
NEWS & INFORMATION

From: Nat Silverman (847) 328-4292

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For: Cedille Records
5255 N. Lakewood Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640-2220
(773) 989-2515

The Virtuoso Handel
**INTIMATE MUSIC BY A MASTER
OF THE GRAND GESTURE**

Intimate, rarely-heard music by one of everyone's favorite Baroque composers, George Frideric Handel, is offered on *The Virtuoso Handel*, the third and newest Cedille CD of vocal and instrumental chamber music featuring the Chicago Baroque Ensemble, directed by John Mark Rozendaal, and soprano Patrice Michaels (Cedille Records CDR 90000 057).

While Handel's reputation rests mostly on the stirring operas and oratorios he composed in England, this new CD sets out to recreate the type of music-making that small, privileged audiences of discerning connoisseurs enjoyed during Handel's Roman sojourn (1706 to 1709). The program includes works created as vocal chamber music as well as operatic excerpts adapted for small-scale instrumental presentation.

The earliest works on the CD are three secular cantatas, composed during Handel's stay in Italy. These exquisitely refined pieces about romantic love and the harrowing tale of the Roman noblewoman Lurcretia belong to "a body of work that represents the zenith of an important genre in Italian music," Rozendaal writes in the program notes. Evidence suggests *La Lucrezia* was one of Handel's more famous chamber works during his lifetime.

Transcribed for flute and strings, the arias "Non saria poco" from *Atalanta* and "Spera si mio Caro" from *Admetus* were issued by London music printer John Walsh, who, from 1739, was

Handel's exclusive publisher. Handel himself transcribed for harpsichord (his favorite performance medium) the moving aria "Sventurato godi, o core abbandonato" from his opera *Floriodante*.

For variety, the CD includes a Sonata in C Major for viola da gamba and harpsichord attributed to Handel: a charming work that is neither a cantata nor a transcription. The harpsichord's virtuoso role is something rarely found in chamber music of this period.

Ms. Michaels (formerly Patrice Michaels Bedi) and the Chicago Baroque Ensemble previously collaborated on Cedille's *The World of Lully* (CDR 90000 043) and *A Vivaldi Concert* (CDR 90000 025), showcasing what *Early Music America* called "the Chicago Baroque Ensemble's passionate playing" and Ms. Michaels' "sensuous warm-toned, luxuriant voice." Of the Lully CD, the magazine said, "All this virtuosity invites repeated listening." Like its predecessor CDs, *The Virtuoso Handel* unfolds through a symmetrical sequence of varied musical textures, moods, and instrumentation, in contrast to the homogeneity of many Baroque CDs.

Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) is dedicated to showcasing Chicago's most noteworthy classical artists and attractive yet unjustly neglected repertoire. The label is an arm of the nonprofit Chicago Classical Recording Foundation.

Cedille CDs are distributed to retailers by Qualiton Imports and are available at finer record stores nationally. For a free catalog and the whereabouts of local retail outlets, consumers are invited to write to Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, call (773) 989-2515, or send e-mail to info@cedillerecords.org; (www.cedillerecords.org).

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THE VIRTUOSO HANDEL

Non saria poco from "Atalanta" (6:28)

Cantata: Un' alma innamorata (17:00)

Sventurato godi, o core abbandonato from "Floriodante," (7:14)

Cantata: Chi rapi la pace al core? (8:39)

Sonata in C for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord (13:08)

Cantata: La Lucrezia (18:48)

Spera si mio Caro from "Admetus"(7:08)

Patrice Michaels, soprano

Chicago Baroque Ensemble, John Mark Rozendaal, director

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