

Cedille Records
5255 N. Lakewood Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 989-2515
www.cedillerecords.org

Press contact: Nat Silverman
Nathan J. Silverman Co./PR
1830 Sherman Ave., Suite 401
Evanston, IL 60201-3773
Phone (847) 328-4292
Fax (847) 328-4317
Email: natsilv@aol.com

News

For Release: October 2005

PIANO MEXICANO: JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO SURVEYS PONCE'S PIANO MUSIC ON NEW CD

Rarely Heard Works of Radiant Mexican Romanticism

Composer Manuel Ponce (mahn-WELL' PAWN'-say), the founding father of Mexican musical nationalism, is best-known for the guitar music he wrote at the behest of legendary Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia.

That Ponce's favorite instrument was the piano is obscured by a paucity of recordings of his piano repertoire. Now, the celebrated Mexican-born pianist Jorge Federico Osorio brings a selection of Ponce's most entertaining and colorful solo piano pieces to CD on *Mexican Piano Music by Manuel M. Ponce* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 086).

Ponce (1882–1948) revolutionized Mexican music by fusing indigenous native and Spanish sounds with late-Romantic, European classical forms.

In the booklet notes, Dr. Ricardo Miranda of the Universidad Veracruzana writes, "It is in Ponce's piano repertoire that Mexican Romanticism finds some of its most eloquent landmarks."

Ponce's Romantic embrace of local folk music is heard in the three Mexican songs that open the program: "Estrellita," Ponce's most famous song; "La barca del marino"; and "Cuiden su vida."

The composer similarly absorbed and adopted Cuban folk music while in Havana, where he found sanctuary from the political violence of the Mexican Revolution. His sultry *Suite Cubana* (1914), with its striking harmonic and rhythmic sensuality, was immensely popular in Cuba.

The Romantic aesthetic is evident in *Legende*, an imaginative and expressive work in which a single lyrical idea is constantly transformed.

Ponce wrote a set of 14 intense and poignant *Trozos románticos* (*Romantic Sketches*), of which four are performed on the CD. These short, touching pieces combine melodic inspiration with a subtle harmonic palette.

So do Ponce's mazurkas. The Polish dance first arrived in Mexico around 1850 and became a favorite of audiences and composers. "Outside of Poland, the Mexican repertoire may well hold the

- more -

largest collection of mazurkas,” Dr. Miranda writes. The eight mazurkas that Osorio performs on the CD convey a unique musical universe constructed with elegant and idiomatic writing. The third theme of each mazurka is a melody of Ponce’s own creation, but with the lyrical character of Mexican folk songs.

Another *fin de siècle* Romantic touchstone, sparkling technical virtuosity, infuses Ponce’s *Estudios de concierto*, three of which are heard on this disc, and his later *Deux études pour piano* (1930), written for Arthur Rubinstein.

“Although Ponce’s piano repertoire is little known, it remains one of the most original and expressive voices of Latin American music of the twentieth century,” Dr. Miranda writes.

Pianist Jorge Federico Osorio is an international concert and recording artist now living in the Chicago area. He has performed with major orchestras including the Orchestra National de Paris and the Chicago Symphony, Concertgebouw, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, and Moscow State orchestras. The pianist has worked with conductors Lorin Maazel, Bernard Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt, and Enrique Batiz, and others. He studied at the conservatories of Mexico City, Paris, and Moscow and with teachers including Jacob Milstein, Nadia Reisenberg, Wilhelm Kempff.

Osorio has recorded a wide variety of repertoire for the EMI, CBS, Artek, IMP, and ASV labels. His first recording for Cedille Records, *Piano Español* (Cedille CDR 90000 075), was released in 2004 and received wide acclaim.

Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE') is dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from Chicago. The nonprofit label is an arm of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation.

For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, consumers are invited to contact Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, call (773) 989-2515; E-mail: info@cedillerecords.org. On the Net: www.cedillerecords.org.

###

Mexican Piano Music by Manuel M. Ponce
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 086)

Canciones Mexicanas; Estudios de Concierto
Selections from “Trozos Románticos”
Legende; Mazurcas; Suite Cubana
Deux Études Pour Piano
(à Artur Rubinstein)

Jorge Federico Osorio, piano