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News

Recording release date: April 9, 2021

Pianist Ursula Oppens Plays Works by Laura Kaminsky on 'Fantasy' April 9 from Cedille Records

**Album of world-premiere recordings presents
pieces for solo piano, piano four-hands,
chamber ensemble, and orchestra**

Ursula Oppens, much-honored champion of 20th- and 21st-century American piano music, celebrates her decades-long friendship and professional association with composer Laura Kaminsky on *Fantasy: Oppens Plays Kaminsky*, an album of world-premiere recordings on Cedille Records.

Available April 9, 2021, the album offers two recent works written for the pianist: Kaminsky's Piano Quintet, performed with the Cassatt String Quartet, "a concise work of considerable substance and atmosphere" (*New York Classical Review*) and the turbulent *Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America* for piano four-hands, with pianist Jerome Lowenthal, created expressly for this recording (Cedille Records CDR 90000 202).

A large-scale Fantasy for solo piano, written for pianist Jenny Lin, explores sonorities from French Impressionism to jazz. Oppens gave the New York premiere in 2017.

Kaminsky's Piano Concerto, a Koussevitzky Music Foundation commission, was inspired by visual images of sunlit rivers in New York City and St. Petersburg, Russia, where Oppens gave the world premiere in 2011 with the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic led by its artistic director Jeffery Meyer. On this world-premiere recording, Meyer, who is also director of orchestras at Arizona State University, conducts the ASU Symphony Orchestra.

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The concerto, comprising a single extended movement, opens with “a piano cadenza that serves as the conceptual basis for the rest of the work,” Kaminsky writes in the album liner notes.

“An Ear for the New and Interesting”

“Possessing an ear for the new and interesting” (*The New York Times*), Kaminsky is a composer whose music is “full of fire as well as ice, written in an idiom that contrasts dissonance and violence with tonal beauty and meditative reflection” (*American Record Guide*).

Grammy-Winning Producer

Fantasy: Oppens Plays Kaminsky was produced and engineered by multiple Grammy Award winner Judith Sherman September 28, 2019, and February 1, 2020, in Buchwald Hall, Leonard and Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York; and February 9, 2020, in Gammage Auditorium, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

Ursula Oppens on Cedille Records

Oppens “is known particularly for the intelligence, technical skill and warmth she brings to her performances and recordings of contemporary music” (*Grove Music Online*).

Her previous Cedille Records discography includes four albums, three of them Grammy-nominated: *Oppens Plays Carter; Winging It — Piano Music of John Corigliano*; and *Rzewski: The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* on which she pairs Frederic Rzewski’s celebrated set of variations, written for and dedicated to Oppens, with his *Four Hands*, written for her and pianist Lowenthal. *Gramophone* praised it as “the sonic and interpretative version of reference” and “a fine monument to Oppens’s unflinching devotion to contemporary piano music.”

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.

Cedille has recorded more than 180 Chicago artists, with more than 80 making their

professional recording debuts on the label. Its catalog includes the world premieres of more than 300 classical compositions.

The audiophile-oriented label releases every new album in multiple formats — physical CD, 96 kHz, 24-bit, studio-quality FLAC download, and 320 Kbps MP3 download — and on major streaming services.

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 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call 773-989-2515; email: info@cedillerecords.org. Website: cedillerecords.org.

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Fantasy: Oppens Plays Kaminsky
Ursula Oppens, piano

Laura Kaminsky:
Piano Quintet (19:10)
with the Cassatt String Quartet
Fantasy (20:51)
Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America
for piano four-hands (9:03)
with Jerome Lowenthal
Piano Concerto (20:59)
with the ASU Symphony Orchestra,
Jeffery Meyer, conductor