

collection, though, is the first recording of the 'new' *Martin Ballade*, which is a work well worth getting to know better. Equally worth getting to know better is the playing of the excellent Thies Roorda, whose intelligent musicianship and fluid virtuosity make him a pleasure to listen to. He is joined by first-rate chamber musicians. This is one of the most enjoyable recordings I have heard in a very long time. Mention must be made of the excellent programme notes by Rien de Reede.

Robert Bigio



**Below: Music for Low Flutes.** Peter Sheridan, alto, bass, contrabass and subcontrabass flutes; Claire Cooper, piano; with Sheridan Stokes, Lisa-Maree Amos, Peter Neville, Heather Price and John Sawoski. Move records MD 3330.

Peter Sheridan is an American player who is now resident in Australia, and a specialist in bass and contrabass flutes. He is active in commissioning new repertoire, and this disc is an interesting compilation of music for low flutes. Gary Schocker's *A Small Sonata for a Large Flute* is for bass flute and piano and features flowing melodic lines in a simple, tonal context. Schocker is a popular composer who has much appeal, and this is set to become a repertoire standard. Sheridan's sound is mellow and unforced but balances well with the piano. The second movement is particularly lyrical, while the short final movement is rhythmic and punchy. *Irish in the Lowlands* by Sheridan Stokes features contrabass flute, bass flute and Irish flute, and as the title suggests, has a strong Irish influence, with some interesting ornamentation giving an authentic feel. Three short virtuoso studies follow, by Hilary Taggart, Demersseman and Kohler,

demonstrating the agility of these instruments, and showing that they are capable of much more than just slow, low register melodies. Gaubert's *Madrigal* is heard in a lovely arrangement for alto flute and piano, and Patrick Neher's *City Vignettes* has a wonderfully jazz-influenced language, scored for contrabass flute, double bass and piano. There are a few balance issues in the second movement, as the timbre of the contrabass flute can sometimes get lost against the resonance of the piano and the more edgy tone of the double bass, but the instrumental combination is an interesting one. *Adventures Under a Leaf* is a set of short duets for flute and bass flute by Gary Schocker. Tuneful and charming, they work well and demonstrate the timbral differences between the two instruments. Lisa-Maree Amos's flute playing is also worth mentioning here; she plays with a lovely tone and a beautiful sense of phrasing. Works by Bruce Lawrence and Vinny Golia show different aspects of the contrabass flute, with the instrument heard with piano and percussion respectively. Sheridan's own composition, *And the Giant began to dance* has a wonderful sense of charm and character. The final work on the disc is Alex Shapiro's beautifully atmospheric work, *Below* for contrabass flute and electronics. Peter Sheridan is creating some varied and interesting mainstream repertoire for low flutes, and demonstrates real mastery of the instruments he plays. In this recording he shows the true versatility of low flutes and sets some high expectations for his performance at the BFS convention this summer. Highly recommended. Carla Rees

**Mercy.** Bill McBirnie, flute; Robi Botos, piano; Pat Collins, bass; John Sumner, drums. Extreme Flute EF05.

This collection of predominantly jazz standard tunes showcases Canadian jazz flautist Bill McBirnie doing what he does best, playing fluidly over bebop changes. It has to be said there are far too few flautists in this world who can negotiate the harmonic language of jazz convincingly: Bill is one of that elite club. Accompanied by Hungarian pianist Robi Botos and his trio, Bill's improvised lines are right on top of the beat, propelling each tune with his trademark urgent grooving intensity. The production is very dry