

***For Immediate Release***



**CEDILLE RECORDS RELEASES *WELCOME TO MY WORLD*,  
A RECORDING SHOWCASING MARK STEVEN DOSS'S  
EXTRAORDINARY CAREER, ON JULY 14**



**CHICAGO, IL (June 16, 2023)** — Cedille Records releases ***Welcome to my World***, a solo recital album celebrating the remarkable career and artistic versatility of Grammy Award-winning bass-baritone **Mark Steven Doss**, the 1985 Grand Prize Winner of Chicago's Bel Canto Foundation competition. *Welcome to my World* will be released on **Friday, July 14**.

With a career spanning more than three decades, Doss has consistently defied categorization. He has graced the stages of over 60 major international opera companies in more than 100 operatic roles. His repertoire spans a broad spectrum, encompassing classical works from all eras, as well as contemporary compositions, spirituals, and songs of faith. Doss is joined on this album by celebrated pianist Ken Smith, who has had a long association with the Bel Canto Foundation, playing for its annual competition.

*Welcome to my World* offers a rich and varied musical experience reflecting Doss's expansive range as a performer. The album begins with a selection of "Devil" songs and arias inspired by Goethe's *Faust*,

including music by Berlioz, Beethoven, Mussorgsky, Boito, and Gounod. Doss then offers a wide array of iconic opera arias that demonstrate his exceptional versatility, including the Toreador Song from Bizet's *Carmen*, "Sibillar gli angui d'Aletto" from Handel's *Rinaldo*, "Non più andrai" from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, "Là del ciel" from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, and "Nemico della patria?" from Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*. The album further explores three popular Neapolitan songs, in which Doss is accompanied by accordionist Stas Venglevski.

Doss continues his program with a tribute to trailblazing Black baritone Todd Duncan, who was one of the first Black singers to perform with a major opera company, notably originating the role of Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*. In an homage to Duncan, Doss performs three songs from Kurt Weill's opera *Lost in the Stars*, for which Duncan had originated the lead role of Stephen Kumalo. Additionally, he sings an aria from Louis Gruenberg's opera *The Emperor Jones*, which originally featured blackface during its Metropolitan Opera premiere in 1933, highlighting the racial complexities of the era. Transcending this historical context, Doss fearlessly embraces the aria, showcasing his dramatic skills and precise articulation to capture its profound impact.

He closes the album with songs of faith, including two by Thomas A. Dorsey, who was a major figure in Chicago as a pianist and composer of jazz, blues, and gospel; as well as *I'll Walk with God* originally composed by Nicholas Brodsky for Mario Lanza, and *You Raise Me Up*, written in 2001 by Brendan Graham and Rolf Lovland and popularized by Josh Groban.

*Welcome to my World* was produced by the Grammy-winning team of James Ginsburg and engineer Bill Maylone, and recorded on November 28–30, 2022 at the Sasha and Eugene Jarvis Opera Hall at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

The album is made possible in part by the generous support of the Bel Canto Foundation and its patrons, and by the newly established [Ruth Bader Ginsburg Fund for Vocal Recordings](#) at Cedille Records, honoring the late Justice's love of vocal music.

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### MARK STEVEN DOSS

Celebrated bass-baritone, opera star, and concert singer, [Mark S. Doss](#) has performed with the major orchestras of San Francisco, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, and Toronto, while also performing more than 100 roles with more than 60 major opera companies, including Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Canadian Opera Company, among others. Doss is renowned for his signature roles, notably, the Dutchman in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Jochanaan in *Salome*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, The Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*, performing these roles numerous times to critical acclaim. Doss made his operatic debut in the role of Khan Konchak in Borodin's *Prince Igor* at Indiana University, where he earned his Master of Music degree. He served as an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera, and then as an ensemble member of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Center for American Artists (now known as the Ryan Opera Center). From Chicago, he launched a successful career beginning with a cover role at The Metropolitan Opera. Included among his many professional accomplishments is a Grammy Award in the Best Opera Recording category for his performance on the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Handel's *Semele*. He is a First Prize recipient in the Verdi Competition in Busseto, Italy; and received the National Institute for Music Theatre's George London Opera Prize, which was presented to him by Leontyne Price.

In addition to singing more than 100 opera roles, Doss has performed some 35 oratorios on five different continents and in ten different languages: English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, Russian,

Czech, Hebrew, and Hungarian. Improvisation and straight acting have also been notable parts of Doss's career. Additional highlights include his Carnegie Hall debut with Riccardo Muti conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bruckner's *Te Deum*, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* with elite members of the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Robert Shaw, his Italian debut alongside Carlo Bergonzi in Busseto Opera Theater's *La Forza del Destino*, Escamillo in *Carmen* for his La Scala debut and as his debut role at the Arena di Verona, and his Lincoln Center debut at David Geffen Hall debut in a program commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paul Robeson's birth.

#### **KEN SMITH**

Pianist Ken Smith has enjoyed a 50-year performing career, including solo and ensemble appearances throughout the United States, Europe, Japan, and Central America. Widely celebrated as a vocal accompanist, he has collaborated with hundreds of singers through the years. Career highlights include his association with the Ashiya Chamber Society in Japan, which has presented him in performances at the Asian Museum of Seattle, Matsukata Hall in Kobe, Izumi Hall and the Gansenji Shrine in Osaka, Lichtentall Church in Vienna, the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome, St. Jakob's Church in Rotenberg, Germany, and at the City Concert Hall in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. As an accompanist, Ken enjoyed a long association with the Bel Canto Foundation of Chicago, playing for its annual competition. He also served as principal coach at the Foundation's seminars in Busseto and Siena, Italy, collaborating with numerous luminaries of the operatic world. He served on the faculty of the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University as a coach in the Department of Voice and Opera from 1992 to 2014 and has been a frequent guest lecturer and recitalist featuring the songs of Hugo Wolf. Ken continues a long association with Am Shalom Congregation in Glencoe, Illinois, where he has been keyboardist since 1982 and participated in three recent recordings of traditional and contemporary Jewish music. A native of Louisiana, Ken studied with the American pianist Sidney Foster at Indiana University where he received Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees, *cum laude*.

#### **STAS VENGLEVSKI**

His artistry, dazzling technical command, and sensitivity have brought Republic of Moldova-native [Stanislav \("Stas"\) Venglevski](#) increasing acclaim as a virtuoso of the bayan (Russian accordion). Stas is a two-time first-prize winner of the Republic of Moldova's national bayan competition and a graduate of the Russian Academy of Music in Moscow where he received his Masters Degree in Music. In 1992, Stas immigrated to the United States. An accordionist, composer, conductor, arranger, entertainer, and teacher, Stas's wide repertoire includes his original compositions and a broad range of classical, contemporary, and ethnic music. He has toured extensively as a soloist throughout the former Soviet Union, Canada, Europe, and the United States, including numerous performances with Doc Severinsen and Steve Allen, and with Garrison Keillor on *Prairie Home Companion*. He has performed with symphony orchestras in Europe and throughout the United States including the Anchorage, Grand Florida, and Detroit orchestras. For the past five years he has been the Artistic Director of the Houston Accordion Orchestra Retreat and in 2021 he was named Artistic Director of A World of Accordions (AWAM) in Superior, Wisconsin. He is a past President of the Accordionists and Teachers Guild and currently serves on its board. Most recently, he has joined the faculty of the Music Department of the University of Wisconsin, Superior.

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#### **BEL CANTO FOUNDATION**

The Bel Canto Foundation was founded by the Monastero family, owners of Monastero's Ristorante in Chicago, and has promoted Italian operatic repertoire by offering unique opportunities for young singers to compete for cash prizes and performance opportunities. From 1974 to 1981, the Grand Prize Winners of the contest were sent to study with the legendary baritone Tito Gobbi in a 6-week opera workshop held in Florence, Italy. Following Maestro Gobbi's retirement in 1982, the Bel Canto Foundation established an opera seminar at Hotel I Due Foscari in Busseto, Italy in 1983, featuring the outstanding teaching talents

of tenor Carlo Bergonzi and soprano Renata Tebaldi. Participation in the seminar was opened to all American singers and it was held annually through 1988.

### **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. Cedille recordings are available on CD, as MP3 and hi-resolution FLAC downloads, and on all major streaming platforms.

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#### **Mark Steven Doss: *Welcome to my World***

(CDR 90000 222)

**Mark Steven Doss, bass-baritone**

**Ken Smith, piano**

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

- 1 “Une puce gentille” from *La damnation de Faust* (1:38)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

- 2 “Flohlied” from *Faust*, Op. 75, No. 3 (2:02)

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839–1881)

- 3 Pesnja a Blaxe (Song of the flea) (3:00)

ARRIGO BOITO (1842–1918)

- 4 “Ecco il mondo” from *Mefistofele* (2:28)

CHARLES GOUNOD (1893–1818)

- 5 “Le veau d’or” from *Faust* (2:26)

GEORGES BIZET (1838–1875)

- 6 “Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre” (Toreador Song) from *Carmen* (3:55)

GEORGE FRIEDRIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

- 7 “Sibillar gli angui d’Aletto” from *Rinaldo* (5:03)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

- 8 “Non più andrai” from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (3:28)

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792–1868)

- 9 “Là del ciel” from *La Cenerentola* (6:55)

UMBERTO GIORDANO (1867–1948)

- 10 “Nemico della patria?” from *Andrea Chénier* (4:37)

EDUARDO DI CAPUA (1865–1917)

- 11 ‘O Sole Mio\* (2:33)

ERNESTO DE CURTIS (1875–1937)

12 Torna a Surriento\* (2:45)

13 Non ti scordar di me\* (2:41)

KURT WEILL (1900–1950)

14 “Lost in the Stars” from *Lost in the Stars* (3:09)

15 “O Tixo, Tixo Help Me!” from *Lost in the Stars* (5:17)

16 “Thousands of Miles” from *Lost in the Stars* (3:52)

LOUIS GRUENBERG (1884–1964)

17 “Oh, Lawd Jesus, heah my Prayer” from *Emperor Jones* (3:44)

THOMAS A. DORSEY (1899–1993)

18 Peace in the Valley (4:01)

19 Take my Hand, Precious Lord (4:50)

NICHOLAS BRODSZKY (1905–1958)

20 I’ll Walk with God (3:03)

BRENDAN GRAHAM (B. 1945) & ROLF LOVLAND (B. 1955)

21 You Raise Me Up (5:00)

TT: (77:40)

\*Stas Venglevski, accordion