

# Gramophone

November 2003

## ALBÉNIZ

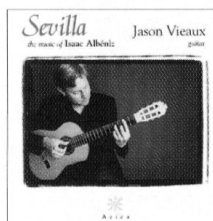
'Sevilla'

Suite española No 1, Op 47 – Granada; Cataluña; Sevilla; Cadiz; Cuba. Rumores de la Caleta, Op 71 No 6. Cantos de España, Op 232 – Preludio (Asturias); Córdoba. Mallorca, Op 202. Torre Bermeja, Op 92 No 12. España, Op 165 – Tango; Capricho Catalán; Zortzico (all arr Vieaux)

**Jason Vieaux** *gtr*

**Azica** Ⓢ **ACD71224** (65 minutes: DDD)

**An affectionate recital full of charm played with stylish conviction**



Isaac Albéniz wrote much music that seems to scream (in a dulcet voice) 'Guitar!' Yet the pieces guitarists have embraced for a century – with their seductive and exuberant dance rhythms, modal harmonies

and subtle play of colours ideally suited to their instrument – originally were composed for piano, of which Albéniz was an acknowledged master (stories about him studying with Liszt are now believed to be apocryphal).

Jason Vieaux, an American guitarist who has won several international competitions, has arranged famous and lesser-known Albéniz piano pieces with such style and conviction. The programme is a journey through cities, regions, countries and dance forms that Albéniz transformed by way of affectionate, life-affirming creativity.

Is it possible that these selections sound more idiomatic on guitar than on piano? Certainly the range of shadings a superlative solo guitarist can produce evokes the nationalistic and emotional worlds in haunting detail. Vieaux revels in the intimate and sinuous aspects of Albéniz's art. He employs vibrato to varied expressive effect and sends harmonics soaring from the instrument as if they were floating objects. The spectrum of articulations he manages is so broad that he sustains lines with unusual suspense. Hearing these performances in a listening room, rather than in a concert hall, brings the music's personal qualities into striking focus. The recording succeeds in providing just enough space for the guitar to resonate in close proximity to our grateful ears.

**Donald Rosenberg**