

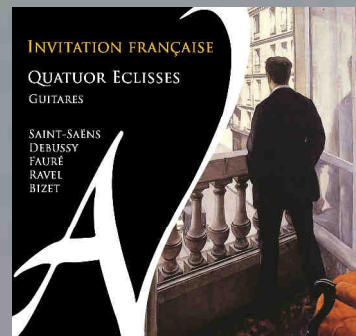


Décembre 2015

CD REVIEWS (continued)
Quatuor Éclisses (Gabriel Bianco,
Arkaïtz Chambonnet, Pierre Lelièvre,
and Benjamin Valette, guitars).

Invitation Française.

Works by Ravel, Debussy, Saint-Saëns,
 Fauré, and Bizet. Ad Vitam Records AV 150715, 2015.



This is a French invitation you will absolutely not want to miss. The latest recording by Quatuor Éclisses is wonderful from start to finish. The program begins with Maurice Ravel's greatest guitar work. Now, to be honest it's not actually a guitar piece. You knew that. But the "Alborada del gracioso" for piano (transcribed for orchestra by the composer) is an astonishingly guitaristic piece. I have heard it on guitar(s) before, but the version played here is signally successful. Some parts indeed sound much better on guitars than they usually do on piano. While Debussy's *Suite Bergamasque* invariably sounds good when played well in the piano original, the gorgeous transcription by Quatuor Éclisses enlarges the timbral palette immeasurably to magical effect. The sound is sometimes quite arresting in its beauty. Camille Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre* follows. While obviously not having the massive orchestral weight of the familiar instrumental original, the transcription unquestionably does the work justice and is really downright fun. The Frenchmen wisely utilize the LAGQ arrangement of excerpts from Bizet's *Carmen*. It is a masterly version and they play it very, very well. The disc concludes with the *Barcarolle*, Op. 26, No. 1 by Fauré. It is gentle and warm, played with beautifully judged musical architecture. Technically the members of the quartet are unfailing, and their sound—individually and as an ensemble—is truly remarkable. Recording, presentation, and liner notes are fine. — Al Kunze