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Argondizza, Peter and , Classical Guitar Magazine and , Ashley Marks Publishers (1996) *Fernando Sor: Fantasies Vol. 1 and 2. Recorded by Alain Prevost.* [Review]

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Linde and Ragossnig perform competently together. Their sound is attractive and appealing with some well thought out phrasing. The Giuliani aside, this is a most enjoyable recording.

Steve Marsh

**FERNANDO SOR (Vol. I)**

FANTASIES OPUS 4 À 16

*Deuxième Fantasia Op. 4 en La Majeur, Fantasia Op. 7 en Do mineur, Triosième Fantasia Op. 10 en Fa Majeur, Quatrième Fantasia Op. 12 en Do Majeur, Cinquième Fantasia Op. 16 en Do Majeur.*

**FERNANDO SOR (Vol. II)**

FANTASIES OPUS 21 À 59

*Sixième Fantasia 'Les Adieux' Op. 21 en Mi mineur, Septième Fantasia et Variations Brillantes Op. 30 in Mi mineur, Fantasia sur un air favori Ecossais Op. 40 en Ré Majeur, Fantasia 'Souvenir d'Amitié' Op. 46 en La Majeur, Fantasia Villageoise Op. 52 en La mineur, Fantasia 'Souvenirs d'une soirée à Berlin' Op. 56, Fantasia Op. 58 en La mineur, Fantasia Elegiaque Op. 59 en Mimineur.*

*Alain Prevost, Guitar romantique*

De Plein Vent – PVC36 CD 9463 and CD4964

Mr Prevost does a good job of presenting an essentially archival recording of the complete Sor Fantasies on his 'Romantic guitar' – a copy of a René Lacôte by Carlos Gonzales Marcos. Performed in chronological order, the fantasies on this two volume set are particularly useful to the historically inclined listener who may be interested in tracing the compositional development of Fernando Sor.

Almost two hours and forty minutes of what is essentially (for Sor) a Theme and Variations form can be tough going for the listener, but discovering the fascinating, lesser known gems embedded in all this material will make it all worthwhile. The minor variation of the *Opus 10* in F major (with the sixth string tuned to F), for instance, is one of Sor's more touching moments and the unexpected chromatic language of *Opus 16* is some of the strangest Sor I've heard. Two seldom played complete works, *Opus 52* and *Opus 56*, will provide a substantial work for any innovative guitar programme.

Such compilation can, and ultimately will, highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the featured composer. Cantabile melodies, idiomatic and effective guitar writing (arpeggios, sixths thirds and harmonics) are some of Sors' strengths. A lack of truly memorable original melodies,

unimaginative and predictable harmonic progressions, and relatively little compositional development from variation to variation are some of the apparent weaknesses.

These performances are very literal interpretations – all repeats are taken. The phrasing is thoughtful and well behaved, the tone is good, and Alain Prevost shows fine musicianship and a flair for the style. There is, however, a distinct unevenness in the quality of performance. Some Fantasias are technically secure and musically astute (*Opus 7*, 40 and 59 in particular) while others are not as successful and seem less prepared as in *Opus 7* where harmonics are unclear and in *Op. 10* and *12* which both have missed notes and ornaments. Generally, there is an unsteadiness of rhythm in the faster tempos. It is in the slow to medium tempos that Mr Prevost shows his best playing.

Mr Prevost provides excellent sleeve notes. The general information about Sor, the description regarding the genre 'fantasy' and the specific comments about each piece are scholarly and interesting. Bibliography and source material are also provided. The recording quality is questionable due to some unpleasant overtones and a distinctly boomy sound.

I admire Mr Prevost for taking on such an extensive project. I would hope that he will give us another reading of these pieces after further years of reflection and performance. Performers have done this with Bach, Mozart and Haydn, perhaps Fernando Sor deserves no less.

*Peter Argondizza*

## **LA GUITARE DE JEAN-FELIX LALANNE**

LALANNE: *Prière pour Jamy, Le Mariage des Ondes, Veille 84, Variations su le Theme de Nabucco de Verdi, Concierto 'Entre Ciel el Terre', Impression Reve, Bibi Funk, Ancolie, Sacis, Desitination Voyage, Ballade Pour Nini, Bibi Folk, Iguazu, Brasiliana, Bibito, Villa René Georges, Extraits de la Symphonie Pour un 'Country Gentleman', Sweed Sadness, Keep me Posted, Nashville Family, Laguna Girls, Timour le Magicien.*

Buda Records, Paris.

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Sub-titled '15 years of compositions' this double CD features works written by Lalanne between 1977 and 1992. The music ranges from slow, introspective works in a romantic vein to funky, country and western style, energetic numbers.