EDUARDO RECK MIRANDA
MOTHER TONGUE
SARGASSE SCD2865 CD

BY BRIAN MORTON

If you know him at all, it's likely to be from his book Composing Music With Computers, but

Reck Miranda also walks the walk. Currently he's both head of computer music
research at the University of Plymouth and a formidably prolific 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
decade years from 1990 to 2002.

Reck Miranda makes a playful, even semi
mischievous approach to some familiar genres.

Mother Tongue includes two Electroacoustic
Sambas from the early 90s, and a magnificent

Requiem Per Una Veu Perdida (Requiem For A
Lost Voice), made in collaboration with mezzo
Simone Sathyouni. 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 Robotopathicos 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.