

***Contemporary Voices*, the Pacifica Quartet’s Cedille Records Disc,
Wins the 2021 Grammy Award in the Best Chamber Music/Small
Ensemble Performance Category – Features Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s
Quintet for Alto Saxophone and String Quartet**



Pacifica Quartet Contemporary Voices disc; Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (photo by Bill Keefrey)

Sunday, March 14, 2021 – The Pacifica Quartet’s recording *Contemporary Voices*, showcasing works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers Shulamit Ran, Jennifer Higdon, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, a Cedille Records release, has won the 2021 Grammy Award in the Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance category, it was announced this afternoon.

For the recording’s performance of Zwilich’s Quintet for Alto Saxophone and String Quartet, the quartet was joined by renowned classical saxophonist Otis Murphy making his Cedille label debut. In its review of the disc, BBC Music Magazine said, “Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s Quintet for Alto Saxophone and String Quartet (2007) is a superb addition to the slim repertoire, masterfully executed here by the Pacifica Quartet and Otis Murphy, professor of saxophone at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where the string players are artists in residence. The three-movement work begins by blending the string and sax timbres, before the parts develop independence; the saxophone’s gentle cantabile solos culminate in a thrilling virtuosic display.” And Musical America said that the performance “effortlessly blends the spiky rhythms of the massed strings with the slinky smoothness of Otis Murphy’s alto sax. ...echoes of Stravinsky and Milhaud laced with a sassy, post-minimalist vibe....”

Visit www.zwilich.com for the latest news about the composer and her music, as well as upcoming performances of her works, including those of her most recent, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, which premiered in March 2020 right before the concert world was put on pause.

Contemporary Voices, featuring Zwilich's Quintet for Alto Saxophone & String Quartet, wins 2021 Grammy Award - Page 2 of 2

At a time when the musical offerings of the world are more varied than ever before, few composers have emerged with the unique personality of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. Her music is widely known because it is performed, recorded, broadcast, and – above all – listened to and liked by all sorts of audiences the world over. Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians states: "There are not many composers in the modern world who possess the lucky combination of writing music of substance and at the same time exercising an immediate appeal to mixed audiences. Zwilich offers this happy combination of purely technical excellence and a distinct power of communication."

A prolific composer in virtually all media, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's works have been performed by most of the leading American orchestras and by major ensembles abroad. Her works include five Symphonies and a string of concertos commissioned and performed over the past two decades by the nation's top orchestras.

Contemporary Voices on the Cedille Records website:

<https://www.cedillerecords.org/albums/contemporary-voices/>

Grammy Awards: <https://www.grammy.com/>
