

Josep Cervera-Bret; The Catalan Virtuoso

Leon Bosch, double bass

Sung-Suk Kang, piano

Min-Jung Kym, piano

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<http://www.meridian-records.co.uk>



This 2014 release by South African/English virtuoso Leon Bosch is his tenth for the Meridian Label, an astonishing recording catalogue in its own right. Featured on this disc is the music of Josep Cervera-Bret, the Catalan virtuoso. Cervera, whose career spanned the first four decades of the twentieth century, was a student of Pedro Valls,

and his music would have remained completely unknown had it not been for its discovery in 1981 by his grandson. Bass World published an extensive article on the composer in 2013 (Vol. 37 No. 1). There is a website devoted to Cervera's music < <http://www.josepcervera.net> > and some of his music is available there to download.

Cevera spent much of his performing career playing in the ensembles known as *cobla*, performing dances known as *sardana*, the echoes of which can be heard in many of these compositions (as well as those by such famous Catalan composers as Enrique Granados and Isaac Albéniz).

There are 62 surviving compositions, an enormous oeuvre from which Bosch has selected ten for this premier recording, and these highlight what a discovery Cevera's grandson made. Bosch's liner notes are illuminating and paint a vivid picture of Cevera's time and his career, and the recordings will go a long way to bringing this music to a much wider audience.

Like all of Bosch's previous discs the recordings here are elegant and opulent, his tone rich and luxurious and the recording quality clear and very detailed. One couldn't really hope for a better introduction to this music. This recorded collection spans from the gorgeous (*Cielo Gris* and *Nocturno*) to the virtuosic (*El Carnival De Venecia* and *Introduction Y Tarantella*). It's a collection full of material which will have immediate appeal to bassists looking for challenging and rewarding repertoire from the early twentieth century, repertoire that sings and shows off the instrument magnificently. The *Reverie* is a great example of a work every bit as attractive as the shorter works by Bottesini, and comparisons are inevitable despite its much later genesis.

– Review by Rob Nairn