

Artist Management

Jason Vieaux

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Jason Vieux applies refined touch to guitar works

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By **Donald Rosenberg, The Plain Dealer**

The classical guitar can be one of the most poetic instruments in the right (and left) hands.

Among the musicians who makes the guitar sing is Jason Vieaux, who gave an elegant recital Monday for the Rocky River Chamber Music Society at West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church. When not heading the guitar department at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Vieaux performs internationally and makes solo discs, including new ones on Cleveland-based Azica Records.

It is immediately clear why he's in such demand. Vieaux sits serenely onstage and barely raises his musical voice. Even when a composer asks for virtuoso fireworks, he chooses refinement over flamboyance, while maintaining inner intensity.

Vieaux's varied program Monday largely focused on introspective works, ranging from J.S. Bach's Lute Suite No. 3 to a tender Pat Metheny ballad, "The Road to You." Amid these pieces, the guitarist paid ample tribute to Spanish composers who revel in the instrument's seductive and captivating qualities.

The Bach suite, originally for cello, demonstrated Vieux's ability to shape cogent statements and his penchant for lingering on pertinent expressive points. The performance was lilting and fluent, with subtle attention to nuances and a sense of reverie in the Sarabande that almost stopped time.

Isaac Albeniz dominated Spanish music for several decades with music of haunting and proud personality. Vieux's arrangements of three Albeniz miniatures – and another as an encore – embraced both the sad lyricism and passionate flair that mark much of this composer's output. Spanish music also took up much of the program's second half, which included a lovely piece by a composer better known as the guitar titan of the 20th century, Andres Segovia. His "Estudio Sin Luz" ("Study Without Light") could hardly be more songful or suited to Vieaux's pensive sensitivity.

The other Spanish composers are household names mostly to guitarists, though their alluring music deserves wider attention. Along with Regino Sainz de la Maza's vibrant "Zapateado" and Julian Arcas' suave "Solea," Vieaux gave rich definition to Francisco Tarrega's "Caprichio Arabe," which moves from sensuous ardor and sweetness to wistful tranquility. The activity in Frank Martin's "Quatre Pieces Breves" reflects the Swiss composer's colorful application of harmony and command of guitar sonority. Vieaux brought as much nimble, warm and crisp inflection to these charming pieces as he did to the night's other distinctive music.

http://www.cleveland.com/musicdance/index.ssf/2011/01/vieaux_review.html