

For Immediate Release

**TRUMPETER MARY ELIZABETH BOWDEN'S
STORYTELLER: CONTEMPORARY CONCERTOS FOR TRUMPET
TO BE RELEASED BY CEDILLE RECORDS, JUNE 14**

*Album features world-premiere recordings of works by composers Clarice V. Assad,
Tyson Gholston Davis, Reena Esmail, Vivian Fung, Sarah Kirkland Snider,
and James M. Stephenson*



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (MAY 17, 2024) — In furtherance of her mission to establish a robust, contemporary repertoire for the trumpet, soloist **Mary Elizabeth Bowden** devotes her first album with full orchestra to world-premiere recordings of concertos by six living composers. Titled ***Storyteller: Contemporary Concertos for Trumpet***, this Cedille Records release features three concertos specially commissioned for this project — by Clarice V. Assad, Tyson Gholston Davis, and Vivian Fung — as well as newly commissioned concerto arrangements by Reena Esmail, Sarah Kirkland Snider, and James M. Stephenson. Ms. Bowden performs these works with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, led by Music Director Allen Tinkham. *Storyteller: Contemporary Concertos for Trumpet* is available **Friday, June 14**. The recording is Ms. Bowden's first with Cedille Records.

The album opens with its title track, ***The Storyteller*** (2013) by Chicago-based composer James M. Stephenson. Originally composed for trumpet, violin, piano, and offstage trumpet, the work is a tribute to the late Adolph “Bud” Herseth, who was Principal Trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for more than 50 years and whose performances were a formative musical influence on the composer. Herseth’s playing has been described as telling a story with every note, so Mr. Stephenson endeavored to tell the trumpeter’s story in this piece, including through allusions to works that the composer had heard Herseth play with particular aplomb. Mr. Stephenson’s 2018 companion piece for *The Storyteller*, titled ***Scram!***, has also been cast in a new orchestral concerto arrangement for the present album.

Composed for Ms. Bowden and premiered by her with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, Clarice Assad’s ***Bohemian Queen*** (2022) is inspired by the surrealist art of Chicago-based American painter Gertrude Abercrombie (1909–1977). The first two movements, titled *Girl Searching* and *The Stroll*, respectively, are inspired by Abercrombie’s 1945 and 1943 paintings of the same names. The artist was friends with many jazz luminaries, and the third and final movement, *Hyde Park Jam*, evokes their frequent music-filled parties, in which Gertrude often joined in at the piano. *Hyde Park Jam* is available now as a single.

Tyson Gholston Davis’s ***Veiled Light*** (2021) also tackles a painterly subject, in this case James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s *Nocturne in Black and Red* (c. 1884). The concerto is written for two trumpet soloists with strings, as the composer uses these forces to channel the “murky and ambiguous atmosphere” he identifies in the painting. The first movement, for example, captures the eerily still reflections of buildings in a canal through slowly evolving harmonies paired with a descending line in the trumpets that drives the musical flow. The composer wrote the work in part for Ms. Bowden, and she performed in the premiere with The Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle in Durham, NC.

The inspiration for Vivian Fung’s ***Trumpet Concerto*** (2019) was Ms. Bowden herself, particularly her quest to build a solo career in a male-dominated field. The work’s expressive arc parallels her emotional journey along that path, marked by feelings of frustration, passion, struggle, and ultimately a sense of celebration. This one-movement concerto also seeks to explore the musical possibilities of both E-flat trumpet and flugelhorn. Ms. Bowden premiered the work with lead commissioner the Erie Philharmonic.

The remaining two world premieres on this album are new instrumental, concertante arrangements of works that originated as songs in a more intimate chamber setting. Sarah Kirkland Snider’s ***Caritas*** (2021) began as a song inspired by the texts of 12th-century composer, visionary, and polymath Hildegard von Bingen. Ms. Snider explains: “I created a poem of sorts based on various Hildegard texts about the Biblical virtue ‘Caritas,’ or Charity, to whom she often prayed. For Hildegard, Caritas embodied the Female Divine.” The original setting for mezzo-soprano, string quartet, and harp has been adapted here for flugelhorn, string orchestra, and harp.

Reena Esmail’s ***Rosa de Sal*** (2020) was initially composed as a song for soprano-and-piano with Pablo Neruda’s Sonnet XVII as the text. Opening with the line “No te amo como si fueras rosa de sal” (I do not love you as if you were rose of salt), the poem goes on to present a complex vision

of love and desire that Ms. Esmail connects musically to the Hindustani raag *Puriya Dhanashree*, in which she hears the same sensibility. Unlike Snider's straightforward transcription, Esmail's piece is a full reimagining of her original song.

Storyteller: Contemporary Concertos for Trumpet is Ms. Bowden's third solo album. It was preceded by two releases on Summit Records: her 2015 debut album, *Radiance* (featuring new American works), and her second solo recording, *Rêverie* (2019), with the Kassia Ensemble. *Rêverie* was featured among the Global Music Awards' Top Albums of the Year, *Textura Magazine's* Top Ten Classical Albums of the Year, and nominated for an Opus Klassik Award. With her chamber ensemble, Seraph Brass, Ms. Bowden is currently recording an album of new compositions for brass quintet for Tower Grove Records.

MARY ELIZABETH BOWDEN

STORYTELLER: CONTEMPORARY CONCERTOS FOR TRUMPET

CEDILLE RECORDS — CDR 90000 229

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Mary Elizabeth Bowden, trumpet
Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra
Allen Tinkham, Music Director

JAMES M. STEPHENSON (b. 1969)

1. The Storyteller* (8:57)
with Yvonne Lam, violin and David Dash, offstage trumpet

CLARICE V. ASSAD (b. 1978)

Bohemian Queen: Concerto for Trumpet and String Orchestra* (15:38)

2. I. Girl Searching (5:59)
3. II. The Stroll (4:29)
4. III. Hyde Park Jam (5:02)

VIVIAN FUNG (b. 1975)

5. Trumpet Concerto* (15:31)

TYSON GHOLSTON DAVIS (b. 2000)

Veiled Light for Two Trumpets and String Ensemble* (8:20)

6. I. Sospeso, pensive (5:44)
7. II. Skittish, marcato (2:32)

with David Dash, trumpet

SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER (b. 1973)

8. Caritas** (6:04)

REENA ESMAIL (b. 1983)

9. Rosa de Sal for Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra* (9:42)

JAMES M. STEPHENSON (b. 1969)

10. Scram! for Solo Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra** (3:15)

TT: (68:15)

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING of this arrangement

Produced and engineered by James Ginsburg and Bill Maylone.

Recorded November 15, 2021 at Kennedy King College (Chicago, IL); December 9–10, 2023 at Sasha and Eugene Jarvis Opera Hall, DePaul University (Chicago, IL); and January 14–15, 2024 at Gannon Concert Hall, DePaul University (Chicago, IL).

ABOUT MARY ELIZABETH BOWDEN

Classical trumpeter Mary Elizabeth Bowden is a highly in-demand soloist, praised for her “splendid, brilliant” playing (*Gramophone*). A Gold Medal Global Music Award Winner, Opus Klassik Nominee, and Yamaha Performing Artist, Ms. Bowden works to establish a new repertoire for the trumpet through creative commissioning projects and award-winning albums. She is a founding member and artistic leader of Seraph Brass, an ensemble of America’s top female brass players that was awarded the 2019 American Prize in Chamber Music and has performed around the world, including as part of pop star Adele’s 2016 North American tour. Seraph Brass’s debut album, *Asteria*, was released on Summit Records in 2018 and won the Silver Medal Global Music Award. Ms. Bowden currently plays Principal Trumpet in the Artosphere Festival Orchestra and is a member of the Iris Collective and the Chrysalis Chamber Players, the latter she co-founded in 2011. She was previously Principal Trumpet of the Sarasota Opera Orchestra and a member of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Festival Academy, Auckland Philharmonia, and Daejeon Philharmonic. Ms. Bowden earned her Bachelor of Music degree from The Curtis Institute of Music and her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. Learn more at maryelizabethbowden.com.

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. Learn more Cedille Records and explore the label's catalog at cedillerecords.org.

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