**-** **Iliana Matos, "Angels in the Street," GSP Recordings 1030 CD, 2006**

It's been 80 years since Heitor Villa-Lobos rejuvenated classical guitar music with his compositions, breathing a rhythm and gravitas never heard before his time. Composer Eduardo Martin, perhaps best known from the LAGQ's rendering of "Hasta Alicia Baila" and "La Trampa," proves not only his stewardship for Villa-Lobos' spirit, but for also truly drawing it into the 21st century with writing "Angels in the Street." The only limiting factor for a piece such as "Angels?" -- to find a performer who possesses the virtuosity able to handle the technical act of precisely lifting the notes from daunting page to fretboard, and to do it with a panache and sensitivity which disguises the difficulty as only subliminal. Such an artist is Iliana Matos. Matos has a long history of concert awards including first prizes in the Vila de L'Olleria, Ciudad de Vélez-Málaga, S.A.R. La Infanta Doña Cristina, and Manuel M. Ponce International Guitar Competitions. And though Matos is a dark horse, it's impossible while listening to "Angels" to believe that her name will not someday ring the same peal of recognition as does Bream and Williams. "Preludio" begins with the same slumbering but expectant legato lines of Villa-Lobos' Prelude No. 4 in E minor, and also like that piece explodes into surprising glissades of arpeggiations. "Anunciacion" (from Martin's "En Cinco Lineas") has the floating and ethereal quality of a Ralph Towner composition. Not surprisingly, since both composer and performer are Cuban, Latin influences are prominent on some pieces ("Inevitable," "Son," "Son de Barrio," De La Rumba Son") and will reward fans of Egberto Gismonti. GSP Recordings seems to have a talent for ferreting out bright new classical guitar talent, and they've succeeded once more by making this collaboration between Eduardo Martin and Iliana Matos possible and accessible.

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