



# Giovanni BOTTESINI

## *Concerto for contrabass and orchestra No. 2 in B minor*

**Giovanni Bottesini** (22 December 1821 – 7 July 1889), was an Italian Romantic composer, conductor, and a double bass virtuoso. Bottesini became a bass player by accident. When he was 14, he entered the Milan Conservatory on a scholarship; the only scholarships the conservatory had left were for bassoon and double bass. He quickly became a virtuoso player and, after leaving the conservatory, established himself as an outstanding soloist. Bottesini performed throughout Europe and also toured America; it was during this time that he earned the nickname “Paganini of the double bass.” He conducted the first performance of Verdi's opera *Aida* in Cairo in 1871 and won success with some, at least, of his own ten operas. He significantly extended the technical possibilities of the instrument. His compositions include a number of double bass concertos, some for double bass and piano, as well as works for solo violin and double bass and for two double basses. His *Metodo completo per contrabasso* is an important addition to the pedagogical literature of the instrument. In 1849 Bottesini played the cello part in London in a quintet by George Onslow. His own chamber music includes a *Gran Quintetto for two violins, viola, cello and double bass*. He wrote eleven string quartets and arranged his Second Double Bass Concerto for solo instrument and string quartet.

**Concerto for contrabass and orchestra No. 2 in B minor** is the triumph of the bass player's repertoire. It is a moment captured from the Bel Canto era, when all focus was placed on a player's virtuosity and expressiveness, above all other musical considerations. The result is an intensely lyrical concerto that will stretch the capabilities of any performers. The second movement is an aria, it is warm and lyrical, with an understated string accompaniment, while the third features a vigorous, muscular theme that later transforms into a march. The third movement also includes another solo cadenza, this one showcasing the performer's breathtaking virtuosity and speed; it also ranges over an unheard-of six octaves.