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# News

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Recording release date: October 8, 2021

## **Dover Quartet Performs Beethoven's 'Middle Quartets' on New Cedille Records Album Due October 8**

### **Grammy-nominated ensemble offers the 'Razumovskys,' 'Harp,' and 'Serioso' on second installment of complete cycle**

The Dover Quartet launches the newest installment of its complete cycle of Ludwig van Beethoven's string quartets with an album of the composer's five "Middle Quartets," set for worldwide release October 8, 2021, on Cedille Records.

*Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 2 The Middle Quartets*, a three-disc set, comprises the three Op. 59 "Razumovsky" Quartets, commissioned by a Russian diplomat and infused with Russian folk tunes; the graceful "Harp," Op. 74, named for its plucked string figures; and the intense Op. 95 "Serioso," a forward-looking experiment that Beethoven originally intended "for a small circle of connoisseurs" (Cedille Records CDR 90000 206).

The Grammy-nominated ensemble, which holds residencies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, Evanston, Illinois, and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., previously recorded Beethoven's six early Opus 18 quartets for its inaugural volume of the Cedille series, released in 2020 to international critical acclaim.

In a podcast interview with Cedille founder and president James Ginsburg, Dover cellist Camden Shaw, speaking for the ensemble, says that in the Middle Quartets, Beethoven "spreads the roles much more evenly around the ensemble, and technical demands on each individual player are unbelievably high.

"He really is pushing the envelope" with these "very emotional, very intense" quartets, Shaw says.

In the interview, Shaw also discusses the Dover Quartet’s origins, its history with the Beethoven quartets and their performance challenges, and how the recording process helped the ensemble shape and refine its approach to these works.

Ginsburg notes that, unlike artists who take a more conservative approach when recording, the Dover Quartet allow themselves to be more adventurous in the studio, using the opportunity for multiple “takes” to play in ways they hadn’t yet explored in concert. The complete podcast streams at <https://bit.ly/3hEm0z4>.

The three “Razumovsky” Quartets, known in Beethoven’s time as the “Russian Quartets,” have more in common than the use of Russian folk songs, as Beethoven scholar and author Nancy November observes in the album’s liner notes. “In all three quartets, we find strikingly audible, visual, and visceral gestures” that “impart a sense of physicality, contributing to these works’ exploratory character and theatricality.”

November, an Associate Professor in musicology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, also discusses intriguing connections between the Op. 74 and Op. 95 quartets and Beethoven’s famous overture (and other incidental music) for Goethe’s heroic tragedy, *Egmont*, all written during the same period.

### **Recording Team and Venue**

*Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 2 The Middle Quartets* was produced by Alan Bise and engineered by the late Bruce Egre, December 16–18, 2019, and July 10–12 and August 7–9, 2020, in Sauder Concert Hall, Goshen College, Goshen Indiana.

In a tribute to Egre in the CD booklet, Bise and the Dover Quartet note that the new album represents the Grammy Award-winning engineer’s last recording sessions before succumbing to cancer.

“He was a kind, warm, supportive force in every session, with incredible ears,” they write. “We miss him terribly.”

The recording team of Bise and Egre also helmed the Dover’s *Beethoven Complete String Quartets: Volume 1 The Opus 18 Quartets* on Cedille and the ensemble’s Grammy-nominated all-Schumann album, a 2019 Azica Records release, both recorded in Sauder Hall.

In his Cedille interview, the Dover’s Shaw praises the “wonderful” venue’s “beautiful reverb” and other acoustical properties. “The hall itself supports most frequency ranges quite democratically, which is rare in a space: so it’s not going to accidentally feature one instrument over another.”

## **Dover Quartet on Cedille Records**

*Beethoven Complete Quartets: Volume 2 The Middle Quartets* is the Dover Quartet's fourth Cedille Records album.

The first volume of their Beethoven cycle prompted England's *The Strad* to assert that the Dover Quartet "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."

The Dover Quartet made its recording debut with 2016's *Tribute: Dover Quartet Plays Mozart* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 167), honoring their teachers and coaches from the Guarneri Quartet. The album was inspired by the Guarneri's own all-Mozart debut album a half-century earlier. "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."

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 *Wall Street Journal* found it "an illuminating voyage . . . undoubtedly one of the most compelling discs released this year."

The Dover Quartet first garnered international attention by sweeping the 2013 Banff Competition, at which they won every prize. The ensemble also won grand and first prizes at the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.

Winner of Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and honored with a coveted Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Dover has been hailed as "the young string quartet of the moment" by *The New Yorker*. Its rise to the top has been "practically meteoric" (*Strings*).

The Dover Quartet holds the first Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music. In addition to its residencies at Northwestern University and the Kennedy Center, it also serves as quartet-in-residence at Artosphere and the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival.

Quartet members are violinists Joel Link and Bryan Lee, violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, and cellist Camden Shaw. Website: [www.doverquartet.com](http://www.doverquartet.com).

## **Cedille Records**

Launched in November 1989 by 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 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](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). Website: [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org).

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*Beethoven Complete String Quartets*

*Volume 2 The Middle Quartets*

Dover Quartet

(Cedille Records CDR 90000 206)

Disc 1

String Quartet No. 7 in F major, Op. 59, No. 1 (39:05)

Disc 2

String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2 (28:16)

String Quartet No. 9 in C major, Op. 59, No. 3 (30:39)

Disc 3

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat major, Op. 74 (24:03)

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 (19:50)