

Albeniz - Iberia Suite - Concierto Fantastico

Written by bluesever

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Iberia Suite, for piano, B. 47: 1. *Evocación* 2. *El corpus en Sevilla* 3. *Triana* 4. *El puerto*
5. *El albaicin* 6. *Navarra, for piano in A flat major, B. 49*

Piano Concerto in A minor, 'Concierto fantástico' (orchestrated by Trayter; also arranged for 2 pianos), Op. 78:

7. 1. *Allegro ma non troppo* 8. 2. *Andante - Presto* 9. 3. *Allegro* 10. *Catalonia, suite populaire, for orchestra (only 1st of 3 parts completed)*

London Symphony Orchestra Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra Enrique Bátiz – conductor

A highly colourful and diverting selection that gives much undemanding pleasure. The London based recordings with the LSO, (Iberia and Navarra), and RPO (Piano Concerto) were originally early Eighties' digital releases from EMI, hitherto unavailable on CD, while the Mexico City recording of Catalonia is of ASV provenance.

The Iberia Suite comprises five movements from the composer's series of piano works of the same name in lavish and at times even gaudy orchestrations completed after his death by his friend, the conductor Enrique Arbos. They dilute the specifically Spanish temperament which is such an intrinsic feature of the adventurous keyboard writing of the originals to a degree that manifests a brash picture-postcard quality so regularly and mis-guidedly attributed to Respighi's Roman tone poems. As with Navarra, an orchestration of another piano work completed by de Severac, they combine splashy spectacle, infectious dance rhythms and sultry, evocative textures which are all seized upon with relish by Batiz, albeit with some occasionally wayward discipline from the orchestra. The sumptuous sound is appropriately panoramic. The Piano Concerto is an earlier work, premiered in 1887. Benign rather than overt in Spanish idiom, but requiring considerable virtuosity and style, Aldo Ciccolini demonstrates mastery of both and transforms the work into something far more alluring and memorable than its outwardly faceless material might suggest on paper. Although recorded in the same location as Iberia and Navarra (St Barnabas Church, Woodside Park), the sound picture here seems drier and less opulent,

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with a very favourable disposition given to the soloist. Catalonia reverts to the scenic nationalist pageant of the other orchestral works and rounds off the concert in boisterous style. ---lan Duller, Editorial Reviews

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