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# News

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**Recording release date: June 10, 2022**

## **Lincoln Trio Spotlights Living Chicago Composers on Cedille Records Album Arriving June 10**

**'Trios from Contemporary Chicago' showcases world-premiere recordings  
of Shawn E. Okpebholo's salute to the city's architecture, Mischa Zupko's  
celebration of a revered music institution,  
and Stacy Garrop's paternal homage**

**Program includes piano trios by Windy City stalwarts  
Augusta Read Thomas and Shulamit Ran**

The twice-Grammy-nominated, *Billboard*-charting Lincoln Trio — violinist Desirée Ruhstrat, cellist David Cunliffe, and pianist Marta Aznavoorian — surveys works by five of its hometown's most highly lauded living composers on *Trios from Contemporary Chicago*, available June 10, 2022, on Cedille Records.

The album features world-premiere recordings of three works written for the Lincoln Trio: Shawn E. Okpebholo's *city beautiful*, a salute to Chicago's acclaimed architecture; Mischa Zupko's *Fanfare 80*, celebrating a revered local music school, and Stacy Garrop's deeply felt homage to her late father, *Sanctuary*.

The ensemble also selected works by two eminent, widely recognized Chicago composers they greatly admire and with whom they have worked over the decades: Augusta Read Thomas's *...a circle around the sun...* and Shulamit Ran's *Soliloquy* (Cedille Records CDR 90000 211).

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## Series Capstone

*Trios from Contemporary Chicago* caps the Lincoln Trio's two-part series focusing on notable Chicago composers of the past and present. The ensemble's *Billboard*-charting *Trios from the City of Big Shoulders*, released in 2021, featured works by 20<sup>th</sup>-century figures Leo Sowerby and Ernst Bacon.

In a podcast interview with Cedille Records founder and president James Ginsburg, Lincoln Trio cellist David Cunliffe, speaking for the ensemble, says that beyond the Chicago focus, what the albums have in common are composers “breaking rules” and crafting their own signature styles, regardless of musical trends and orthodoxies. The complete interview can be streamed at <https://bit.ly/3GmDFGE>.

## Architectural Icons

Okpebholo's music has been described as “devastatingly beautiful” and “fresh and new and fearless” (*Washington Post*).

His three-movement *city beautiful* evokes a trio of distinctive Chicago architectural landmarks: Jeanne Gang's 82-story Aqua Tower skyscraper, with wavy balconies reminiscent of rippling water (as seen on the album cover); Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School masterpiece, the Frederick C. Robie House; and Daniel Burnham's Beaux-Arts Union Station.

Okpebholo (pronounced ohk-PEH-boh-loh), who, in Cunliffe's words, wields “a wonderful imagination,” is the only composer on the album with whom the Lincoln Trio had not worked previously.

According to ensemble violinist Ruhstrat, the group was looking to commission a work for the project from a rising star. The sources she consulted placed Okpebholo, an American-born composer of Nigerian and African American descent, at the top of their lists.

Zupko's music has earned kudos from *The New York Times*, *Classical Voice North America*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and other major publications and has been championed, commissioned, and premiered by leading U.S. orchestras and chamber groups. Zupko's *Blue Matter*, inspired by Chicago's jazz, blues, and hip-hop traditions, will receive its world premiere June 17, 2022, by Chicago's Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Carlos Kalmar.

His celebratory *Fanfare 80* opens with the hallmarks of a classic fanfare, with "antiphonal volleys" among the instruments and occasional "savage dance-like" passages from the piano. It was commissioned for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Music Institute of Chicago. This is no ordinary fanfare, the trio says, citing its shifting rhythms and unusual time signatures.

"One of Chicago's most keenly sensitive composers" (*Chicago Tribune*), Garrop is also among the busiest. Recent commissions include works for The Crossing, Grant Park Orchestra, and St. Louis Symphony.

Her two-movement *Sanctuary* traces a deeply personal journey, a struggle to recall and reconnect with her father, who died during her childhood. The music, commissioned by Garrop's mother, evinces the composer's trademark narrative drama as the protagonist recovers memories of a lost parent, followed by the joy and solemnity of "[finding] the parent within the sanctuary of her own heart," Garrop writes in the album liner notes.

### **Local Luminaries**

Recipient of many awards and honors, Read Thomas is "a true virtuoso composer" (*The New Yorker*). Her vibrant, multicolored *...a circle around the sun...* gives each instrument, by turns, a "starring" role in the center of a compact musical solar system.

In addition to receiving the Pulitzer Prize in 1991, Ran has received almost every major honor a U.S. composer can earn. Her *Soliloquy*, depicting unrequited love, is based on a musical fragment from her first opera, *Between Two Worlds (The Dybbuk)*, with the violin serving as its emotional center.

“We have genuine admiration and respect for all of the composers on the album, who are shaping the cultural legacy of our great city,” Lincoln Trio pianist Aznavoorian says. “It’s important that classical ensembles engage with contemporary music and allow the best of it to be heard.”

### **Grammy-Winning Recording Team**

*Trios from Contemporary Chicago* was recorded by the Grammy Award-winning team of producer Ginsburg and sound engineer Bill Maylone July 26–28, 2021, in the Reva and David Logan Center for The Arts at the University of Chicago and March 2–3, 2022, at Nichols Concert Hall of the Music Institute of Chicago, Evanston, Illinois.

### **Lincoln Trio on Cedille Records**

The Lincoln Trio’s extensive Cedille Records discography includes the Grammy-nominated *Trios From Our Homelands*; the complete works for multiple strings and piano by Joaquin Turina; and their debut album, *Notable Women*, featuring works by Jennifer Higdon, Joan Tower, Lera Auerbach, Stacy Garrop, Augusta Read Thomas, and Laura Schwendinger. The trio performs on four additional Cedille albums where they share the billing with other artists. The trio performed on the Grammy-nominated Naxos release *Annelies*, based on *The Diary of Anne Frank*. More information about the ensemble and its recordings can be found at [www.cedillerecords.org/artists/lincoln-trio](http://www.cedillerecords.org/artists/lincoln-trio).

### **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. 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 over 80 making their professional recording debuts on the label. Its catalog includes the world premieres of more than 400 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 4311 N. Ravenswood Ave., Suite 202, Chicago, IL 60613; call 773-989-2515; email: [info@cedillerecords.org](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). Website: [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org).

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*Trios from Contemporary Chicago*  
Lincoln Trio  
Cedille Records CDR 90000 211

Shawn E. Okpebholo: *city beautiful*\* (11:18)  
Augusta Read Thomas: *...a circle around the sun...* (5:10)  
Shulamit Ran: *Soliloquy* (8:29)  
Mischa Zupko: *Fanfare 80*\* (2:55)  
Stacy Garrop: *Sanctuary*\* (23:31)

\* *World Premiere Recording*