

*Schlafe Mein Prinzchen; Ana Latu.* BROUWER: *Afro-Cuban Lullaby.* FAURÉ: *Berceuse.* JONES: *A Child is Born.* LENNON/McCARTNEY: *Goodnight.* BARRY: *Night Wheel.*

**Michael Barry** (guitars, bass and keys) with **Karen Hogg** (mandolin), **Eddie Malave** (viola) **Yimin Miao** (bamboo flute) **Ihoko Taguchi** (violin, viola), **Yanko Valdes** (acoustic bass) **Jessica Valiente** (flute) and **Mary Wooten** (cello)

Laughing Buddah. LBP99 - 2013  
Now here is a worthwhile cause packaged in a very attractively designed hard cardboard gatefold cover. Granted it is not really guitar music as such, but Michael Barry on guitar is the principal light behind the whole idea and features on just about every track in one way or another.

Peace and tranquillity is the raison d'être behind the disc and as such everything washes over the listener in a warm wave. The opening *Tibetan Prayer* with its evocative use of the Tibetan cymbal is a fine opener. *Garten Mother's Lullaby* heavily features the violin over a drone, with answering phrases from the guitar and the viola. *Utate* is South African and very beautiful too with its use of the marimba as an accompaniment. One of the few tracks we might already know is Leo Brouwer's beautiful *Afro-Cuban Lullaby*, which is played solo and straight in a very competent and pleasant fashion by Mr Barry.

And so it continues for a relatively short 40 minutes or so. Various other countries are featured including, Japan, Scotland, Germany, France, Tonga, the USA and even England, albeit by a Beatles number! It is all very pleasant and soothing. The playing by all concerned is utterly compelling, and is destined to help any little baby go to sleep, so any parents with bleary eyes please take note!

Chris Duminigan

#### **ROBERT DE VISÉE - COMPLETE WORKS FOR GUITAR**

**David Jacques** (baroque guitar)  
XXI-21 Records XXI-CD-2-1530 (3 CDs)

Claiming any complete works as a 'world premiere' has become something of a risky business. In the high-budget heyday of vinyl, there was little likelihood of a thumping great boxed set of LPs arriving on the shelves unnoticed by other musicians working in the same

field. But in an age when the most modest injection of capital can take care of the recording, manufacturing and, up to a point, the distribution of a major new release, the prospect of being pipped to the post by an unknown rival is ever present.

However, I have to confess at the time of writing to being unaware of any De Visée recording other than this that covers the printed anthologies from 1682 and 1686, together with all the various manuscript sources currently known to survive. Nor can I name any baroque guitar specialist who presents the material with greater style and panache as this 29-year-old Canadian. With its loose, languid trills, jangling octave strings and casually strummed chords, the baroque guitar can be an acquired taste, especially for those more accustomed to the cut-glass precision of the harpsichord. Jacques' tidy and focused playing thus makes him a worthy ambassador for an instrument that still remains several steps behind the lute in its quest for mainstream recognition. His potential appeal is further widened by the fact that De Visée, unlike most of his contemporaries, was not a great one for *campanella* fingerings, a magical and idiomatic effect that can nonetheless be a little disconcerting for the uninitiated.

So what we get is tidy and uncluttered accounts of some 124 individual movements, none of which exceeds four minutes in duration. In fact, a sizeable percentage make both their entrance and exit within a matter of seconds. There's also an isolated *Gavotte* for two guitars which, in the absence of any statement to the contrary, presumably finds Jacques overdubbing both parts. All is well stylistically, and I have to acknowledge a little relief on discovering that, although Jacques quite correctly applies the *notes inégales* characteristic of the French baroque, he resists the ever-present temptation to lay them on with a trowel. Finally, a well-earned credit for Quebec luthier Claude Guibord, whose Stradivarius-based instrument from 1999 contributes considerably to the pleasures of this extended and rewarding listen, as do the efforts of a production team comprising Martin Duchesne and Robert Lafond.

An outstanding archive release whose merits reach far beyond the academic.

Paul Fowles

#### **IKONOSTAS**

FALLA: *Homenaje pour le Tombeau de Claude Debussy.* JOSÉ ANTONIO DE SAN SEBASTIAN: *Errimina (Nostalgia).* MOMPOU: *Suite Compostelana.* ASEN-CIO: *Suite Mistica.* POULENC: *Sarabande.* DURIGHELLO: *Sefer Torah.* GILARDINO: *Annunziazione (Ommagio al Beato Angelico); Ikonostas (Ommagio a Pavel Florenskij).*

#### **Alberto Mesirca**

Lira Classica LR CD 112

'When the great mystic and musician wrote his epicidium, the guitar was revealed in a light which had till then remained hidden, becoming fully invested with the highest of its powers: that of evoking, through its elusive sound, the sentiment of the unknown which dominates us, the giddiness which overcomes us as we approach the boundaries of the *noche oscura*'. So reads just part of the opening sentence in Angelo Gilardino's interminable eulogy to one brief item on this superbly recorded CD from the prodigiously talented Alberto Mesirca. So at the risk of sounding like a certain celebrity Antipodean, can you guess what it is yet? Perish the thought that Gilardino would lavish such plaudits upon his own two compositions that conclude the proceedings, although it has to be said that neither of these works exactly arrives unheralded. No, the 'great mystic' in whose spectral presence we find ourselves is none other than Manuel de Falla, and the work under the spotlight is the modest *Homenaje* at the top of the agenda. No serious commentator would doubt the work's historical significance and, like the Poulenc *Sarabande* also on offer, it presents a tantalising glimpse of what might have been had the composer gone on to generate more of the same. But there can surely be nowhere other than the guitar world in which a respected senior figure of Gilardino's standing would go into such prolonged raptures about an isolated miniature that has been and gone in less than four minutes.

The individual we should really be getting excited about is Alberto Mesirca, whose compelling account of this often highly spiritual

programme gives not the slightest indication that the performer has yet to pass his quarter century. Even in the well-worn terrain of the Falla, he achieves a feeling of soft-focus fluidity that the work always seems to crave but only occasionally finds. Likewise in the currently ubiquitous Mompou, Mesirca's hypnotic accounts of the slow central movements commanding the attention to an extent that one almost regrets the arrival of the final *Muñeira*. Sandwiched between these stock repertoire items is the single movement one-off composed for Segovia in the 1920s by José Antonio de San Sebastián, also known as Padre Donastia. Now published as part of the *Segovia Archive*, this once spurned offering from the Capuchin priest yields a meditative yet at times rather troubled 4'20", the dreamlike state described in the composer's own explanatory comments being evocatively realised in Mesirca's persuasive interpretation. It was with some satisfaction that I added this to the slowly increasing list of pieces from the *Segovia Archive* that have been spotted on a professional recording, most of the material having yet to break its duck within my earshot.

The mood of inner contemplation is maintained in the Poulenc *Sarabande* and Vicente Asencio's often under-valued *Suite Mistica*, a triptych from the early 70s that became one of the last major works to enter the repertoire of a by now octogenarian Segovia. New ground is broken in the four-movement *Sefer Torah* by Gianmartino Durighello, a 2005 composition inspired by Alberto Mesirca and, according to Gilardino, derived from earlier choral and chamber works.

This, together with Gilardino's own extended and imaginative pair of homages, concludes one of the most original and rewarding debut releases to reach me for some considerable time.

Paul Fowles

#### WEISS LUTE SONATAS VOL.8

WEISS: *Sonata No.36 in D minor*; *Sonata No.19 in F major*; *Sonata No.34 in D minor*.

Robert Barto (baroque lute)  
Naxos 8.570109

No, it isn't a typo. *Sonata No.36 in D minor* also appears in the track listing to the first volume of this remarkable series, reviewed by CG

way back in April 1999. Only it wasn't the same piece, the correct title of the work on that inaugural disc apparently being *Sonata No.11*. Naturally, I'd like to give the impression I figured this out unaided, but the truth is it's all explained in a footnote to Tim Crawford's essay that accompanies the present release. It takes a writer of Crawford's unsurpassed integrity to not only reveal the error in the first place but to even concede the earlier work was 'mis-identified', rather than claiming it has merely been reclassified.

Either way, the true *Sonata No.36* is now presented in all its glory, the central *Sarabande* flanked by a playful *Bourrée* and equally amiable *Minuet*. The real gem, however, is the valedictory *Allegro*, which weaves its unhindered path through an extended series of those rising and falling arpeggio figures at which Weiss excels. As always, Barto remains fully in control, the spirited choice of tempo presenting him with no audible challenges and even leaving space for some stylish and unfussy ornamentation. More stern in countenance is the *Sonata No.19 in F major*, its commanding *Allemande* outliving even the *Sarabande* by more than two minutes.

*Sonata No.34 in D minor* has a familiar ring insofar as it's the one that appears towards the back of the Frederick Noad book, transposed for guitar to E minor. Noad also reshuffles the batting order by placing the *Bourrée* after the *Sarabande* rather than before, the correct layout apparently being *Bourrée-Sarabande-Minuet(s)*, like in *Sonata No.36*. As Crawford reveals, this was one of the first Weiss sonatas to appear in modern print, an edition having been published by lute pioneer Hans Neeman in the late 1930s. Given that Neeman must also have been active around the end of the 1920s, one can only speculate as to what he made of the Weiss-related shenanigans of Segovia and Ponce. I guess we'll never know, but it would be nice to think he saw the Ponce pastiches as precisely what they were: harmless in-jokes that did no-one's career any damage and, by virtue of being wonderfully entertaining works in their own right, could only have helped in

stimulating wider public interest in the genuine works of Weiss. Sadly, Neeman was killed in action during World War II, long before his dream of a complete Weiss edition could come to fruition.

May his spirit shine upon these magnificent performances by Robert Barto.

Paul Fowles

#### ROZETA OD PLETERA

PAPANDOPULU: *Three Croatian Dances*. STAHULJAK: *Lyubica, Op.14 No.16*. KABILJO: *Gitarina Dalmatna*. BRKANOVIC: *Suita Mediterana*. VIDOVIC: *Imaginary Landscapes; Clown on a Carousel; Farewell in Osor*.

#### Viktor Vidovic

Aquarius CD 138-06

I fear I was initially rather daunted by a recording on which, apart from that of Vidovic himself, no composer's name rang even a distant bell. Of the individuals on the roster, only Boris Papandopulu (1906-91), a German-born Croatian despite his Greek-sounding surname, warrants a mention in the *New Grove*. There's also a modest entry headed Brkanovic, but further investigation reveals that the man who met the editorial requirement was in fact Ivan Brkanovic (1906-87), the composer represented here being his son Zeljko (b.1937).

Although the material all hails from the 20th century, those of a timid disposition need have no fear, for the greater part of the playing time is occupied by nothing scarier than folk driven light-to-middleweights. The exception, and by far the most rewarding item on the agenda, is Vidovic's inspired arrangement of *Ljubica*, a searching and compellingly nostalgic single movement piano work by Juraj Stahuljak (1901-75). There are also some pleasing moments in Vidovic's own compositions, most notably the gentle and lyrical *Dalmatian Song* that appears as the third of four *Imaginary Landscapes*. Here and elsewhere, the performance is tidy and focused, the wayward rhythmic style of at least one earlier Vidovic release having apparently been forsaken in favour of a more disciplined approach. There again, I have no prior knowledge of the music on this