

NAXOS

BOTTESINI

**Fantasia 'La
Sonnambula'**

Ci divide l'ocean

**Introduction et
Variations sur le
Carnaval de Venise**

**Jacquelyn Fugelle,
Soprano**

**Thomas Martin,
Double Bass**

**Anthony Halstead,
Piano**



Giovanni Bottesini (1821–1889)

Fantasia ‘La Sonnambula’ • Introduction et Variations sur le Carnaval de Venise

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Thomas Martin, Double Bass
Anthony Halstead, Piano
Jacquelyn Fugelle, Soprano *

Giovanni Bottesini (1821–1889)

Fantasia 'La Sonnambula' • Introduction et Variations sur le Carnaval de Venise

Giovanni Bottesini, 'the Paganini of the double bass', was born in Crema, Northern Italy, on 22nd December 1821 into a family of talented musicians. His own musical education began at the age of five, when he studied violin with an uncle. He also sang as a treble in church choirs and played timpani in several local orchestras. When he was thirteen his father, having learned that there were two scholarship places available at the Milan Conservatory, one for bassoon and the other for double bass, asked him which he would like to apply for. Young Bottesini chose the double bass, not because he already felt a particular attraction for the instrument, but mainly because of his previous knowledge of stringed instruments. During his audition, after only four lessons with Luigi Rossi, he so impressed the jury with his general musicianship that they overlooked his lack of technique; at one point he apologized for playing out of tune but promised this would not happen once he had mastered his fingering.

Thus began Bottesini's association with the double bass, an association that was to bring him the greatest triumphs of his long and varied career. On leaving the Conservatory in 1839 he was awarded 300 francs which he used, together with 600 francs borrowed from a relative, to purchase the instrument that was to be the companion of his successful concert career. This instrument was made in 1716 by Carlo Antonio Testore and was a 3/4 size Italian double bass tuned one, or one and a half tones higher than the usual orchestral tuning.

The *Fantasia 'La Sonnambula'* was the composition that brought Bottesini fame and fortune in the early years of his career. His London debut in 1849 was with this piece with the orchestra conducted by Sir Michael Costa. He continued to perform this with great success throughout his life. He allowed the composition to be published by Richault in Paris so it has always been in the repertoire of bassists even though the double bass part was originally printed in the wrong key.

The three strings were of gut and he used a slightly longer than average French bow.

Bottesini gave his first public concert in Crema in 1839 and in 1840 embarked on a concert tour of Italy with his former fellow-pupil, Luigi Arditi. 1846 found the two friends in Havana and it was here that Bottesini wrote his first opera, *Cristoforo Colombo*, which was performed with great success. His composing career had begun while still at the Conservatory with a *Quartet for Harps in B minor*. His operas, and in particular *Ero e Leandro* and *Ali Babà* were well-received in his lifetime and his fascination for the human voice can also be seen in his writings for the double bass. Although a recognised composer, it was as a virtuoso of the double bass that he was acclaimed in all the cities that he visited, places as far apart as St Petersburg, London, Dublin, Paris, Vienna, Buenos Aires and Boston. He played before most of the crowned heads of Europe, receiving praise from, amongst others, Czar Alexander II, Emperor Napoleon III and Queen Victoria, and everywhere he played his audiences were amazed at the brilliance of his technique. His friendship with Verdi, which had begun in 1834, led the latter to choose him to conduct the first performance of *Aida* in Cairo and to recommend him for the post of Director of the Conservatory in Parma, a post he accepted just six months before his death in 1889.

Francesca Franchi

Melodia in E (Romanza patetica) was a popular salon piece and was also in the set published by Richault. It follows the form used by Bottesini for most of his slower compositions of an introduction followed by the main melodic composition with a coda to finish. The harmonics used here are among the highest on the instrument.

Capriccio 'à la Chopin' is, as the title suggests, inspired by Chopin whose music Bottesini admired

greatly along with that of Mendelssohn. The piece is made to be seen as well as heard, using great leaps between the upper and lower registers of the instrument.

Melodia is an art song which was dedicated to Giulio Ricordi and was published by that well-known firm. Entitled *Young Man in Love*, it tells of the young man's sorrow at being abandoned by his beloved.

Tutto il mondo serra is in fact an arrangement of Chopin's *Etude No. 19 in C sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7*, for soprano, double bass and piano. It was undoubtedly used with "concert parties" of various soloists who undertook tours together. We know that one such tour saw Bottesini travelling from Paris to St Petersburg (with all the stops along the way) together with the violinist Wieniawski and the great French soprano Désirée Artôt, with whom one imagines he performed this work. The words are very melancholy and tell us that everything in the world he holds dear is fleeing from him.

Introduzione e Gavotta is given here in its complete version. Two other original manuscripts exist in shortened forms. The piece was also published in London for solo piano under the name *Queen Marie Gavotte*.

Meditazione (Aria di Bach) is the famous *Air on the G string* from Bach's *Orchestral Suite in D major*. It was obviously used for the salon concerts at which the artists of the day were asked to perform; then, as now, a popular favourite.

Variations on the aria *Nel cor più non mi sento* by Paisiello were loosely based on variations on the same theme by Paganini and are visually as well as musically constructed. In concert one sees the great leaps required to reach from the extreme low register to the high harmonic tones near the bridge.

Ci divide l'oceano is generally considered to be Bottesini's greatest art song. It was published in the

popular Ricordi collection of Italian songs. It closes: "There is no joy in my heart, we are divided by the ocean".

Romanza exists only in two manuscript versions in a private collection. They are both dedicated to Emilia Dando. The circumstances of the dedication remain obscure (perhaps with good reason). She has betrayed her first love. She says, "God forgive me this fatal love and return its delights to me once more".

Variations on a Scottish Air 'Auld Robin Gray' are based on the popular song of the time and are quite short, leading one to suppose that they may have been used as an encore.

Réverie is a classic slow piece by Bottesini. It combines his great feeling for Italian melody with his virtuoso technique. It follows roughly the same form as his *Melodia* and *Elegia*, but without the introduction. Given the manuscript copies, one assumes that it has been published (along with several other Bottesini compositions) in a lower key in order to make it easier to play. It appears here in what I assume to be the correct tonality.

Introduction et Variations sur Le Carnaval de Venise is probably the most difficult to play of all Bottesini's compositions and is (along with *La Sonnambula* and *Tarantella*) one that appears, often under the name *Air varié*, the most frequently in programmes and newspaper reviews. I recall reading a letter to the editor of, I believe, *The Scotsman* in which the disgruntled concert-goer complains that he went expecting to hear *La Sonnambula* and instead was treated to this "circus act", indicating that Bottesini really performed and brought out the sounds of the other instruments that the piece contains.

Thomas Martin

Thomas Martin



Thomas Martin studied in America under Harold Roberts, Oscar Zimmerman, and Roger Scott, and has held leading positions with the Buffalo Philharmonic and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras and as a principal with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and latterly, the London Symphony Orchestra. He has been Principal Double Bassist with the Oxford Philomusica since its first season. He now also pursues an interest in solo playing, appearing in recitals and concertos with orchestras around the globe. For many years Thomas Martin was Senior Professor of Double Bass at the Guildhall School of Music in London, and now teaches at London's Royal College of Music. In 2007 he was appointed International Chair of Double Bass at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow. He gives master-classes internationally, and is responsible for many editions of music for double bass. He has served on many International Competition juries, and is also well known as a luthier, having so far made over 140 basses.

Anthony Halstead



Although known primarily as a horn player and more recently a conductor, Anthony Halstead has been active as a keyboard player for many years. While principal horn of the English Chamber Orchestra, he studied the harpsichord with George Malcolm, whose advice and encouragement were of immense benefit when The Hanover Band performed Bach's *Six Brandenburg Concertos* with Halstead as Director/ Soloist, subsequently recording them for EMI 'Classics for Pleasure'. The complete cycle of J.C. Bach's twelve harpsichord and fifteen fortepiano concertos was recorded for the German company cpo by Halstead and the Hanover Band between 1995 and 2001, enjoying many excellent reviews. As a piano accompanist, Anthony Halstead has performed with many leading soloists, including William Bennett, the late Ifor James, Thomas Martin, Crispian Steele-Perkins and Barry Tuckwell.

Jacquelyn Fugelle



Jacquelyn Fugelle studied at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and in Rome and Vienna. She was a prize-winner in the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Competition, and won awards from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Royal Society of Arts and the Vaughan Williams Trust. She was awarded the Worshipful Company of Musicians Silver Medal. Following rôles with English National Opera and Scottish Opera she made her début at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden to critical acclaim as Arbate in the award-winning production of Mozart's *Mitridate*. After several seasons with the Royal Opera she performed at the Teatro Regio in Turin where she was based for some time. Apart from her operatic career which includes rôles such as Mimì, Turandot, the Countess and Electra, she has also performed in concert and oratorio across the globe from Guatemala to Iceland. As well as international broadcasts for television and radio, she has given over sixty recitals for the BBC with conductors including Bernard Haitink, Kurt Masur and Robin Stapleton.

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4 Melodia (Giovinetto innamorato)

Giovinetto innamorato che ti pasci di sospir,
Dal tuo bene abbandonato mondo
e Gloria vuoi fuggir.
Sia deserta la tua vita, il tuo pianto sia romito,
Non ha pace un cor tradito,
gli son muti Terra e Ciel.

Dove andrai qualunque sorte sarà morte,
ah, sarà duole,
Pascerei tra giovinezza d'amarezza in ogni suol.
In quegli occhi mezzo spenti,
su quel volto scolorito.
La mestizia del tradito come nube apparirà.

Giovinetto innamorato che ti pasci di sospir,
Dal tuo bene abbandonato non ti resta che morir.
Sul cammino della vita sei deserto sei smarrito,
Ah, non vive un cor tradito,
gli son muti Terra e Ciel.

Pensa a Dio! Stronca la morte ogni gioia, ogni duol.
Pensa A Dio! E congiunta a giovinezza
amarezza in ogni suol.
Pensa e prega. Un punto solo a tue pene
sei fuggito.
Pensa e prega, sulla tomba del tradito
ogni core piangerà.

5 Tutto che il mondo serra

Tutto che il mondo serra di più caro per me
Da me s'invola, ah!
Oggi per sempre ed ogni gaudio perdo.
Ogni speranza che l'amara terra dall'esiglio feconda
Esser non puote se non d'affanno.

9 Ci divide l'oceano

Vien la sera bruna copre il ciel
s'oscura il mar.
Solo pallido di luna mesto è dolce un raggio appar,
Come rapido il pensier melancolico d'amor,
Vola trepido e leggero fra visioni e sogni d'or.

Melody (Young man in love)

Young man in love, you who feed on sighs,
Abandoned by your beloved
you want to run away from glory and the world.
Let your life be deserted, let your crying be secret,
No peace has a betrayed heart,
Heaven and earth are silent to him.

Wherever you go any fate will be death
and suffering.
You will feed on bitterness in your youth.
In those eyes half closed,
on that pale face the sadness
Of the betrayed one will appear like a cloud.

Young man in love, you who feed on sighs,
Abandoned by your beloved
On the path of life you are deserted, you are lost
Ah, a betrayed heart lives not
Heaven and earth are silent to him.

Think of God for death will break all joy and pain.
Think of God, bitterness will join youth
wherever you go.
Think and pray. One sole point for your troubles
you fled
For on the tomb of the betrayed one
every heart will weep.

All that the world holds

All that the world holds that is dearest to me
Is slipping away from me, Ah!
Today I lose forever all joy and all hope
For my troubles serve only to feed
The bitter land of exile.

We are divided by the ocean

Evening darkness falls and covers the sky
and the sea grows dark.
Only the pale ray of the moon, sweet and sad, appears.
The thought made sad by love flies quickly and lightly
between visions of golden dreams.

Io ti chiamo e affido all'onde il tuo nome
ed un sospir,
Non un eco, mi risponde muto
è il cielo ai miei desir,
Triste un metro di dolore la mia cetra spira invan.
Non va gio del mio core,
ci divide l'ocean.

Più non va per me sorriso non accento lusinghier,
Se non splende il tuo bel viso
sempre fervido pensier.
Non va gioia nel mio core,
ci divide l'ocean.

10 Romanza

Dove fuggiste mai giorni del primo amore,
L'uomo che tanto amai perché non m'ama ancor,
Io ti tradiva, è vero, io ti mancai di fè.
Ma il palpito primiero spento nel cor non è.

Ah, la man che a te giurai ad altra man s'unì,
Ah, ma t'amo ancor lo sai come t'amavo un dì, ah!...
Torna diletto mio, torna ad amarmi ancora,
Deh, mi perdoni Iddio questo fatale amor.

I call you and entrust to the waves your name
and a sigh,
Not even an echo answers me,
heaven and earth are deaf to my desires.
A sad metre of sorrow is given out in vain by my lyre.
There is no joy in my heart,
we are divided by the ocean.

There is no smile for me, there is no happy sound,
If your beautiful face does not shine forever
in my fervent thought.
There is no joy in my heart,
we are divided by the ocean.

Where have the days of first love gone?
The man of my first love no longer loves me.
I did not keep my promise, I betrayed you.
But the first throb of my heart is no more.

Ah the hand that swore to you is joined to another
Ah, but I love you still, as I once loved you.
God forgive me this fatal love and return
Its delights to me once more.

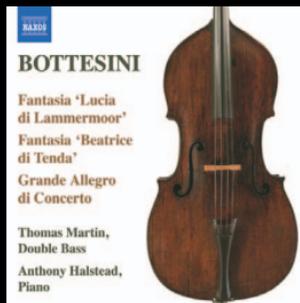
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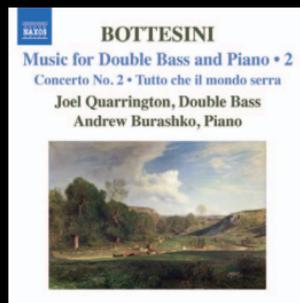
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Giovanni Bottesini, an accomplished and respected conductor, also enjoyed a globe-trotting career as "the Paganini of the double bass". For this recording manuscript sources have been used for his *Fantasia on Bellini's La sonnambula*, Variations on *Nel cor più non mi sento* from Paisiello's *La molinara*, arrangements of famous works such as Chopin's *Etude in C sharp minor, Op. 25 No. 7*, the *Air* from Bach's third Orchestral Suite and other pieces. Volumes 1-3 of this series are available on 8.570397, 8.570398 and 8.570399.

Giovanni
BOTTESINI
(1821-1889)

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| 7 Méditation (Aria di Bach) | 3:24 | sur le Carnaval de Venise | |
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Thomas Martin, Double Bass
Anthony Halstead, Piano
Jacquelyn Fugelle, Soprano *



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Includes sung texts and translations which may also be accessed at
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Please see page 2 of the booklet for a detailed track list

Previously released on ASV CD DCA 1052 • Booklet notes: Francesca Franchi and Thomas Martin
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Playing Time
68:39



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