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News

PIANIST OSORIO APPLIES TECHNICOLOR ARTISTRY TO PICTORIAL WORKS BY LISZT AND DEBUSSY

Mexican-born pianist Jorge Federico Osorio won praise for his ravishing CD of piano music by Spanish composers and his elegant and expressive CD of works by Mexican composer Manuel Ponce, both on Cedille Records.

For his third and newest Cedille recording, Osorio turns to evocative, pictorial works by Liszt and Debussy (Cedille Records CDR 90000 098). The two-CD set, priced as a single CD, includes Debussy's *Preludes, Books 1 & 2*, framed by selections from Liszt's *Années de pèlerinage: the 3 Sonetti del Petrarca*, "Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este," and "Vallée d'Obermann."

"Critics have turned to the vocabulary of the visual arts when describing Osorio's Technicolor pianism," observes James Ginsburg, Cedille Records president and producer of the new recording. He cites reviews that laud the pianist's "imposing palette of colors and articulation" and "sparkling, prismatic accounts" and one that proclaims, "Osorio plays on a large canvas and uses it to the fullest."

"That's precisely what Osorio brings to these colorful works by piano masters who use every ounce of the instrument's sonority," Ginsburg says.

Liszt's three *Sonetti del Petrarca*, from the "Italy" volume of *Années* (c. 1837-49), were originally composed as songs based on Petrarch's sonnets to his beloved Laura. "They display Liszt's particular genius for exploiting keyboard sonority and using the sounds of his instrument

to evoke romantic yearning,” writes WMFT-FM music director Andrea Lamoreaux in the CD booklet notes.

Musical language had changed considerably by the time of Debussy’s *Preludes*, of which Volume 1 appeared in 1910 and Volume 2 in 1913. “Debussy’s indefinite harmonies and evanescent melodies sound decidedly modern and different,” Lamoreaux writes. “The *Preludes* are, essentially, experiments in sound.”

The 24 Preludes take their titles, and perhaps their inspiration, from sculpture, dance, drawings, legends, the natural world, and poets from Shakespeare to the French Symbolists.

Notable among these are the mysterious “Voiles” (Sails, or Veils), with its dual use of whole-tone and pentatonic scales; the ghostly “La Cathédrale engoutie” (The Engulfed Cathedral), “one of the most stunning pieces ever composed for the piano,” according to Lamoreaux; and the extremely sonorous and tonally vast “Feux d’artifice” (Fireworks), depicting a brilliant pyrotechnic display against the night sky.

Liszt’s “Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este” (1877), from the “Rome” volume of *Années*, shows the evolution of his harmonic genius and his continuing skill with tone-painting. The piece is “one of the 19th century’s most brilliant demonstrations of pictorial music and one of the most virtuosic pieces Liszt ever wrote,” Lamoreaux writes. With its vivid rendering of water sounds, it exerted a strong influence on later composers, including Debussy.

The tumultuous “Vallée d’Obermann” (1848-54), from the “Switzerland” *Années*, based on a novel of the same name, depicts the emotional storms of a man who tries to escape life’s sorrows in an isolated mountain refuge.

Pianist Jorge Federico Osorio is an international concert and recording artist now living in the Chicago area. He has performed with major orchestras including the Orchestra National de Paris; Chicago Symphony; and Concertgebouw, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, and Moscow State orchestras. The pianist has worked with conductors Lorin Maazel, Bernard

Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt, and Enrique Batiz, among others. He studied at the conservatories of Mexico City, Paris, and Moscow and with teachers including Jacob Milstein, Nadia Reisenberg, and Wilhelm Kempff.

Osorio has recorded a wide variety of repertoire for the EMI, CBS, Artek, IMP, and ASV labels. His first recording for Cedille Records, *Piano Español* (Cedille CDR 90000 075), was released in 2004, followed by *Mexican Piano Music by Manuel M. Ponce* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 086) in 2005. Both received wide acclaim.

Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE') is dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from Chicago. The nonprofit label is an arm of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation. For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, contact Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, call (773) 989-2515; E-mail: info@cedillerecords.org. On the Net: www.cedillerecords.org. Cedille Records is distributed by Allegro Corporation in the U.S. and Canada.

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**Debussy: Preludes, Books 1 & 2
Liszt: 3 Sonetti del Petrarca, Les jeux d'eaux
à la Villa d'Este, and Vallée d'Obermann
(Cedille Records 90000 098)**

Jorge Federico Osorio, piano