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GUITAR COLLECTION: SOR

Complete Guitar Music (Vol. 7)

FERNANDO SOR: *Introduction and Variations, Op. 26, Douze Etudes, Op. 29, Fantasie et Variations Brillantes, Op. 30.*

Jeffrey McFadden

Naxos 8 553451

From the cover painting by Goya to the excellent notes by Richard Long, Naxos has yet again offered a first rate package at a budget price. Add the stylish and brilliant playing by Canadian guitarist Jeffrey McFadden, winner of the GFA competition in 1992 and teacher at McMaster University and Royal Conservatory of Music and you have a bargain at any price!

Through the three 'Introduction and Variations' McFadden shows a clear, concise articulation with a virtuosic flair which adds sparkle and charm to the pieces. Slow movements are well paced, also demonstrating McFadden's capacity for rhythmic nuance and tonal shading.

The studies, Opus 29, are some of Sor's most demanding works. Those familiar with the Segovia 'Twenty' will recognise those chosen from this opus by the Spanish master. McFadden's personal interpretation of those culled from

this opus stand up well to other performances of these works. The famous B flat arpeggio study is played with a well articulated bass and attention to the inner voices that reveals the implicit polyphony of this charming piece. The C major polyphonic study (number 20 in Segovia's edition) is refreshingly handled here, with emphasis on a graceful and balanced cantabile – rather than the somewhat 'buffa' style sometimes offered. The lesser known studies, including one entirely in natural harmonics, show Sor's harmonic, melodic and guitaristic skills at their best.

The *Fantasia et Variations Brillantes, Op. 30* is again handled expertly by McFadden, though I find this a less convincing work than the other pieces.

Played on modern guitar, the sound is well balanced and convincing. Highly recommended.

Peter Argondizza