

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

Press contact: Nat Silverman
Nathan J. Silverman Co. PR
2906 Central St. #250
Evanston, IL 60201-1283
Phone/Fax: (847) 328-4292
Email: natsilv@aol.com

News

Recording release date: March 10, 2017

Pacifica Quartet and Menahem Pressler Play Brahms's Piano Quintet, Op. 34 on New Cedille Records Album

Schumann's String Quartet No. 1 Offers an Unexpected Pairing

In a generation-crossing collaboration, the Pacifica Quartet partners with revered pianist Menahem Pressler in Johannes Brahms's Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34, on a new Cedille Records album.

It's the first recording of this cornerstone chamber work for both the internationally acclaimed quartet and, surprisingly, the 93-year-old founding pianist of the famed Beaux Arts Trio, who has played the piece with most of the marquee string quartets of the past half-century.

The album, available March 10, pairs Brahms's Quintet with a string quartet by his champion Robert Schumann, the latter's String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1 — an uncommon, perhaps unprecedented, combination on disc. It's also the Pacifica Quartet's first recording of a Schumann work (Cedille Records CDR 90000 170).

"Listeners will hear a spacious, sweeping traversal of the Brahms Quintet that sets its own pace to build suspense, drama, and beauty," says Cedille Records founder and president James Ginsburg. "Schumann's buoyant, sprightly quartet dedicated to Mendelssohn showcases the Pacifica's virtuosity and exuberant performance style while offering significant contrast to Brahms's moodier masterwork."

-more-

Pressler Inspires

Although the Pacifica Quartet and Pressler are both on the Indiana University music faculty — the quartet since 2012, Pressler since 1955 — it was the University of Chicago Presents music series that first brought them together on stage in 2005, for Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E-flat, Op. 44. The artists went on to concertize together in England, Canada, and elsewhere in the U.S.

“His artistry and dedication were inspiring to us,” recalled Pacifica Quartet violinist Sibbi Bernhardsson in an interview with Cedille Records. “Here was someone who had been performing for 50 years and is still searching for new artistic heights, still rediscovering the music.”

Pressler plays with a clarity and transparency that makes the piano seem like a fellow member of the string ensemble, Bernhardsson said. “That’s one of the great things about playing with him, one of his unique strengths as a pianist. He’s a consummate artist.”

The Pacifica Quartet has been playing Schumann’s String Quartet No. 1 since early in its career. Bernhardsson says it works well with the Brahms Quintet because of the influence of J. S. Bach’s counterpoint and fugal writing in both pieces. And then there’s Schumann’s direct influence on the younger composer. “Brahms was modeling this quintet on Schumann’s handling of these instruments,” he said.

Recording Dates and Venues

The album was produced and engineered by multiple Grammy Award winner Judith Sherman in Auer Hall of the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. The Brahms Piano Quintet was recorded November 19–21, 2014, and the Schumann String Quartet May 2–3, 2016.

Menahem Pressler

Making his Cedille Records debut in the Brahms Piano Quintet, German-born pianist Menahem Pressler (b. 1923) was a founding member of the illustrious, long-lived (1955–2008) Beaux Arts Trio, with whom he recorded dozens of albums, mostly for the Philips label. The *Washington Post* called the ensemble “the gold standard for trios throughout the world.”

Pressler won the 1946 Debussy International Piano Competition and went on to receive numerous other honors, including *Gramophone* magazine’s Lifetime Achievement Award. Pressler currently holds the rank of Distinguished Professor of Music at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music. For more information, visit menahempressler.com.

Pacifica Quartet

Currently quartet-in-residence at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music, the Pacifica Quartet was previously quartet-in-residence at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and the University of Chicago. The Pacifica Quartet received the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance for a Naxos recording of Elliot Carter quartets and that same year was named “Ensemble of the Year” by *Musical America*.

This is the Pacifica Quartet’s tenth Cedille Records album. Its Cedille discography includes the four-volume, eight-disc project *The Soviet Experience: String Quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich and His Contemporaries*, of which London’s *Daily Telegraph* said, “The playing is nothing short of phenomenal.” Quartet members are Simin Ganatra, violin; Sibbi Bernhardsson, violin; Masumi Per Rostad, viola; and Brandon Vamos, cello. The ensemble’s website is pacificaquartet.com.

Cedille Records

Marking its 27th anniversary during the 2016–2017 season, Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) has been dedicated to showcasing 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.

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.

###

Pacifica Quartet/Menahem Pressler
Johannes Brahms: Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34 (45:01)
Robert Schumann: String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1 (26:25)
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 170)