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Recent Releases Tuesday: Albums from Eliot Fisk (Beaser's 'Guitar Concerto'), Duo Salmona-Valette, and Evgeny Beleninov

June 13, 2017 – by Blair Jackson



Retratos

Benjamin Valette (guitar) Juliette Salmona (cello)

Ad Vitam records

"I hadn't really thought much about the combination of guitar and cello until I was knocked out by David Leisner and Zuill Bailey's wonderful *Arpeggione* CD last year. That disc primarily consisted of works by European composers (Schubert, Saint-Saëns, Paganini, Gluck, de Falla), whereas **this fine disc by a pair of excellent French musicians is devoted entirely to repertoire by Brazilians active in the late 19th and/or the first half of the 20th century** : Radamés Gnattali (whose *Sonate pour Guitare et Violoncelle* was the jumping-off point for this musical partnership); Ernesto Nazareth, Francisco Mignone (actually Italian, but he grew up in Brazil), Alberto Nepomuceno, and, of course, the omnipresent Heitor Villa-Lobos. (*Arpeggione* does share one piece with this disc—Villa-Lobos' much-performed *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*; always a good choice.) Guitarist Valette wrote the transcriptions for the pieces other than the Gnattali *Sonate*, and did a superb job of sharing the instrumental load between the two instruments, though as often seems to be the case with this combination, the cello, with its singing, sonorous voice, takes on the main melodies more than the guitar does. **These two are marvellously sympathetic players and the choice of so many attractive and tuneful pieces is certain to appeal to many listeners.**

Suite Retratos: *Chiquinha Gonzaga, Anacleto de Medeiros* (Gnattali); *Odeon* (Nazareth); *Chanson de Cristal* (Villa-Lobos); *Valse de Esquina No. 4* (Mignone); *Carioca* (Nazareth); *Valse de Esquina No. 5* (Mignone); *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* (Villa-Lobos); *Fon-Fon* (Nazareth); *Sonate pour Guitare et Violoncelle* (Gnattali); *Noturno, Op. 33* (Nepomuceno); *Melodia Sentimental* (Villa-Lobos)

For samples or to purchase the disc, go the [Ad Vitam Records site](#).