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News

Recording release date: Nov. 11, 2016

Chamber Music by Mischa Zupko Takes the Spotlight on 'Eclipse' from Cedille Records

***New album of world-premiere recordings illuminates
one of Chicago's "most interesting composers"***

**Performers are violinist Sang Mee Lee,
cellist Wendy Warner, and Zupko on piano**

Eclipse, the first album devoted to music of Chicago composer Mischa Zupko, a leading light in the city's new-music scene, illuminates Zupko's recent chamber works for violin, cello, and piano in a program exploring themes of separation, convergence, and union, both earthly and celestial.

Eclipse: Chamber Music by Mischa Zupko, available November 11, includes world-premiere recordings of Zupko's *Rising* for violin and piano, *Fallen* for cello and piano, *From Twilight* for solo violin, *Eclipse* for violin and cello, *Nebula* for solo cello, *Shades of Grey* for violin and piano, and *Love Obsession* for cello, piano, and six pre-recorded electronic cello tracks (Cedille Records CDR 90000 168).

"These are inventive, virtuosic, and impassioned chamber works, written in a present-day musical language by a strikingly original American composer," says James Ginsburg, Cedille Records founder and president and the album's producer.

Zupko, on piano, is joined by two close friends and musical colleagues, violinist Sang Mee Lee, who heads the string department at the Music Institute of Chicago, and cellist Wendy Warner, international concert artist and protégé of Mstislav Rostropovich. Zupko wrote three of the works expressly for Lee and Warner.

Spiraling Ascent

The album opens with the ecstatic *Rising* (2009), which depicts Jesus's ascension to heaven as recounted in the Gospel of Luke. The violin creates an aural illusion of a spiraling ascent while the piano's reverie evokes the earthbound faithful waiting for his return.

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The contrasting *Fallen* (2010) is a study in spiritual despair, based on a Federico García Lorca poem about a youth's suicide leap off a high ledge. Zupko calls it "a musical imagining of that desperate moment," with a lyrical statement descending from the cello's uppermost range in a slow-motion free fall.

From Twilight (2015), written for violinist Lee, is "a meditation on the mystery of the cosmos as night descends," Zupko writes. The first notes represent isolated, blinking points of light, ultimately expanding into a night sky awash in sparkling starlight.

In the album's centerpiece and title track, *Eclipse*, from 2014, violin and cello approach like two celestial bodies, their distinct musical lines merging and becoming one strangely luminous entity before continuing their trajectories across the cosmos. *Eclipse* was written for Lee and cellist Warner.

Nebula (2015), written for Warner, also reflects on mysteries of the distant universe. It opens with a hypnotic, seductive phrase, then gathers in intensity and complexity, "absorbing an increasing number of artifacts that both propel the music and refract it in a kaleidoscopic way," Zupko says.

Shades of Grey (no relation to the novel) is an "inventive and intricate exploration" of the dynamics of personal relationships (*Chicago Reader*). The work, written in 2005 for the violin and piano ensemble Duo Diorama, was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition.

By contrast, *Love Obsession* (2013) for cello, piano, and six pre-recorded electronic cello tracks exudes a visceral, single-minded passion. An eight-note arpeggio represents the obsessive pursuit of an object of desire.

Recording Dates and Venues

Eclipse: Chamber Music by Mischa Zupko was produced by Cedille's Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone, a multiple Grammy Award nominee, at sessions September 1–4, 2014, and January 6–7, February 22–23, and March 31–April 1, 2015 at the Music Institute of Chicago's Nichols Concert Hall, Evanston, Ill.; and June 17–19, 2015, in the Fay and Daniel Levin Performance Studio at radio station WFMT Chicago.

The Artists

Winner of top prizes at the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition, Leopold Mozart International Violin Competition, and other showcases, Sang Mee Lee has performed as guest soloist with symphony orchestras conducted by Erich Leinsdorf, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, and Mstislav Rostropovich. Her chamber music pursuits have included performances with Chicago's Fifth House Ensemble and International Chamber Artists and collaborations with members of new-music ensembles ICE, Fulcrum Point, Anaphora, and Eighth Blackbird. She holds bachelor's and master's

degrees in violin performance from The Juilliard School and has taught at the Music Institute of Chicago since 2000. From 2005–2007, she was on the chamber music faculty at Northwestern University. More at <https://www.musicinst.org/sang-mee-lee>

Wendy Warner first garnered international attention in 1990 winning the top prize at the Fourth International Rostropovich Competition in Paris. She made her New York debut with the National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. She later embarked on a European tour with the Bamberg Symphony, again under the great Russian-born conductor-cello's direction. In chamber music, she has collaborated with the Vermeer and Fine Arts Quartets, Chicago Chamber Musicians, Jupiter Chamber Players, violinists Gidon Kremer and Vadim Gluzman, and pianist Irina Nuzova in the WarnerNuzova duo. She teaches at the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University in Georgia, where she holds the Leah D. Hamer Distinguished Faculty Chair. Website: wendywarnercello.com

One of “the city’s most interesting composers” (*Chicago Tribune*), Mischa Zupko is composer-in-residence at the Music Institute of Chicago and teaches at DePaul University School of Music. In 2010–2011, he was composer-in-residence for Chicago’s Fulcrum Point New Music Project. He’s received plaudits from *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*. Zupko has been featured in the *Chicago Reader* and New Music USA’s *New Music Box*, which called him “a humble, energetic, and constantly searching artist.” Chicago’s *New City* hailed him as a composer “with something to say, and the adventurous listener will be rewarded.”

His music has been championed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, American Modern Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, Corigliano Quartet, Lincoln Trio, and members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as well as members of the Kronos, Vermeer, and Pacifica Quartets. Camerata Chicago performed Zupko’s *Chamber Symphony: Pilatus* on its 2013 tour to the Czech Republic, France, and Italy. Website: mischzupko.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.

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Eclipse: Chamber Music by Mischa Zupko
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 168)

Rising (9:22)

Fallen (9:29)

From Twilight (5:00)

Eclipse (3:58)

Nebula (7:08)

Shades of Grey (21:49)

Love Obsession (10:20)

Sang Mee Lee, violin

Wendy Warner, cello

Mischa Zupko, piano