



Geoff EALES The Dancing Flute

Nimbus Alliance NI 6216

Though he's an outstanding Jazz pianist, Geoff Eales studied composition under Alun Hoddinott and he also pursued piano lessons with Martin Jones. He has a Symphony to his name and what does that sound like, one wonders. Not unsurprisingly there's also a piano concerto; dare one hope for an Eales recording of that? He has also carved smaller joints and this selection of thirteen pieces shows the lighter, more compact side of his compositional nature. The works are for flute and piano and celebrate the joys of the dance.

The flautist is the exceptional Andy Findon who wields, as well, the penny whistle and piccolo. *Eternal Dance* is a catchy opener with Eales providing super-abundant and articulate jazz licks. *Song for my Mother* plays on the Horace Silver title and generates a different ambience altogether – warm lyricism. Eales has already recorded this on a solo album but it works well for flute and piano. Virtuosity is to the fore in *In the Pocket*, with its tripartite ABA structure and characteristically elegant soloing from Eales. Wistful nostalgia is present in *Remembrance* – his titles are always apropos, and the strength of his lyrical inspiration is never in doubt.

Elf Dance, another song he has previously recorded, is a flighty swinger with a degree of Roots vibrancy to keep it grounded and there's an especially nice, lonesome B section where the flute soliloquises sensitively. There's a mid-tempo lope to *Lochria's Rhumba* and for *In the Eyes of a Child* Findon wields a penny whistle to impart Gaelic lyric hues. Faster and more international variety is provided by the Tango implicit in *Farewell Patagonia* whilst Eales' inspiration in *The Sad Little Geisha Girl* is from a book, and is openly rhapsodic. It's also the most extensive of these pieces and perhaps hints at Eales the tone poet. Lest one suspect all is clement in this recital, there's an allegro onrush in *Force 11*, a gale of a piece, not least when Findon is on the piccolo, taking things windy and high. *Ice Maiden* is played on the bass flute – a mysterious opus. Even the central section of *Pan Dance* can't efface Eales' essentially lyrical gift.

The disc is excellently recorded, succinctly annotated and expands still further Eales' discography. Roll on the Symphony.

Jonathan Woolf MusicWeb International

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