

Cedille Records  
1205 W. Balmoral Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60640  
(773) 989-2515  
www.cedillerecords.org

Press contact: Nat Silverman  
Nathan J. Silverman Co. /PR  
1830 Sherman Ave., Suite 401  
Evanston, IL 60201-3774  
Phone (847) 328-4292  
Fax (847) 328-4317  
Email: natsilv@aol.com

## News

---

Digital release: Feb. 5, 2013

CD release: Feb. 26, 2013

### Lera Auerbach's Preludes for Cello and Piano Receive World Premiere Recording on new Cedille Records Album

'Celloquy' CD features cellist Ani Aznavoorian,  
with the composer on piano

Sonatas for cello and piano abound, but it's exceedingly rare to encounter a monumental set of preludes for that instrumental combination.

Into the breach steps Lera Auerbach, one of the most widely performed composers of the new generation. Her *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* receive their world premiere recording on *Celloquy*, with cellist Ani Aznavoorian in her first recording as featured soloist, and Auerbach on piano (Cedille Records CDR 90000 137).

Another recorded premiere is Auerbach's *Postlude for violoncello and piano*, which features prepared piano.

*Celloquy* also offers the first account of Auerbach's *Sonata for violoncello and piano* with the composer herself at the keyboard, a work commissioned for David Finkel and Wu Han.

*Celloquy* was released digitally on February 5 and on CD February 26. The album was recorded August 7–9, 2012, at the Performing Arts Center, Purchase College, State University of New York. Adam Abeshouse produced and engineered the album.

### **New Take on a Venerable Tradition**

Written in 1999, Auerbach's *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* follow in the tradition of solo keyboard preludes established by J.S. Bach in the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and later by composers Chopin, Scriabin, and Shostakovich. She has written a cycle of miniature, self-contained pieces with an improvised feel that are sequenced across the circle of fifths in alternating major and relative minor keys and traverse a wide panorama of ideas and emotion.

This is the third set of twenty-four preludes written by Auerbach, following her initial acclaimed explorations *24 Preludes for piano solo* and *24 Preludes for violin and piano*.

"There are several ingenious aspects to it," wrote *Chicago Tribune* music critic John von Rhein of the version for violin and piano, "beginning with the way each piece — complete and satisfying unto itself — evolves into the next to form a unified, mosaic-like structure nearly one hour long. This richly allusive music can be heard as a kind of opus summa of violin writing from the last several centuries."

"Re-establishing the value and expressive possibilities of all major and minor tonalities is as valid at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it was during Bach's time." Auerbach writes.

The *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* defy expectations by taking surprising turns. "They are often not what they appear to be at first glance," she muses.

The *Preludes* combine "intense lyricism with fierce sonic clashes," writes Andrea Lamoreaux, music director of Chicago's WFMT Radio, in the CD booklet notes. They "demand extreme virtuosity from the performers and explore both instruments' extreme ranges."

In 2003, famed choreographer John Neumeier adapted Auerbach's *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* as a setting for his full-length ballet *Preludes CV*, which is being featured again this season during the Hamburg Ballet's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Aznavoorian and Auerbach, friends and musical collaborators since their student days at the Juilliard School,

premiered the ballet version of the *Preludes* on stage at the Hamburg Staatsoper for the ballet's premiere in 2003 and for the 2013 revival. They have also performed the original concert version (that appears on *Celloquy*) many times. Auerbach premiered the concert version with cellist Alisa Weilerstein at the Caramoor International Music Festival in 2008.

“The *Preludes* are a full world unto themselves,” Aznavoorian said in an interview with Cedille Records.

The *Postlude for violoncello and piano*, from 2006, is a bold transformation of the Prelude No. 12. It was recorded with prepared piano for a distorted, edgy sonority. The altered piano and long downward glissandi from the cello make this a strange, distant reflection of the original Prelude.

Auerbach's *Sonata for violoncello and piano*, from 2002, is dedicated to the duo of cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han, who made the sonata's first and only other recording.

“This is perhaps one of the most intense and tragic pieces I have written,” the composer says. The Sonata's intensity makes itself felt at the outset, with the cello playing microtonal trills. “At the end, both instruments rise to the height of their registers, as if entering a different kind of existence,” Auerbach says.

### **Lera Auerbach**

Virtuoso pianist and composer Lera Auerbach (b. 1973) is one of today's most sought after and exciting creative voices. Her boldly imaginative and evocative compositions are championed by today's leading musicians, conductors, choreographers, and opera houses. She has been profiled in the U.S. on PBS's “Great Performances,” in Canada on CBC Radio's “Wachtel on the Arts,” and across Europe on many television and radio outlets.

Auerbach is the youngest composer on the roster of Hamburg-based publishing company Hans Sikorski, home to Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Schnittke, and others. Her published output

includes more than 90 major works of opera, ballet, symphonic, and chamber music.

She has won a host of awards, including Germany's Hindemith Prize and has held recent composer residencies with the Staatskapelle Dresden and the Marlboro Music Festival. She is currently in residence with the Verbier Festival, the New Century Chamber Orchestra, BASF's "Kunst und Kultur" program, the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival in Norway, and the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo.

Auerbach was born in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk, near Siberia. While on a U.S. concert tour in 1991, she chose to remain in the country. She subsequently earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School in New York.

Her website is [leraauerbach.com](http://leraauerbach.com)

### **Ani Aznavoorian**

An award-winning cellist of international stature, Ani Aznavoorian was born in Sydney, Australia, and spent her formative musical years in the Chicago area, studying with Nell Novak at the Music Institute of Chicago before entering the Juilliard School in 1995. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Juilliard, where she studied with Aldo Parisot.

Familiar to Southern California concertgoers as principal cellist of the Camerata Pacifica, Aznavoorian also appears as soloist and chamber musician with some of the world's most recognized ensembles. The *Los Angeles Times* called her "a cellist who shows great sensitivity and great virtuosity at all moments." She has received the Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award and was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. She has performed throughout the world with orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, Tokyo Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, and Belgrade Philharmonic.

She performs on a cello made by her father, Peter Aznavoorian, in Chicago.

Her website is [aniaznavoorian.com](http://aniaznavoorian.com).