

For Immediate Release



CAVATINA DUO'S *RIVER OF FIRE* TO BE RELEASED ON CEDILLE RECORDS, MARCH 14

*Guitarist Denis Azabagić and flutist Eugenia Moliner, alongside the Pacifica Quartet,
present world premiere recordings of five works that bridge
classical traditions and Romani influences*



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (February 10, 2025) — For their latest release on Cedille Records, the **Cavatina Duo**—Bosnian classical guitarist **Denis Azabagić** and Spanish flutist **Eugenia Moliner**—presents world premiere recordings of five new works written for them by Clarice Assad, Sergio Assad, Matthew Dunne, Stacy Garrop, and Atanas Ourkouzounov, all drawing on the music and history of the Romani diaspora. On select works, the Duo is joined by the Grammy Award-winning **Pacifica Quartet**, or individual members of the quartet. *River of Fire* will be released on **March 14, 2025**.

It is believed that a variety of closely related ethnic peoples known variously as Romani, Roma, or “Gypsies” originated in what is now southeast Pakistan, eventually migrating into Eastern Europe

as well as forking southward through the Middle East, down into Egypt, across Northern Africa, and up into Southern Spain. “Gypsy music” is as diverse as the Romani that play and perpetuate it; regionally defined Romani groups encountered native music cultures, blending them with their own unique musical sensibilities.

Upon deciding to embark on a Gypsy music project, Azabagić and Moliner saw an opportunity to breathe new life into this theme by using Gypsy music, culture, and history as a point of departure for newly commissioned works. Azabagić explains that at this stage of his musical career, he feels a longing to contribute to the repertoire—to create new and enduring music that expands and sustains the canon. This idea of creating something “new” or “original” emphasizes that music, like language, is always in a state of flux and constantly evolving.

In writing *Romani Songs*, **Stacy Garrop** was particularly inspired by Romani dancers; the work, performed with Pacifica Quartet cellist **Brandon Vamos**, incorporates clapping, stomping, and the guitar as percussion. Pacifica violinist **Samin Ganatra** joins the Duo for **Sérgio Assad’s** *Contos Ciganos*, which follows the dissemination of the Romani from traditional dances of India’s Punjab region to *Gelem Gelem*, considered an unofficial Romani anthem. **Atanas Ourkouzounov’s** *Raga Ibraima* blends Balkan and Romani sounds with the Indian raga, paying homage to Bulgarian-Romani clarinetist Ivo Papazov. **Matthew Dunne’s** *Three Artisans*, composed in memory of flutist Tal Perkes, weaves in European jazz, Flamenco, and Romani musical influences. **Clarice Assad’s** *Four Scenes*—performed by the combined Cavatina Duo and Pacifica Quartet—depict the Romani experience of being in constant motion and the anxiety inherent in such instability.

Through this project, Azabagić and Moliner hope to break down inherited negative cultural stereotypes of the Romani people. The Romani have endured extraordinary marginalization and violence throughout their history as an “exotic” people foreign to native cultures. Ultimately, the Gypsy diaspora represents the common theme of displacement in humanity: from the smallest examples of leaving home or losing one’s innocence to the larger examples of war refugees or a centuries-old exiled, nomadic people skirting the fringes of conventional society. Although the human race is often divided into “us” and “them,” Azabagić and Moliner believe that these boundaries can be dissolved through music as we discover our shared humanity.

River of Fire is the Cavatina Duo’s fourth recording on Cedille Records, following their highly praised *Sephardic Journey*, described as “one of the most delightful chamber recordings” by the *American Record Guide* and “wonderful beyond praise” by *Fanfare*. *Sephardic Journey* also features five world premieres of works composed specifically for the Duo.

ABOUT THE CAVATINA DUO

The Cavatina Duo — Eugenia Moliner (flute) and Denis Azabagic (guitar) — has established itself as one of the world’s premier flute and guitar duos. Based in Chicago, their artistry and synergy

have garnered international acclaim, including *The New Yorker* declaring the Duo “the best of them” in their genre. Critics consistently praise Cavatina’s performances for their “style, sympathy, and technical aplomb” (*Fanfare*), ensuring that audiences experience a unique blend of emotional depth and innovative sound. Their concert journey has taken them to prestigious venues around the globe, including Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, the National Performing Arts Center of China, and the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. They have captivated audiences with their electrifying performances, making a significant impact on the international music scene.

The Duo's commitment to innovation is clear from their extensive recording projects, including *Sephardic Journey*, *The Balkan Project*, and *Acrobats: Music of David Leisner*, all released by Cedille, as well as their Bridge Records albums, *Cavatina at the Opera* and *Folias and Fantasias*. Each recording is a journey into new musical territories, expanding the flute and guitar repertoire and collaborating with renowned composers. Beyond performing, Moliner and Azabagic are both dedicated educators at the University of Illinois at Chicago and serve as artistic directors for festivals in the U.S. and Europe. They are also founding members of Fandango!, a vibrant ensemble that enriches the chamber music landscape.

ABOUT THE PACIFICA QUARTET

With a career spanning nearly three decades, the multiple Grammy Award-winning **Pacifica Quartet** has achieved international recognition as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. The Quartet is known for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices. Having served as quartet-in-residence at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music for the past decade, the Quartet also leads the Center for Advanced Quartet Studies at the Aspen Music Festival and School, and was previously the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music’s top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002, the Quartet was honored with Chamber Music America’s Cleveland Quartet Award and appointment to Lincoln Center’s The Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two) and, in 2006, was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. With its powerful energy and captivating, cohesive sound, the Quartet has established itself as the embodiment of the senior American quartet sound. In addition to winning a 2021 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance for *Contemporary Voices* and a Grammy-nomination for *American Stories* (2022), featuring clarinetist Anthony McGill, both released by Cedille Records, the Pacifica Quartet won the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance for its recording of Elliott Carter’s String Quartets Nos. 1 and 5 on Naxos.

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 well over 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 artists' 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.

CAVATINA DUO

River of Fire

CEDILLE RECORDS — CDR 90000 235

Cavatina Duo

Pacifica Quartet

TRACK LISTING

STACY GARROP (b. 1969)

Romani Songs (19:22)

1. I. Song from the twisting road (4:45)
2. II. Song of the restless wind (3:56)
3. III. Song for the coming spring (4:28)
4. IV. Song of the boundless soul (6:01)

with Brandon Vamos, cello

SÉRGIO ASSAD (b. 1952)

5. *Contos Ciganos* (16:27)

with Simin Ganatra, violin

ATANAS OURKOUZOUNOV (b. 1970)

6. *Raga Ibraima* (8:35)

MATTHEW DUNNE (b. 1959)

Three Artisans (19:20)

7. I. The Painter (6:26)
8. II. The Architect (5:25)
9. III. The Flute Player (7:20)

CLARICE ASSAD (b. 1978)

FOUR SCENES (15:34)

10. I. Migration (2:53)
11. II. Três Meninos (4:22)
12. III. Um Sonho (3:24)
13. IV. Sigamos, Sigamos (4:44)

with Pacifica Quartet

Total Duration: 79:50

Produced and engineered by James Ginsburg and Bill Maylone. Recorded January 4–5 and June 5–6, 2024 in Auer Hall at Indiana University Bloomington.

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