

EDUARDO RECK MIRANDA
MOTHER TONGUE

SARGASSO SCD28051 CD

BY BRIAN MORTON

If you know him at all, it's likely to be from his book *Composing Music With Computers*, but Eduardo Reck Miranda also walks the walk. Currently he's both head of computer music research at the University of Plymouth and a formidable electroacoustic composer. The pieces collected here were made at a number of campus studios – in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bourges, York, Pompeu Fabra University, Spain, the Tempo Reale Centre, Italy – and over a dozen years from 1990 to 2002.

Reck Miranda makes a playful, even mischievous approach to some familiar genres. *Mother Tongue* includes two *Electroacoustic Sambas* from the early 90s, and a magnificent *Requiem Per Una Veu Perduda (Requiem For A Lost Voice)*, made in collaboration with mezzo Simone Sahyouni. His interest in processed voice is evident throughout, inspired in part by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas about pre-linguistic communication and the evolution of music from passionate speech, in which passion can mean both ecstasy and suffering.

The *Requiem* is the most elaborate manipulation of digitally processed voice and synthesized singing, using poetry readings in Catalan and Spanish and samples of sung Latin vowels. It's at the opposite remove to the first *Samba*, which is tape-edited with no digital signal processing whatsoever. *Le Jardin De Jerome* and the exquisite *Robotapithecos* both deploy sophisticated vocal synthesis to create a 'sung' language that has no relation to any actual human speech. This is a consistent theme: the uncharted back country between actual and possible speech and the relation between language and culture. *Goma Arabica* – the title this time in Portuguese – is a synthetic poem to a vanished civilisation.

What's critically different about Reck Miranda from other composers who have worked in lost, fragmentary and imaginary languages is that he is inventing or synthesizing not just the deep structure but also the phonological mechanics as well. These are immensely sophisticated pieces that constitute an electronic global music of convincingly organic simplicity.