

CD REVIEWS

Jarring Sounds (Adam Cockerham, lute, guitar, and theorbo; Danielle Reutter-Harrah, mezzo-soprano). *Recital*.

Works by Guédron, Boësset, Bataille, Monteverdi, Purcell, Britten, and Goss. No label or number, 2014. www.JarringSounds.com

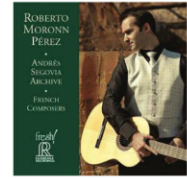


Jarring Sounds — the name is taken from a Dowland song — is the name of the duo formed by Adam Cockerham and Danielle Reutter-Harrah, but it does not describe their performances on this marvelous disc. Between Reutter-Harrah's flawlessly delivered interpretations of the wide-ranging and challenging repertoire and Cockerham's partnering on a variety of fretted instruments, they have delivered a truly first-rate addition to the discography for voice and fretted instruments. The program is in chronological order with the composers' birth dates spanning four centuries! The earliest is "Un jour l'amoureuse Silvie" by Pierre Guedron (b. 1570) and the latest is a song cycle by Stephen Goss (b. 1964). The performers find an ideal style for each work, with mezzo-soprano Reutter-Harrah using restrained *vibrato* in the earliest works, and freer *vibrato* as an ornament. The longest of the early works is "Se pur destina" from Monteverdi's seventh book of madrigals (which, interestingly are mostly not madrigals as we know them). Their performance of the extended *scena* embodied in the text by Ottavio Rinuccini (of the Florentine Camerata) is most impressive and the singer even does the *trillo*, a quite peculiar ornament, but a quite valid one. After two songs by Purcell, we jump a few centuries to the *Songs from the Chinese* by Britten, one of the great cycles for voice and guitar. Cockerham and Reutter-Harrah do just as well in this modern repertoire as in the early works. Some of the Britten songs seem a bit slow, but at least in the case of "The Old Lute", the result is quite ravishing. Stephen Goss must increasingly be recognized among the finest guitar composers of our time. The current work will add measurably to that appreciation. *Under Milk Wood* is one of the last works of the Welsh writer Dylan Thomas. It is a radio play dealing with the dreams and thoughts of a very eccentric cast of characters in a Welsh fishing village. Goss captures the weird modes of expression of the play's characters most aptly in his vocal — and spoken — lines and a beautifully crafted guitar part. The disc insert includes texts with translations when needed, which are most welcome. It would have been valuable to include some information about the songs, especially for the Dylan Thomas texts: knowing which characters are singing and their places in the village would enhance the listener's enjoyment. (I strongly recommend looking up the Wikipedia article about the play, which is quite fascinating.) Recorded sound is excellent. I hope to be jarred by the sound of this fine duo again soon. — Al Kunze

Moronn Pérez, Roberto.

Andrés Segovia Archive • French Composers.

Works by Petit, Martelli, Breville, Collet, Moulaert, Laparra, Ferroud, and Presti. Reference Recordings FR-709.



Using pieces from the many works written for the late Andrés Segovia which he did not record, this album is the second of a series which brings to our ears a refreshing collection of heretofore unheard French music. Working with Angelo Gilardino, the General Editor of the Andrés Segovia Archive, guitarist Roberto Moronn Pérez has chosen fifteen works by a variety of French composers, both known and unknown to guitarists, music that has been patiently waiting in Segovia's files to be appreciated. Pérez is a fine player who has studied Segovia's style deeply, and as in his first CD in this series, he delivers clear interpretations which often remind the listener of the maestro's style in tone, articulation and phrasing. Growing up, guitarists of this reviewer's vintage listened to all of the Segovia recordings we could find, and one can't help hearing the similarities in music presented here, as in Raoul Laparra's *Cuadros*, reminiscent of Tórroba's *Castles of Spain*, and Pierre de Bréville's *Fantasia* (originally untitled) with definite Mompou moments. One wonders why these pieces were not the "chosen ones." Was it that they did not conform to Segovia's idea of musicality, or was it just a matter of available time to play through them? Compared to most pieces in the Segovia repertoire, some of the compositions included here lack clarity and tend to meander, such as the Sicilienne by Raymond Petit. The *Fantasia* by Pierre de Breville begins with a rather uncultured motive which would not appeal to most classically-oriented musicians. Understandably, most of these works were written by non-guitarists, and likely did not have the "benefit" of Segovia's editing. It would have been interesting to see what changes he would have made. *Segovia* by Ida Presti concludes the recording — this is a gem! Liner notes, by Pérez himself, are illuminating and well-written, and the recorded guitar sounds realistic, with comfortable spacing between tracks. Pérez and Reference Recordings are to be highly commended for bringing these many excellent pieces to life. This was no small undertaking — the playing is technically excellent, oftentimes brilliant, and the CD would be an excellent addition to one's library. — Jim McCutcheon