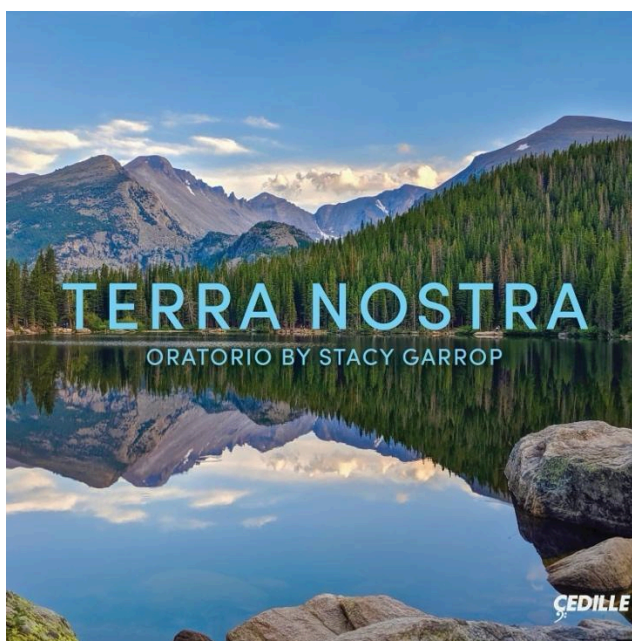


For Immediate Release



CEDILLE RECORDS RELEASES WORLD-PREMIERE RECORDING OF STACY GARROP'S ORATORIO *TERRA NOSTRA* ON APRIL 22



“No one could accuse composer Stacy Garrop of thinking small. [She] has assembled a wealth of creation myths from around the world in a sweeping attempt to take stock of nothing less than humanity’s place on Earth.” — San Francisco Chronicle

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (MARCH 11, 2024) — Cedille Records celebrates Earth Day with the **Monday, April 22** release of Stacy Garrop’s environmentally themed oratorio ***Terra Nostra***. Commissioned by the San Francisco Choral Society and the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir for premiere performances in 2015, the work has since been heard most frequently in the Chicago area, where it has been enthusiastically received (“a powerful portrait of awe, sorrow and hope,” *Chicago Classical Review*). Among the oratorio’s most ardent champions has been conductor Stephen Alltop, who leads this recorded performance by the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, Alice Millar Chapel Choir, and Chicago’s Uniting Voices, with soloists soprano Michelle Areyzaga, mezzo-soprano Leah Dexter, tenor Jesse Donner, and bass-baritone David Govertsen.

Terra Nostra is available for pre-order on March 22, 2024. For one year, Cedille will donate 25% of revenue from direct sales of the CD from cedillerecords.org to the [Climate Action Network International](https://climateactionnetwork.org/), a global network of non-governmental organizations working collaboratively to advocate for policies and initiatives that address climate change and promote sustainable practices.

Garrop's oratorio focuses on the relationship between our planet and mankind, how this relationship has shifted over time, and how we can re-establish a harmonious balance. The work is divided into three parts:

- **Part I: Creation of the World.** The oratorio opens with a celebration of the planet's birth and natural beauty, expressed through nature-inspired poetry and diverse creation myths. The composer sets verses by Edna St. Vincent Millay ("God's World"), Percy Bysshe Shelley ("On thine own child"), and Walt Whitman ("Smile O voluptuous cool-breathed earth!" and "A Blade of Grass"), while also weaving the Biblical account of creation in Genesis together with creation stories from India, North America, and Egypt.
- **Part II: The Rise of Humanity.** The work continues by depicting the emergence of mankind as a dominating and increasingly destructive force on the planet, particularly since the Industrial Revolution. Featured texts recognize the quickening pace of technological progress (Lord Alfred Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," Charles Mackay's "Railways 1846," William Ernest Henley's "A Song of Speed," and John Gillespie Magee, Jr.'s "High Flight"), while also noting danger in humanity's environmental recklessness (Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Binsey Poplars" and Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Dirge").
- **Part III: Searching for Balance.** The oratorio concludes by seeking reconciliation between Parts I and II—between the well-being of the planet and the ambitions of its inhabitants. First, the ominous note on which Part II ended continues to intensify in settings of Lord Byron's "Darkness," contemporary poet Esther Iverem's "Earth Screaming," and William Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much With Us." Garrop's setting of contemporary/agrarian poet Wendell Berry's "The Want of Peace" brings the emotional climax of the oratorio, emphasizing the precipice at which we now stand, while the final three Whitman texts—"A Child said, What is the grass?," "There was a child went forth every day," and "A Blade of Grass," the latter being reprised from Part I, now heard in a new light—suggest a way forward.

Terra Nostra received its international premiere in Sweden with a 2019 performance by the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra and Concert Choir, led by Mei-Ann Chen. The work reached an even wider audience in 2020 via WFMT's special broadcast of a performance in celebration of the 50th-annual Earth Day. *Terra Nostra* also exists in a chamber ensemble version that was premiered last year by the oratorio's original commissioners, the San Francisco Choral Society and Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir, led by Robert Geary, who had conducted the premiere performances of the full-orchestra version.

Garrop is a Cedille Records artist, and the new album marks the label's 13th recording to feature her music. Her earlier recordings for Cedille have been praised as "powerful" (*Chicago Tribune*) and "deeply satisfying" (*The New York Times*). The composer credits Cedille's promotion of her artistry with her emergence as a full-time freelance composer, saying: "These recordings have

opened doors for me that I otherwise would not have been able to get through. And that leads to lots more performances, not just nationally, but internationally, and also to commissions from groups that I never would've had any previous contact with."

The new album, recorded February 6 & 8, 2023, at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall (Evanston, IL), was produced and engineered by Cedille's Grammy Award-winning team of James Ginsburg and Bill Maylone. Additional Cedille recordings featuring Garrop's music include two all-Garrop albums (*Mythology Symphony*, 2015; *In Eleanor's Words*, 2010) and recordings of several of her works for string quartet and piano trio.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Stacy Garrop is an American freelance composer whose music is known for its lyricism and vivid storytelling. Her compositions have been performed by leading ensembles around the nation, including the major orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Fort Worth, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, and top chamber groups including Kronos Quartet and Chanticleer. Recent commissions include *Forging Steel* for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, described as "thoroughly enjoyable ... clear and engaging" by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* ("the orchestra thrilled in the work's tectonic expansions and contractions"), and *Goddess Triptych* for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, praised by local KDHX for its "[high] degree of imagination and inventiveness," possessing "the kind of vivid [orchestral] detail which would have impressed even Richard Strauss."

Based in Chicago, Garrop has been described by the *Chicago Tribune* as "one of [the city's] most keenly sensitive composers." She is a regular presence on the Chicago music scene, with current commissions including works for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Philharmonic, as well as a new opera for the Chicago Opera Theater. She is also an ongoing mentor for Chicago *a cappella's* HerVoice Emerging Women Choral Composers Competition.

Garrop's accolades include an Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Fromm Music Foundation Grant, Barlow Prize, and multiple Barlow Endowment commissions. Beyond her recorded catalog on Cedille Records, recordings of her music have been released by more than a dozen additional labels. Learn more about Stacy Garrop at garrop.com.

ABOUT 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. A nonprofit record label, Cedille's mission is to produce and disseminate audiophile recordings presenting the finest classical music performers and composers in and from Chicago. The recordings further the careers and legacies of these Chicago artists as Cedille invests in not only the recordings but in the artists represented on them. 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, including world premieres of more than 400 classical compositions. Works from the classical canon, when they do appear, are usually heard in particularly imaginative pairings. Cedille never removes albums

from its catalog and each recording is a permanent documentation of the artist's work. With more than 180 Chicago artists and ensembles, over 80 making their professional recording debuts on the label, Cedille brings the area's most significant classical music artists to a worldwide listening public. Cedille recordings are available on CD, as MP3 and hi-resolution FLAC downloads, and on all major streaming platforms. Learn more Cedille Records and explore the label's catalog at cedillerecords.org.

STACY GARROP: *TERRA NOSTRA*
Cedille Records — CDR 90000 227

Artists:

Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra & Chorale
Alice Millar Chapel Choir
Uniting Voices

Stephen Alltop, conductor

Michelle Areyzaga, soprano
Leah Dexter, mezzo-soprano
Jesse Donner, tenor
David Govertsen, baritone

Program:

STACY GARROP (b. 1969)
Terra Nostra (2015)

Part I: Creation of the World

1. In the Beginning (8:16)
2. God's World (3:56)
3. On thine own child (2:28)
4. Smile O voluptuous cool-breathed earth! (4:16)
5. A Blade of Grass (2:06)

Part II: The Rise of Humanity

6. Locksley Hall (3:47)
7. Railways 1846 (1:49)
8. A Song of Speed (2:00)
9. High Flight (2:52)
10. Binsey Poplars (4:13)
11. A Dirge (3:53)

Part III: Searching for Balance

12. Darkness (3:57)
13. Earth Screaming (4:32)

14. The World Is Too Much With Us (2:54)
15. The Want of Peace (4:18)
16. A Child said, What is the grass? (2:59)
17. There was a child went forth every day (2:03)
18. A Blade of Grass/I bequeath myself (5:20)

Total time: 65:53

Credits:

Produced and engineered by James Ginsburg and Bill Maylone. Recorded February 6 & 8, 2023, at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in Evanston, IL.

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