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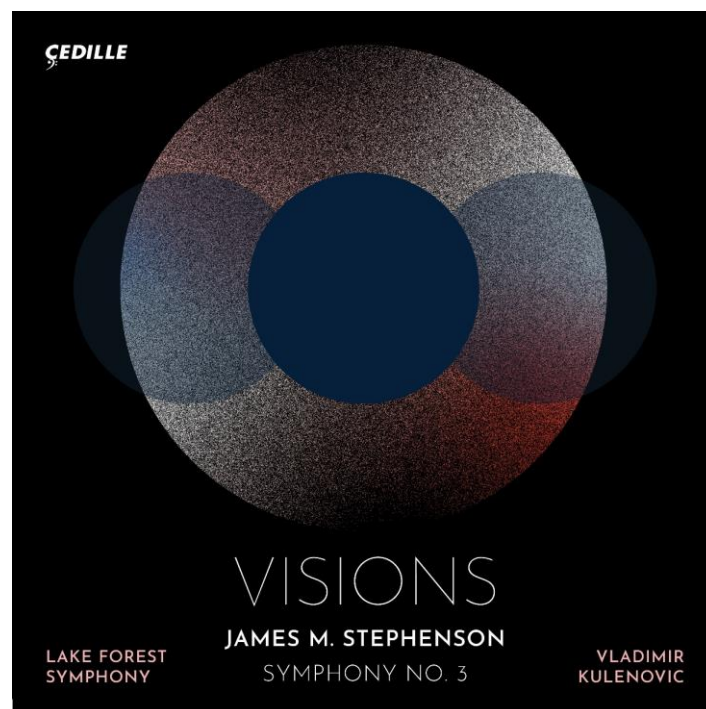
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News

FOR APPROVAL

James M. Stephenson's 'Visions' Symphony to Be Released Digitally August 5 on Cedille Records

Vladimir Kulenovic conducts Lake Forest Symphony in world-premiere recording of prolific Chicago composer's largest orchestral work to date



CHICAGO, July 29, 2022 — The world-premiere recording of James M. Stephenson's Symphony No. 3, "Visions," the prolific Chicago composer's largest orchestral work to date, will be released digitally August 5, 2022, on Cedille Records.

Illinois' Lake Forest Symphony, led by multiple award-winning conductor Vladimir Kulenovic, performs the four-movement, 40-minute work, which Stephenson says embodies "a formal sense of melody and tonality, embedded in a contemporary soundscape," a signature characteristic of his compositional style (Cedille Records 3014).

A composer of "straightforward, unabashedly beautiful sounds" (*Boston Herald*), Stephenson says the symphony is informed, as is all his music, by his prior experience as a professional orchestral trumpeter and conductor.

In his program note, he writes that the symphony's subtitle, "Visions," derives from images he kept in mind as he composed the work: "I would literally close my eyes and imagine myself sitting there,

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in the performance space. I would then only write music that I could envision getting colleagues, patrons, conductors, and young versions of myself at the edge of their seats, eager to play and experience.”

Stephenson wrote his Third Symphony in 2019 on commission from the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. Alexander Magalong, who conducted the work's premiere in April of that year, wrote, “Stephenson has produced an excellent, accessible, modern work that truly deserves an unlimited number of future performances.”

“Cinematic Scope”

James Ginsburg, Cedille Records founder and president, and the recording's producer, suggests listeners take note of “the engaging, perpetual-motion type motor rhythms in the faster movements and the beautiful pacing and cinematic scope of the Adagio second movement.

“A particular highlight for me,” Ginsburg says, “is the jazzy, smoky middle section of the third movement, marked ‘Vivo scherzando,’ where the composer adds three saxophones to the orchestration to give that section a completely different sound from the rest of the piece.”

Recording Team

James M. Stephenson's Symphony No. 3 was recorded by the Grammy-winning team of producer Ginsburg and engineer Bill Maylone October 28–29, 2019, in the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts at the College of Lake County, Grayslake, Illinois.

James M. Stephenson

Stephenson has written works for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Ballet, St. Louis Symphony, The Boston Pops, The “President's Own” US Marine Band, among many other organizations, and a host of orchestral players of every stripe. Chicago Symphony clarinetist John Bruce Yeh dubbed him “The Concerto King,” as his catalog includes a concerto, as well as a sonata, for nearly every symphonic instrument. A full-time composer since 2007, the Illinois native earned a degree in trumpet performance from the New England Conservatory. He was a trumpeter with Florida's Naples Philharmonic for 17 seasons and performed in its award-winning brass quintet. On Cedille Records, Stephenson's music is featured on the Grammy-nominated album *Liquid Melancholy — Clarinet Music of James M. Stephenson*, headlined by Yeh. Stephenson was the Lake Forest Symphony's composer in residence when Cedille recorded his Third Symphony. Website: composerjim.com.

Vladimir Kulenovic

Designated “Chicagoan of the Year in Classical Music” (2015) by the *Chicago Tribune*, Kulenovic was music director of the Lake Forest Symphony for its final six seasons. On Cedille Records, he conducted the ensemble in Stephenson's *Liquid Melancholy* concerto for clarinet and orchestra with clarinetist Yeh, and on the album *Sisters in Song*, featuring sopranos Nicole Cabell and Alyson Cambridge. A winner of the Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, he served four seasons as associate conductor of the Utah Symphony and Utah Opera and served as assistant conductor with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, principal conductor of Japan's Kyoto International Festival, and resident conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic in his native Serbia. Website: vladimirkulenovic.com

Lake Forest Symphony

The Lake Forest Symphony performed in Lake County, Illinois, north of Chicago, for more than 60 years. A fully professionally ensemble, the orchestra was honored numerous times by the Illinois Council of Orchestras and League of American Orchestras and earned Orchestra of the Year

recognition from the Illinois Arts Council. The orchestra ceased operations in 2020 due to fundraising shortfalls.

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.

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. Website: cedillerecords.org.

Cedille Records is distributed in the Western Hemisphere by Naxos of America and its distribution partners, by Naxos Music UK, and by other independent distributors in the Naxos network in classical music markets around the world.

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James M. Stephenson:

Symphony No. 3, "Visions" (39:57)

Lake Forest Symphony, Vladimir Kulenovic, cond.

Cedille Records 3014

I. Moderato agitato (9:52)

II. Adagio cantabile (8:33)

III. Vivo scherzando (12:17)

IV. Andante sonore – Allegro (9:00)