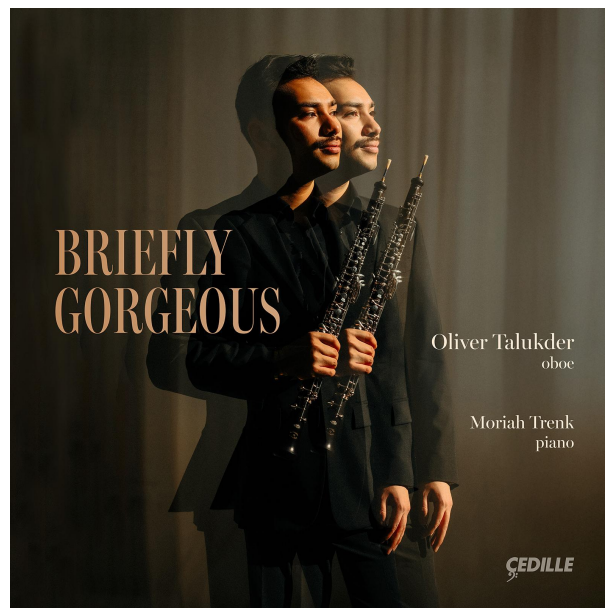


For Immediate Release



CEDILLE RECORDS RELEASES *BRIEFLY GORGEOUS*, OBOIST OLIVER TALUKDER'S SOLO RECORDING DEBUT, SEPTEMBER 4

Winner of Cedille's 2025 Emerging Artist Competition, Talukder explores his personal heritage through works by Jeffrey Agrell, Marina Dranishnikova, Alyssa Morris, Florence Price, Reena Esmail, and Arturo Márquez



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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (AUGUST 3, 2026) — Cedille Records releases *Briefly Gorgeous*, the solo recording debut of Chicago-born oboist **Oliver Talukder**, winner of [Cedille's 2025 Emerging Artist Competition](#). Joined by pianist Moriah Trenk, Talukder — a recent alum of the Curtis Institute of Music currently pursuing a Master's degree at Juilliard — presents a debut album celebrating family, identity, home, and the many musical traditions that have shaped his life. Drawing on his Mexican and Bengali heritage and his Chicago upbringing, the digital album reflects Talukder's distinctive artistic voice through works by Jeffrey Agrell, Marina Dranishnikova, Alyssa Morris, Florence Price, Reena Esmail, and Arturo Márquez. Performing on oboe, English horn, flute, and piccolo, Talukder moves effortlessly across styles and cultural traditions,

showcasing the remarkable versatility that defines him as a musician. *Briefly Gorgeous* will be released digitally and on streaming platforms on **Friday, September 4**.

Taking its title from Ocean Vuong's acclaimed novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, Talukder explains the personal significance of the book: "Vuong's novel is an emotionally raw, coming-of-age story that grapples with themes of love, family, identity, and the experience of living in diaspora. I saw myself in its pages. It was the first work of art that reflected so many of my own experiences with such honesty and beauty. The novel gave me language for feelings I had carried for years but never fully understood."

Talukder's upbringing similarly shaped the album's musical perspective. "My home was filled with the aroma of my father's biryani, the sounds of boleros, salsa, and Bollywood film soundtracks, and conversations among my family in English, Spanish, and Bengali. My neighborhood reflected that same richness," Talukder recounts. "Long before I understood it, my ears were being trained by different languages, rhythms, and musical traditions."

The album opens with **Jeffrey Agrell's** *Blues for D.D.*, a virtuosic work that pushes the oboe to its technical and stylistic limits through blues, swing, bebop, and Latin rhythms before crashing into a nearly three-octave chromatic swoop that culminates in a sassy "tongue in cheek" finale.

The only known composition by **Marina Dranishnikova**, daughter of Mariinsky Theatre conductor Vladimir Dranishnikova, *Poème* is a meditation on love, longing, and loss that offers a striking contrast to the album's more extroverted works. Dedicated to her lover, V.M. Kurlin (an oboe soloist with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra), the piece is thought to be inspired by their relationship, which ended in an unknown tragedy.

Alyssa Morris' *Four Personalities* for oboe and piano is inspired by the Hartman Personality Test. Its four movements — Yellow, White, Blue, and Red — transform into musical portraits the traits associated with each of the test's personality colors. Yellow celebrates the joy of doing something simply for its own sake; White conveys kindness, adaptability, and a desire for peace; Blue expresses purpose, loyalty, sincerity, thoughtfulness, and meaningful relationships; and Red embodies confidence, power, and ambition.

Talukder contributes two original arrangements that broaden the repertoire for wind instruments, beginning with five songs by **Florence Price**. Talukder first discovered Price's music during the COVID-19 pandemic and was captivated by its warmth and sincerity. Originally written for voice and piano, Talukder reimagines these *Five Songs* for oboe and English horn, with the instruments assuming the vocal line. The arrangements are both a tribute to Price's artistry and a reflection on his own musical upbringing in Chicago. "Like Price, I came of age in a city whose rich culture shaped my identity as both a musician and a person. These arrangements feel like a conversation across generations — a way of honoring a composer whose artistic voice continues to inspire me while celebrating the city that musically nurtured us," Talukder remarks.

Talukder's interpretation of **Reena Esmail's** highly ornamented *Jhula Jhule* is deeply influenced by the Bollywood songs Talukder grew up hearing. Originally for violin, Esmail's work takes inspiration from two Indian folk melodies that she heard throughout her own life, and acts as a musical snapshot of her childhood. Enhancing the folk melodies with motifs and melodies from her mother's lullabies, grandfather's records, and her own collection of Indian music, the work represents a statement about belonging.

The album closes with Talukder's second arrangement: **Arturo Márquez's** Danzón No. 2. Talukder first performed the work's original orchestral version in 2024, under conductor Alondra de la Parra at Festival Paax GNP in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico. Inspired to explore the work from a personal perspective, Talukder arranged his version for oboe, English horn, flute, and piccolo. "As I worked through the score, I realized that the expressive range of the oboe alone could not capture the colors that make this piece so exhilarating," Talukder states. "Bringing this work into my own musical voice through this arrangement became a way of honoring my Mexican heritage while sharing one of Mexico's most iconic musical works with listeners in a new light."

Cedille will also release a two-track single titled *Powder* on **Thursday, September 10** featuring two songs for mezzo-soprano, oboe/English horn, and piano by Delfin Demiray, Talukder's classmate at the Curtis Institute of Music. Commissioned by Cedille Records specially for this project, the first song features Chicago mezzo, Sophia Maekawa, while Talukder performs the second song's special effect and extended technique infused vocal line himself (as an overdub), demonstrating yet another facet of his artistry.

Established to support and identify the next generation of Chicago's finest classical musicians, Cedille's Emerging Artist Competition is sponsored by the Zell Family Foundation. The quadrennial competition awards exceptional Chicago-based musicians a fully funded solo recording debut, introducing their artistry to audiences around the world. Since its founding by James Ginsburg in 1989, Cedille has built a reputation for championing Chicago's leading classical musicians and composers. *Briefly Gorgeous* is Cedille's third Emerging Artist Competition-related release following *As We Are* by inaugural (2021) Competition winner, saxophonist Julian Velasco, and *HOME* by 2021 finalist, violinist Karisa Chiu.

ABOUT OLIVER TALUKDER

Oliver Talukder is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, and teaching artist of Mexican and Bengali heritage. Through his performances, recordings, and creative projects, he explores the intersections of classical music, cultural identity, and storytelling. Equally at home on the stage and in community-centered collaborations, Talukder is committed to creating musical experiences that are both artistically compelling and deeply human. Talukder currently serves as Second Oboist of the Opera Philadelphia Orchestra and has appeared as a guest musician with the Chicago, Baltimore, Atlanta, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Princeton Symphony Orchestra, Symphony in C, and Civic Orchestra of Chicago. His early musical foundation was laid during his time with the Chicago Youth Symphony

Orchestras, The People's Music School, the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative, and Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the USA. He is also a teaching artist with Philadelphia Lullaby Project — a program that pairs musicians with caregivers to create lullabies. Talukder's honors also include First Prize in the 2022 Midwest Double Reed Society Competition and Outstanding Instrumentalist at the 2024 and 2026 Sphinx Orchestral Partners Audition (SOPA) Competition. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Katherine Needleman, Philippe Tondre, and Richard Woodhams, Talukder was named the 2024 Presser Scholar and served as Student Council President. Talukder is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Oboe Performance at The Juilliard School under the guidance of Elaine Douvas. His previous teachers include William Welter, Xiomara Mass, Toyin Spellman-Diaz, Robert Walters, Elizabeth Koch Tiscione, Lindsay Wiley, and Jennifer Stucki. While at Curtis, he held the William S. Mulherin and Joseph F. Baker Fellowship. olivertalukder.com

ABOUT MORIAH TRENK

Praised for her "fluid and graceful style" (Villages-News.com), pianist Moriah Trenk maintains a vibrant career as a highly sought-after soloist, chamber musician, and collaborative artist. A deeply dedicated collaborator, Trenk has performed at premier venues and concert series nationwide including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Bargemusic, Jordan Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. She works extensively with both the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre and as a staff pianist at The Juilliard School. At the New York City Ballet, she recently served as a rehearsal pianist in close collaboration with violinist Hilary Hahn on dancer/choreographer Tiler Peck's new ballet set to Eduard Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*. Trenk has also served as Company Pianist at the Philadelphia Ballet and collaborated with BalletX, Boston Ballet, New Jersey Ballet, Mark Morris Dance Group, and New York Theatre Ballet. Committed to civic engagement and community outreach, she is a frequent performer with Concerts in Motion, has performed with Boston's Volunteer Musicians for the Arts, and served as an accompanist for Eureka Ensemble's Women's Chorus. Trenk's festival and residency appearances include the Avaloch Farm Music Institute, Manchester Music Festival, Garth Newel Music Center, and National Music Festival. Trenk holds a Master's degree in Collaborative Piano from the New England Conservatory and a Bachelor's in Piano Performance from New York University. moriahtrenk.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 not only in the recordings but also 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 well over 400 classical compositions. Works from the classical canon, when they do appear, are usually heard in particularly imaginative programs. Cedille never removes albums

from its catalog, and each recording is a permanent documentation of the artists' 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 about Cedille Records and explore the label's catalog at cedillerecords.org.

BRIEFLY GORGEOUS

Cedille Records CDR 90000 245

Oliver Talukder, oboe (except as noted)

Moriah Trenk, piano

JEFFREY AGRELL

1 *Blues for D.D.* (3:19)

MARINA DRANISHNIKOVA

2 *Poème* (8:14)

ALYSSA MORRIS

Four Personalities (10:25)

3 I. Yellow (2:27)

4 II. White (2:57)

5 III. Blue (2:36)

6 IV. Red (2:14)

FLORENCE PRICE, ARR. OLIVER TALUKDER*

Five Songs (12:40)

7 Night (1:44)**

8 I Grew a Rose (3:41)

9 What's the Use? (1:16)

10 To My Little Son (1:34)**

11 Hold Fast To Dreams (1:47)

**English horn

REENA ESMAIL

12 *Jhula Jhule* (9:51)

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ, ARR. OLIVER TALUKDER*

13 Danzón No. 2 (7:59)

oboe, English horn, flute & piccolo

TT: (50:40)

***PREMIERE ARRANGEMENT**

Briefly Gorgeous is made possible in part by the generous support of Nancy Dehmlow, Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, Patricia Kenney & Gregory O'Leary, Olga & Darin Walsh, Glory & Lynn Witherspoon, and Helen Zell

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PROMOTIONAL CDS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. PLEASE CONTACT:

Shuman Public Relations | (212) 315-1300

Lisa Jaehnig | lisa@shuman-pr.com

Tru Pierone | tru@shuman-pr.com

Cara Toback | cara@shuman-pr.com