
NEWS & INFORMATION

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

RARE SOLER: CATCHY QUINTETS CAPTURED ON CD

Captivating and quirky, the quintets for keyboard and strings of Spanish composer Padre Antonio Soler were rare, even in the heyday of LP recordings.

Now, these post-Baroque delicacies are making their first appearance on compact disc via a new release from Chicago's Cedille Records. The disc contains the first three of Soler's six quintets, performed by David Schrader, harpsichord, with four of Chicago's finest period-instrument players (CDR 90000 013).

"Schrader plays with the sensitivity, delicacy, and virtuosity demonstrated in his previous two releases of Soler harpsichord sonatas on Cedille," says producer Jim Ginsburg, who set the 1992 recording sessions in the warm, radiant acoustic of St. Luke's Church, Evanston, Ill.

When Westminster Records reissued a 1959 monaural recording of Soler's Quintet No. 6, American Record Guide (October 1964) deemed the work "well off the beaten track of repertoire" and of "considerable musical as well as historic value," with "lovely moments that are worth savoring for themselves."

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The same can be said for the Quintets Nos. 1, 2, and 3, newly recorded and released on Cedille.

Upon hearing a stereo LP set of the complete quintets on Vox, Stereo Review's Richard Freed was moved to write (October 1973), "All six of these are really so endearing that it would take a hard heart to resist the set, once exposed to it."

Paul Henry Lang, reviewing the same recording in High Fidelity (October 1973), noted, "The variety of forms and devices in these quintets is great" and called them "charming, melodious, and euphonious compositions."

"A recording such as this always comes as something of a surprise," Lang wrote. "Imagine a monk ensconced in the forbidding Escorial and composing lilting, dancing, elegant rococo music!"

Even when Arthur Cohen wrote Recorded Classical Music (Schirmer, 1981), critics still had only the Vox set to recommend to listeners. He, too, commented favorably on the works: "This is fine Soler music and little known."

"With the new compact-disc recording, today's listeners can experience the same sense of discovery on hearing quintets by the Spanish musical explorer, Soler," says Cedille's Ginsburg.

Cedille plans to record the remaining three Soler Quintets, Nos. 4, 5, and 6, for a disc to be released in fall 1994.

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Padre Antonio Soler: Quintet No. 1 in C Major
Quintet No. 2 in F Major; Quintet No. 3 in G Major
David Schrader, harpsichord
Christopher Verrette, violin. Michael Shelton, violin
Peter Slowik, viola. John Mark Rozendaal, cello
Cedille Records CDR 90000 013