

CONCERTO REVIEWS



THROUGH TIME

**Works for bassoon and orchestra
by Villa-Lobos, Françaix, Mozart,
Vivaldi and Elgar**

Rui Lopes (bassoon);
English Chamber Orchestra
Solo Musica SM211 57:28 mins

BBC Music Direct £13.99

Portuguese bassoonist Rui Lopes offers a tour 'through time' of his instrument's concerto repertoire. Mozart's essential early Concerto joins a well-chosen example of Vivaldi's 39 surviving bassoon concertos. There is an engaging rarity in Villa-Lobos's *Ciranda das sete notas*, or 'Round dance of seven notes' (the notes of the major scale). And Lopes claims two first recordings: of Françaix's lively *Divertissement* in the version with string orchestra rather than quintet, authorised by the composer but lacking some of the spikiness of the chamber setting; and of Elgar's soulful *Romance* with a monochrome string accompaniment standing in for the original plush full-orchestra scoring.

Lopes plays with pleasing, well-rounded tone, great presence (maybe helped by microphone placings?) and a rhythmic freedom which helps him put across the Villa-Lobos and the Elgar, but sabotages the throwaway ending of the Françaix. The Mozart suffers from the shortening of most of its 'leaning' appoggiaturas, which stunts the melodic flow. The Vivaldi is more stylish, though the free recitative manner adopted for the continuo-accompanied introduction seems a mistake given that the same theme comes back in the main body of the first movement. All the same, with the English Chamber Orchestra responding alertly to the soloist's direction throughout, this disc makes a good case for the bassoon as a solo instrument. *Anthony Burton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★