

Concert Program

Khee Yu Hang, Double Bass
Dr Cherie Khor, Piano

Johann Matthias Sperger
Sonata in D major, T40
I. Allegro Moderato
II. Adagio
III. Moderato

Giovanni Bottesini
Concerto No.2 in b minor
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante
III. Allegro

—Intermission 10mins—

Nino Rota
Divertimento Concertante
I. Allegro
II. Marcia
III. Aria
IV. Finale

Johann Matthias Sperger, Sonata in D major, T40

Johann Matthias Sperger was indeed one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of the double bass. He spent a great part of his life as a double bass player in different orchestras and as a soloist, and was also an extraordinarily prolific composer. His own contribution to double bass solo literature is considerable and can be compared with the work of G. Bottesini.

The Sonata in D major (T40) is one of the three sonatas composed by Sperger with the obligatory viola part. The structure of the composition, along with the numerous double stops, points to Sperger's use of the following double bass tuning. The double bass with this tuning in thirds and fourths (Viennese tuning) made frequent double stop play possible; the instrumental character literally offered the use of arpeggios and passages in thirds. It has been arranged in order for the sonata to be played today on the solo double bass tuned to F sharp - B - E - A.

Giovanni Bottesini, Double Bass Concerto No. 2 in B Minor

Composed in 1845, this concerto remained unpublished until 1950 but soon became a standard work for the bass. The first movement, marked *Allegro moderato*, features a brief introduction. The solo double bass part, inspired by the Italian lyric vocal style known as "bel canto," incorporates embellishments, leaps in the high register, and long, melodic lines. The movement reaches its dramatic climax with the cadenza, showcasing the player's technical prowess through double stops, chord sequences, harmonics, and virtuosic passages.

The second movement, *Andante*, resembles a beautiful Italian aria or song, drawing upon dramatic traditions from Italian opera such as *bel canto* and lament styles. Dramatic tension is created through unexpected dynamic changes, modulatory sequences, and extreme leaps from high to low registers.

In the third movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, a spirited dance unfolds. The introduction sets the tone for the movement and heralds the entrance of the double bass. Energetic temperament pervades the movement with its *alla breve* meter and rhythmic motifs of quarter notes followed by two eighth notes.

Nino Rota, Divertimento Concertante

Between 1967 and 1971, Nino Rota composed the *Divertimento Concertante per Contrabbasso e Orchestra* as a tribute to the revered double bass soloist, pedagogue, and conductor, Franco Petracchi. This four-movement piece includes "Allegro," "Marcia," "Aria," and "Finale."

Rota's composition reflects a profound collaboration, influencing its compositional history, style, and technical demands. Notably, the *Divertimento* showcases Rota's adeptness at melding classical elements with modern sensibilities, presenting unique challenges and opportunities.