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ONGAKU RECORDS RELEASES “AMERICAN TRIBUTE” CD FEATURING CLARINETIST JONATHAN COHLER AND PIANIST RASA VITKAUSKAITE

Boston, MA — [Ongaku Records, Inc.](#) released [American Tribute](#) (024-125), the third CD of today’s leading clarinet-piano duo, Jonathan Cohler and Rasa Vitkauskaite. The CD is dedicated to the memory of those who died at the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013, and in support of those who were injured on that terrible day. As the duo explains in the extensive and scholarly program notes,

“Our real power emanates from our ideas and our freedom ... As Bernstein said so eloquently, ‘This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.’”

American Tribute features the following repertoire:

- **Leonard Bernstein** *Sonata*
- **Victor Babin** *Hillandale Waltzes*
- **Robert Muczynski** *Time Pieces, Op. 43*
- **Simon Sargon** *KlezMuzik*
- **Dana Wilson** *Liquid Ebony*
- **Paquito D’Rivera** *Invitación al Danzón, Val Venezolano, Contradanza*

Referring to the composers, Cohler and Vitkauskaite write, “Each driven by their own inner and outer forces have become uniquely part of the American Dream.” *American Tribute* features almost 70 years of musical life in the United States. Across this span of time, one can see an incredible variety of styles, traditions, schools, backgrounds, and musical experiences. The music represents the essence of America and what makes America the real melting pot. *American Tribute* takes us on six journeys of success, acclaim, musical inspiration and freedom. Each of the composers brought to the United States a unique perspective, as well as highly individual musical taste and influence. *American Tribute* offers American neoclassicism, Klezmer tradition, Broadway influence, Latin rhythms, jazz improvisation, and pure American creativity. These exemplary citizens composed all of the included works here in the United States.

Also included with the CD is an extensively researched, highly informative, and well-sourced 24-page booklet written by the Mr. Cohler and Ms. Vitkauskaite. As always, the new Ongaku CD features the award-winning engineering of Brad Michel. *American Tribute* 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 digital recording technology throughout to preserve the pristine audiophile quality sound for which Ongaku Records has become known.

American Tribute is available for sale at [Amazon](#), [CD Baby](#), [Ongaku Records](#), and many other quality outlets worldwide.

Jonathan Cohler is recognized throughout the world as “an absolute master of the clarinet” (International Clarinet Association’s *The 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, his recordings have 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 *Jonathan Cohler & Claremont Trio* (Ongaku 024-122) of the Brahms and Beethoven trios 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.” *Rhapsodie Française* (Ongaku 024-121), with award-winning pianist Rasa 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. Last season the Cohler-Vitkauskaite duo released their second recording together, *Romanza* (Ongaku 024-123) featuring transcriptions for clarinet and piano of works by Schumann, Prokofiev and Guastavino.

Mr. Cohler maintains a busy international schedule with performances in recent seasons that have taken him around the Globe to China, Hungary, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, and Peru. 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.

In addition to his work as soloist, Jonathan Cohler is 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, the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, the Boston Chamber Music Society, the Wavehill 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 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 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 ½
- **mouthpiece:** Vandoren B4013
- **bell & barrel:** Gao

Rasa Vitkauskaitė

Winner of the Grand Prix at the Mendelssohn Cup Piano Competition in Italy, [Rasa Vitkauskaitė](#) has won top prizes at many prestigious international piano competitions including First Prizes at Les Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes (Belgium), the competition in Taurisano (Italy), and the Rubinstein Piano Competition (Paris). 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. Vitkauskaitė has garnered the top prize at six national competitions. Recently, she was awarded the Westmont Fellowship at the Montecito International Music Festival in Santa Barbara, California.

Her most recent concert engagements include performances in China, South Korea, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, and the United States. Ms. Vitkauskaitė 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 Caracas (Venezuela), Taiyuan (China), Porto (Portugal), Kaunas (Lithuania), Moscow (Russia), Piano aux Pyrénées (France), and Music Fest Perugia (Italy).

Ms. Vitkauskaitė 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. Their second CD titled [Romanza](#) (Ongaku 024-123) features works by Schumann, Prokofiev and Guastavino. Recently, the duo recorded an all-American CD (to be released this season), in honor of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013. The duo also performed a live recital on WGBH radio, and was recently featured on Radio Vaticana in Italy.

Ms. Vitkauskaitė began her music studies with Jūratė Prėskienytė at the Alytus Music School in Lithuania. At the age of 10, she left home to continue her studies with Jūratė Karosaitė at the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Arts in Vilnius, from which she graduated with honors. She then won a scholarship to attend the United World College of the Adriatic in Italy, where she studied piano 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 where she won the H. Wilfred Churchill piano scholarship competition in both 2007 and 2008. She also completed a Graduate Performance Diploma with Randall Hodgkinson.

In addition to her active performing career, Ms. Vitkauskaitė is a dedicated teacher with many students at the Concord Conservatory of Music, where she is a faculty member, and in her private studio. In 2013, she adjudicated the Massachusetts Music Teachers Association Bay State Contest. In 2009, she won a \$5000 Fellowes Athenaeum Fund grant and started a piano program for inner-city children in Boston.

Ms. Vitkauskaitė also serves as the pianist of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra.

For more information, visit: <http://rasavitkauskaitė.com/>.