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# News

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Recording release date: Feb. 8, 2019

## **Violist Matthew Lipman Makes Cedille Records Debut With Disc Featuring World-Premiere Recording of Shostakovich's Impromptu, Op. 33**

***'Ascent,' the artist's first solo album, includes  
newly commissioned viola-and-piano work  
from Clarice Assad plus music by  
York Bowen, Robert Schumann,  
Garth Knox, and Franz Waxman***

American violist Matthew Lipman, recipient of a 2015 Avery Fischer Career Grant, makes his Cedille label debut with *Ascent*, an album featuring, in the artist's words, "music enraptured by flights of fantasy," including world-premiere recordings of Dmitri Shostakovich's recently discovered Impromptu for Viola and Piano, Op. 33, and Clarice Assad's *Metamorfose*, which Lipman commissioned.

Available February 8, 2019, Lipman's album of imaginative, improvisational works for viola and piano, created as a loving tribute to his late mother, also includes York Bowen's *Phantasy* for Viola and Piano, Op. 54; Robert Schumann's *Märchenbilder* (Fairy Tale Pictures), Op. 113; Garth Knox's *Fuga libre*; and the first-ever recording on viola of Hollywood composer Franz Waxman's popular violin showpiece, *Carmen Fantasie*. (Cedille Records CDR 90000 184).

Lipman's duo partner is prize-winning American pianist Henry Kramer. They met as undergraduates at the Juilliard School and at Ravinia's Steans Institute and have been performing as a duo for six years. Lipman considers *Ascent* the highlight of their collaboration.

The Shostakovich Impromptu was initially released by Cedille Records as a “digital single” on October 19, 2018, available as an MP3 download and on streaming services.

### **Securing Shostakovich’s Score**

Lipman first learned of the discovery of Shostakovich’s previously unknown Impromptu, written in 1931, from a news article in *The Strad* magazine on the composer’s birthday in 2017. Hoping to obtain the score, he emailed the decorated Russian musicologist Liudmila Kovnatskaya, whom he’d met the previous year during a concert tour with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in St. Petersburg. He was initially told the score wouldn’t be available until its official publication, at an undetermined future date. Lipman says he was delighted to receive the preliminary transcript of the score after a colleague of Kovnatskaya heard videos of his playing online and wrote, “We [at DSCH Publishing House] will be very happy if you include ‘Impromptu’ in your programs!”

Cedille Records founder and president James Ginsburg says, “Shostakovich is my favorite composer, the one whose music speaks most directly to me. So the release of his Impromptu, Op. 33, on Cedille is immensely gratifying. It’s a point of pride to be sharing it with classical music fans worldwide.”

Before launching the Chicago artist-focused classical imprint nearly 30 years ago, Ginsburg was a reviewer for *American Record Guide* specializing in the music of Shostakovich and other Soviet-era Russian composers. He praises the just-under-two-minute Impromptu, which Shostakovich dispatched in a single sitting, as “an example of the composer’s uncanny ability to pack a great deal of musical content and emotion into a brief time span.”

Ginsburg says, “It’s truly a gem and a wonderful distillation of Shostakovich’s musical style of the early 1930s, a time that produced two of his most significant ballet scores (*The Golden Age* and *Bolt*) and his major opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.”

### **Commissioning an Homage**

While researching composers whom he might commission to write an homage his mother, Lipman came upon an online video of violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and the New Century Chamber Orchestra playing the world premiere of Assad's violin concerto, *Dreamscapes*.

"I thought it was outrageously beautiful," Lipman said in an interview with Cedille Records.

At Lipman's behest, Cedille's Ginsburg, who had worked with Assad on a previous recording project, put the two of them together. "We became friends," Lipman said. "We bonded instantly."

Lipman asked Assad to compose a fantasy piece for viola and piano. The result is the two-movement *Metamorphose*, which he describes in the liner notes as "a poignant commentary on the grief process . . . and letting go." In Assad's program notes for the piece, she says she chose "the beautiful and unexpectedly gruesome metamorphosis of a butterfly" as a metaphor for the journey from excruciating pain and loss to "the freedom that perhaps only acceptance can provide."

*Metamorphose* became the nucleus of *Ascent*, a title Lipman chose to describe the album's music and "the upward movement that happens throughout life and after."

He paired *Metamorphose* with Shostakovich's "impetuously" written Impromptu; Schumann's *Fairy Tale Pictures* and Bowen's *Phantasy*, with their "heart on the sleeve" emotions and "deft character changes"; the Knox *Fuga libre* for solo viola, "a piece that literally flies free"; and Waxman's *Carmen Fantasie*, which "embraces the larger than life personality" of its namesake operatic heroine.

### **Recording Team**

*Ascent* was produced by multiple Grammy Award winner Judith Sherman at recording sessions October 1–3, 2017, and April 25–26, 2018, at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City and July 7, 2018, at Oktaven Audio, Mount Vernon, NY. Sherman also served as recording engineer for all but the July 7 session, which was engineered by Charles Mueller.

### **Matthew Lipman**

Hailed by *The New York Times* for his “rich tone and elegant phrasing,” violist Matthew Lipman performs internationally with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and at Marlboro, Music@Menlo, and Ravinia, among other major festivals. The 26-year-old Chicago native holds top prizes of the Primrose, Tertis, Washington, Johansen, and Stulberg International Viola Competitions. England’s *The Telegraph* praised Lipman as “gifted with poise and a warmth of timbre” for his recording of Mozart’s Sinfonia Concertante with violinist Rachel Barton Pine, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and Sir Neville Marriner on an Avie label release that topped the *Billboard* classical chart. Lipman holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Juilliard School and is on faculty at Stony Brook University. He performs on a 1700 Matteo Goffriller viola loaned through the support of the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation. His website is [www.matthew-lipman.com](http://www.matthew-lipman.com).

### **Henry Kramer**

Pianist Henry Kramer won Second Prize at the 2016 Queen Elisabeth competition and top prizes in the 2015 Honens International Piano Competition and 2011 Montreal International Music Competition, among other honors. His performances have been praised as “triumphant” and “thrilling” (*The New York Times*), and “technically effortless” (*La Presse*, Montreal). His first commercial recording, dedicated to Liszt oratorio transcriptions, was recently released on Naxos. He holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees from The Juilliard School and an artist diploma from the Yale School of Music. He currently holds the L. Rex Whiddon Distinguished Chair in Piano at Columbus State University’s Schwob School of Music in Georgia. His website is [www.henrykramerpiano.com](http://www.henrykramerpiano.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](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). Website: [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org).

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*Ascent*

Matthew Lipman, viola

Henry Kramer, piano

Cedille Records CDR 90000 184

York Bowen: *Phantasy* for Viola and Piano, Op. 54 (14:36)

Clarice Assad: *Metamorfose* (11:56)

Robert Schumann: *Märchenbilder*, Op. 113 (14:57)

Garth Knox: *Fuga libre* (8:40)

Dmitri Shostakovich: Impromptu for Viola and Piano, Op. 33 (1:56)

Franz Waxman: *Carmen Fantasie* (12:00)