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News

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Civitas and Gipsy Way Ensembles Blend Classical and Romani Music On New Cedille Records Album

*On 'Alla Zingarese,' Chicago and Prague musicians
perform new works and audience favorites
inspired by Gypsy folk music*

The Civitas Ensemble, an enterprising chamber group founded by Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians, teams up with Prague's Pavel Šporcl & His Gipsy Way Ensemble for a groundbreaking collaboration at the crossroads of Western classical and Romani folk music on *Alla Zingarese*, a new album from Cedille Records.

Alla Zingarese ("in the Gypsy style"), available August 17, 2018, embraces the present with world premiere recordings of two new works by noted Czech composer Lukáš Sommer: *Gipsy Odyssey* written for the combined forces of Civitas's violin, clarinet, cello, and piano and Gipsy Way's violin, viola, string bass, and cimbalom (hammered dulcimer); and *Cigi-Civi*, scored for Civitas alone.

The album, a two-CD set priced as a single disc, also celebrates the past with world-premiere recordings of new arrangements of popular Gypsy-infused works by 19th and 20th century composers Johannes Brahms, Georges Boulanger, Jenö Hubay, Pablo de Sarasate, and George Enescu, plus original compositions by Sylvie Borodová, Franz Liszt, Leó Weiner, and David Popper (Cedille Records CDR 90000 179).

Alla Zingarese is the Civitas Ensemble's recording debut and the Cedille label debut for violin virtuoso Šporcl and Gipsy Way.

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New Works and Arrangements

“What distinguishes this project from other Gypsy-themed classical projects are new works and arrangements, a festival-like variety of instrumental chamber pieces, and the presence of Gipsy Way’s Roma musicians,” says James Ginsburg, founder and president of Cedille Records and the album’s co-producer. “With this trans-Atlantic collaboration, the Civitas and Gipsy Way Ensembles have carved a creative new path within the time-honored tradition of music *alla Zingarese*.”

The first disc in the set features music written and arranged for the combined ensembles, including Sommer’s *Gipsy Odyssey* and Šporcl’s new version of his own *Gipsy Fire*, the title track from an earlier, best-selling Gipsy Way album. Also on the CD are Sommer’s arrangements of Brahms’s *Hungarian Dance* No.1 in G minor and *Rondo alla Zingarese* from his G-minor Piano Quartet; Boulanger’s *Serenade Tzigane*; Hubay’s *Scène de la Csárda* No. 5 “Hullámzó Balaton,” Op. 33 (with Šporcl as co-arranger); and Sarasate’s *Zigeunerweisen*.

The second disc showcases the Civitas Ensemble and its individual members in Sylvie Borodová’s *Dža More* for solo violin; Franz Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsody* No. 12 for piano; Sommer’s *Cigi-Civi*; Leó Weiner’s *Peregi Verbunk* for clarinet and piano; David Popper’s *Hungarian Rhapsody*, Op. 68, for cello and piano; and Enescu’s *Romanian Rhapsody* No. 1, arranged for Civitas by Chicago composer Cliff Colnot.

Intense Collaboration

“These performances represent the culmination of an intense two-year collaboration between Western classical and Gypsy musicians and composers, one that brought the two communities together in both Prague and Chicago to honor the mutual influences of Gypsy and Western classical music,” Rachel DeWoskin writes in the liner notes.

The project is the outgrowth of a 25-year friendship between Šporcl and Shanghai-born Civitas violinist Yuan-Qing Yu, who met as music students at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

“Surprises Aplenty”

Civitas and Gipsy Way recorded *Alla Zingarese* after premiering the program at packed concert halls in Prague and Chicago. The *Chicago Tribune* found it “unique” and “exhilarating.” *Chicago on the*

Aisle called it “a trip through musical history . . . and a venture into new musical territory with surprises aplenty.”

Recording Team

Alla Zingarese was produced by Steve Rodby and James Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone May 20–22, 2017, at Chicago Recording Company, and August 15–17 and September 25, 2017, at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago.

Civitas Ensemble

Formed in 2011, Chicago-based Civitas Ensemble includes violinist Yuan-Qing Yu, assistant concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Kenneth Olson, assistant principal cello of the CSO; J. Lawrie Bloom, clarinet and bass clarinet of the CSO; and Winston Choi, head of the piano program at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts. The group is known for its artistic excellence, community service, cross-disciplinary programming, innovative presentations of old and new works, and collaborations with living composers. The ensemble’s website is www.civitasensemble.org.

Pavel Šporcl & His Gypsy Way Ensemble

Violinist Pavel Šporcl appears regularly as soloist with the Czech Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and other major orchestras. His albums on Universal, EMI, and Supraphon have sold more than 250,000 copies. In 2008, he started playing with Gypsy musicians and later formed Gypsy Way Ensemble. In addition to Šporcl, Gypsy Way includes violist Zoltán Sándor, double bassist Ján Rigó, and cimbalom player Tomáš Vontszemü. The ensemble has performed more than 350 concerts and has two albums to its credit. Its website is www.pavelsporcl.com.

Cedille Records

Launched in November 1989, Grammy Award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) is dedicated to showcasing and promoting the most noteworthy classical artists in and from the Chicago area.

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.

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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Alla Zingarese
Civitas Ensemble
Pavel Šporcl & His Gipsy Way Ensemble
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 179)

DISC 1

Civitas Ensemble; Pavel Šporcl & His Gipsy Way Ensemble

Johannes Brahms, arr. Lukáš Sommer: *Hungarian Dance* No. 1 in G minor (3:33)

Georges Boulanger, arr. Lukáš Sommer: *Serenade Tzigane* (2:48)

Jenő Hubay, arr. Pavel Šporcl and Lukáš Sommer: "Hullámzó Balaton,"

Scène de la Csárda No. 5, Op. 33 (7:13)

Pablo de Sarasate, arr. Lukáš Sommer: *Zigeunerweisen* (9:35)

Lukáš Sommer: *Gipsy Odyssey* (5:14)

Pavel Šporcl: *Gipsy Fire* (9:21)

Brahms, arr. Lukáš Sommer: *Rondo alla Zingarese* (8:14)

DISC 2

Civitas Ensemble

Sylvie Borodová: *Dža* for Solo Violin (5:15)

Franz Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody* No. 12 in C-sharp minor (10:30)

Lukáš Sommer: *Cigi-Civi* (3:47)

Leó Weiner: *Peregi Verbunk* for Clarinet and Piano (5:53)

David Popper: *Hungarian Rhapsody*, Op.68, for Cello and Piano (8:20)

George Enescu, arr. Cliff Colnot: *Romanian Rhapsody* No. 1 (7:21)