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News

Recording release date: October 14, 2022

Dover Quartet Completes Its Beethoven Cycle on Cedille Records October 14

**Acclaimed ensemble performs composer's late quartets,
including the 'Grosse Fuge,' on final installment
of three-volume series**

The Grammy-nominated Dover Quartet, whose credits include a host of prestigious awards and residencies, concludes its complete Beethoven string quartet cycle on Cedille Records with a three-disc set of the composer's late quartets, available October 14, 2022.

The Dover's *Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 3 The Late Quartets* includes Beethoven's Quartet No. 12 in E-flat major, Op. 127; No. 13 in B-flat major, Op. 130; *Grosse Fuge* in B-flat major, Op. 133 (original finale to Op. 130); No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 131; No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132; and No. 16 in F major, Op. 135. The triple-album is priced as a double disc (Cedille Records CDR 90000 215).

Beethoven's last major compositions, the late quartets are universally acknowledged as remarkable and often daunting works that upended the concept of the string quartet. Many critics and scholars consider them the ultimate expression of Beethoven's artistry. At the same time, lyrical, songlike "vocal" writing pervades these works, delighting the same audiences who flocked to Rossini's operas.

"For musicians, they're considered the greatest things ever written in the [string quartet] repertoire," Dover first violinist Joel Link says in a podcast interview about the new recording with Cedille Records founder and president James Ginsburg.

"The scale is so impressive," the violinist says. "They take a lot from the performer; they take a lot from the listener." What Beethoven is doing in these works, he says, "is changing how we're listening."

The complete interview streams at <https://bit.ly/3SuO08k>.

“A grandeur ... which no words can express”

Composers Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann were among early fans of Beethoven’s late quartets. Schumann wrote that opuses 127 and 131 “have a grandeur . . . which no words can express. They seem to me to stand . . . on the extreme boundary of all that has hitherto been attained by human art and imagination,” according to album notes by Beethoven scholar Nancy November, musicology professor at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Op. 130 is characteristic of the “striking oppositions” found in these quartets, such as “the placement of miniature movements alongside those of great length,” November writes.

Beethoven originally composed the *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 133, as the final movement to Op. 130. Because the 15-minute movement proved immensely difficult for musicians and listeners alike, Beethoven’s Viennese publisher convinced him to replace it with a new finale and issue the *Grosse Fuge* as a separate work. November observes that in contrast to the “vocal” writing found elsewhere in the late quartets, the *Grosse Fuge* is “music that could only be realized on the four stringed instruments.”

A Viennese critic applauded Op. 132 as “big, gorgeous, unusual, surprising, and original,” November writes. The work’s vocal gestures, such as recitative-like passages and a motet-like third movement, made it popular with Vienna’s opera-loving concertgoers.

Beethoven’s Op. 135, written in 1826, was the last major multi-movement work he completed. The score contains cryptic notations such as “Must it be?” and “It must be!”

Recording Team and Venue

Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 3 The Late Quartets was produced and engineered by Alan Bise January 16–19, May 14–16, and July 21–24, 2021, in Sauder Concert Hall, Goshen College, Goshen Indiana.

Dover Quartet on Cedille Records

Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 3 The Late Quartets is the Dover Quartet’s fifth Cedille Records album.

Its album of Beethoven’s early quartets, the first volume in the cycle, prompted England’s *The Strad* to assert that the Dover “exhibits a beguiling freshness and spontaneity that creates the impression of these

relatively early masterworks arriving hot off the press.” New York’s WQXR radio said, “It’s hard to imagine a group better suited to recording these works.”

Laudatory reviews also greeted the Dover’s second installment, comprising Beethoven’s middle quartets. “Their music-making is simply breathtaking . . . Their Beethoven is, simply, perfection” (*Classical CD Reviews*).

In 2017, Cedille released the quartet’s *Voices of Defiance*, “their ingeniously designed programme” (*BBC Music Magazine*) of World War II-era works by Dmitri Shostakovich, Viktor Ullmann, and Szymon Laks (Cedille Records CDR 90000 173). A critic for *The New York Times* called it “one of the most powerful new releases to cross my desk.”

The Dover’s debut recording, *Tribute: Dover Quartet Plays Mozart* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 167), released in 2016, honored their teachers and coaches from the Guarneri Quartet. “This is a smart debut from a quartet that has a brilliant future ahead of it,” said *Audiophile Audition. Fanfare* proclaimed, “This is music-making not of the highest order but of the *next* order.”

The Dover Quartet earned a 2021 Grammy nomination for its Azica Records album *The Schumann Quartets*.

Declared “one of the best” of today’s “truly wonderful younger quartets” (*BBC Music Magazine*), the Dover Quartet has followed a “practically meteoric” career trajectory (*Strings*) to become one of the most in-demand chamber ensembles in the world. In addition to its faculty role as the Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music, Dover holds residencies with the Kennedy Center, Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University, Artosphere, and Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival.

Its awards include a sweep of all prizes at the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition and grand and first prizes at the Fischoff Chamber Music Competition, among many others.

Quartet members on this recording are violinists Link and Bryan Lee, violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, and cellist Camden Shaw. Website: www.doverquartet.com.

Cedille Records

Launched in November 1989 by James Ginsburg, Grammy Award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) is dedicated to showcasing and promoting the most noteworthy classical artists in and

from the Chicago area. The label’s catalog of more than 200 front-line albums brims with attractive, off-the-beaten-path repertoire from the Baroque era to the present day. Works from the classical canon, when they do appear, are usually heard in particularly imaginative pairings.

Cedille has recorded more than 180 Chicago artists and ensembles, with over 80 making their professional recording debuts on the label. Its catalog includes the world premieres of more than 400 classical compositions.

Cedille recordings are available on CD, as MP3 and hi-resolution FLAC downloads, and on all major streaming platforms.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille Records is the label of Cedille Chicago, NFP. Sales of physical CDs and digital downloads and streams cover only a small percentage of the label’s costs. Tax-deductible donations from individual music-lovers and grants from charitable organizations account for most of its revenue.

Cedille’s headquarters are at 4311 N. Ravenswood Ave., Suite 202, Chicago, IL 60613; call 773-989-2515; email: info@cedillerecords.org. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Beethoven Complete String Quartets:

Volume 3 The Late Quartets

Dover Quartet

(Cedille Records CDR 90000 215)

Disc 1

Quartet No. 12 in E-flat major, Op. 127 (36:04)

Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major, Op. 130 (38:16)

Disc 2

Grosse Fuge in B-flat major, Op. 133 (15:09)

Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 131 (37:27)

Disc 3

Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132 (42:52)

Quartet No. 16 in F major, Op. 135 (23:01)