

MARY JANE LEACH *Celestial Fires*
(Experimental Intermedia) CD Leach is relatively unknown among composers who experiment with singing and the human voice, producing some of the most challenging work in that field. Trained in Cologne, Germany, and now a New York resident, Leach is just beginning to get the recognition she deserves—this is the first CD release of her music. She admits being fascinated by sound phenomena: echoes, overtones and interference tones are the main ingredients of her musical recipes. Four of the compositions collected on this CD are eight-part pieces for a-capella sopranos. "Bruckstuck," possibly the masterpiece, employs a ten-measure section of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony and builds up a complex, polyphonic hymn in which melodies are passed from voice to voice. The resulting slow motion pandemonium has an hypnotic quality somewhat reminiscent of minimalist pieces, haunting and paradisiac at the same time, an unrelenting flow of tenuous emotions. When she deals with instruments (as in the floating fanfare of "Feu De Joie" for seven bassoons), she maniacally explores their timbres and somehow relates the singing parts to them; she vivisects each frequency (or matches it to a vocal event). A striking attribute of Leach's music is the ability to develop complexity out of simplicity, music that reveals an extreme density—the mind of the listener is suddenly caught in a vortex of devastating sounds.

Piero Scaruffi, *i/e*