The Monster Concert

in Celebration of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869)

SIDE 1

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTCHALK (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. Répons-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 GOTTCHALK
4. Printemps d’amour
   Mazurka Brillante for Two Pianos
   Soloists: Gary 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 GOTTCHALK
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

STEPHEN FOSTER
3. Soirée Polka
   Eugene List and all the Ladies of the Corps de Piano

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTCHALK
4. Printemps d’Amour
   Mazurka Brillante 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
William Shookhoff, Conductor
Assisting Artists
Ronald Neal, Vincent Esposito, Violins; David Sills, Viola; Ann Alton, Violoncello; Lisa Bogardus, Double bass; Svetlana Kabalin, Flute; Victor Battipaglia, Clarinet; Douglas Riva, Organ

Louis Moreau Gottschalk wrote in his Notes of a Pianist, “Music is a language, a living voice.” This Monster Concert is a celebration of the music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk, marking the sesquicentennial of his birth. Godschalk was a brilliant composer, pianist, and teacher, known for his inventive compositions blending European and American music. His work was influenced by various styles, including the Romantic era, and his unique approach has left a lasting impact on the development of American classical music. The Monster Concert highlights his most prominent works, reflecting the richness and diversity of Gottschalk's oeuvre. Including his own compositions and beautifully arranged works from his contemporaries, this concert serves as a testament to Gottschalk's musical genius. It is performed in celebration of his life and legacy, offering audiences a glimpse into the world of this extraordinary composer.
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 mainstream of Western art music: we encounter habaneras, congas, samba, soiree polka, tradanzas, and cakewalks in his music, along with the characteristic Gottschalk setting of a Cuban dance, probably stemming from the time of his concert tour of the West Indies in 1857. Gottschalk himself might have been pleased as a set of variations on "My Old Kentucky Home." 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 habaneras, 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 traditional patriotic rhapsody into 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 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 "tinte de la Grande Symphonie pour Dix Pianos, Le Siège de Saragossa." 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 mid-19th century, Gottschalk used a melody in this composition turned into the conclusion. 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 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 marcha, 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 repertory! 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, for letting me use this in my Monster Concert recording, and most particularly to all those great pianists who with enthusiasm to music to help celebrate one of my pet addictions, the music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk! Without their devoted 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 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 of the college, who authorize this conclave of pianists to help me celebrate one of my pet addictions, the music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk! Without their devoted 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.
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Gottschalk was America's first important composer and pianist, and the first to achieve worldwide renown. His artistic and creative achievements look 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 nationalism and frequently staged gargantuan extravaganzas in Havana, Rio, Saigon, 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), 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 another of Gottschalk's pupils. Stephen Foster (1826-1864), Guiraud, like Gottschalk, was America's first important composer and pianist, and intends as a token of respectful homage to Gottschalk, whose first composition is intriguingly titled 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 first to introduce into the mainstream of Western art music; we encounter habaneras, contradanzas, and cakewalks in his music, along with the characteristic flowing rhythms and seductive melodies. Gottschalk's music is delightful, sparkling, witty, and elegant.

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It is a conjecture 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 "long time. La Grande Symphonie pour Dix Pianos, Le Siege de Saragossa." 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 caza. 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 of 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 composed in the same year that Gottschalk's famous 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 are not included.

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 distinctive 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.

Printemps d'amour, Rio, Saigon, Havana, and Saragossa were almost exact contemporaries. While it is not generally known that Stephen Foster composed a few pieces for piano with "borrowings," as he writes on the title page, from N.R. Espadero, a great friend of Gottschalk, 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.

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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.

Track List:

1: 8:50, 3:10, 7:02, 4:20, 2:58/26:20
2: 5:52, 3:02, 5:53, 2:25, 3:01, 6:30/26:43
Produced by David B. Hancock
Engineering: David R. Hancock, Eugene List
Mastering: Bill Kipper, Masterdisk Corp.
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Gottschalk himself might have been pleased at the idea of a Monster Concert since he was such an ardent champion of musical nationalism. He wrote in his Pianist, “Music is a thing sensuous. It is a set of variations on “My Old Kentucky Home,” a brilliant mazurka, with intimations of the ragtime still to come. It is the most cheerful “retreat” in the whole musical repertoire! It is a garden for musical Puritans. It is a set of variations on “The Camptown Races,” and the calypso. 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.

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