
NEWS & INFORMATION

From: Nat Silverman (708) 328-4292

For Release: May 1995

For: Cedille Records
700 W. Barry Ave., Suite 3-E
Chicago, IL 60657-4587
(312) 404-0758

**COPLAND A ROMANTIC?
NEW PIANO CD PRESENTS ALL FACETS
OF HIS CREATIVITY**

**Ramon Salvatore Makes First Recording
of Composer's Early Sonata in G Major**

Public Premiere May 21 at D.C.'s National Gallery of Art

While studying composition in New York, Aaron Copland composed a Romantic-style piano sonata in the grand manner. After nearly 75 years, his Sonata in G Major (1921) receives its performance and recording premieres by Chicago pianist Ramon Salvatore.

On a new CD, *Copland Piano Music -- Romantic & Modern* (Cedille CDR 90000 021), Salvatore presents an unusually complete stylistic survey: the high Romanticism of the Sonata in G Major, Copland's early flirtations with French impressionism and jazz, the classic Americana for which he's best known, and his bold modernism. Unlike other Copland piano discs, Cedille's includes only original piano works (no transcriptions), performed with clarity and imagination by a leading exponent of American piano music.

Salvatore will give the Sonata in G Major its premiere performance in an all-Copland program May 21 at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., as part of the gallery's annual American Music Festival. The new Cedille disc includes all the works to be

performed in Washington, and then some.

Composed at the behest of his traditionalist teacher Rubin Goldmark, Copland's Sonata in G Major is his most ambitious early work. "It demonstrates a familiarity with and mastery of traditional form and harmony that is impressive," writes composer Phillip Ramey in his notes for the CD booklet. Ramey was a close friend and associate of Copland.

Pianist Salvatore says the German-Romantic style piece offers "all the elements that attract pianists and audiences to this kind of music" and could become a genuine audience-pleaser like Charles Ives' similarly backward-looking First Symphony. "I invite the listener to decide," Salvatore says.

Sonnet II (1919), a 27-bar miniature, is a sonorous, post-Impressionistic piece performed for the first time in 1985. *The Cat and the Mouse* (1920) caused a falling out between Copland and Goldmark over the "modernism" of its erratic rhythms and French impressionist veneer. The witty little piece became Copland's first published work. *Three Moods* (1921) marks the first appearance of jazz in Copland's work.

Serious, abstract, carefully articulated -- yet emotionally stirring -- Copland's *Passacaglia* (1922) shows the influence of composition teacher Nadia Boulanger, who stressed control and clarity.

Copland insisted that the sweetly pastoral miniature *Down a Country Lane* (1962), commissioned by *Life* magazine, had nothing to do with a country lane. "I didn't think up the title until the piece was written," he said. Ramey discovered Copland's exquisite bagatelle *Midsummer Nocturne* (1947) while foraging through his friend's files in 1977. It premiered in Cleveland in 1978.

The sternly challenging *Proclamation* (1973/82) and soothing *Midday Thoughts* (1944/82) are Copland's last works in any genre. Both are based on sketches for never-

completed works. *Proclamation* was originally intended as a large-scale piano piece.

Midday Thoughts dates back to Copland's *Appalachian Spring* period and shares the ballet's sweet temperament.

The generous survey concludes with the fascinating *Piano Fantasy* (1957), Copland's most complex and virtuosic work for solo piano. He wanted it to suggest "a spontaneous and unpremeditated sequence of 'events' that would carry the listener irresistibly (if possible) from first note to last." Influenced by 12-tone technique but fundamentally tonal, the work was commissioned by the Juilliard School of Music to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The CD cover uses artist Georgia O'Keefe's panoramic 1928 painting, *East River from the Shelton*, to evoke the program's Romantic-Modern duality and panoramic scope: A classic white and pink vase rests on a window sill overlooking a monochromatic backdrop of riverfront Manhattan.

Cedille's CDs are distributed by Empire Music Group 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.

#

Copland Piano Music -- Romantic & Modern
Sonata in G Major
Sonnet II; Three Moods; The Cat and the Mouse
Passacaglia
Down a Country Lane; Midsummer Nocturne
Proclamation; Midday Thoughts
Piano Fantasy
Ramon Salvatore, piano
Cedille Records CDR 90000 021

May 1995