



Sephardic Journey

Cavatina Duo, with guests Avalon String Quartet, Desiree Ruhstrat (violin) and David Cunliffe (cello)

Cedille Records

Historic diaspora inspires poignant portraits of a people

This set from the married Cavatina Duo - guitarist Denis Azabagic and flautist Eugenia Moliner - features new pieces based on Sephardic folk melodies. Atlanta-born Alan Thomas' Trio *Sefardi* for cello, flute, and guitar is in three movements: The first is quite extensive, with many mood changes; the sultry second employs an alto flute; and the third is jig-like, and a fitting close to a piece that is a real find. Joseph V. Williams' *Isabel* is another melodic and rewarding piece - tragic throughout - based on a woman who was tortured for her faith during the Spanish Inquisition. (The Spanish persecution of Sephardic Jews was a reason they fled to other countries in Europe.)

Carlos Rafael Rivera's work *Plegaria y Canto* also includes violin. This is another substantial item (it's based on two songs), quite emotional and full of wonderful harmonies. David Leisner's *Love Dreams of the Exile* includes string quartet and is in three movements, each using a different approach to variation. The last movement begins with nightmarish sounds from the quartet before turning tender and nostalgic. The final piece is another major work: Clarice Assad's three-movement *Sephardic Suite*, which also uses the quartet to represent many differing moods and harmonies.

This CD is full of melodic, rewarding works that have something to say and resonate in the memory.

Recommended! -CD