

VALEZ SUR MOI for solo guitar

by *Sebastien Vachez*

Doberman-Yppan DO636. 12pp.

French guitarist Sebastien Vachez was born in 1973 and his initial formal studies were at the Conservatoire National, Troyes. He subsequently carried on his musical studies in Paris with Vladimir Mikulka and Gerard Verba and it is this latter teacher, who was for many years the main organiser of the 'Antony Guitar Festival' for which *Valez sur Moi* was commissioned in 2008, to whom this piece is dedicated.

The piece bears the sub-title *Homage a Barrios* and is, for the most part, an energetic and very rhythmic contemporary work which hints at jazz and 'Latin' and makes extensive use of the fashionable percussive effects much used these days such as hitting the strings with the left hand only and slapping the strings with the right hand thumb. Throughout the entire score there are very precise directions as to fingering, damping, rapid *portamento* and *glissando*, staccato, accentuation, tonality, etc. Rapid snippets of melodic line keep making an appearance and there are some quirky harmonies scattered here and there. An unexpected, but totally pleasant mood change comes around two-thirds of the way through but this is short-lived and soon the music is back on track as in the previous style.

I personally cannot see the Barrios connection but that aside, I found this to be a fascinating, exciting and highly entertaining composition which would certainly grace any recital programme and would, in all likelihood, go down well with audiences and anyone of a high technical standard seeking some new and slightly unusual accessible contemporary material ought to give this a try out.

Steve Marsh