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# News

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Digital release: Sept. 4, 2012

CD release: Sept. 25, 2012

## **MEANWHILE: MORE MUSICAL MARVELS FROM EIGHTH BLACKBIRD**

### **Adventurous Sextet's New Cedille Records CD Mixes World-Premiere Recordings With Established Works**

The ever-inventive sextet eighth blackbird takes listeners on a wide-ranging, virtuosic excursion through contemporary classical music on *meanwhile*, its fifth and newest album on Cedille Records (CDR 90000 133).

The album was released digitally September 4 and will be available on CD September 25.

The two-time Grammy Award-winning ensemble of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion likens *meanwhile* to wandering “through an unfamiliar house.” In the liner notes, eighth blackbird writes, “With each track a new door is opened, releasing unexpected sounds and dramas.”

The album offers world-premiere recordings of three works written for eighth blackbird, as well as three modern masterpieces that get the incisive, expressive, take-no-prisoners eighth blackbird treatment. Premieres include the title piece, Stephen Hartke’s *Meanwhile: Incidental Music to Imaginary Puppet Plays* (2007); Missy Mazzoli’s *Still Life with Avalanche* (2008); and two movements from Roshanne Etezady’s *Damaged Goods* (2000), “About Time” and “Eleventh Hour.”

In addition, eighth blackbird performs Philippe Hurel’s . . . *à mesure* (1996), Philip Glass’s *Music in Similar Motion* (1969), and Thomas Adès’s *Catch* (1991).

"*Meanwhile* is a gloriously multifarious grab bag of our favorite music from the past decade," writes Tim Munro, eighth blackbird's flutist, in a note to Cedille Records. "There is thrilling

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virtuosity, tuneful simplicity, confrontational chaos. We've toured this music around the world, and this recording is the ripe fruit of those many performances, ready to pick and enjoy.”

As the *Washington Post* wrote about a similar concert program with eighth blackbird, “This was some of the most kinetic, exuberant and purely pleasurable music to be found anywhere.”

### **World Premiere Recordings**

Droning harmonicas and buzzing strings are among the unexpected sounds in Mazzoli’s *Still Life with Avalanche*, “an involving and very moving work” (*Washington Post*). Dubbed “Brooklyn’s post-millennial Mozart” by *Time Out New York* magazine, Mazzoli (b. 1980) is an indie rock darling as well as lauded classical composer.

Hartke’s fanciful *Meanwhile: Incidental Music to Imaginary Puppet Plays* looks to classical Asian puppet and court theater for inspiration. “The sound of the ensemble has been reinvented along lines that clearly have roots” in Asian models, Hartke (b. 1952) says. “For sheer coloristic vibrance,” wrote *The Plain Dealer* in an eighth blackbird concert review, “honors fell to the Hartke, a whirlwind mash-up of Asian court music, full of arresting sounds and virtuoso turns.”

The two movements from Roshanne Etezady’s *Damaged Goods*, “About Time” and “Eleventh Hour,” grapple with the psychic bruises of everyday modern life. A *Cleveland Plain Dealer* concert review said, “The alternation of lyrical and fierce activity . . . found eighth blackbird in [a] typically alert, soaring frame of mind.” Etezady (b. 1973) is, like Mazzoli, a composer whose lyrical, delectable music is inspired by many stylistic worlds.

### **Virtuosity Tested**

Hurel’s (b. 1955) . . . *à mesure* is a mutable, unstable kaleidoscope, stretching eighth blackbird to its virtuosic limit. A *Washington Post* review called it “exhilarating, stunningly beautiful and brilliant in every sense.”

Glass’s *Music in Similar Motion* is a minimalist classic: the composer has reduced musical elements to their simplest forms, creating music that is intense and hypnotic. Glass (b. 1937) and

eighth blackbird performed this work together on stage at Cincinnati's 2012 MusicNow festival. The ensemble says it considers Glass "America's most influential living composer."

In *Catch*, Adès (b. 1971) takes listeners to an English schoolyard for a musical version of a playground game. Like youngsters trying to keep a ball out of the hands of a playmate, a trio of violin, cello, and piano try to keep the melody away from the clarinet. "Frenzied and phenomenally difficult parts for all four instruments evoke the childish chaos and exuberance of the game," eighth blackbird writes. In a 2006 profile of Adès, the *San Francisco Chronicle* said the celebrated Englishman had "vaulted to the forefront of contemporary composers, writing music that combines technical virtuosity, expressive range and the wonderful insouciance of a creator who seems able to pull off just about anything he puts his mind to."

The new eighth blackbird album was produced by Judith Sherman and engineered by Bill Maylone at sessions in Gottlieb Hall at Chicago's Merit School of Music August 29–September 1, 2010, and January 19–20, 2011.

### **eighth blackbird**

Chicago-based eighth blackbird won Grammy Awards for its two previous Cedille Records albums, *strange imaginary animals* (Best Chamber Music Performance, 2007) and *Lonely Motel: Music from Slide* (Best Small Ensemble Performance, 2011).

Beyond its five albums for Cedille Records, eighth blackbird has recorded on the Nonesuch, Naxos, and ASO Media labels.

The ensemble tours nationally and internationally and holds ensemble-in-residence positions at the University of Chicago and University of Richmond (Virginia). The group will commence a three-year term as ensemble-in-residence at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music in fall 2012. In recent seasons, eighth blackbird has performed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Park Avenue Armory's Tune-in Music Festival in New York, Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Library of Congress. In a review of eighth blackbird's performances

at the 2009 Ojai Music Festival in California, the *Los Angeles Times* described the group as “a new breed of super-musicians.” Website: [www.eighthblackbird.com](http://www.eighthblackbird.com).

### **Cedille Records**

Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) has been dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from the Chicago area since its launch in late 1989.

The audiophile-oriented label releases albums as physical CDs, “lossless” FLAC downloads, and MP3 downloads. All are available directly via its website, [www.cedillerecords.org](http://www.cedillerecords.org). In spring 2011, Cedille began offering new releases as better-than-CD-quality 24-bit FLAC downloads. Earlier albums are available as CD-quality 16-bit FLAC downloads. In early 2012, Cedille began offering extra-high-quality 320 Kbps MP3 file downloads of new releases. Earlier titles are available as 256 Kbps MP3s (same as the new iTunes standard).

Cedille Records is distributed in the Western Hemisphere by Naxos of America and its distribution partners, by Select Music in the U.K., and by other independent distributors in major international classical music markets.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille is the label of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation. For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, contact Cedille Records, 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; e-mail: [info@cedillerecords.org](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org).

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### ***meanwhile***

(Cedille Records CDR 90000 133)

**Missy Mazzoli: *Still Life with Avalanche* (8:44)**

**Philippe Hurel: . . . *à mesure* (14:20)**

**Roshanne Etezady: “About Time” from *Damaged Goods* (2:36)**

**Stephen Hartke: *Meanwhile: Incidental Music to Imaginary Puppet Plays* (17:35)**

**Philip Glass: *Music in Similar Motion* (11:19)**

**Thomas Adès: *Catch* for clarinet violin, cello, and piano (9:45)**

**Roshanne Etezady: “Eleventh Hour” from *Damaged Goods* (3:46)**

**eighth blackbird**