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Vieaux proves string theory

by **Garaud MacTaggart**

The folks doing the scheduling for the Ramsi P. Tick Memorial Concert Series are to be commended for their programming. Everything this season has either been a fine listening experience or holds out the promise of being great.

They started out with a well-received performance by the internationally renowned Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble, and future offerings will showcase other musical worthies including the Burning River Brass, violinist Hilary Hahn and, for the last program of the season, pianist Richard Goode. Tuesday night's concert, however, was reserved for a performance by guitarist Jason Vieaux.

Vieaux, who was raised in Buffalo, is one of the finest classical guitarists of his generation as evidenced by his having won numerous awards and become the youngest person to ever lead the Cleveland Institute of Music Guitar Department. Vieaux is also a personable entertainer whose introductions to the music being played on Tuesday night were a pleasant mix of the informative and the humorous. Vieaux's recital was a nice overview of his repertoire. In addition to compositions by Fernando Sor ("Variations on a Theme of Mozart"), Manuel Ponce ("Sonatina Meridional") and Jose Luis Merlin ("Suite del Recuerdo"), which were created especially for the guitar, Vieaux included his own arrangements of works scored for the lute by Johann Sebastian Bach ("Prelude, Fugue and Allegro," BWV 998) and the piano by Isaac Albeniz ("Cuba" and "Rumores de la Caleta"). For good measure, Vieaux also included his version of a jazz tune by Pat Metheny ("The Bat") taken from Vieaux's latest album, "Images of Metheny."

Sor's variations, the Ponce sonatina and the Merlin suite all sounded perfectly natural via Vieaux's fingers, as did the Albeniz arrangements. The guitarist's treatment of Metheny's atmospheric riff was a tasteful crossover moment and a surprising addition to an otherwise straightforward classical concert.

Overall, Vieaux's performance was well deserving of the two encores he gave. First up was another of his Albeniz arrangements ("Torre Bermeja"), but the final chords of the evening belonged to "Lagrima," a short, simple exercise in delight by Francisco Tarrega.
