
NEWS & INFORMATION

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**A CANAL LESS TRAVELED:
NEW VIVALDI CD TAKES UNUSUAL VOYAGE
THROUGH VENETIAN'S MUSIC**

When people think of Vivaldi, they think of concertos, which represent only about half of his nearly 800 compositions. Vocal music? Mostly forgotten. Vivaldi recordings, though voluminous, comprise many predictable collections of similar works -- flute concertos, violin concertos, and so forth.

A Vivaldi Concert (Cedille CDR 90000 025), performed by the Chicago Baroque Ensemble with guest artist Patrice Michaels Bedi, soprano, opens a unique vista on the Venetian composer. It's an invigoratingly diverse program of Vivaldi's vocal and instrumental works, none of them over-recorded.

"We looked at all approaches to programming Vivaldi on disc and took the one less traveled by," said Cedille producer James Ginsburg, paraphrasing a Robert Frost poem, "And that makes all the difference." The program of motets, concertos, cantatas and sonata unfolds through a symmetrical sequence of varied musical textures, moods, and instrumentation for an entertaining (and generous) 78-plus minutes of music.

A VIVALDI CONCERT -- 2

This variety is a truer reflection of what a concert in Vivaldi's day would have sounded like -- and how the Chicago Baroque Ensemble programs its concerts -- compared to today's typically homogenous concert programs, according to the ensemble's artistic director John Mark Rozendaal, who also wrote the CD booklet notes.

Variety was the goal even among the selection of vocal pieces; the sacred motets exhibit a relatively simple vocal style, while the cantatas on the theme of romantic love allow for a more freely expressive vocalism. The first motet is characterized by a pure, angelic soprano sound, while the second is darker, moodier.

The first cantata, "All'ombra di sospetto," R.V. 178, features flute and follows the Concerto for Strings in D-Minor, R.V. 128. The second cantata, "Lungi dal vago volto," R.V. 680, features violin and is followed by the Flute Concerto in G-Major, R.V. 436 (there's that symmetry again).

For further variety, keyboardist David Schrader plays chamber organ rather than harpsichord in the motets, which were intended for church performances.

Rozendaal's notes set the stage by depicting the artistic vitality of 17th-century Venice in modern terms: the city was "the Hollywood of Europe, the center of a powerful entertainment industry and a playground for the continent's beautiful people." Music-making was everywhere -- "in the churches, the opera houses, the palaces of the ambassadors, in the streets and canals." And one of the key power-lunchers was Vivaldi, vain and temperamental, a "one-man music factory."

The CD marks the recording debut of the Chicago Baroque Ensemble, which the *Chicago Tribune* recently called "the city's newest and brightest period-instruments group."

A VIVALDI CONCERT -- 3

Miss Michaels Bedi has been singing Vivaldi as guest artist with the Chicago Baroque Ensemble on radio and in concert, and it shows in the precise ensemble coordination and vocal control in the motets and cantatas.

She made her solo recording debut on Cedille last year with *Songs of the Romantic Age* (Cedille CDR 90000 019), proving herself "a formidable interpretative talent" (*The New Yorker*). Jean LeBlanc wrote in *Classical DisCDigest*, "I don't think I have enough superlatives in my vocabulary to describe this recording adequately, but I'll give it a try. The words 'rich and evocative' come to mind with every note . . . [Her] voice is both natural and passionate." *American Record Guide* said she "deserves to be heard often." Next month, she appears on the Lydian label's new recording of Mozart's Requiem.

Cedille CDs are distributed by Passport Music Distribution, Inc., part of Alliance Entertainment Corp., and are available nationally at finer classical record stores. For a free catalog and the whereabouts of local retail outlets, consumers are invited to write to Cedille Records, 700 W. Barry Ave., Suite 3-E, Chicago, IL 60657-4587, or call (312) 404-0758.

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A Vivaldi Concert

Motet: Nulla in mundo pax sincera, R.V. 630
Concerto In D-Minor for Strings, R.V. 128
Cantata: All'ombra di sospetto, R.V. 178
Cello Sonata in B-flat, R.V. 45
Cantata: Lungi dal vago volto, R.V. 680
Concerto in G-Major for Flute and Strings, R.V. 436
Motet: Longe mala, umbrae, terrores, R.V. 629
Chicago Baroque Ensemble
Patrice Michaels Bedi, soprano
Cedille Records CDR 90000 025

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