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DANÇAS BRASILEIRAS
Works by Nopomuceno; Levy; Villa-Lobos; Mignone; Fernández;
Guarnieri; Krieger; Jobim; Pereira/Guerra-Peixe
São Paulo Symphony Orchestra

Roberto Minczuk

BIS- 1430(SACD)
Reference Recording - None for this collection

Artistic Quality **9/10** Sound Quality

This almost perfect collection follows a roughly chronological progression from the late 19th century (Nepomuceno and Levy, whose Samba is a highlight of the disc), to the 21st century (Edino Kreiger's somewhat glum Passacaglia for the New Millennium). As the foregoing description suggests, the only problem is that the newer pieces are less interesting than the older ones, although Antonio Carlos Jobim's A Chegada dos Candangos is delightful even if it does end in mid-stride. Along the way you'll surely enjoy Villa-Lobos' magical Dança Frenética, while Mignone's Congada is equally clever and evocative (BIS has one disc of his orchestral music, and we surely would enjoy another).

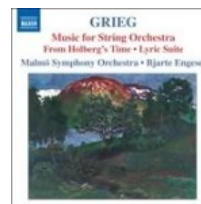
Fernández's famous Batuque receives its best performance here since Bernstein's, though it would be great to hear the entire suite from which it derives. Camargo Guarnieri's Three Dances are also beautiful pieces. Only the third of them is at all familiar, but the lyrical central dance is memorably atmospheric. You could be forgiven for thinking it comes out of a film score for an American Western. As already hinted, the performances are about as good as it gets, and the SACD sonics offer the last word in natural brilliance and impact. Slightly uneven compositionally, but strongly recommended nonetheless.

--David Hurwitz

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