarla Ó Lionáird
for a world-premiere recording***

***New evening-length work by composer Dan Trueman
and poet Paul Muldoon updates an Irish legend
and sets it to music with Celtic folk, indie pop,
and contemporary-classical hues***

Multiple Grammy-winning sextet Eighth Blackbird, *Musical America*’s 2017 ensemble of the year, joins forces with Iarla Ó Lionáird, vocalist with the Irish music supergroup The Gloaming, for the world premiere recording of *Olagón: A Cantata in Doublespeak*, a contemporary updating of an ancient Irish legend, with music by Princeton University’s Dan Trueman, who also plays fiddle on the album, and text by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Paul Muldoon.

Available November 10, *Olagón* is a double-CD set priced as a single disc. It includes two booklets: one with track listings, liner notes, and credits, the other with the complete text of the work (Cedille Records CDR 90000 174).

“Listeners will hear strands of traditional Irish music, experimental pop, and contemporary classical music in this singularly inventive project,” says James Ginsburg, founder and president of Cedille Records.

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A Conflicted Cry

Olagón was inspired by the Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* about a battle of egos between a king and queen and the bloody warfare that ensues. The Irish word “Olagón” refers to a profound, conflicted cry of both triumph and anguish.

Muldoon’s modern retelling of the legend depicts a privileged “power couple” mired in envy, greed, and adultery, descending into criminality and addiction as Ireland’s “Celtic-Tiger” economy collapses in the early 21st century.

Ó Lionáird, whom *The Guardian* calls “one of the most dramatic voices in contemporary music,” sings the text in the unique and highly ornamental Irish style known as *sean-nós*. The production also incorporates the young voices of students of acclaimed Irish *sean-nós* singer Treasa Ní Mhiolláin, who also makes an appearance.

Macaronic Verse

Liner notes include an essay by Muldoon on the “macaronic verse” he employs in *Olagón*. It’s a bilingual mixture of English and Irish found in some traditional Irish songs. The practice dates back “to the mash-up of Latin and vernacular languages that developed throughout Europe at the end of the Middle Ages,” he writes. A famous example is the 13th century *Carmina Burana*, comprising poems mixing “sacred” Latin with “profane” Medieval German or French.

Olagón’s subtitle, “A Cantata in Doublespeak,” references both its dual-language text and witty wordplay.

Recording Credits

Olagón: A Cantata in Doublespeak was produced by Jesse Lewis and recorded between Oct. 9, 2015, and April 15, 2017, at Princeton University; on Inis Mór Árann, County Galway, Ireland; and at IV Lab Studios and SHIRK Studios in Chicago. Recording engineers were Bill Maylone in Chicago, Andrés Villalta at Princeton, and Dan Trueman in Galway.

The Artists

Eighth Blackbird is “one of the smartest, most dynamic contemporary classical ensembles on the planet” (*Chicago Tribune*). Olagón is the group’s ninth Cedille Records album. Four of those have won Grammy Awards in the Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance category.

Since its launch in 1996 by six Oberlin Conservatory undergraduates, Chicago-based Eighth Blackbird has achieved the status of “a brand-name ... defined by adventure, vibrancy and quality... known for performing from memory, employing choreography and collaborations with theater artists, lighting designers and even puppetry artists” (*Detroit Free Press*).

Ensemble members are Nathalie Joachim, flutes; Michael Maccaferri, clarinets; Yvonne Lam, violin and viola; Nick Photinos, cello; Matthew Duvall, percussion; and Lisa Kaplan, piano and bitKlavier. More at eighthblackbird.org.

Iarla Ó Lionáird is a twice Grammy-nominated songwriter and recording artist with more than 12 albums to his name. He has worked with composers including Donnacha Dennehy, Nico Muhly, Gavin Bryars, and David Lang and has performed and recorded with Peter Gabriel, Nick Cave, Robert Plant, and Sinéad O’Connor. He can be heard on films including *The Gangs of New York* and *Hotel Rwanda* and appeared on camera in *Brooklyn* singing an Irish folk song. Website: iarla.com.

Composer, fiddler, and electronic musician Dan Trueman has collaborated with So Percussion, the JACK and PRISM Quartets, and the Princeton Laptop Orchestra, which he co-founded. He's received awards and commissions from the Guggenheim Foundation, Barlow Endowment, Fulbright Commission, American Composers Forum, and Meet the Composer, among others. Trueman is a professor of music at Princeton University and director of the Princeton Sound Kitchen. More about his work at manyarrowsmusic.com.

Irish poet Paul Muldoon is the author of twelve major collections of original poetry, one of which, *Moy Sand and Gravel*, earned the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. He served as professor of poetry at Oxford University from 1999 to 2004 and as poetry editor of *The New Yorker* from 2007 to 2017. He has taught at Princeton University since 1987 and currently occupies the Howard G.B. Clark '21 chair in the humanities His website is paulmuldoon.net.

Cedille Records

Marking its 29th year 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. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Olagón: A Cantata in Doublespeak
Music by Dan Trueman, with Iarla Ó Lionáird
Text by Paul Muldoon
Eighth Blackbird
Iarla Ó Lionáird, vocals
Dan Trueman, fiddle
Total Time: 92:09
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 174)