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# News

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Recording release date: Oct. 13, 2017

## **Dover Quartet Amplifies ‘Voices of Defiance’ on New Cedille Records Album**

***Ensemble assembles deeply felt program  
of World War II-era works by Viktor Ullmann,  
Dmitri Shostakovich, and Szymon Laks***

On *Voices of Defiance*, the Dover Quartet’s second Cedille Records album, the accomplished young ensemble, winner of a 2017 Avery Fisher Career Grant, performs three World War II-era European works that express distinctive responses to the turmoil and destruction that surrounded their creation.

*Voices of Defiance*, available October 13, offers Czech composer Viktor Ullmann’s String Quartet No. 3, Op. 46, written in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943; Dmitri Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 68, written in a Soviet Russian-run artists retreat in 1944; and Polish composer Szymon Laks’s String Quartet No. 3, written in 1945 following his evacuation from Auschwitz and liberation from the Dachau concentration camp (Cedille Records CDR 90000 173).

“The idea for the album arose slowly and naturally,” writes Dover Quartet cellist Camden Shaw in the CD booklet. While touring Ullmann’s Third Quartet, they heard from concertgoers who urged the ensemble members to acquaint themselves with Szymon Laks. After hearing Laks’s Quartet No. 3, “we were hooked,” Shaw writes. “We had known for some time that we wanted to base an album around Shostakovich’s masterful String Quartet No. 2, written in 1944, and with the Ullmann from 1943 and the Laks from 1945, the program for our second album fell into place almost inevitably.”

While Shaw describes *Voices of Defiance* as “a heavy album,” he writes that it’s “not just about voices raised in protest.” The music’s inherent beauty, he notes, defies the physical and psychological horrors of the time.

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### **Ullmann's Unique Vision**

Ullman's "incredible quartet," Shaw says, draws inspiration from Impressionism as well as Schoenberg's serialism. "Ullmann's vision was unique," he says. "His unique approach to the Second Viennese School was to embrace the sentiment behind twelve-tone composition without being a slave to its constraints."

A *Montreal Gazette* concert review proclaimed, "It's hard to think of a better group for Viktor Ullmann's transporting String Quartet No. 3." The newspaper singled out the Dover Quartet's "remarkable attentiveness and an astonishingly even tone" and "the rarity of a strong and distinctive viola." The *Santa Fe New Mexican* noted how, in the Dover's hands, the Quartet No. 3 "came across as an escape into beauty rather than a reflection of Ullmann's circumstances."

James Ginsburg, Cedille Records founder and president, says "the Dover Quartet's muscular approach to Shostakovich's epic Second String Quartet emphasizes its tragic qualities, befitting the album's theme." *San Francisco Classical Voice* praised a Dover performance of the Shostakovich quartet as "uncompromising and declarative."

Laks's lyrical String Quartet No. 3 revels in traditional folk melodies from his native Poland in contrasting scenes of heartbreak and ecstasy. Laks incorporated Polish folk music in large part because it was forbidden to be heard at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he survived by being music director of the camp orchestra, playing German music for the Nazis' entertainment. A Minneapolis *Star Tribune* concert review applauded the Dover's performance of Laks's quartet for "the selfless teamwork that pulled the piece together, the instruments seamlessly interweaving like tapestry threads" in what the reviewer deemed "a recital of mesmerizing quality and insight."

### **Recording Credits**

*Voices of Defiance* was produced by Theresa Leonard and engineered by Mark Willsher March 19–21, 2016, at Rolston Recital Hall, the Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada.

### **Dover Quartet**

The Dover Quartet made its recording debut in 2016 with the Cedille Records album *Tribute — Dover Quartet Plays Mozart*, an all-Mozart program recalling the 1965 debut of the Guarneri Quartet,

whose founding violist, Michael Tree, joined them on the recording. The album was released to international acclaim. The *Sunday Times* of London called it a “deeply affecting debut disc.”

The Dover Quartet’s rise to the top of its field has been “practically meteoric” (*Strings*). The ensemble swept the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition and was named as Cleveland Quartet Award winner for 2016–2017 and 2017–2018.

Quartet members are Joel Link, violin; Bryan Lee, violin; Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola; and Camden Shaw, cello. Its website is [www.doverquartet.com](http://www.doverquartet.com).

### **Cedille Records**

Marking its 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2017–2018 season, Grammy award-winning Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) has been dedicated to showcasing and promoting the most noteworthy classical artists in and from the Chicago area since its debut in November 1989.

The audiophile-oriented label releases every new album in multiple formats: physical CD; 96 kHz, 24-bit, studio-quality FLAC download; and 320 Kbps MP3 download.

An independent nonprofit enterprise, Cedille Records is the label of Cedille Chicago, NFP. Sales of physical CDs and digital downloads and streams cover only a small percentage of the label’s costs. Tax-deductible donations from individual music-lovers and grants from charitable organizations account for most of its revenue.

Headquarters are at 1205 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; call (773) 989-2515; email: [info@cedillerecords.org](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). Website: [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org).

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### ***Voices of Defiance***

#### **Dover Quartet**

**Viktor Ullmann: String Quartet No. 3, Op. 46 (14:46)**

**Dmitri Shostakovich; String Quartet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 68 (35:50)**

**Szymon Laks: String Quartet No. 3 (23:21)**

**(Cedille Records CDR 90000 173)**