



PRESS RELEASE

Shuman Public Relations

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For Immediate Release



**MIRACLE OF MIRACLES: MUSIC FOR HANUKKAH
FEATURING CHICAGO A CAPPELLA
TO BE RELEASED BY CEDILLE RECORDS OCTOBER 13**

Recording unveils the richer meaning of the Festival of Lights, with music ranging from heartfelt prayers to jazzy and playful holiday favorites



CHICAGO, IL (September 15, 2023) — Cedille Records releases ***Miracle of Miracles: Music for Hanukkah***, featuring songs from more than 25 years of performances by **Chicago a cappella**, an ensemble of ten singers led by artistic director John William Trotter. The collection showcases the creativity and vitality of American Jewish musical traditions through the story of Hanukkah, from the holiday itself to its candles, miracles, religious observances, food, and games. Praised for its “clarity, well-balanced tone, and deep emotional involvement” (*Washington Post*), *Chicago a cappella* captures the festive spirit of communal, collective celebrations and the primary role songs have played in shaping modern Hanukkah traditions. *Miracle of Miracles* will be released on Friday, October 13, 2023.

The music on *Miracle of Miracles* reflects the significance of Hanukkah songs in Jewish culture, emphasizing their unique role in chronicling Jewish history, celebrating family traditions, and

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bridging cultural borders. Many of the Hanukkah songs we know today have evolved over time to become a central part of Hanukkah celebrations, connecting religious history to secular life. During the Jewish Enlightenment in the late 18th and 19th centuries, Hanukkah songs became more prevalent in modern Jewish culture, largely due to the expansion of publishing and the creation of Jewish songbooks, which helped in preserving and spreading these songs.

Rich with liturgical and folk melodies, *Miracle of Miracles* demonstrates a keen sensitivity to both biblical and modern Hebrew, as well as Yiddish elements (and English) intertwined with American jazz and popular styles. Eight living composers and arrangers from different traditions and communities bring fresh perspective to songs encompassing Hanukkah celebrations. Among them, Robert Applebaum's stirring version of "Haneirot Halalu," which weaves English translation and commentary into the Hebrew verses that accompany lighting of the Hanukkah menorah; movements from the majestic "Hallel Cantata" by London-based Daniel Tunkel; and a lively arrangement of the traditional melody for the prayer of thanksgiving, "Al HaNisim" ("For the Miracles"), by Elliott Z. Levine. Familiar dreidel tunes take on a new attitude in Applebaum's Hebrew/English "Funky Dreidl" and a swing version of "S'vivon" ("Little Dreydl") by Steve Barnett.

The album also includes two bonus tracks originally released on the ensemble's 2008 *Christmas a cappella* album.

John William Trotter, artistic director of Chicago *a cappella*, notes in the recording's booklet:

"Hanukkah offers so many different modes of personal, social, and spiritual practice. Consider just three of these. Hanukkah offers the chance to reflect on the historical significance of the Maccabean revolt, with its consequences echoing through to the present day. It invites quiet contemplation of the candle flames, set aside from any utilitarian purpose. And it provides an opportunity to gather with family and have a really great party with really great food."

Jonathan Miller, Chicago *a cappella* artistic director emeritus, offers his own reflection in the booklet:

"Why, you might ask, aren't there more albums of Hanukkah music like this? Finding the music is a big part of the challenge. It's hard to locate works that meet all of our criteria: superb musical craftsmanship, a Hanukkah text, and a setting for a cappella mixed choir... Jewish choral music is a recent phenomenon, begun in earnest only about 200 years ago in Berlin, so there's a simple quantity issue: we have much less repertoire to peruse than in other choral traditions. Given all of this, we are especially grateful for the composers and arrangers whose persistence and skill have given us the works found here."

Miracle of Miracles joins Chicago *a cappella*'s two previous Cedille releases, *Shall I Compare Thee: Choral Songs on Shakespeare Texts* and *Christmas a cappella*. Produced by the Grammy-winning team of producer James Ginsburg and engineer Bill Maylone, *Miracle of Miracles* was recorded January 13 and 16–18, 2023, at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. The album includes all song texts and translations (where applicable) and extensive scholarly notes by Philip V. Bohlman, Ludwig Rosenberger Distinguished Service Professor in Jewish History in the Department of Music at the University of Chicago.

ABOUT CHICAGO A CAPPELLA

Chicago a cappella is an ensemble of ten singers that performs a wide-ranging repertoire of musical styles and genres from the ninth to the 21st centuries, without a conductor and without instruments. Founded in 1993, the group features a roster of the Chicago area's most accomplished classically trained choral singers and soloists, whose flexible vocal skills and musical adventurousness bring a sense of joy to their performances. *Chicago a cappella* presents an extensive concert series in the Chicago area and has made dozens of guest appearances in the U.S. and Mexico. The ensemble has commissioned new works by composers including Chen Yi, Tania León, Stacy Garrop, Julio Morales, Rodrigo Cadet, Novelli Jurado, Ezequiel Viñao, Paul Crabtree, Sarai Hillman, and Rollo Dilworth.

Chicago a cappella has been acclaimed as "a jewel in the crown of Chicago's musical life" (*The American Organist*) and praised for its "pure intonation, beautiful blend and clear diction" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). This recording joins two previous Cedille releases, *Shall I Compare Thee: Choral Songs on Shakespeare Texts* and *Christmas A Cappella*. In addition, the ensemble has recorded Renaissance works, collections of spirituals and holiday music, and a program of Jewish works titled *Days of Awe and Rejoicing: Radiant Gems of Jewish Music*.

www.chicagoacappella.org

Chicago a cappella is led by Artistic Director John William Trotter. Singers are sopranos Katelyn Lee, Kristin Lelm, and Cari Plachy, mezzo-sopranos Chelsea Lyons and Emily Price, tenors Ace Gangoso and Trevor Mitchell, baritones Matthew Brennan and Joe Labozetta, and bass John Orduña.

Bonus tracks, recorded in 2008, were led by *Chicago a cappella* Founder and Artistic Director Jonathan Miller and sung by sopranos Kathryn Kamp and Cari Plachy, mezzo-sopranos Elizabeth Grizzell and Susan Schober, tenors Harold Brock and Cary Lovett, baritones Michael Boschert and Matthew Greenberg, and bass Benjamin Rivera.

ABOUT 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. A nonprofit record label, Cedille's mission is to produce and disseminate audiophile recordings presenting the finest classical music performers and composers in and from Chicago. The recordings further the careers and legacies of these Chicago artists as Cedille invests in not only the recordings but in the artists represented on them. 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, including world premieres of more than 400 classical compositions. Works from the classical canon, when they do appear, are usually heard in particularly imaginative pairings. Cedille never removes albums from its catalog and each recording is a permanent documentation of the artist's work. With more than 180 Chicago artists and ensembles, over 80 making their professional recording debuts on the label, Cedille brings the area's most significant classical music artists to a worldwide listening public. Cedille recordings are available on CD, as MP3 and hi-resolution FLAC downloads, and on

all major streaming platforms.

Miracle of Miracles: Music for Hanukkah
Cedille CDR 90000 225
Chicago a cappella

TRADITIONAL (ARR. ROBERT APPLEBAUM)

1 Oh Chanukah/Y'Mei Hachanukah (3:20)

TRADITIONAL (ARR. STEVE BARNETT)

2 S'vivon (1:19)

TRADITIONAL (ARR. MARK ZUCKERMAN)

3 O, ir kleyne likhtelekh (3:50)

GERALD COHEN

4 Chanukah Lights* (2:47)

ROBERT APPLEBAUM

5 Haneiroth Halalu* (4:37)

TRADITIONAL (ARR. ELLIOT Z. LEVINE)

6 Al HaNisim (1:44)

TRADITIONAL (ARR. APPLEBAUM)

7 Al Hanisim* (3:58)

JOSHUA FISHBEIN

8 Al Hanisim (For the Miracles)* (4:39)

DANIEL TUNKEL

from Hallel Cantata* (7:14)

9 I. Hal'luyah! (Psalm 113) (1:28)

10 II. B'tzeit Yisrael (Psalm 114) (1:53)

11 III. Adonai Z'charanu (Psalm 115, vv. 12-18) (2:26)

12 VI. Hodu (Psalm 118, vv. 1-4) (1:26)

TRADITIONAL (ARR. APPLEBAUM)

13 Maoz Tzur* (5:21)

ELLIOT Z. LEVINE

14 Lo V'Chayil (3:01)

VLADIMIR HEYFETZ (ARR. ZUCKERMAN)

15 Fayer, fayer (0:57)

SAMUEL E. GOLDFARB (ARR. APPLEBAUM)

16 Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl) (3:35)

MIKHL GELBART (ARR. ZUCKERMAN)

17 I am a Little Dreydl (Ikh bin a kleyner Dreydl) (1:23)

JONATHAN M. MILLER

18 Biy'mey Mattityahu* (4:14)

Bonus Tracks from *Christmas a cappella*:

CHAIM PARCHI (ARR. JOSHUA JACOBSON)

19 Aleih Neiri (3:54)

STACY GARROP

20 Lo Yisa Goy (5:04)

TT: (62:09)

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

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