

Isaac Albéniz



Suite Iberia

Brazilian Guitar Quartet

Isaac Albéniz - Suite Iberia

arranged by the Brazilian Guitar Quartet • world premiere recording

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1-Evocación (5:26) | 7-El Albaicín (7:03) |
| 2-El Puerto (4:21) | 8-El Polo (6:24) |
| 3-Corpus Christi en Sevilla (7:31) | 9-Lavapiés (6:04) |
| 4-Rondeña (7:10) | 10-Málaga (4:47) |
| 5-Almería (8:44) | 11-Jerez (8:38) |
| 6-Triana (4:53) | 12-Eritaña (5:13) |

Brazilian Guitar Quartet

Luiz Mantovani • Everton Gloeden
Edson Lopes • Tadeu do Amaral
(left to right)



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Total Playing Time: 76:16



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Book 1

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Book 3

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Book 4

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TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 76:16

Brazilian Guitar Quartet

Everton Gloeden and Luiz Mantovani, 8-string guitars
Tadeu do Amaral and Edson Lopes, 6-string guitars



Recording Producer: *Brazilian Guitar Quartet*
Recording Engineer: *Plínio Hessel, Jr.*
Editing: *Tadeu do Amaral*
Mastering: *Otávio Bertolo*

Recorded – July/August 2005, MCR Studio, São Paulo, Brazil

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Package design: *Tadeu Knudsen*
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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909) was born in 1860 in Catalonia. A child prodigy, he gave his first public concert on the piano at the age of four. At twelve, he stowed away on a ship to South America. There he led an itinerant life, performing across that continent and eventually in the United States, where he appeared in a vaudeville act playing the piano behind his back. In the early 1880s, he met the musicologist and folksong collector Felipe Pedrell, who awakened in the young Albéniz a lifelong passion for Spanish traditional music. Albéniz finally settled in Paris, where he became close friends with the major Impressionist composers.

Albéniz began writing *Iberia* in 1905 and finished it in 1908, the year before his death. Hailed by Olivier Messiaen as “the masterpiece of Spanish music,” *Iberia* is one of the best examples of “nationalist” piano repertoire. The suite comprises twelve pieces, divided into four books. Bearing the French subtitle *12 nouvelles impressions en quatre cahiers*, it embraces a variety of musical motifs and moods that figure prominently in Spanish music, especially that of Andalusia. In fact, most of the twelve pieces could be described as musical impressions of places, traditions, or dances from this region of southern Spain. But though he was in-

spired by folk elements, Albéniz rarely employs them verbatim, preferring instead to reconfigure them according to his own creative insights. This process is handled in so natural a way that Albéniz’s own original conceptions and the folk elements that inspired them are seamlessly melded. *Iberia* was composed when Albéniz was already in his artistic prime, with a highly sophisticated and cosmopolitan sensibility that enabled him to merge the folk idioms of his native land with the Romantic and Impressionist trends of other European countries (Liszt and Debussy being among his major influences). Debussy said of *Iberia*: “Never has music achieved such diverse and colorful impressions; one shuts one’s eyes, dazzled by its wealth of images.”

Book One of *Iberia* opens with the nostalgic **Evocación**, which serves as a prelude for the pieces to come. **El Puerto** takes the listener to the port of Cadiz, bursting with vibrant rhythms and festive colors, while **Corpus Christi en Sevilla** portrays a religious procession through the streets of Andalusia’s capital (it is the only piece in the set that directly quotes folk material, the popular melody “La Tarara.”) **Rondeña**, which opens Book Two, is a dance from the city of Ronda, with alter-

nating 3/4 and 6/8 rhythms. It is followed by the allusive **Almería**, which juxtaposes moments of great tenderness with ones of great passion. **Triana** refers to the Gypsy quarter of Seville, one of the birthplaces of flamenco, with its guitars, hand-clapping, castanets, and bravura dance steps called *zapateados*. **El Albaicín**, the first piece of Book Three, evokes Granada's Gypsy quarter, an historical flamenco redoubt, here imbued with great melancholy. In **El Polo**, named after an Andalusian song and dance genre, the composer asks the performer to play "as though sobbing," and an obstinate rhythm carries the piece from beginning to end. Closing this book, the lively **Lavapiés** stands in colorful contrast to the two preceding pieces, recalling the street musicians of a popular quarter of Madrid. Book Four starts off with **Málaga**, inspired by the malagueña, a type of Andalusian song descended from the fandango. It is followed by **Jerez**, an elegant portrait of that sherry-producing Andalusian city; the frequent appoggiaturas represent the arabesques so characteristic of the architecture of that region. The suite culminates with **Eritaña**, which depicts a famous tavern in the outskirts of Seville.

Since the Brazilian Guitar Quartet was founded in 1999, our repertoire has had two main foci: Brazil-

ian "classical" music (much of it neglected even in our own country), and universally-acclaimed masterworks by great composers such as Bach. *Iberia*, belonging to the latter category, was high on the list of performing and recording projects we had hoped to realize since BGQ's inception.

This CD is the fruit of a long process that involved far more than rehearsals and recording sessions. Our incessant quest for interpretive, technical, and acoustic solutions took us down pathways rarely explored in the guitar world; thus the process was a wonderful education. Our unique formation — two traditional six-string guitars and two eight-string guitars with expanded bass and treble ranges — helped us enormously in making the arrangement. We owe much of our inspiration to the recordings of the great Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha, who, indirectly, was our musical mentor.

As a virtuoso pianist often compared in his day to Franz Liszt and Anton Rubinstein, Albéniz knew how to exploit the piano's entire technical and acoustic range, creating in *Iberia* a work at once virtuosic in the extreme, and utterly idiomatic for the piano. Given this fact, the idea of arranging the work for guitars might seem at first presumptuous and perhaps impossible. However,

the practice of arranging Albéniz's piano music for guitar dates back to his own lifetime (his compatriot, the renowned guitarist Francisco Tárrega, was one such practitioner). Some Albéniz pieces, such as "Asturias" (from *Suite Española*), are much better known today in their guitar versions than in the original piano ones. While *Iberia's* "language" is, of course, pianistic, passages evocative of the guitar permeate the suite. One can hear guitar-like arpeggios, strumming, modal harmonies peculiar to the flamenco guitar idiom, and rhythmic articulations and melodic patterns that intuitively remind us of plucked strings.

Thus, this recording continues an established tradition while putting forth a new and adventurous reading, retaining the work's musical essence while shifting the emphasis somewhat more toward its folk roots through the instrument universally associated with Spain and its culture, the guitar.

It is our hope that our listeners will find themselves inexorably carried through the byways of Andalusia and seduced by the same vivid Spanish sensations, rhythms,

and melodies that inspired Albéniz to create his greatest legacy to the music world.

— The Brazilian Guitar Quartet
*translated from the Portuguese
and edited by Lisa Sapinkopf*



THE BRAZILIAN GUITAR QUARTET

In Brazil they are called the “DREAM TEAM”—four of that country’s most brilliant guitarists. Since their first appearances outside Brazil in 1999, the BGQ has quickly become one of the world’s most sought-after guitar ensembles, with several highly successful international tours every season. Their performances are met by record-breaking attendance, ecstatic audience responses, and rave reviews.

The BGQ were “headliners” at the first World Guitar Congress in Baltimore in June 2004, where they and the Baltimore Symphony gave the world premiere of a specially commissioned concerto by Brazilian composer Ronaldo Miranda.

Recent North American engagements include the Metropolitan Museum and 92nd Street Y in New York City, Wolf Trap and Dumbarton Concerts in Washington D.C., Pittsburgh’s Frick Art and Historical Society, the Latino Cultural Center of Dallas, the Houston Performing Arts Society, the Los Angeles Museum of Latin American

Art, Da Camera Society and Coleman Chamber Music Series, Atlanta’s Spivey Hall, Baltimore’s Shriver Hall, concerts in Boston, Austin, Phoenix, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, Miami, Indianapolis, Salt Lake City, and St. Louis; San Juan, Puerto Rico’s Pro Arte Musical; and a memorable winter tour of Alaska. International festival appearances have included the Hong Kong International Festival, the Monterrey (Mexico) Guitar Festival, the Nantucket Festival, the Florida International Festival, Reno’s “Artown,” the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, El Paso’s World on a String Festival, the Carmel and Winter Park Bach Festivals, Chautauqua, the Round Top (Texas) Guitar Festival, the Albuquerque Winter Chamber Music Festival; and guitar festivals in Scotland, Portugal, Denmark and other countries.

Live performances and interviews by the BGQ have been broadcast numerous times on Voice of America, National Public Radio’s “Performance Today,” and many other radio shows.

Further information on the quartet is available at www.brazilianguitarquartet.com

Other recordings featuring the BRAZILIAN GUITAR QUARTET



Essência do Brasil

Villa Lobos: Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1
Guarnieri: Four Pieces / Mignone: Lundu / Gomes: Sonata em Ré
DE 3245

Essência do Brasil (DE 3245)

Music by Brazilian composers Villa-Lobos, Guarnieri, Mignone, Gomes

“Strong rhythmic articulation and clarity ... creates much excitement ... leave(s) the listener smiling.”
— AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

“Refreshing, highly entertaining and substantial new repertoire ... the players’ musicianship and enthusiasm for this venture shines through every bar. This is a top class recording of fabulous music from a world-class quartet. Highly recommended.”

— CLASSICAL GUITAR

“CRITIC’S CHOICE ... dazzling music ... the works are in fact thoroughly Brazilian in character, full of passionate melodies, exciting strumming and dazzling color ... a stunning debut ... of vibrant music played with joie de vivre that is infectious.”

— THE DAILY YOMIURI, Tokyo

“Cause for celebration ... great brilliance and enormous musicality ... energy and drive ... They play as one, with a gift for tone color at once varied and integrated. They breathe together, giving the performances a uniquely organic aura ... An ideal synthesis of brightness and reverie, tropical warmth and clarity of ideas ... An unsurpassable disc.”

— JORNAL DA TARDE, São Paulo

Bach: The Orchestral Suites (DE 3254)

“Of all the anniversary albums paying homage to Bach this year ... this disc offers some of the most unlikely yet consistently delightful listening ... the Suites sound as if they were meant for this arrangement all along, with the players bringing out not only the rich counterpoint but the vibrant color of the works ... the ever-popular Air of the Suite No. 3 moves with a grace both limpid and lapidary ... a wonderful record.”

— BILLBOARD



BACH
FOUR SUITES
FOR ORCHESTRA
BWV 1066~1069
arr. Brazilian Guitar Quartet

BRAZILIAN GUITAR QUARTET
PAUL GALBRAITH
EDELTON GLOEDEN
EVERTON GLOEDEN
TADEO DO AMARAL

BACH: Four Suites for Orchestra
BWV 1066~1069, arr. Brazilian Guitar Quartet • DE 3254



BRAZILIAN GUITAR QUARTET
Encantamento

Music by Brazilian composers Mignone, Guarnieri, Santoro, Miranda, Oswald • DE 3302

“Absolute clarity, rhythmic precision, and drive ... brilliant playing ... a welcome rhythmic vitality that is tempered with a stylish lilt ... sparkling ensemble playing.”

— AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

Isaac Albéniz Iberia (DE 3364)

“The Brazilian quartet is a unique musical group: it consists of two standard guitars and two eight string guitars à la Paul Galbraith, who was for a time a member of the group. What does it sound like? In a word it is magnificent. In this recording they take on Albéniz’ masterpiece *Iberia*. The extra pitch ranges at the bottom and top mean there is no compromise because of crowding the music into the available octaves of the standard guitar, and the tone colors of which pianists can only dream can be exploited with beautiful effect ... The quartet are effortlessly virtuosic on their parts, preternaturally unified, have gorgeous arrangements of the score, and deliver an outstanding interpretation ... as near to perfection as I have encountered.”

— SOUNDBOARD MAGAZINE

BGQ MAKES HISTORIC RECORDING OF ALBÉNIZ

**** [FOUR STARS, HIGHEST RATING]

“This CD ... will stand as a reference recording of the Catalan composer’s masterpiece ... a performance breathtaking not only for the exuberant virtuosity in fast passages and syncopated rhythms, but also for virtuosity of another level, that of fine control of tempo and tonal qualities, in overlapping layers ... [BGQ’s interpretation] has now taken its place alongside [those of Alicia de Larrocha and Daniel Barenboim], beneath the ideal sun of Iberia, and in no one’s shadow.”

— A FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO



BRAZILIAN GUITAR QUARTET
plays
VILLA-LOBOS

Suite Floral, Cirandas, String Quartet No. 5, Danças Características Africanas (African Folk Dances), String Quartet