

A detailed close-up photograph of the key mechanism of a low flute. The image shows the intricate silver-colored metal keys and linkages against a dark, possibly black, body of the instrument. The lighting highlights the metallic sheen and the complex arrangement of the keys.

MUSIC FOR LOW FLUTES

BELOW

Peter Sheridan | **alto, bass, contrabass,
and sub-contrabass flutes**

Sheridon Stokes | **bass flute, Irish flute and piccolo**

Lisa-Maree Amos | **C flute**

Peter Neville | **vibraphone**

Heather Price | **double bass**

Claire Cooper | **piano**

John Sawoski | **piano***

Low Flutes

Low Flutes are mostly a 20th century invention, yet the concept of extending a particular instrumental sound dates back to the Renaissance period, when recorder consorts, with bass and alto recorders were used frequently in performances. In recent times, the popularity of low flutes grew with the renewed interest in the flute choir and flute quartet. Low flutes are basically members of the extended flute family, which play below the range of the standard orchestral C flute. These instruments include the alto flute in G (four notes below the C flute), the bass flute in C (one octave below C flute), the contrabass flute in C (two octaves below C flute, played in an upright standing position), and the sub-contra bass flute in C (three octaves below the C flute, played either sitting or standing). There are a few other low flutes not represented on this recording. These are the Pinschofon in C, bass flutes in F and G, and a extra large piped instrument known as the hyperbass flute in C (sounding 4 octaves below middle C), of which only one model exists, to my knowledge.

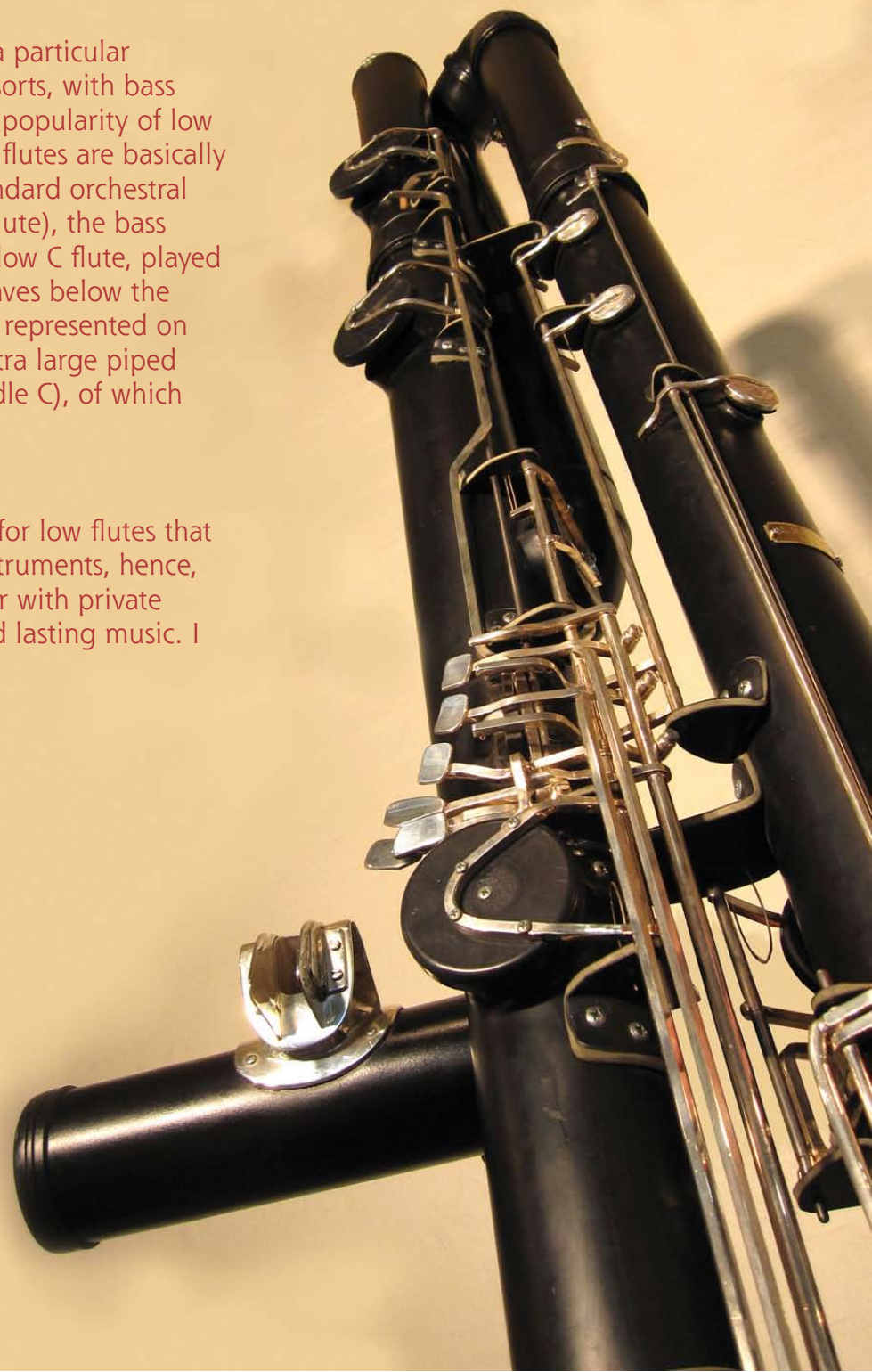
Compositions

This unique recording features predominantly commissioned chamber music for low flutes that was composed to showcase the lyrical and colorful tonal qualities of these instruments, hence, expanding their small, yet growing repertoire. All of these works were paid for with private funds. I wish to sincerely thank the composers who created such beautiful and lasting music. I and the entire flute community are forever grateful.

A Small Sonata for a Large Flute is a well constructed composition that explores the register, timbre, dynamic shadings, and lyricism of a flute twice the length and size of the C flute.

The first movement begins with a syncopated folk-like melody which is transformed through meter and register changes. There is a fleeting movement of a virtuosic outburst for the bass flute, before the sound is abruptly halted and a glimpse of the opening motif returns. This simple and effective design of form, gives the listener a sense of something more to come.

The substance of the sonata lies in the second movement marked *cantabile* (singing), and speaks from the heart. The languid opening melody, with the steady piano pulse and quiet tone, can recall the feeling of loneliness and pain. The middle section leads to an anguished cry, displaying the bass flute's expressive high tessitura, which is eventually calmed to an eerie stillness through the use of an elongated unison pedal tone. This emotional descent to quietude changes the



musical impact of the returning opening melody, which now has its premonitions fulfilled. The movement ends in a questioning manner, and the sense of loneliness sits gently in the questioning air.

The final movement, *Snappy*, acts as a release valve, and with its quirky rhythms and short incomplete melodic lines, this dance overtakes us and the little motif sticks in your ear, long after the piece has finished.

Irish in the Lowlands was composed by the creatively rich mind of Sheridan Stokes, well known Hollywood flutist and UCLA Professor. The poetic title embodies the piece's intentions beautifully. The duet opens with a rhapsodic song for the contrabass flute, with the bass flute adding a most unique 'lowlands' color. The mood changes as the two flutes initiate a romping dance of joy, revelling in the excitement and awkwardness of their low notes. As the pulsating drum rhythm of the contrabass flute enters, the classic Irish folk-like sound emerges with the Irish wood piccolo taking the dance to new heights. The opening song returns on the Irish wood flute, now somewhat exhausted from the joyous activities. These gentle giants of flutes, say a touching farewell to each other, though soon to meet again, I am sure!

Virtuosic Etudes (for Low Flutes) are adaptations of popular flute studies, which are arranged with minor changes to the original form and pitches of the works. My motivation for transcribing these pieces was to demonstrate the possibilities and potential of the instruments. *Winter Sun* is from a set of etude-pieces by the British composer Hilary Taggart, titled "In the Sun." This short active study with its relentless rhythmic pattern and wide melodic leaps focuses on even articulations and a consistent melodic line. The alto flute's edgy tone quality along with its liquid agility, make this piece an ideal musical challenge. Jules Demersseman's *Allegro Vivace* displays a burst of finger technique that is not commonly seen in the bass flute repertoire. The consistent 6/8 rhythm and molto lyrical melody make this piece a tour-de-force for bass flute, not to mention the lungs! My inspiration for the contrabass flute etude came when I was beginning to learn one of the other commissioned works on this album, and I realised that my technical abilities on this low beast of an instrument needed attention. I immediately dug into my study books and found

this E minor study, filled with numerous challenges, especially the quality of middle E. The A major coda is an exercise in rhythmic, articulated definition, as the core sound usually speaks a fraction late on contra. The contrabass flute plays in the same range as the cello.

Madrigal, by Philippe Gaubert is a melody filled with harmonic color and lyricism. One can hear the fine gift and understanding Gaubert possessed of phrasing, as he was Chief Conductor of the Paris Opera for many years. All those singers must have had a great impact on his musical psyche! Transcribed for the alto flute in G, the original key of the work is maintained, as this allows the alto flute to explore the highly expressive colors of its upper register.

City Vignettes was commissioned in 2007, while the virtuoso double bassist, Patrick Neher was visiting Melbourne Australia on business. I caught up with Patrick after a recital at the University of Melbourne and discussed the proposal for this work. The conception and breadth of the work is one of a kind for the genre of contrabass flute chamber music. Both solo parts are virtuosic in their own right.

Corner Encounter, inspired by the meeting to discuss this piece, is filled with melodic and rhythmic energy, possibly depicting my enthusiasm that a composer would actually take the contrabass flute seriously! The tunes are jazz based with a hint of a Native American flavour to their overall shape. The dense counterpoint is cleared for duo moments amongst friends, and each instrument gets to share the 'walking bass.'

The second movement is music that expresses a deep and profound beauty. *Lunacitie* is a play on words, as the mood of the movement can be heard as night music, though the intense soaring lyricism, and at times thick counterpoint, pulls the listener in to a more intimate and personal sound world. The contrabass flute and double bass almost become one in sound quality as the movement ends with the expansion of the opening melodic shape.

The third movement, *Block Party*, immediately creates a fun party atmosphere that pushes the limits of each instrument in their technical and musical approaches. The ending, with its sheer simple compositional genius (if you will), is a delight to experience. The party fades away, yet one party goer does not want to leave. Can you guess which one ...?

Adventures Under a Leaf was composed for Lisa-Maree Amos and Peter Sheridan in December 2007. A set of wonderfully quirky, lyrical, and exciting duets, these pieces reflect upon the happenings that may take place under particular types of leaves. The *Fern* (or Frond) leaf is a mysterious type of plant that unfolds from its stem. The opening motif that unfolds between flute and bass flute is returned throughout the brief movement. Each short movement has great character and the set of duos bring a new compositional idea to the flute duo genre.

An **Elegy**, originally a poem of mourning, set by the ancient Greeks, reflects three stages of loss. First, the 'lament', then 'praise and admiration,' and finally 'consolation and solace'. In this transcription (from cello), by the Australian composer Bruce Lawrence, I was inspired to highlight the unique expressive voice of the contrabass flute, which is also known as the gentle giant. The haunting melody, filled with the emotions of pain and relief, are clearly shaped by the simplicity of the three stages mentioned above. The work is dedicated to the memory of Bruce's father, the well-known Australian artist George Feather Lawrence, who encouraged his musical and artistic development from an early age. I must say I cannot help to think of my own father, Patrick, who inspired my musical development as well.

There is a Difference Between Apples and Men is a movement from a larger work for contrabass flute and (various) percussion. The opening several minutes of 'spatial' improvisations, set the exploratory sound world of the work. The atmospheric introduction leads into a metered dialogue between the two instruments. Explorations of timbre, tessitura and time, manipulate the material to the gradual frenzied *accelerando*, where the music disintegrates into a 'machine-like' improvisatory section. The opening *rubato* material returns and the vibraphone and contra almost exchange one another's timbres. What is the difference between apples and a man? There's one to ponder.

And the Giant began to Dance ... is a spontaneous composition inspired by the dancing pulsations of air emerging from the elephant-like pipe of the sub-contrabass flute. Though I am not a trained composer, I possess a deep passion for creating sound, so I did! I began the short work based around the grumbling footsteps of an approaching grumpy giant. As the music changes, so does his mood, and as his feet become freer with each phrase, we feel the resonance of the giant's foot stomps, until he is almost dancing on air (or so he thinks). The sub-contrabass flute is a gigantic instrument that resembles a contrabassoon. This dance style of music is not the most appropriate fit for such a grumpy slow responding pipe, yet becomes rather charming within its story telling style. I thought I would teach the instrument how to dance, and in the process, allowed myself to discover new sounds on this growling pipe.

Below plunges beneath the surface, into a stunning world of liquid beauty and grace. Hidden from our eyes and even our imagination, the sea is a private sanctuary that envelopes life and hope. Seismic





activity, from one of the Pacific Ocean's many undersea volcanos, bookends a journey into an environment of unknowns. After recording Alex's highly imaginative 2004 flute quartet, *Bioplasm*, I asked her to create a work for the gorgeous lyricism and driven outbursts of the contrabass flute. Little did I know that I would be paired with such an unusual duet partner! Alex auditioned the sound files of many candidates until she came across this exceptional song from a Pacific humpback whale. No adjustments in rhythm or pitch were needed to make the flute and the cetacean harmonious; they blend naturally, swimming in the same sonic waters and communicating from the heart, with me even singing along at one point! Follow your ears and your heart to the depths of a place we sometimes rarely see. A.S.

Performers

Peter Sheridan, a native of New York City, has performed and taught in America, England and Australia. He has been a faculty member of numerous music faculties in Los Angeles and was a founding member of the Los Angeles Flute Quartet. He has recorded Hollywood soundtracks and has been a recipient of awards from Mannes College, University of Arizona, Aspen Music Festival, Ottorino Respighi Festival (Italy), American Composers Forum, and Santa Monica College. A specialist on the low flutes, he has commissioned over thirty compositions for these instruments. Peter Sheridan is a flute teacher for the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the Victorian College of the Arts, and Donvale Christian College in Australia. Peter performs on Kotato and Fukushima bass and contrabass flutes, and a Jelle Hogenhuis sub-contrabass flute. He is an active soloist and chamber musician and his flutes can be heard on Albany, Innova, Warner Music Latina, and Varese Sarabande record labels.

Melbourne based pianist, **Claire Cooper**, has established a reputation as a versatile and much sought-after associate artist and vocal coach. Claire studied piano at the Canberra School of Music, and later at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. She spent years as repetiteur and accompanist at the Victorian College of the Arts, and is now a member of staff at the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, where she works both as accompanist and lecturer in accompaniment. She is an accomplished recitalist with an extensive repertoire, and has performed throughout Australia. Numerous radio broadcasts include Young Australia Programme for ABC FM, and an ABC LIVE broadcast.

Peter Neville is Head of Percussion at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Australia. While he works in a range of musical styles he has a particular commitment to New Music. As an active member of *Elison*, *Jouissance*, the *David Chesworth Ensemble* and *Speak Percussion*, he has recorded and toured internationally with each. His orchestral work has included tours to



Europe with the Australian Youth Orchestra and Japan with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Within dance orchestras he has supported performances of the Bolshoi Ballet, the Russian State Ballet, the Nureyev Farewell Tour and the Netherlands Dance Theatre. He has performed and recorded numerous Australian premieres, and appears on CD recordings ranging from pop albums to experimental industrial sounds.

Lisa-Maree Amos is Principal Flute of Orchestra Victoria, and enjoys a variety of musical activities including recording, chamber and symphony performances as part of her duties with the Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and the Victorian Opera. Appearing as Guest Principal Flute with the BBC Symphony and the Boston Symphony, Lisa-Marie has performed with some of the finest orchestras in the world, and for the past decade has served as Principal Flute with the Colorado Music Festival, in Boulder Colorado. Lisa-Marie has toured the USA, Scandinavia and the UK as a chamber musician with the ensemble, Jane's Minstrels.

From the fresh age of five **Heather Price** was interested in string instruments and their employment in many different styles of music. The influence of a father's jazz bands and a mother's opera singing, led her to study contemporary electric bass, classical double bass, and both contemporary and classical singing. Such a broad ability has taken Heather on many adventures, including national and international touring with original band The Good and Australian Youth Orchestra; professional orchestral playing with The Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Raga Dolls Salon Orchestra; and recording and string arranging efforts for bands such as Cotton Sidewalk, The Heartbreak Club and her own original projects. Heather currently lives, teaches, performs and arranges in Melbourne. www.myspace.com/heatherpricemusic

John Sawoski is a Los Angeles-based keyboardist, composer, producer, and musical director. He is an active orchestral pianist and has accompanied some of America's finest singers and musicians throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. John has also composed, arranged, and recorded for numerous film and TV scores, sound recordings, and live performances. www.lapianist.com

Composers

Gary Schocker is a world-renowned flutist as well as an award-winning composer with over 100 compositions in publication. He has published more pieces for the flute than any other living composer. An active soloist, Gary tours throughout the world, and his engagements have included performances with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony and a tour with I Sollicit Italian. He has collaborated with many artists on stage, including Pinches Zuckerman, Michael Tilson Thomas, Jessie Norman, and Julius Baker. Gary has been the winner of numerous competitions, and has extensively toured and taught internationally.

www.garyschocker.com

Patrick Neher, Professor of Music, is recognised as one of the world's leading double bass soloists and composers of music for double bass. He received his Master of Music Degree with Honours from the Juilliard School of Music in 1981, under the esteemed tutelage of the late David Walter. In 1996 he received the coveted Diploma from the Intl. Rabat Institute, Paris, France. He has been with the faculty of the University of Arizona since 1984 and founded the Arizona Double Bass Symposium in 1988.

Patrick Neher started composing music at a ripe young age, and hasn't stopped. In the past ten years, the number of commissions has increased to the point that he is becoming as well known as a composer as he is a performer.

Patrick is a former member of the San Diego, New Mexico and New Orleans Symphony. He was Principal Bassist with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Bassist with the Orchestra of Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Pro Musical Chamber Orchestra. His solo concert career has recently taken him to New Zealand and Australia, England, Scotland, France, Canada, East and West Germany, Italy, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, and throughout the USA.

Vinny Golia is a composer who fuses the rich heritage of jazz, contemporary classical and world music into his own unique compositions. As a bandleader, Golia has presented his music to concert audiences in Europe, Canada, Mexico, Japan and the United States. Mr

Goliad has won numerous awards as a composer, including grants from the National Endowment of the Arts, and The Lila Wallace Commissioning Program. He created the 37 piece Vinny Golia Large Ensemble to perform his compositions for chamber group and jazz orchestra. He currently teaches at California Institute of the Arts, and in 1998 was appointed Regent's Lecturer at the University of California, San Diego.

www.vinnygolia.com

Bruce Lawrence was born in Sydney and studied at Sydney Conservatorium and the Royal college of Music in London. On returning to Australia he played in the Sydney Symphony and Tasmanian Orchestras and worked as a teacher in NSW. In 1965 he returned to England where he formed the Deltaic Trio, and then back to Australia in 1974. His compositions include much chamber music, choral works, orchestral music and a number of ballets for Ballet Australia. He has had much pedagogical music published.

Performer / composers

Alex Shapiro When she's not drenched in saltwater, composer Alex Shapiro aligns note after note with the hope that a few of them might sound good next to each other. A resident of Washington State's San Juan Island, Alex has become one of the Pacific coast's best known composers of acoustic and electro acoustic chamber music, and her works are performed and broadcast weekly across the US and internationally. Published by Activist Music, Ms Shapiro's scores are widely distributed and found in libraries and universities nationwide. Alex's music has been recorded by many artists and is available on CDs from Cambria Master Recordings, In nova Recordings, Crystal Records, DC Records, Centaur Records, Quindecim Recordings, Oehms Classics and others.

www.alexshapiro.org

Sheridon Stokes was born in Los Angeles, began playing professionally at age 16, and was the youngest contract musician in Hollywood at age 20, with the 20th Century Fox Orchestra under Alfred Newman. He appears frequently as soloist, master class

technician, and lecturer. His publications are distributed world-wide, and include the 'Illustrated Method for Flute', and 'Special Effects for Flute'. Sheridan Stokes has premiered numerous solo works and has been featured in many television and film scores, including 'Mission Impossible', 'Titanic' and 'Jaws'. He is Professor of Flute at UCLA, a position he has proudly held for over 25 years.

sub-
contrabass
flute

contrabass
flute



alto
flute

bass
flute

Credits

Recorded at Move Records studio, Melbourne, Australia 2008-2009
Produced by: Peter Sheridan and Vaughan McAlley
Edited, mixed and engineered by: Vaughan McAlley
Photos of Peter Sheridan and
label photo: David Temby
Other photos and layout:
Martin Wright

Madrigal

Recorded at Music Forever Studios, Encino, CA, 10 July 2007
Clint Bennett, recording engineer
John Sawoski, editing and mix

Irish in the Lowlands

Recorded at Music Forever Studios, Encino, CA, 14 April 2008
Clint Bennett, recording engineer

Below

Composed 2008 by Alex Shapiro
Published by Activist Music (ASCAP)
Electronic track created by
Alex Shapiro
Contrabass flute performed by
Peter Sheridan
Peter Sheridan recorded at
Music Forever Studios, Encino, CA, 14 April 2008
Clint Bennett, recording engineer
Final mix engineered by Alex Shapiro and Michael Rhoades
Special thanks to Steve Hopkins for 1.5 seconds of percussive fun
Special thanks to NOAA for undersea volcano, bloop and humpback whale
audio
Produced by Alex Shapiro

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks:

To all the composers who so graciously said 'yes' to writing for these odd-ball instruments. Their creativity, enthusiasm and moral support, has lifted my spirits.

To all the fine musicians involved in this project. Your talents, time and commitment will always be gratefully remembered and cherished.

To my wife Lisa-Maree Amos, for her patience and faith in me.

To my dear Sister Maryann Sheridan-Davis, for guiding my spirit on a short trip to Los Angeles to record.

To Martin Wright, owner of Move Records, with gratitude for his patience and generosity

To Jelle Hogenhuis, maker of the Sub-Contra bass flute, for pushing the flute order through, so I could record on this fine instrument.

To Vaughan McAlley, for his endless hours of editing and careful listening.

To Marilyn Thomas in the Move Records office for essential proof-reading of the booklet notes

To our creator, for the gifts I have been given, the passion I breathe, and the talents yet unearthed. Thanks for the challenge!



A Small Sonata for a Large Flute

(bass flute and piano) **Gary Schocker**

- 1** *Moderato* 2'04"
- 2** *Cantabile* 5'55"
- 3** *Snappy* 1'37"

4 Irish in the Lowlands

(bass flute, Irish flute-piccorno, and contrabass flute)

Sheridan Stokes 6'18"

Virtuosic Etudes (arr. P. Sheridan)

- 5** *Winter Sun* (alto flute) **Hilary Taggart** 1'08"
- 6** *Allegro Vivace, Op 4 #18* (bass flute) **Jules Demerssemann** 0'53"
- 7** *Allegretto Vivo, Op 33 #8* (contrabass flute) **Ernesto Kohler** 2'01"
- 8** **Madrigal** (alto flute and piano*)
Philippe Gaubert, Trans. by J. Sawoski 4'05"

City Vignettes

(contrabass flute, double bass, piano) **Patrick Neher**

- 9** *Corner Encounter* 4'06"
- 10** *Lunacite* 6'42"
- 11** *Block Party* 3'58"

Adventures Under a Leaf

(C flute and bass flute) **Gary Schocker**

- 12** *Fern* 2'04"
- 13** *Hosta* 1'26"
- 14** *Mint* 0'32"
- 15** *Monkshood* 2'35"
- 16** *Poppy* 1'34"

17 **Elegy** (contrabass flute and piano) **Bruce Lawrence** 3'02"

18 **There is a Difference Between Apples and Men**

(contrabass flute and vibraphone) **Vinny Golia** 7'52"

19 **And the Giant began to Dance ...**

(sub-contrabass flute) **Peter Sheridan** 3'26"

20 **Below** (contrabass flute and electronics) **Alex Shapiro** 10'21"