Amsterdam Guitar Trio Plays Debussy, Fauré, Chopin (2008)

Suite bergamasque, for piano, L. 75 *1)Prélude - Claude Debussy - 4:02 2) Menuet - Claude Debussy - 4:13 3)Clair de lune - Claude Debussy - 4:18 4)Passepied - Claude Debussy - 3:27*
Dolly, suite for piano, 4 hands or orchestra, Op. 56
5)Berceuse - Gabriel Fauré - 2:16 6)Mi-a-ou - Gabriel Fauré - 1:51 7)Le Jardin de Dolly - Gabriel Fauré - 2:39 8)Kitty Valse - Gabriel Fauré -2:30 9)Tendresse - Gabriel Fauré - 2:22 10) Le Pas espanol - Gabriel Fauré - 2:19
Petite suite (4), for piano, 4 hands (or orchestra), L. 65
11) En Bateau - Claude Debussy - 3:09 12) Cortège - Claude Debussy - 3:15 13) Menuet - Claude Debussy - 3:36 14) Ballet - Claude Debussy - 3:16 15) Rondo for 2 pianos (or solo piano) in C major, Op. 73, CT. 196 Frédéric Chopin - 9:37
Ensemble: Amsterdam Guitar Trio

A casual look at the programme might reasonably raise the reader's expectation of a recording of one- and two-piano music, but it would be a misguided one—six, not four, hands are involved, and if there was a piano in the studio at the time it remained silent; the hands are those of three guitarists. There is, however, nothing new in the arrangement of judiciously chosen piano music for one or more guitars, indeed such arrangements helped to see the music of Granados and Atbéniz through lean years, and it is a decade since Julian Bream and John Williams recorded their duo arrangement of the Dolly suite (also for RCA). It might be objected that, though both the piano and the guitar are percussive instruments, the sonorities are radically changed, but they are no less so when harpsichord music emerges from a piano. Have not, too, composers orchestrated some of their piano works—and even guitar pieces (start with Falla and Rodrigo), and who has complained about Busser's orchestration of Debussy's Petite Suite?

The guitar is capable of a far greater variety of tone-colour than any piano, so that these present arrangements are in effect orchestrations. There can be problems of co-ordination, not least

with percussive instruments, when the work of one player is subdivided amongst more, but in this case they do not arise: the Amsterdam Guitar Trio have had the same personnel since their formation in 1978, and their members were fellow-students. They possess both technique and musicality in abundance and their ensemble has a unanimity of which any chamber ensemble, of whatever composition, might be proud. An advertising slogan once ran: "I've never tried Guinness—1 don't like it"; don't reject this recording without allowing yourself to enjoy this music in its new and alluring dress. No lingering objection could concern the recording per se, for it is superb. -- John Duarte, Gramophone [7/1989]

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