

SOUNDBOARD

GUITAR AND FLUTE ROUND-UP

Cavatina Duo (Eugenia Moliner, flute and Denis Azabagic, guitar; with Katinka Kleijn, cello and Joshua Rubin, . . . clarinet). *Acrobats*. Works by David Leisner. Cedille Records CDR 90000096, 2007.

Of the heterogeneous combinations of instruments with the guitar, duos with flute continue to be the most popular. Though even the flute can be louder than the guitar, it is not as hard to achieve a satisfactory balance with this combination as with most others. The recordings under consideration at this time represent a considerable variety of music and, especially with the recently-reviewed disc of works by Nikita Koshkin, constitute a mini-overview of recent recordings in this genre.

We begin with Cavatina Duo, the husband-and-wife team of Eugenia Moliner and Denis Azabagic, a duo who represent that ideal pairing of state-of-the-art practitioners of their respective. Add to that, a recording which constitutes the complete (as of this writing) *œuvre* for this medium of a fine composer, David Leisner, and you have a disc which is indispensable. The hardest-edged work begins the disc, the eponymous *Acrobats*. Inspired by a macabre and fantastical short story about the Holocaust, it is inventive and challenging. The flute is sometimes very high and very loud, justified by the anguished "program" of the story. It would be a good time to invest in an extended warranty for your speakers! The short and fine Goya-inspired *El Coco* leads via the lovely *Nostalgia* to Leisner's "greatest hit": *Dances in the Madhouse*. Also inspired by a painting, it is a completely charming work whose popularity is well justified. *Trittico* is an absolutely beautiful, exquisitely crafted work, adding the marvelous cellist Katinka Kleijn to the duo. Each instrument is used beautifully, with the flute and cello sometimes bracketing the guitar in the center of the texture, a lovely effect of the two sustaining instruments on the outside of the music. Equally lovely is the abstract *Extremes*, which adds clarinet to the duo. Like its predecessor, the textures and sonorities are uniquely beautiful. A great album, with lovely sound and complete liner notes by the composer. All involved should take a bow.