

Cedille Records
1205 W. Balmoral Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 989-2515
www.cedillerecords.org

Press contact: Nat Silverman
Nathan J. Silverman Co. /PR
1830 Sherman Ave., Suite 401
Evanston, IL 60201-3773
Phone (847) 328-4292
Fax (847) 328-4317
Email: natsilv@aol.com

News

CD release date: September 28, 2010

'CORRIDORS OF LIGHT' ILLUMINATES ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF WILLIAM FERRIS

Four World-Premiere Recordings on a Mid-Priced CD

Orchestral works by revered American choral director and composer William Ferris (1937–2000) take the spotlight on *Corridors of Light: Music of William Ferris*, a new mid-priced CD comprising the world-premiere recordings of four diverse compositions.

Corridors of Light, available September 28, 2010, includes Ferris's *Gloria* for Mixed Chorus, Solo Quartet, and Orchestra; *Ed È Subito Sera*, Solo Cantata for Tenor and String Orchestra; *Bristol Hills, a Reflection for String Orchestra*; and *Corridors of Light* for Baritone, Oboe, Piano, Percussion, and String Orchestra (Cedille FOUNDation CDR 7004, \$11.99 suggested retail price).

The recordings of these pieces from the 1960s and 90s were made between 1989 and 2001 and were never commercially released or otherwise distributed.

“The quality and beauty of William Ferris’s music is far out-of-proportion to its relative obscurity,” writes Francis Crociata in the CD liner notes.

“Through words, gestures, and the alternately wistful, playful, and passionate melodies that were the heart of his compositions, he communicated, in vivid detail, his experiences of life, love, faith, and art,” writes Crociata, who is president of the Leo Sowerby Foundation. Sowerby,

Ferris's mentor, was a Chicago-based composer and organist. (In the 1920s and 30s, Sowerby was the American composer most often programmed by U.S. orchestras.)

Ferris's festive *Gloria* (1992) was born of "the impulse to recreate in the concert hall the sheer joy this moment in the familiar Catholic liturgy engenders in the faithful," Crociata writes. He calls it one of Ferris's defining works, "with all of his stylistic hallmarks, captured here in an incisive and exultant performance conducted by Ferris himself." The work was composed in celebration of the 20th anniversary season of the William Ferris Chorale, which is heard on the CD with the Composer Festival Orchestra, both conducted by Ferris, with soprano Patricia Spencer, alto Kathleen Meredith, tenor John Vorrasi, and bass Philip Skeris.

Ed È Subito Sera (And Suddenly It's Evening), from 1965, is Ferris's cantata setting of four poems by Italian author Salvatore Quasimodo (1901–1968), winner of the 1959 Nobel Prize for Literature. Vorrasi, Ferris's lifelong collaborator and partner, describes the piece as "quite operatic in scope and reflects, in a highly personal way, the sense of human frailty and the power of love so evident in the verse." Vorrasi sings the solo tenor part; Alan Heatherington conducts the Chicago String Ensemble.

A lush work for strings, *Bristol Hills* (1969) is the one purely instrumental work on the CD. Inspired by a hilltop vista in New York's Finger Lakes region, the work was premiered by the Rochester Chamber Orchestra. The performance on the CD was recorded in 2001 with the London Symphony Strings under Arnie Roth at Abbey Road Studios and was edited expressly for this release.

Corridors of Light (1994) was commissioned by the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the parish's founding. The words are from the 1934 Stephen Spender poem, "The Truly Great." Soloists in the world-premiere performance in Chicago, recorded live in concert, were the eminent British baritone John Shirley

Quirk and the accomplished American oboist Sara Watkins, with the William Ferris Chorale and Composer Festival Orchestra, conducted by Ferris.

“The oboe takes on a unique role,” Ferris wrote. “It serves to provoke the protagonist Baritone and chorus into song, and follows these vocal acclamations with rich periods of meditation in coloristic dialogue with the orchestra.”

The booklet that comes with the generously programmed, 71-minute CD includes all texts in their original languages and in English translations.

Cedille launched its mid-price FOUNDation label with a CD of archival recordings of the William Ferris Chorale performing masses by Gian Carlo Menotti and Louis Vierne. *BBC Music Magazine* (February 2007) called it “an auspicious start” for the label. Of the Menotti mass, the critic wrote, “Ferris leads a fine performance that captures the work’s reverence. . . . The spacious quality of the recorded sound is quite impressive.”

William Ferris Chorale

Since its founding in 1971, the William Ferris Chorale has given more than 160 world, American, and Chicago premieres of important new compositions. The mixed-voice choir has been acclaimed for its concerts of music by Dominick Argento, Samuel Barber, John Corigliano, Gian Carlo Menotti, Ned Rorem, William Walton, and many others, often with the composers as honored guests. The Chorale prides itself on a tradition of active collaboration among composers, conductor, and singers — a tradition that defines the Chorale and distinguishes it within the Chicago choral community.

Cedille Records

Celebrating its 20th anniversary season 2009–2010, Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) is dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from the Chicago area.

The audiophile-minded label recently introduced CD-quality album downloads in the “lossless” FLAC format, available directly via its Web site, <http://www.cedillerecords.org>.

Cedille albums are also available as physical CDs and extra-high-quality MP3 file downloads.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille is the label of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation. For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, contact Cedille Records, 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; e-mail: info@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 major international classical music markets.

###

Corridors of Light: Music of William Ferris
(Cedille FOUNDation CDR 7004)

Gloria for Mixed Chorus, Solo Quartet, and Orchestra (18:57)
Patricia Spencer, soprano; Kathleen Meredith, alto;
John Vorrasi, tenor; Philp Skeris, bass
William Ferris Chorale
Composer Festival Orchestra,
William Ferris, conductor

Ed È Subito Sera, Solo Cantata for Tenor and String Orchestra (23:14)
John Vorrasi, tenor; Chicago String Ensemble,
Alan Heatherington, conductor

Bristol Hills, a Reflection for String Orchestra (7:45)
London Symphony Strings, Arnie Roth, conductor

Corridors of Light for Baritone, Oboe, Piano,
Percussion, and String Orchestra (21:18)
John Shirley-Quirk, baritone; Sara Watkins, oboe
William Ferris Chorale; Composer Festival Orchestra,
William Ferris, conductor