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Senior Recital

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for it in several pieces, I decided to write this for the instrument alone. It was composed during June 2007 for the outstanding performer Don Palma. (Elliot Carter)

This was all that **Elliott Carter (1908-2012)**, had to say about his *Figment III*. Like his other pieces titled *Figment*, this piece was composed for the instrument unaccompanied, and it is an exploration of what the instrument is capable of on many playing fields. What one could gather is that he composed this piece for double bass merely as a means to explore and experiment with it. Within the first few lines, the piece has already pushed the player through almost the entire range of the instrument, shortly followed by punchy pizzicato that jumps out of a sustaining arco melody, and aggressive double stops outlining an eerie lyrical line.

Concerto for Double Bass and Piano

Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951), known primarily to many as the champion conductor for the Boston Symphony from 1924-1949, actually began his musical career as a double bass virtuoso in Russia and all over Europe. While he composed a handful of pieces, he did not think of himself as composer, he just simply had to write music for himself as he did not have access to much solo repertoire composed specifically for the double bass. It was in 1902 that he composed his *Concerto for Double Bass*, which he premiered and toured extensively with great success. Some musicologists and double bassists theorize that Koussevitzky had help composing his concerto by composers like Reinhold Glière, but his wife, Olga Koussevitzky, is adamant that he composed the piece with no help from other musicians. (Karr 1999)

This concerto can be thought of as a compact musical idea split into 3 sections A-B-A'. Movements 1 and 2 follow what is typical of 19th century concerti, fast and then slow. The third movement begins as an identical repeat of the first, only in the second theme the piece takes a turn including themes from both earlier movements and ultimately bringing the piece to an epically climactic close. Koussevitzky's concerto is a Tour de Force for any double bassist and has become a rite of passage for most students who are compelled to take on such an unwieldy beast.

— Ethan Reed

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music

presents a

Senior Recital

Ethan Reed, double bass

Clara Cheng, piano

April 29, 2016 ■ 5:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

Program

Suite IV for Unaccompanied Cello in E flat
(Transposed for Double Bass in G)

I. Prelude
III. Courante

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Reverie and Tarantella

Giovanni Bottesini
(1821-1889)

Passione Amorosa

I. Allegro deciso
II. Andante
III. Allegretto
Rafael Zapeda, double bass

Giovanni Bottesini

~Intermission~

Figment III (2007)

Elliott Carter
(1908-2012)

Concerto for Double Bass and Piano

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Allegro

Serge Koussevitzky
(1874-1951)

Program Notes

Suite No. 4 for Unaccompanied Cello in Es (Transposed for Double Bass in G)

It was sometime around 1720 that **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**, composed his *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*. It was at this time that he was in the service of Prince Leopold in the town of Cöthen, a time where he happened to not be in service of the church. Although the Six Suites are a staple of the modern cellist's repertoire (as well as many other instruments), they were not always this way. Bach's music was considered old fashioned after his death, and even after the Bach revival of the early 19th century, the Six Suites still languished in obscurity, looked at as only mere technical exercises. It was in the early 20th century that famous cellist Pablo Casals discovered these pieces and helped secure their position in the canon of classical [music](#). (Berg 2012)

The Edition performed today has been transcribed for the Double Bass by Paolo Rizzi. His goal, as stated in the preface of the edition, was to make the music more accessible for the difference in range and tuning for the Double Bass, all the while maintaining the use of the sonorous middle-lower register of the instrument. Rizzi describes his transcription choices as being more fitting to what Bach's transcriptions of his own works were, as he moved to tonalities that best fit the destination. (Rizzi 2007)

Reverie and Tarantella

Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889) most likely composed these two show pieces at some point during his time at the Conservatory of Music in Milan (1835-1840). It was during this time that he was known to have written most of his solo double bass repertoire, as later in life he would be busy touring all over the world as conductor/soloist (Martin 2015), as well as writing the genre he felt truly called to compose, opera.

Most of the time when performing the *Tarantella*, Bottesini would open the piece first with his *Elegia* (Heyes 2015). Many double bassists today use the *Elegia* as an introduction, but just as often the *Reverie* is performed due to its similar length, tempo, and use of blissful and dramatic elements. The *Tarantella* appears to have been one of Bottesini's personal favorites as it was included on the majority of his solo programs (Heyes 2015). This is understandable as it is an incredibly versatile and virtuosic piece that includes a fiery opening cadenza, the sprightly Tarantella theme, a sublime bel canto middle section, and a breakneck dash to the finish.

Passione Amorosa

Like the previous works, *Passione Amorosa* was also probably composed during Bottesini's time at the Conservatory of Music in Milan (1835-1840). All of his works for a duet of double basses were composed for himself and his partner at the Conservatory, **Giovanni Arpesani (1820-1855)**. It is possible that they were composed shortly after this as well. Bottesini was only performing with Arpesani during his conservatory years and the years just after. The last known performance of the duet was in 1844 at the Teatro San Benedetto in Venice, unfortunately without mention of a performance of the *Passione Amorosa*. (Heyes 2015)

Passione Amorosa evokes the composer's true love for Bel Canto opera. In three lively contrasting movements, it is essentially a scene from a traditional Italian "Opera Buffa", where the parts of lead soprano and tenor are portrayed by two virtuosic, dramatic, and utterly hilarious double basses.

Figment III

The contrabass has always interested me for its special tone color and range. Having written solos

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Instrumental Performance degree. Mr. Reed is a student of David Black.