



The Monster Concert

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in Celebration of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869)

SIDE 1

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK (1829-1869)

1. The Siege of Saragossa

Grand Symphony for 10 Pianos (Arranged by Victor Savant)

Soloists: Victor Savant, Cary Lewis

Assisted by the Complete Piano Ensemble (10 Pianos)

2. Réponds-moi

Cuban Dance for Two Pianos

Soloists: Neal Larrabee, Stefan Scaggiari

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

3. Danse macabre

(Arranged by Ernest Guiraud)

The Complete Piano Ensemble (10 Pianos)

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK

4. Printemps d'amour

Mazurka Brillante for Two Pianos

Soloists: Cary Lewis, Paul Van Ness

STEPHEN FOSTER (1826-1864)

5. Santa Anna's Retreat from Buena Vista

(Arranged by John Van Buskirk)

Soloist: John Van Buskirk

Assisted by the Complete Piano Ensemble (10 Pianos)

SIDE 2

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK

1. Grande Tarantelle

Piano Solo with String Quintet, Flute and Clarinet
Accompaniment*Soloist: Eugene List*

2. Le bananier (The Banana Tree)

Louisiana Folk Song for Two Pianos

Soloists: Joseph Werner, Wade Peeples

3. Night in the Tropics

Second Movement from the Symphony of the
Same Name

(Arranged by John Kirkpatrick)

The Complete Piano Ensemble (10 Pianos)

STEPHEN FOSTER

4. Soirée Polka

Eugene List and all the Ladies of the Corps de Piano

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK

5. Orfa

Polka de Concert for Two Pianos

Soloists: Kimberly Schmidt, James Anagnoson

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)

6. Overture to *William Tell* (abridged)

(Arranged by Louis Moreau Gottschalk)

*Soloists: Eugene List, Joseph Werner**Douglas Riva, Organ**The Complete Piano Ensemble (10 Pianos)**Eugene List, Artistic director**Victor Savant, John Van Buskirk, Arrangers,
artistic coordinators**William Shookhoff, Conductor, music director*

PIANISTS

Eugene List

Adolovni Acosta, James Anagnoson, Nancy Bachus, William Black, Zelma Bodzin, Sara Bong, Stephen Calvert, Lyndall Coffield, Nancy De Cicco, Joan Eighmey, Shuky Falk, Sara Faust, Kenneth Gartner, Daniel Glover, Joanna Goldstein, Serge Gravel, Maria Grieco, Luther Henderson III, Leonard Horowitz, Karen Iannotti, Robert James, Susan Jamieson, Neal Larrabee, Cary Lewis, Gayle Martin, John McKay, Diana Mittler, Wade Peeples, Douglas Riva, Victor Savant, Stefan Scaggiari, Kimberly Schmidt, Raymond Shigeoka, Thomas Stierwalt, Izumi Tanaka, John Van Buskirk, Paul Van Ness, Awilda Villarin, Joseph Werner, Carmen Wilhite, Rose Ann Wood

*William Shookhoff, Conductor**Assisting Artists*

Ronald Neal, Vincent Esposito, *Violins*; David Sills, *Viola*; Ann Alton, *Violoncello*; Lisa Bogardus, *Double bass*; Svjetlana Kabalin, *Flute*; Victor Battipaglia, *Clarinet*; Douglas Riva, *Organ*

Louis Moreau Gottschalk wrote in his *Notes of a Pianist*, "Music is a thing eminently sensuous. Certain combinations move us, not because they are ingenious, but because they move our nervous system in a certain way. I have a horror of musical Puritans..."

Our Monster Concert is decidedly *not* for musical Puritans. It is meant as an Entertainment; a musical excursion into some of the unusual byways of the pianistic repertoire—the multiple-piano sonorities of the Monster Concert. ("Monster," in this case, simply means "big," as in "gigantic.")

Gottschalk was America's first important composer and pianist, and the first to achieve worldwide renown. His artistic and creative achievements loom large in our musical history, and it is entirely fitting that we honor his memory with this special recording.

Gottschalk himself might have been pleased at the idea of a Monster Concert since he was such an ardent champion of musical spectaculars and frequently staged gargantuan extravaganzas in Havana, Rio, San Francisco, Madrid, and many other cities. His high-water mark in this category took place in Havana on February 17, 1860, when there were approximately 900 people on stage. With Gottschalk, it has been said, any number can play.

On this recording we also are honoring some of Gottschalk's contemporaries: Ernest Guiraud (1837-1892), Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), and Stephen Foster (1826-1864). Guiraud, like Gottschalk, was born in New Orleans, and studied in Paris. They were friends. Besides his own compositions, Guiraud is famous for having written the musical interludes which turned *Carmen* from an *opéra comique* (with spoken dialogue) into a full-scale *grand opéra*.

Saint-Saëns was a classmate of Gottschalk in Paris. Stephen Foster and Gottschalk were almost exact contemporaries. While it is not certain that they ever met, we do know that Gottschalk used Foster melodies in his compositions: *The Banjo* quotes "The Camptown Races," and *Columbia* is a set of variations on "My Old Kentucky Home."

Gottschalk's principal claim to fame, in my opinion, is that he was the first American composer to use the indigenous elements of the New World in his music. His music speaks with the authentic voice of the Americas. He used the Creole melodies of his native Louisiana; he also used plantation tunes and patriotic songs, as well as all the popular dance forms of the day—polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, etc. He was the first to introduce the distinctive music of the West Indies into the mainstream of Western art music: we encounter habañeras, contradanzas, and cakewalks in his music, along with the characteristic flashing rhythms and seductive melodies. Gottschalk's music is delightful, sparkling, witty, and elegant.

The first composition is intriguingly titled *The Siege of Saragossa, Grand Symphony for Ten Pianos*. It was written for a special ceremonial occasion in 1852 when Gottschalk was in residence at the

Royal Court of Spain in Madrid. The original music has been lost, but we do know a great deal about this piece just the same.

The actual Siege of Saragossa took place during the Napoleonic Wars, and the work is a tribute to the heroic defenders of the city of Saragossa who held out against the French forces for an incredibly long time.

From a fragment of manuscript in the Lincoln Center Library of the Performing Arts, we know that *The Siege of Saragossa* gradually was transformed from a Spanish patriotic razzle-dazzler to an American patriotic flag-waver which bore the name of *The Union*. *The Union*, Gottschalk's smash hit during the American Civil War, was played everywhere to tremendous acclaim. *The Siege of Saragossa* was Gottschalk's initial setting of the "blood and thunder" piece, with large sections depicting the charges and countercharges of the battling armies, the thrust and parry of the opposing infantry, the cannonading of the artillery, and the general rain and rattle of grapeshot.

Victor Savant reconstructed *The Siege*, using portions of *The Union* for the battle effects and introducing Spanish melodies which Gottschalk himself composed during his Spanish sojourn. The *Jota aragonesa*, which, as we know from the title page, was used in the original composition of *The Siege*, is worked into the conclusion. When it was published separately, the title page stated that it was "tirée de la Grande Symphonie pour Dix Pianos, *Le Siège de Saragosse*." Also included are the Spanish national anthem and a part of the piano piece *Souvenirs d'Andalousie*, which uses the Spanish dances fandango, the *jaleo de jerez*, and the *caña*. The piece as now constituted is a "reconstruction," created in the style of the composer and intended as a token of respectful homage to Gottschalk, whose original composition has disappeared.

Réponds-moi is one of Gottschalk's duets for two pianists at one piano. During the rise of nationalism in music at this time many composers turned for inspiration to the folk melodies of their native countries. Gottschalk became famous for his "exotic" evocations in music of the "fragrant savannahs of his native land." *Réponds-moi* is a characteristic Gottschalk setting of a Cuban dance, probably stemming from the time of his concert tour of the West Indies in 1857.

Saint-Saëns's famous *Danse macabre* is presented in an arrangement for two pianos, eight hands, by Ernest Guiraud. *Printemps d'amour* is a brilliant mazurka, with intimations of the ragtime still to come. It was said to have been a great favorite of the then emperor of Brazil, in whose country Gottschalk spent his last years.

It is not generally known that Stephen Foster composed a few pieces for piano solo. *Santa Anna's Retreat from Buena Vista* portrays the defeat of the Mexican General Santa Anna in February, 1847. This is the most cheerful "retreat" in the whole musical repertoire! It is a beguilingly innocent setting of what must have been a fierce battle.

I am immensely grateful to Lawrence Glover, a descendant of the

Gottschalk family through Gottschalk's youngest sister, Blanche, for the loan of the unpublished original version of the *Tarantelle* for Piano and String Quintet, by N.R. Espadero of Havana. Since the title page states that a flute and clarinet may be added, we are using these parts and presenting a septet. In this version, the introductory octaves in the piano do not appear.

Le bananier was Gottschalk's first big hit in Paris. It spread like wildfire all over Europe, bringing him enthusiastic recognition. *Le bananier* is a Louisiana folk tune based on a well-known Creole melody.

A particularly interesting composition, because of its definite West Indian flavor, is the John Kirkpatrick arrangement for two pianos of the second movement of Gottschalk's symphony, *Night in the Tropics*, with "borrowings," as he writes on the title page, from N.R. Espadero, a great friend of Gottschalk. This composition is a concert samba of great vivacity and verve.

Foster's *Soirée Polka* (our version is for four hands) is a delicious evocation of a far more innocent era. *Orfa* is a lively polka of beguiling charm. And finally, there is the endearing, and enduring, "cheval de bataille," the *William Tell* Overture by Rossini. (Rossini died in 1868, just one year before Gottschalk.) Gottschalk's arrangement for four hands is full of fantasy and imagination, and makes a fitting ending to our recorded journey of novelty, jollity, and celebration.

Eugene List

I wish to express my great appreciation to all those who helped me in this Monster Concert recording, and most particularly to all my present and former students from all over the country who gathered for this conclave of pianists to help me celebrate one of my pet addictions, the music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk! Without their dedicated assistance, this recording would never have been possible. My enthusiastic thanks to Robert Offergeld, John Doyle, Richard Jackson, and the aforementioned Lawrence Glover for their invaluable contributions. **E.L.**

Eugene List is the foremost exponent of the piano music by Louis Moreau Gottschalk and he has featured Gottschalk on his piano recitals all over the world. His recordings of Gottschalk have been rapturously acclaimed. He rediscovered the *Tarentelle* for piano and orchestra, as well as the *Variations on the Portuguese National Anthem*.

Timings:

Side 1: 8:50, 3:10, 7:02, 4:20, 2:58/26:20 *Side 2:* 5:52, 3:02, 5:53, 2:25, 3:01, 6:30/26:43

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