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**ONGAKU RECORDS RELEASES “ROMANZA” CD
FEATURING RENOWNED CLARINETIST JONATHAN COHLER AND
AWARD-WINNING PIANIST RASA VITKAUSKAITE**

BOSTON, MA — [Ongaku Records, Inc.](#) released *Romanza* (024-123), the second CD featuring world-renowned clarinetist Jonathan Cohler and multiple-award-winning Lithuanian pianist Rasa Vitkauskaite. *Romanza* is a ground-breaking chamber music CD that expands the boundaries of traditional clarinet repertoire with transcriptions for clarinet and piano of great works by Robert Schumann, Sergei Prokofiev, and Carlos Guastavino. According to Mr. Cohler, “These are not simply transcriptions of random works for other instruments, but a carefully chosen collection of romantic masterpieces which all sound as if they were originally written for clarinet and piano. To me, these pieces beckon for the special voice of the clarinet.”

Romanza features the following repertoire:

Robert Schumann

- *Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 105* (originally for violin and piano, transcribed by Mr. Cohler)
- *Three Romances, Op. 94* (originally for oboe and piano, transcribed by the publisher)

Sergei Prokofiev

- *Sonata in D Major, Op. 94* (originally for flute and piano, transcribed by Mr. Cohler)

Carlos Guastavino

- *Tonada* (originally for piano solo, transcribed by the composer)
- *Cueca* (originally for voice and piano, transcribed by the composer)
- *Las Presencias № 7 “Rosita Iglesias”* (originally for violin and piano, transcribed by Mr. Cohler)

Also included with the *Romanza* CD is an extensively researched, highly informative, and well-sourced 36-page booklet, written by Mr. Cohler and Ms. Vitkauskaite, that reveals many important details not previously available anywhere else about the history of the recorded works. Mr. Cohler explains his motivations behind this recording in the introduction to the booklet: “*Romanza* has truly been a labor of love for me, arising organically from the marriage of two desires: to play music that I love, and to expand my repertoire and the repertoire for the clarinet in general.”

As always, the new Ongaku CD features the award-winning engineering of Brad Michel. *Romanza* was recorded in the warm and crystal clear acoustics of the Rogers Center for the Arts at Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, and it was produced, edited and mastered using the latest in 24-bit digital recording technology throughout to preserve the pristine audiophile quality sound for which Ongaku Records has become known.

Known throughout the world as one of the foremost clarinet-piano duos, Mr. Cohler and Ms. Vitkauskaite recently finished recording sessions for a new [All-American CD](#) which will be released later this year on Ongaku Records. Also, coming later this season is the debut solo CD of Ms. Vitkauskaite.

Romanza is in-stock and available for sale at [Amazon](#), [CD Baby](#), [Ongaku Records](#), [CD Universe](#), [Tower Records](#) and many other quality outlets world-wide.

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Jonathan Cohler is recognized throughout the world as “an absolute master of the clarinet” (International Clarinet Association’s *Clarinet Magazine*). Through his performances around the world and on record, he has thrilled an ever-widening audience with his incredible musicianship and total technical command. His technical feats have been hailed as “superhuman” and *Fanfare Magazine* has placed him in the pantheon of legendary musicians: “one thinks of Dinu Lipatti.”

A highly acclaimed recording artist, with more than ten solo recordings, Mr. Cohler has received numerous accolades and awards including nomination for the INDIE Award, the Outstanding Recording mark of the *American Record Guide*, *BBC Music Magazine*’s Best CDs of The Year selection, and top ratings from many magazines, radio stations, and record guides including *Penguin Guide*, *BBC Music Magazine*, and *Listener Magazine*, which wrote, “Cohler possesses such musical integrity and taste that everything he touches seems like the last word”. *Gramophone* lauded Mr. Cohler’s expression of “the poetry that lesser artists miss.” His recent recording of the Brahms and Beethoven trios with the Claremont Trio (**Jonathan Cohler & Claremont Trio**, Ongaku 024-122) was ranked the best by *Fanfare Magazine*, “I know of no finer recording of the Beethoven, and this one stands with the best classic versions of the Brahms.” His **Rhapsodie Française** (Ongaku 024-121), also with Ms. Vitkauskaite, was chosen for a Best of the Year award from the Buffalo/Toronto classical station 94.5 WNED alongside two CDs featuring legendary artists Pierre Fournier, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Leonid Kogan, and Emil Gilels.

Mr. Cohler’s maintains a busy international schedule with performances this season that take him around the Globe to Spain, Italy, China, Brazil, and Argentina. In past seasons, he has toured the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Taiwan, China, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico and Cuba, and performed at many festivals including those of Tanglewood, Aspen, Domaine Forget (Canada), Campos do Jordao (Brazil), Xativa (Spain), Arezzo (Italy), Rockport, Newport, Martha’s Vineyard and the Hamptons. He has been a frequently invited performer at the International Clarinet Association’s annual *ClarinetFest* and many other clarinet festivals around the world. He has been featured on the prestigious Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago.

Mr. Cohler is also an active chamber musician, chamber music coach, adjudicator, conductor, and pedagogue. He collaborates frequently with many well-known musicians and ensembles including members of the Emerson String Quartet, the Muir String Quartet, the Claremont Trio, the Lark Quartet, the Moscow Conservatory Trio, the Amadeus Trio, Boris Berezovsky, Ilya Kaler, Andres Diaz, Charles Neidich, Randall Hodgkinson, Judith Gordon, Andrew Mark, Janice Weber and Rasa Vitkauskaite.

Jonathan Cohler is the Music Director of the Massachusetts Philharmonic Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the International Woodwind Festival. He is also in demand as a guest conductor around the world with orchestras such as the Simon Bolivar Orchestra of Caracas, Venezuela.

Mr. Cohler is also a world-renowned teacher. His students hold positions in major orchestras all around the world, and have won top prizes at numerous international competitions.

Mr. Cohler is currently on the faculties of the Music Festival of Xativa (Spain), and has been guest faculty at Domaine Forget (Canada), Campos do Jordao (Brazil), and several others. Mr. Cohler teaches regularly as guest faculty at conservatories and universities around the world, and holds several honorary positions.

Jonathan Cohler’s clarinet teachers include legendary Boston Symphony Orchestra clarinetist Pasquale Cardillo, Harold Wright, Karl Leister, Charles Neidich and Frank Martin. He graduated with high honors in physics from Harvard University. He is Professor of Clarinet and Chamber Music at the The Boston Conservatory in Boston.

Jonathan Cohler is a Vandoren, Rossi, and Gao artist.

For more information, see his web site at <http://jonathancohler.com/>.

- **clarinets:** Rossi
- **reeds:** Vandoren V12 #3 1/2
- **mouthpiece:** Vandoren B4013
- **bell & barrel:** Gao

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Rasa Vitkauskaite has won top prizes at numerous prestigious international piano competitions including First Prizes at the Rubinstein Piano Competition (Paris), Les Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes (Belgium), the competition in Taurisano (Italy), and the Mendelssohn Cup (Italy). In 2007, Rasa won a Kathryn Wasserman Davis \$10,000 grant that supported her tour promoting peace in Israel. In her native country of Lithuania, Ms. Vitkauskaite has garnered the top prize at six national competitions. Her most recent concert engagements include performances in China, South Korea, Venezuela, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, and the United States.

In 2013, she recorded her debut solo CD to be released on Ongaku Records.

Ms. Vitkauskaite has performed as soloist with the Kaunas, Latvian, Kaliningrad Philharmonic Orchestras, I Solisti di Perugia and the Boston Conservatory Orchestra. She has played at many festivals around the world including ones in Kaunas (Lithuania), Moscow (Russia), Piano aux Pyrénées (France), and Music Fest Perugia (Italy). Recently, Ms. Vitkauskaite was awarded the Westmont Fellowship at the Montecito International Music Festival in Santa Barbara, California.

Ms. Vitkauskaite is also very active as a chamber musician. She performs regularly with world-renowned clarinetist Jonathan Cohler. *American Record Guide* praised her "subtle musicianship and exceptional skill" on *Rhapsodie Française* (Ongaku 024-121), her 2008 debut CD with Mr. Cohler. Recently, the duo recorded an all-American CD (to be released next season), in honor of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013.

Ms. Vitkauskaite studied with Jūratė Karosaitė at the National M.K.Čiurlionis School of Arts in Vilnius, Lithuania, from which she graduated with honors. She then won a scholarship to study at the United World College of the Adriatic in Italy, where she studied with Alberto Miodini and took chamber music lessons with members of the Trio di Trieste at the International Chamber Music School. Upon graduating, she was awarded the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma with the highest marks in music.

Subsequently, she completed her Bachelors and Masters Degrees at The Boston Conservatory, where she was a student of Michael Lewin, and won the H. Wilfred Churchill piano scholarship competition both in 2007 and 2008. She currently continues her studies with Randall Hodgkinson.

Ms. Vitkauskaite is on the faculty of the Concord Conservatory of Music, where she maintains a large teaching studio. In 2013, she adjudicated the Massachusetts Music Teachers Association Bay State Contest. She also serves as the pianist of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra.

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