

## ***Viva España & Mexico***

Orchestra/ Richard Hayman

Naxos 555026—58 minutes

This pops concert was originally released in 1990, which seems an eon ago.

I'm wasn't sure CD labels could get away with this kind of disc nowadays, but here we have the formidable Naxos coughing up this easy-listening fare. This is a piñata of mostly Mexican and Latin American music, with some tracks where Mexican composers pay tribute to the Old Country, as in Lara's 'Granada'.

Richard Hayman came from the Boston Pops tradition (his orchestrations were used by them) and you hear that in these arrangements, which are pleasant enough. (But—to honor the recently-deceased Mr Moog—do I detect the sound of a synthesizer here?) You will not find this as idiomatic as, for example, Ernest Lecuona's own band playing his music, or other familiar arrangements from the 1930s and 40s.

Some of the arrangements seem rather grand—especially the one for 'La Cucaracha', which I never knew was a Mexican Revolution ditty. But any collection that includes that, plus 'Cielito Lindo' (*such* a lovely song), the Chiquita Banana anthem, and 'La Bamba', in addition to the Lara and Lecuona songs is bound to raise a smile and set the foot tapping.

TRAUBNER