

JANUARY 1995

# CLASSICAL GUITAR

## JASON VIEAUX

MOREL: *Danza brasileira*. BROUWER: *El Decameron Negro*. REGONDI: *Three Etudes, Nos. 8, 4, 1*. JS BACH: *Lute Suite No. 2 in A minor*. PONCE: *Sonatina Meridional*.

Ark MCD-1334

391 McKinley Avenue, Williams-ville, NY 14221, USA.

The encore comes first in this debut disc – Jorge Morel's irresistible Brazilian Dance, played with gusto – before Jason Vieaux, a pupil of John Holmquist, shows his mettle in Brouwer, Regondi, Bach and Ponce. Well, why not? If a guitarist is going to play one anyway, it might as well come at the beginning.

Half the liner notes consists of Mr Vieaux's CV, with its many high recommendations. Fortunately he lives up to them, playing with vigour, accuracy and a great deal of musical understanding that will undoubtedly deepen and increase as he gains in maturity. But at 19 Jason Vieaux already has more musical maturity than most guitarists have at 29. This is one of the remarkable things about the disc. For all that, there remains a sense of urgency which is attractive. No timings are given, but he gets through the Brouwer work at a rate of knots, yet never leaves

you with the feeling that you are being rushed or that he is missing any of the lyrical quality of the work. The sound picture he builds up is so impressive in evocative colouring that I wanted it to last longer.

The Bach goes well too, Jason Vieaux using ornamentation with discretion while always keeping the main musical message clear and uncluttered. It's not the ultimate in subtlety, but that will develop. He has very many compensating virtues; to take one example, his bouncy rhythm in the *Gigue*, achieved through careful attention to dotting, is a joy.

It would have been surprising if after this excellence the Ponce was disappointing. I was not surprised. Here is a warm and vibrant performance that should satisfy everyone, strong yet not without its own brand of delicacy. I also liked his vigorous approach to the Regondi Studies, particularly in No. 8, which he makes urgent and compelling, like so much else on this disc.

The recording is not all that it should be. Certain fuzzy notes, particularly in the Ponce, are not the fault of the player; they did not interfere to any significant extent with my enjoyment of this disc by an unusually promising newcomer.

Colin Cooper