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CD SELECTION

The British Double Bass

Works by Gordon Jacob, Elizabeth Maconchy, Thomas Pitfield, Lennox Berkeley, David Ellis, John Walton, Alan Bush, John McCabe, Elisabeth Lutyens and Alfred Reynolds

Leon Bosch (db)

Meridian CDE 84550



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This CD is a significant release for the British bassist fraternity. Its programme claims nine premiere recordings and comprises works by ten distinguished 20th-century British composers.

Fittingly, Leon Bosch ditches his Gagliano for an English instrument by Lockett Hill (c.1750); but he retains his renowned mellow tone, decisive characterisation and sensitive musicianship based on a secure technique and a strong appreciation of musical structure and style. The importance he attaches to freedom and spontaneity in performance is most evident in his solo playing, for example in David Ellis's challenging Sonata op.42 and John McCabe's ethereal *Pueblo*, one of the composer's effective 'desert pieces', inspired by a quotation from Reyner Banham's *Scenes in America Deserta*.

Bosch is joined by I Musicians for an excellent account of Gordon Jacob's *A Little Concerto*. These performers shape Jacob's abundant melodies with intelligence and care, particularly in the central Largo, and Bosch's playing is consistently warm, radiant, and full of vitality in the outer movements.

Pianist Sung-Suk Kang takes the more prominent role in Thomas Pitfield's brief *Sonatina*, with its 'name that tune' quodlibet as a centrepiece. She also assists Bosch in expressive readings of Lennox Berkeley's lyrical *Introduction and Allegro*, Elizabeth Maconchy's *Music for double bass and piano* and Elisabeth Lutyens's *The Tides of Time* op.75. Alan Bush's *Meditation and Scherzo* op.93 and bassist-composer John Walton's *A Deep Song* are performed with an ease and fluency that seems inborn and Alfred Reynolds's *Hornpipe* has all the requisite humour and verve. The recordings are exemplary. **ROBIN STOWELL**