

# RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS

Tessa Souter



Still with Beethoven, the first track of **Tessa Souter's** wonderfully original **BEYOND THE BLUE** (Motema MTM 87: 60.11) is an urgently vocalised version of the second movement of his seventh symphony. Described a 'a vocal jazz odyssey through European classical repertoire', *Beyond the Blue* is

remarkably successful on all fronts. Tessa Souter's words (only three tracks use previously existing lyrics) manage to relate to the real world without doing harm to the great melodies which they hi-jack: the treatment of Schubert's Serenade is typical, the famous melody there to be enjoyed, the phrasing totally jazzy. Perhaps the best shot at a jazz song with a permanent place in the repertoire is *My Reverie* (from Debussy), something of a swinger with Steve Kuhn's piano to the fore. Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, you might think, is played out in jazz and rock circles, but this terrific guitar-free version adds accordion to the mix for the drone behind Joel Frahm's haunting saxophone. And, apart from Souter's immaculately phrased vocals, there's plenty of Joe Locke vibraphone to fill an hour with music.