



Reviews

SEPHARDIC JOURNEY CD

"...a remarkable, expressive, emotive CD that takes the listener on a true journey of sound... **All of the playing is inspirational, combining rich, gorgeous, colorful tone quality with impeccable phrasing, technique, and ensemble playing.**... Moliner and [violinist Desirée] Ruhstrat play with such close ensemble that they might as well be one person... This album is a perfect medium for appreciating **Moliner's exquisite playing. Her control, her impeccable intonation, and her ability to blend seamlessly with subtle changes of tone color are second only to her expressive artistry.** Every moment of the CD is entertaining, moving, and impressive!"

—The Flutist Quarterly (Jessica Dunnivant)

"This music has been **an absolute joy** to hear!

The Cavatina Duo and their performing partners the Avalon String Quartet and Desirée Ruhstrat and David Cunliffe of the Lincoln Trio—all Chicago based—are **wonderful beyond praise.** The recording and presentation are up to Cédille's usual exemplary standards... Carlos Raphael Rivera's Plegaria y Canto (Al Bodre de la Mar): Prayer and Song (At the Edge of the Sea) is a **remarkably uplifting piece...this lovely, melancholy, but vital music of love, longing, and hope will charm the souls...**, especially in these **passionately shaped and technically immaculate performances. Bravi!"**

—Fanfare Magazine (Ronald E. Grames)

"...tasty little disc of world premieres ... This is music of an oppressed culture and it is tempting to look upon the creative impetus which oppression sometimes seems to provide but the message here is one of sadness and nostalgia but also of hope. It is perhaps a tribute to the ultimate triumph over said oppression even if it took 500 years. There is some comfort and healing to be had from the celebration of this lost culture and that is **the triumph of this disc.**"

—NewMusicBuff (Allan Cronin)

"**Hats off to the Cavatina Duo . . .** this is a set of uncommonly beautiful pieces performed with high artistry. It's really delightful stuff, and it's all beautifully played—each of these musicians are real artists; there's not a weak link among them. It's **one of the most delightful chamber recordings I've heard in quite a while.**"

—American Record Guide (Kenneth Keaton)

"...this disc features arguably **the finest guitar-flute duo extant, Cavatina Duo...these pieces and the performances are on the very highest level; the playing and the music are not just fine as guitar music, but fine as music period.** Thomas's music is compositionally sophisticated but without any sacrifice of power or urgency . . . Joseph Williams's Isabel is an impressive work...in the first few

minutes of *Plegaria y Canto* (al Bodre de la Mar), Carlos Rafael Rivera achieves an emotional intensity rare in the guitar world. This is masterfully maintained for the fifteen minutes of this very impressive work...Leisner's *Love Dreams of an Exile*, is a work of substantial power, with the almost programmatic second movement being particularly noteworthy...Clarice Assad's *Sephardic Suite* sometimes embraces almost avant-garde techniques in an amazingly inventive work, which has brilliant writing for the flute and guitar.

This is **an essential disc** for any lover of contemporary music. "

—**Soundboard (Al Kunze)**

"All the works on this program are performed by Moliner and Azabagic, who are known professionally as the Cavatina Duo, with their accustomed **style and feeling for rhythmic and sonic values**. The sound of Moliner's alto flute is particularly notable for its warmth and dark, well-grounded color, allowing Azabagic's guitar plenty of room to create its own sonic space and range of moods. The supporting artists are all excellent: cellist David Cunliffe in Thomas' *Trio Sefardi*, violinist Desiree Ruhstrat in Rivera's *Plegaria y canto*, and the Avalon String Quartet, whose muted sounds make the perfect backdrop to the Leisner and Assad works. Kudos also to producer James Ginsburg, engineer Bill Maylone, and editor Jeanne Velonis, all top pros in their field."

—**Audio-Video Club of Atlanta (Phil Muse)**

"Historic diaspora inspires poignant portraits of a people

Atlanta-born Alan Thomas' *Trio Sefardi* . . . is a real find. Joseph V. Williams' *Isabel* is another melodic and rewarding piece . . . Carlos Rafael Rivera's work *Plegaria y Canto*...quite emotional and full of wonderful harmonies. David Leisner's *Love Dreams of the Exile* . . . tender and nostalgic . . . Clarice Assad's *Sephardic Suite*, . . . another major work . . . This CD is **full of melodic, rewarding works that have something to say and resonate in the memory. Recommended!** "

—**Classical Guitar Magazine-CD**

"Leisner's atmospheric *Love Dreams of the Exile* draws one back for repeated listening; the sighing microtones of its first movement, a meditation on the song 'Yo bolí,' add a layer of deep resignation within the calmly flowing figuration that surrounds them. Assad's '*Sephardic Suite*,' conceived as a kind of musical storytelling, is full of contrast and incident . . . "

—**Pasatiempo - The Santa Fe New Mexican**

"A **compelling** CD of new works commissioned specifically for the Cavatina Duo, all drawing on traditional Sephardic folk tunes—mostly love songs with their often-dramatic, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) texts—for inspiration. The recording is infused with **gorgeous, evocative melodies, soulful and plaintive laments, lyrical flights of fancy, sultry twists** on the tango, startling percussive passages and an exhilarating energy. Azabagic and Moliner are **virtuosic, passionate musicians**, deftly accompanied by David Cunliffe on cello, Desirée Ruhstrat, violin, and the Avalon String Quartet . . . **I wholeheartedly recommend joining the Cavatina Duo on their journey.**"

—**Whole Note**

"**Simply lovely in all respects**...This is no class in musicology, but five newly-composed works bent on reflecting the spirit of this age and its people using music produced in that realm if not necessarily of that actual period. These composers are not by necessity of that origin, but each of them responded to the commission with enthusiasm and a definite sense of the overall catholicity of the music and the

people. The results are five very different but **uniquely beautiful takes on the gems of this culture**, and there are many moments that, while standing apart in style, are bound by a very common **haunting beauty**. The sound is superb, and this disc should surprise many . . . **By all means give this gorgeous album a chance ★★★★★.**"

—*Audiophile Audition*

"A **passionate journey** down paths we thought were lost, but which live forever."

—*El Nuevo Herald*

"It certainly represents an intriguing way to acknowledge and pay tribute to the primary performers' previously unknown ancestry."

—*Infodad*

Concert and CD Reviews

"The two musicians **perform seamlessly together, firing our imaginations with exotic new sounds...extraordinary artistry** of flutist Eugenia Moliner, who is **technically and musically the most extraordinary flutist I have ever heard...the incredible musical gifts** of Azabagic... The Cavatina Duo did nothing but astonish and delight."

—*Herald Tribune, Sarasota, FL*

"Lovely playing, relentlessly mellifluous . . . and exceedingly pleasant."

—*Gramophone*

"The Cavatina Duo, Eugenia Moliner and Denis Azabagic, take to the Piazzolla pieces with **sensual sounds and an earthy musical understanding** of the genre. They play with **warm, resonant sounds**. Their sometimes playful, sometimes soulful approach to the tangos is just what the pieces need . . . **This pair serves up a rich selection of flute and guitar repertoire** with a hand-in-glove style of playing."

—*American Record Guide*

"The energy levels behind these brilliant musicians are breathtaking and fascinating. The Spanish flute player **Eugenia Moliner is an artist of the highest caliber**, and her husband **Denis Azabagic is one of the best guitarists I have heard.**"

—*British Flute Society Magazine*

"Their Piazzolla performance is vibrant and colorful, demonstrating their quality with its well-judged phrasing and rhythmic emphasis. Excellent technical control and convincing intensity that creates a haunting atmosphere. **Highly recommended!**"

—*Classical Guitar Magazine*

“Ms. Moliner is the perfect foil for Azabagic’s flawless technique: She is as formidable player as he is—no small compliment—and her vivacious stage presence is icing on the cake. **What a treat!”**

—*Soundboard Magazine*

“The two musicians perform seamlessly together, firing our imaginations with exotic new sounds . . . extraordinary artistry of flutist Eugenia Moliner, who is technically and musically the most extraordinary flutist I have ever heard . . . incredible musical gifts of Azabagic.”

The Cavatina Duo did nothing but astonish and delight.”

—*Sarasota Herald Tribune*

“Spectacular, stunning performance, ensemble playing is superb.”

—*British Flute Society Magazine*

“Cavatina Duo Offers Variety . . . The duo husband and wife team of Denis Azabagic on guitar and Eugenia Moliner playing flute offer an evening of music that was entertaining and performed with exceptional virtuosity and panache. Moliner’s flute complimented Azabagic’s efforts—the sort of near perfect plunking we have come to expect from the world class artists the Society consistently brings—beautifully.”

—*Fort Worth Star Telegram*

“These mates share unerring technical skill and an understanding of the emotional intentions in the music—not to mention an X factor of duo synchronicity.”

—*Santa Barbara Independent*

“Top quality Cavatina duo, excellent!”

—*Seicorde, Italy*