

Les Siecles Live: France-Espagne (Musicales Actes Sud)



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I came out of my seat like a rocket (or as near as I can get to Rocket Man) when this disc popped through the letter box: some things you just have to wait for, eagerly if impatiently. The French chamber orchestra, Les Siecles Live, with its electric conductor Francois-Xavier Roth, is one of the most exciting period orchestras on the planet. If by any chance they are new to you, I would urge you to check out their recordings, at two different musical extremes, of Saint-Saens's Organ Symphony and Stravinsky's Rite Of Spring: they are dynamite. And so too is this new recording from the band, which reflects the influence of Spain - in its sounds, colours, rhythms and temperament - on French composers. It's dazzling, with brilliantly and precisely splashed colours in Chabrier's Espana, the very different hues and moods of Ravel's Alborado del gracioso and Debussy's Iberia, a masterpiece of suggestion, and the less known but wholly charming music from the Ballet Suite to Massenet's El Cid.

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