

CANTO INTERNO



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This album, all its efforts, feelings and gratitude put on it, are dedicated to my dear teacher, mentor and friend: Rinat Ibragimov. Not a day goes by when I play the bass that I don't think of him.

I want to thank Justyna Maj and Sylvia Huang for their amazing playing, energy and inspiration, and for joining me patiently during this long process. Their musicianship and generosity are beyond limits. I am really grateful to Brendon Heinst, Hans Erblisch and the amazing TRPTK team for their professionalism, ideas and great partnership. They have made this project the most creative, instructive and inspiring journey I could have imagined.

I would like to thank the Sena and Amarte foundations for their support without which this production could not have taken place, and to the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation (NMF), for letting me play on the most wonderful bass by Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi (ca.1770).

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, my parents, my sister María, my colleagues, students, former students who accompanied me and gave ideas during the whole process (José, Marco, Miguel, Felipe to name a few...), to my teachers Rafa, Karen and Janne for all they taught me and shared about our instrument. But especially for teaching me to love it and to respect it, and, to all my friends for their constant and unconditional support, very in particular at the later stages to Mario Torres, Tom Bruijnen, Ki-jan, and Elian Ortiz for that last push when the summit is near and the path gets tricky.

This CD includes everything and everyone who is precious to me, the music and the people who were involved, before and during its elaboration, and those who are no longer with us, all of them and those who helped me out, by listening, encouraging and proposing, are inside this box as much as the music is.

Luis Cabrera



Se canta lo que se pierde...

Antonio Machado

CANTO INTERNO

'Canto interno', or 'inner voice', is the nesting place of the elements necessary for the expressive, melodic, and timbral elaboration of one's musical construction where, before the sound becomes real or audible, it is developed consciously in the innermost depths of our being. It is the space where we can hear and feel music in its purest state.

According to my friend Elian Ortiz: *"These elements are at first basic parameters, such as rhythm, articulation and intonation, which together, build the framework for the interpretive elaboration of any musical material. On top of these we then add expression and colours to give life and feeling to the musical dialogue."*

Rinat always said that when the music and the sound are inside your head, your hands find a way to make it happen through the instrument. This is to me the inner voice, finding its way through the outer voice of our instrument, the double bass. Canto Interno is the way music was taught to me, and how I try to transmit it when I play or when I teach – the interiorization of the sound and the lines of the music before sharing it with others.

GIOVANNI BOTTESINI

On the 200th anniversary from the birth of Giovanni Bottesini, a composer of great excellency for our instrument, I am delighted to be able to record two of his most significant works. Genius player, icon and pioneer of our instrument as a virtuoso performer and a composer, he was also a conductor or, as he referred to

himself, a composer who plays the double bass.

The man himself, his life full of events and trips making him to me one of the most fascinating and intriguing characters in classical music history. Whenever I visited London, Barcelona, Paris, the City of Mexico, La Havana or Buenos Aires, I could read or hear about his doings, anecdotes, concerts... he left a trail of events both conducting and playing in Europe, America, and Africa, where he conducted the premiere of *Aida* in El Cairo upon Giuseppe Verdi's recommendation who was his close friend and his admirer too. Many of his operas were inspired by or written on mythological, oriental, or biblical themes such as *Ali Baba*, *La regina del Nepal*, *La Torre di Babele* and *Ero e Leandro*. He also visited and interacted with several European countries, from Spain to England, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To make his journey broader, his bass is now in Japan as part of a private collection. All of this gives the feeling of geographical and historical omnipresence, of the most charismatic of our composers.

These were two of the pieces that the composer liked to play himself. They could often be heard at the operas' intervals, at small gatherings or at musical evenings while Bottesini was on tour, where he was asked to perform mostly by himself or together with one of his musical partners. This makes me feel that they were his favourite ones that accompanied him during his trips. They happen to be mine as well, the pieces by Bottesini which I like to play the most.

The *introduction, theme and variations on the carnival of Venice* opens with one of the most beautiful cantilenas written by Bottesini. Here, the registers and the timbre show the apparition of the characters and the different singers: Bass, tenor, soprano... This happens in most of his compositions, but in the carnival it is very easy to appreciate that, both at the introduction and at the variations. Based on the Neapolitan folk tune *Oh mamma, mamma cara*, the variations show the masquerade ball at the end of the Carnival of Venice with the different singers, characters or masked dancers relating to each other.

Originally written as a duo for two double basses, the *Grand duo concertante* was transcribed for bass and violin by Camilo Sivori, disciple of Nicolo Paganini, who played the piece extensively with Bottesini although he played it with many other renowned violinists at the time too. It is a real operatic scene duet, purely written in the bel canto style that inhabits all of his compositions. However, on the arrangement for bass and violin the operatic roles become even more clearly differentiated, because of the tessitura, variety and contrast of colours. As an opera, it has its recitativos, dialogues, elements of comedy and drama, sarcasm, and, in fact, a love declaration and ongoing dialogue between the two instruments.

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY

Serge Koussevitzky was well renowned as a conductor, especially for his unique achievements in the fields of his career as a bass player and his compositions for this instrument (including his concerto and these 4 pieces, which are part of the main body of the bass repertoire).

There are actually recordings of Koussevitzky playing his music, as well as ones where he conducts. The music and the sound are completely free of any boundaries or tightness to the score. He believed in the performer as a free interpreter of the general guidance of the composer, a big contrast to other performing and conducting trends at the time. His sound is unique in many ways for its purity and expressiveness.

These “salon pieces”, originally written as: 2 *morceaux*, Op. 1 (*Andante* and *Valse Miniature*), *Chanson triste*, Op. 2 and *Humoresque*, Op. 4 were written just before the turn of the 20th century and belong to the miniature, intermezzo-like compositions which were still popular at the time but were published later for several reasons.

Andante is the most serene and lyrical of the pieces which brings a delightful melody exposed from different angles and expressions to end up fading away as in an echo of its main theme. *Valse Miniature* flows through its long phrases and takes us through a more cadential middle section before dancing its way out again. The *Chanson triste* is dedicated to Koussevitzky's friend, pianist Leonid Maximoff, who died at a very young age. It has the character of a funeral song, deep and static, where time and space between the notes and phrases create the atmosphere. The *Humoresque* combines elements of humour, playfulness and constant chasing between the bass and the piano but with a middle section containing traces of his more lyrical writing which, to me, shows evidence of his biggest influences: Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Originally written for clarinet and piano but indicated by Schumann himself that it could be played on the viola or the cello as well, the *Fantasiestücke* Op. 73 are some of the most significant instrumental/chamber works of the romantic period. A gem from the kingdom of the intermezzo by one of the main romantic writers of the 19th century.

The three movements represent the contrasting, extremely differentiated characters, moods and obsessions which persist in all of Schumann's compositions; fate, melancholy and fury (or madness). The Davidsbündler characters show up once again as the calm and reflexive Eusebius at the *Zart und mit Ausdruck* (“tender or delicate and with expression”) and in the presence of the more impetuous Florestan at the latter *Rasch und mit Feuer* (“fast and with fire”). One could say that the second movement, *Lebhaft, leicht* (“lively, light”) is a transition from one to the other where both characters play with each other at the middle section, only to end up taking a break in another of his favourites at the coda, “the night” or nocturne ending. The calm and contained yet emotional harmony and melody of the music evolves towards the fiery and impetuous accented rhythms, syncopations and constant rush throughout each movement, culminating in the most characterful of Schumann's exultated and epic endings.

Roland Barthes refers to Schumann's music and characters in his *The responsibility of forms* (*Lo obvio y lo obtuso* in Spanish) in the chapter *Loving Schumann*:

“Schumann truly is the composer of solitary intimacy, of the soul in love and cloistered; a soul that speaks with itself, perhaps that one of a child that has nothing more than its mother.”

To do this arrangement and encounter these descriptions, impressions and characters behind every phrase and harmony is a real journey into Schumann's world of fantasy, dreams and despair.

CÉSAR FRANCK

As it is known, César Franck wrote this sonata for Eugene Ysayé's wedding to Louise Bourdau. I believe that when someone makes a present for someone special, things are always well-planned with care and love, and so I feel he did in this piece. He masterfully wrote it with all the elements of storytelling: drama, poetry, rhetoric, and the most organic harmonic progressions where the themes gradually introduce each other making a perfectly told story where everything makes sense.

The constant reminders of *molto dolce - dolcissimo - sempre molto dolce* that give way to the contrasting *fuocoso - molto fuocoso - appassionato - drammatico grandioso* and even *con fantasia*... perfectly explain the moods that succeed each other. The extreme tenderness that grows into rage, passion, fantasy and excitement... and a nuptial hymn! But the harmony, the tension emerging with every key that appears really is what makes me stay on my seat when listening to or playing this piece.

To play it on the double bass, apart from the obvious technical challenges, presents several musical difficulties of handling the original slurs and indications of dynamic and articulation as well as the octavation, particularly in the canon of the last movement. It does sound odd inverting the intervals, but to me it does still make sense to do this and try to sing it, recite it and even desperately cry it through the double bass. Since we don't have a work of this magnitude, isn't it fair that we try?

Justyna proposed that we played this sonata a few years ago. She had played it extensively with her husband Dimiter in New York and knew it really well. As I could later witness, she loved it and understood it perfectly, so I thought why not? I went on holiday on my own to the south of Lisbon and ran up and down the beach of Comporta listening to the old recordings of the great violinists. I looked at the score every night in front of that wonderful Atlantic ocean with a glass of Alentejo wine. I feel that I learned that piece during those days and whilst this place had nothing to do with Belgium or Franck, the reflection of the moon in the sea and the vibrancy of the water hitting the shore felt ideal to listen to it and feel inspired. I came back and we performed it in London and Amsterdam. Now we just recorded it in Rotterdam. The piece has traveled with us through many places and stages of our lives, and whatever the result of the transcription may be, it is part of us by now.

Luis Cabrera



LUIS CABRERA

Born in Madrid, Spain in 1985, Luis Cabrera started playing the double bass at the age of 10. After finishing his studies in Madrid, where he studied with Professor Rafael de Frias and later on with Karen Martirosian, he moved to London in 2002 to complete his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama under Professor Rinat Ibragimov. Luis then completed a Masters Degree at Berlin's "Hans Eisler University" under Professor Janne Saksala.

Having received numerous awards and Scholarships he became, at the age of 20, Principal double bass of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra in Amsterdam in 2006. Since then on, he has been invited to play as guest principal double bass with the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English National Opera, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Northern Sinfonia, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Amsterdam Sinfonietta amongst others, where he played under the most distinguished conductors and soloists.

Luis has collaborated with ensembles of different styles, doing both baroque, classical and contemporary repertoire in ensembles such as Arcangelo, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the London Sinfonietta, BandArt or the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orquesta Nacional de España amongst others. Very active as a chamber music player, soloist and teacher, these commitments frequently take him to Portugal, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Argentina, Mexico, Greece, Peru, Colombia, Hong Kong and, of course The Netherlands and the UK where he has performed both alone or in small groups at venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, LSO St Luke's, Het Concertgebouw, De Doelen, Den Haag KonCon and Palacio de Cibeles in Madrid amongst others.

Luis joined the Guildhall School of Music & Drama's teaching staff in 2012 and has been a visiting teacher and coach in several colleges and Youth Orchestras including CSKG in Madrid, CSMA in Zaragoza, Forum Musikae, and JONDE. Since 2018 he is also a professor at the Conservatoire of Rotterdam (CODARTS).

Luis has recorded with several chamber groups for labels including EMI Classics and Pentatone, and has collaborated with BBC Radio 3's prestigious New Generation Artists scheme.

Luis plays on a double bass made by Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi, c.1770 on loan from the collection of the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation (NMF).

www.luiscabrera.eu



JUSTYNA MAJ

Polish-Canadian pianist Justyna Maj, a winner of numerous prestigious national and international competitions, has performed throughout Canada, Western & Eastern Europe, China and the USA. She has appeared with the Wroclaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vancouver Academy Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra and has recorded for CBC Radio, German & Polish National Radios.

For more than 2 decades, Ms. Maj has been very active as a chamber musician, obtaining many awards in this discipline as well. As a pianist and co-founder of the Grand Air Trio, and since their critically acclaimed New York Recital Debut at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 2008, she has performed extensively in the USA, France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Canada.

From 2012, she has formed a duo with renowned double-bass player Luis Cabrera with whom she performed recitals in the Netherlands, Spain and England. Ms. Maj held a position of piano collaborator at the Casalmaggiore International Festival in Italy during eight consecutive years and played for the prestigious series Jeunesses Musicales du Canada, where she was re-invited for a tour in 2008.

She served on the piano faculty at the British Columbia Conservatory of Music in Vancouver and the Bergen Academy of Music in New Jersey. A resident of New York City between 2006 and 2011, she collaborated extensively with such artists as Ida and Ani Kavafian, Timothy Eddy, Lewis Kaplan, Sally Thomas, Lucie Robert, Todd and Daniel Phillips at the Juilliard, Manhattan and Mannes Schools of Music.

By taking part in festivals worldwide she gained an international training and studied with renowned teachers such as Prof. Lee Kum Sing, John O'Connor, Jon Kimura Parker, Evgeny Indij, G.Guangren, Alexij Orlovetsky, Roger Chase, Florian Wieck.

She holds a Bachelor of Music and Artist Diploma from the Vancouver Academy of Music and a Master of Music Degree from the Hochschule fur Musik Stuttgart. She now resides in Amsterdam, where she works with many Dutch orchestras (HGO, Nedpho, NKO, NJO, RFO, Metropol Orkest, Phion), collaborates with well known instrumentalists and teaches extensively as part of her private Justyna Maj Piano Studio.



SYLVIA HUANG

Appreciated for her “true lyricism and her touching musicality, her simplicity and her sensitivity”, and delivering a “wide color palette” (Le Soir), Belgian violinist Sylvia Huang is described as a “moving and honest” musician with a “rich sound” (De Standaard). In 2019 she became laureate of the Queen Elisabeth International Competition and won the two audience prizes: the Musiq’3 Prize and the Canvas-Klara Prijs. She also received the Caecilia Prize of the Young Musician of the Year 2019 by the Union de la Presse Musicale Belge.

Sylvia has been a member of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam since August 2014. As a passionate chamber musician, she founded the GoYa Quartet with three of her RCO colleagues. After having won the prestigious “Prix de Salon 2015” awarded by the business network of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the GoYa Quartet was able to make recordings of two live performances of all Brahms and Schumann string quartets.

She made her debut with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in 2021 with Mozart Violin Concerto K218 and has collaborated with many other orchestras such as the Belgian National Orchestra, the Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie, the Bad Reichenhall Philharmoniker, in halls such as the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, the Vlaamse Opera in Gent, deSingel in Antwerp, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

She also took part in several international festivals including B-Classic Festival van Vlaanderen, Les Echappées Musicales du Médoc, Festival Musiq’3, Klara in deSingel, Collegium Vocale Crete Senesi and the Festivals de Wallonie.

Born in 1994, Sylvia had her first violin lessons with her father and continued her studies at the Académie des Arts de la Ville de Bruxelles, and later on with Alexei Moshkov and Liviu Prunaru. She won first prize at the Belfius Classics National Musical Competition in 2004 and at the Lions European Musical Competition in 2008. She was a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra from 2009 to 2010 before joining the second violin section of the Belgian National Orchestra in September 2012. She was promoted to the position of co-principal violinist in 2013 before joining the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra a year later.

She plays on a violin built by Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi from 1751, on loan from the RCO Foundation.

www.sylvia-huang.com



THE LANDOLFI

My mother bought me my first double bass when I was ten. It cost about six hundred euros, which was a lot for us back then. I remember her bringing it on her shoulders through the door, her face of exhaustion impressed by the weight but with a smile kind of saying; "from now on this heavy load will be on both of our shoulders..." That moment accounted for all my birthdays and Christmas presents put together until then. I practiced so much on that bass that the paint came off of the fingerboard which eventually became white. It was obviously not made of ebony.

22 years later, after an extensive search and trials of some of the world's finest basses, with the big support of the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation, we ended up finding the instrument which is my favourite, my dream instrument and which has now also become my voice of expression, this wonderful bass by Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi. To now be able to play on such a wonderful instrument is a gift to me, for which I am deeply honoured and grateful to the NMF for trusting me to play on such a glorious, colourful instrument.

I cannot be grateful enough to them for making it possible, but also extremely humbled to remember where I started, where I come from and to value the long journey of effort and perseverance which being a musician consists of. Thinking of all this and realising how privileged I am, I realise that there are so many people to be grateful to in this CD, but I couldn't leave out the most important, without whom I would not have been able to do any of this; my mother.

Luis Cabrera





Our goal is to create immersive experiences through sound. By creating an acoustic hologram, our recordings give you the illusion of being at the world's most beautiful concert halls and churches – all this, while never leaving your listening room.

No costs or efforts are spared to seize that magical moment in which music is being created, and bring it home to you in the highest quality. Why? Simply because this is how music should be experienced: fresh and alive, not canned and with a stale aftertaste of conservation. To us, music is life, and should be lived to the fullest in an authentic and uncompromising way.

Through these recordings, we bring you closer to the music and the musicians than you've ever imagined. The devil is in the details, and the ability to catch those makes all the difference between good quality and excellent quality. Listening to our recordings, you're able to perceive every breath, every bowing, every movement with an astonishing clarity. Not only do you hear the music, you hear the music as it's being created. This adds a human dimension to your listening experience, connecting you instantly and instinctively to what you're listening to.

The basis for all of our recordings is our Optimised Omnidirectional Array (OOA for short), developed by founder and lead audio engineer Brendon Heinst. With OOA, we aim to create a truly accurate image of the soundstage, while retaining uncoloured transparency in the tonal characteristics of the recording. Unlike many current recording techniques, OOA was developed scientifically through simulation and modelling, as well as through many extensive listening tests with an independent listening panel. But however great any microphone array can be, the signals still have to be converted into the digital domain. Our aim at TRPTK is to do this conversion process completely and utterly uncoloured, preserving all the tiniest little details without the harshness usually attributed to digital recordings. The way we do this is by recording at 352.8 kHz 32 bits DXD, at 16 times higher than CD quality. This means, in musical terms, that everything in the original performance is preserved. From the huge 32-foot pipe of a cathedral organ, to the highest notes on a piccolo flute. From the softest whispers all the way to the searingly loudest orchestral hits.

Speaking of soft whispers and loud orchestral hits; we choose our artists not just by their ability to amaze us. We're eager to collaborate with musicians and composers who walk that fine line between renewing genres and connecting to audiences. Together with them, we can achieve our goal of creating daring recordings that stay loyal to the idea of always aiming for the highest quality possible.

Because at TRPTK, we bring you not just the sound, but the core of music.

recording & mastering engineer at TRPTK

CREDITS

Recording & mastering	Brendon Heinst
Co-production & editing	Hans Erblisch
Acoustics engineer	Ben van Leliveld
Piano technician	Piano's Maene
Photography & artwork	Brendon Heinst
Liner notes	Luis Cabrera

This recording was made on 22-23 November 2020 and 11-12 January 2021 at De Doelen, Grote Zaal in Rotterdam (NL). Justyna Maj plays on a Steinway Model D-274 concert grand piano.

EQUIPMENT

Microphones	DPA d:dicate 4006A DPA d:dicate 4015A
AD/DA converters	Merging Technologies Hapi Merging Technologies Anubis
Master clock	Grimm Audio CC2 at 352.8kHz
Resampling for SACD	Weiss Saracon DSD
Monitoring	KEF Blade Two loudspeakers KEF LS50 loudspeakers Hegel H30 amplifiers Sennheiser HD800S headphones
Power conditioning	Furutech Daytona 303E CAD Ground Control GC1
Cabling	Furutech custom microphone cables Furutech custom balanced interlinks Furutech custom power cables Furutech custom loudspeaker cables
Misc.	JCAT Optimo 3 Duo linear power supply JCAT NET Card XE JCAT M12 Switch Gold Furutech e-TP609E NCF Furutech NCF Boosters R.T.F.S. acoustics modules



trptk