

## Leon Bosch: The Russian Double Bass

Leon Bosch, double bass  
Sung-Suk Kang, piano  
Meridian CDE 84564  
www.meridian-records.co.uk

A double bass CD with a title that invokes Russian nationality for purposes of defining its contents could invite both culturally biased and probably inappropriate analysis as well as the comments of the deconstructionists who pretend to defend the "other." On occasion, the interpretation of Russian music has been mired in this manner of discourse. Fortunately, emerging soloists such as Leon Bosch allow us to set aside hermeneutics and, instead, focus on the more intuitive and satisfying aspects of musical performance as they could pertain to a particular nationality. The CD explores a range of human emotion that is as much a projection of the life and persona of Mr. Bosch as well as the music of the composers themselves.

Immediately with the first track, *Melodie* by Anton Grigor'yevich Rubinstein, the listener is struck with the tone that Mr. Bosch draws from the bass. It is sonorous and lush. His vibrato is expressive and establishes his carefully studied sense of lyrical Romanticism.

Mr. Bosch's command of dynamic contrast allows him to perform with a wide range of expression. In Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* Op. 34, No. 14, Mr. Bosch can perform *soto voce* as if attempting to evoke a fragmented recollection of painful memories. In the same work he can exalt up to the limits of the instrument's heroic and triumphant capabilities. This is also the case with his performance of *Chanson Triste* by Koussevitzky and many of the other works on this CD.

Complementing Mr. Bosch's lyricism is his deft and incisive technical facility. Bosch performs the flurry of notes demanded by the score in Gliere's *Tarantella* and *Scherzo* with agility and clarity of execution. Likewise, he handles the expansive melodies of the *Intermezzo* and *Prelude* with dexterous ease.

In the age of digital audio, a recorded performance can be idealized and every flaw and blemish removed. Although there are few imperfections on this CD, it is apparent that Mr. Bosch and his accompanist Sung-Suk Kang do not need the help of post-production audio editing to achieve technical and musical goals. In eschewing the temptations of cold and calculating technology, Mr. Bosch allows the music of Russian composers to be revealed in its visceral power, passionate honesty, and purity of artistic intent. In short, his recording realizes the ideals of "The Russian Double Bass."

— Review by Jeremy Baguyos