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# News

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## Harpsichordist Jory Vinikour and Chicago Philharmonic Headline World-Premiere Release of Ned Rorem's 'Concertino da Camera' on Cedille Records

*Composer calls it a 'perfect recording'*

**'20<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord Concertos' album  
also offers rarely heard works by Walter Leigh,  
Viktor Kalabis, Michael Nyman**

Harpsichordist Jory Vinikour, a two-time Grammy nominee, and the Chicago Philharmonic, a professional, musician-governed ensemble now in its 30<sup>th</sup> season, headline the new Cedille Records album *20<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord Concertos*, featuring the first professional recording and first commercial release of Ned Rorem's neoclassical 1946 *Concertino da Camera*.

After listening to the *Concertino da Camera* from the new album, Rorem wrote: "I was moved on hearing the piece — for the first time! Thank you to Jory Vinikour for this perfect recording."

Available June 14, 2019, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord Concertos* presents four rarely recorded works spanning a period of more than 60 years.

In addition to Rorem's *Concertino*, the album includes English composer Walter Leigh's poetic 1934 *Concertino for Harpsichord and Strings*, Czech composer Viktor Kalabis's intensely personal 1975 *Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings*, and contemporary English composer Michael Nyman's thrilling 1995 *Concerto for Amplified Harpsichord*. Scott Speck conducts the Chicago Philharmonic on its Cedille label debut (Cedille Records CDR 90000 188).

### **"Persuasive introduction"**

The album opens with Leigh's brief *Concertino*, "a persuasive introduction to the world of contemporary harpsichord music for many listeners," according to harpsichord expert Robert Tiff, who

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cities “its immediately appealing melodies, concise structure, and idiomatic writing.”

Vinikour has performed Leigh’s *Concertino* on numerous occasions and says, “The keyboard part fits the harpsichord’s idiom impeccably.”

**“Virtuosic keyboard part”**

Rorem’s early *Concertino da Camera*, written when he was 23 years old, is scored for harpsichord and a small ensemble of mixed solo strings and winds. It features a solo cornet, “perfectly juxtaposed against the virtuosic keyboard part,” Vinikour writes.

“From this performer’s viewpoint, Rorem’s great fluency in keyboard writing, as well as his distinctive harmonic language with its use of gently extended tonality, are already very much in evidence.”

The *Concertino da Camera* received its world-premiere performance at a 1993 concert by a University of Minnesota chamber ensemble conducted by Alexander Platt, celebrating Rorem’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was recorded live and broadcast on American public radio.

Vinikour also recorded Rorem’s solo harpsichord work, *Spiders* (1968), on *Toccatas*, his Grammy-nominated 2013 album of American 20<sup>th</sup>-century harpsichord music on Sono Luminus.

**“Difficult to imagine”**

Vinikour first met Czech composer Viktor Kalabis and his wife, Czech harpsichordist Zuzana Růžičková, in Prague in the mid-1990s, and a friendship ensued. She introduced Vinikour to Kalabis’s *Harpsichord Concerto*, but it was years later before he had an opportunity to perform it.

“It is difficult to imagine a work, distinctly a product of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century though it is, fitting the harpsichord so perfectly,” Vinikour writes. “Keyboard textures are expertly balanced, avoiding heaviness. The string writing is masterful and allows the harpsichord to shine through at all moments.”

**“Electrifying and outrageous”**

“I discovered Michael Nyman’s electrifying and outrageous *Concerto for Amplified Harpsichord and Strings* just a few years after its premiere,” Vinikour writes. French conductor Marc Minkowski introduced him to the piece. Vinikour performed it several times under Minkowski’s direction and with other European conductors.

“Within a basically minimalist sound world, Nyman pushes the technical limits of the harpsichordist to the maximum. The result is thrilling both for performer and audience!”

### **Recording Team**

*20<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord Concertos* was recorded by Grammy-nominated producer James Ginsburg and multiple Grammy-nominated engineer Bill Maylone on November 3, 2016, at Wentz Hall, Naperville, Illinois [Nyman]; March 5, 2018, at the Feinberg Theater, Spertus Institute, Chicago [Leigh and Kalabis]; and May 8, 2018, at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago [Rorem].

### **Jory Vinikour**

Chicago-born harpsichordist Jory Vinikour studied in Paris with Huguette Dreyfus and Kenneth Gilbert on a Fulbright scholarship. He won First Prizes in the International Harpsichord Competitions of Warsaw (1993) and the Prague Spring Festival (1994).

Vinikour received Grammy nominations in the category of Best Solo Instrumental Recording for his 2012 release of Rameau’s complete harpsichord works (*Sono Luminus*), as well as for his aforementioned *Toccatas* album. *BBC Music Magazine* praised his “stylish playing, executed with a sensitive and easy touch.” *Gramophone* said, “Vinikour’s performances are so buoyant, glistening or noble that you’ll find yourself glued to your speakers (or headphones).”

He made his Cedille label debut with 2018’s *J.S. Bach: The Sonatas for Violin & Harpsichord* with Rachel Barton Pine. *Early Music America* praised his “consistently elegant playing” while *Fanfare* lauded his “prescient, accurate, and highly nuanced” musicianship.

### **Chicago Philharmonic and Scott Speck**

The Chicago Philharmonic Society is a collaboration of nearly 200 high-level classical musicians from the Chicago area. Its orchestra, the Chicago Philharmonic, has been called “one of the country’s finest symphonic orchestras” (*Chicago Tribune*). In 2018, the Illinois Council of Orchestras named it “Orchestra of the Year.” Founded 30 years ago, the Chicago Philharmonic currently serves as the official orchestra of the Joffrey Ballet and regularly performs at Chicago’s leading concert venues. Its website is [chicagophilharmonic.org](http://chicagophilharmonic.org)

Scott Speck, the Chicago Philharmonic’s artistic director and principal conductor, is also music director of the Joffrey Ballet, West Michigan Symphony, and Mobile (Alabama) Symphony and has

conducted many of the world's great orchestras. He has co-authored three of the world's best-selling music books: *Classical Music for Dummies*, *Opera for Dummies*, and *Ballet for Dummies*, available around the world in more than 20 languages. His website is [scottspeck.org](http://scottspeck.org).

### **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.

Cedille will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year at a gala fundraiser September 8, 2019, in Chicago.

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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*20<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord Concertos*

Jory Vinikour, harpsichord

Chicago Philharmonic,

Scott Speck, conductor

Cedille Records CDR 90000 188

Walter Leigh: *Concertino for Harpsichord and Strings* (8:56)

Ned Rorem: *Concertino da Camera* (17:14)

Viktor Kalabis: *Harpsichord Concerto* (28:07)

Michael Nyman: *Concerto for Amplified Harpsichord and Strings* (21:00)