



Virtuoso Double Bass

Works by Giovanni Bottesini

Leon Bosch (db)

Sung-Suk Kang (pf)

Meridian CDE 84544

Leon Bosch demonstrates a natural affinity with the origins, aims and virtuosity of Bottesini's music. He finds an admirable partner in pianist Sung-Suk Kang, who moulds her contribution faithfully and sensitively to his lead.

Bosch's programme particularly highlights his sonorous, lyrical playing style and musicianship, as demonstrated in his performances of the *Meditazione (Aria di Bach)*, the quasi-operatic *Elegy*, the *Romanza Patetica (Mélodie)*, with its telling phrasing and crystal clear harmonics, and the contemplative *Rêverie*. His readings of the solemn *Romanza Drammatica (Élégie)* and the passionate *Adagio par Ernst* further emphasise his expansive lyricism and careful shaping of the line, allowing time for the introduction of some agreeable rubato. His characterful account of the *Gavotta* contrasts elegance with humour and his *Tarantella* combines a laudably flexible approach to the introduction with a relatively steady version of the main dance section. Nevertheless, Bosch is musically commanding throughout, even if some imperfections of intonation remain and his dynamic range seems relatively small.

The *Fantasia Sonnambula* and *Capriccio di Bravura* find Bosch in more volatile form. He dispatches the *Fantasia*'s introduction with flair and imagination, launches into 'D'un pensiero' and 'Ah! Non giunge uman pensiero' with style and feeling and gauges the crescendo of virtuosity towards the climactic conclusion with skill and élan. Following Kang's calm piano introduction, Bosch brings to the *Capriccio* a winning spontaneity, lyricism, panache and range of colour. With the benefit of a warmly resonant recording, these are persuasive performances which carry one along, cocooned in the rich, sonorous tone of Bosch's Gagliano. RS