A Selection of the Most Significant Concertos for Double Bass Written since 1970: Reviews and Performance Approaches

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A SELECTION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONCERTOS FOR DOUBLE BASS

WRITTEN SINCE 1970:

REVIEWS AND PERFORMANCE APPROACHES

BY
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A Treatise submitted to the College of Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Music

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my professors at Florida State University for their assistance and guidance during my studies, especially the members of my doctoral committee - Melanie Punter, Dr. Evan Jones, Bruce Holzman and Mary Roman for their suggestions and continued encouragement. Also I would like to thank many of my fellow bassists and friends who helped me with their ideas and suggestions during the preparation of this document.
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ABSTRACT

This treatise surveys a selection of concertos for double bass published since 1970. The concertos have been classified in terms of musical styles, performance approaches, instrumental techniques, and level of difficulty.

The document provides a guide to selected published and unpublished double bass concertos. Numerous concertos have been examined, and forty of them are included in this document. The primary goal of the treatise is to encourage interest in new concertos by teachers, performers and students so that such concertos can be included in the standard double bass repertoire as well as music curricula. Presenting the concertos to the general audience will likely increase interest in the double bass repertoire.

Chapter 1 includes a brief history of concertos for the double bass along with an overview of earlier and newer concertos. Chapter 2 is a list of selected concertos with brief analysis, general characteristics and background, and difficulty level for each concerto. Included in the discussion is biographical information about the composers, samples of the scores, forms of movements, and suggested approaches to the concertos from the composer's and performer's point of views when appropriate. Nicholas Cook pointed out that “analysis strengthens performance because it compels the performer to think about the relationships implied in the music.”¹ For each concerto I examined musical context, techniques and styles, information regarding the composition's history, and pedagogical value. This chapter includes the title of the concertos, publisher and publication, recording(s), orchestration, scordatura,² and duration. It also includes the level of technical difficulty for each, which will be determined by combining analysis, opinions of the composer or performer, as well as reviews when available. Chapter 3 is a list of existing concertos which, while not fully analyzed, are important additions to the double bass musical literature. Basic information is included to supplement the references in this paper and to encourage further analysis by others interested in the double bass repertoire.


INTRODUCTION

Double bassists often complain that there are too few original concertos, particularly when compared to the rich repertoire of the violinist and pianist. However, there are actually a large number of double bass concertos. The challenge is knowing how and where to locate and access them. During the preparation of this document, I was able to locate a large quantity of relatively obscure literature for the double bass. I gathered the information through contacts with bassists and composers of national and international renown, some of whom have written concertos for the double bass. This process included, but was not limited to, contacts through e-mails, telephone conversations, personal meetings and informal interviews at International Society of Bassists (ISB) conventions.

It would require an enormous amount of time and effort to analyze and document the entire double bass concerto literature that has been written during the past forty years. Indeed, many of these concertos have never been publicly performed. Some of the concertos lack piano accompaniment. This may discourage the bassist from investing the time to learn these concertos, as the performer may feel there will likely never be an opportunity to perform the work with an orchestra. Because the pieces are not performed, the concertos move quickly to obscurity.

The paucity of information relating to bass concertos beyond the reviews written by bassist Rodney Slatford and a few other connoisseurs is unfortunate. In 1969, Dr. Phillip Albright finished a thesis for his Doctorate of Musical Arts\(^3\) which included an overview of select double bass concertos. Then, in 1974 (updated in 2000), Murray Grodner\(^4\) compiled a comprehensive catalogue of music, books, recordings and videos for the double bass. These are, in my opinion, some of the most important and helpful documents regarding concertos for the double bass. The lack of widely available materials, as well as the information contained in the documents described above, inspired me to choose the double bass concerto, in general, and post-1970 bass concertos, in particular, as my main areas of research.


CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONCERTOS FOR THE DOUBLE BASS

The double bass has long been seen as no more than reinforcement at the foot of the orchestra and other ensembles, often simply echoing the cello part. There is no argument that the main role of the bass is just that. Consequently, classical composers rarely gave the double bass a chance to shine. However, thanks to performers who have demonstrated the expanded potential of the instrument, both the role of the double bass and the number of available concertos have greatly increased. These changes are, in part, the result of combining method books and approaches to the double bass. The resultant combinations have led to the development of many exceptional virtuosos. As composers have become more aware of the expanding capabilities of these modern virtuosos, more compositions have been written specifically for the double bass.

In the nineteenth century, concertos were largely intended to supplement an instrument’s musical literature. Discussing the history of double bass repertoire, Fausto Borem⁵ states that from 1820 to 1920 transcriptions were probably the most common compositions of the bassist’s literature. I have to disagree with Borem’s statement. Since 1820 performers such as Johann Joseph Abert, Isaià Bille, Giovanni Bottesini, Domenico Dragonetti, Theodore Findeisen, Serge Koussevitzky, Joseph Laubert, Edward Nanny, Franz Simandl, Burnet Tuthill, and many others have performed works composed originally for the double bass. The works have included concertos, concertinos, sonatas, show pieces and other types of compositions. The main issue is not the lack of literature, but an ignorance of the literature that exists. Since the 1760s, concertos have been written for the double bass by Haydn, Vanhal, Zimmermann, Hoffmeister, Sperger, and Dittersdorf.⁶ Composers as well as performers have been exploring the potentials and possibilities of the double bass as a solo instrument.

Double bass soloists have been the driving forces in the propagation of new music written specifically for the double bass. A leading figure of the double bass in the early 20th century, Serge Koussevitzky popularized the double bass as a solo instrument. Because of improvements

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to the double bass, including steel strings and better set-ups, the bass can be played at a more advanced level than ever before. Hence, more composers are writing concertos for the instrument. In the mid-twentieth century and in the following decades, many new concertos were written, including Nikolaos Skalkottas's *Concerto* (1942), Eduard Tubin's *Concerto* (1948), Gunther Schuller's *Concerto* (1962) and Hans Werner Henze's *Concerto* (1966). From the 1960s, through the end of the century, Gary Karr was the leading promoter of the double bass as a solo instrument and was active in commissioning or having many new concertos written especially for him. In the 1970s and 1980s, new concertos included Nino Rota's *Divertimento for Double bass and Orchestra* (1973), which is a concerto in form and style, Jean Françaix's *Concerto* (1975), Einojuhani Rautavaara's *Angel Of Dusk* (1980), Gian Carlo Menotti's *Concerto* (1983), Christopher Rouse's *Concerto* (1985), and Henry Brant's *Ghost Nets* (1988). Continuing into the twenty-first century, new concertos have been composed, including Kalevi Aho's *Concerto* (2005), John Harbison's *Concerto for Bass Viol* (2006), and André Previn's *Double Concerto for violin, double bass, and orchestra* (2007). From this brief overview it is evident that over the last half century composers have been producing music to address the abilities and interests of modern double bass players.

**THE CONCERTO**

Definition

“A concerto is an instrumental work that maintains contrast between an orchestral ensemble and a smaller group or a solo instrument or among various groups of an individual orchestra”.

The instrumental concerto came into being around the last two decades of the 17th century but the term “concerto” began to be applied consistently at the beginning of the 18th century to compositions in three movements (fast-slow-fast). The solo concerto was, and still is, a prominent form of virtuoso display.

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FACTORS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE WRITING OF NEW CONCERTOS

Many of the newer concertos are unknown in the bass community because of compositional issues such as unrealistic double-stops, questionable harmonics and modern musical notations without clear explanations. The sonic ideal and bass playing techniques have changed greatly in the last four decades, but the intrinsic sound of the bass, and, therefore, certain passages, can be covered by a small orchestra or even by a piano accompaniment. Some of the new concertos have these issues with balance and sound production that are rarely present in a concerto for piano, violin, or cello. Other problems include misuse of notation, range overlap, and nontraditional unrealistic extended techniques for new sound effects that do not produce a clear sound in the bass. These are perhaps some of the main reasons why many of these compositions have quickly faded into obscurity.

Despite these actual and/or perceived limitations, advances in both technology and technique has allowed for the expansion of the double bass repertoire. Advances in technology, such as sound amplification and electronic recording, are allowing the double bass to be heard more clearly. Furthermore, the trend of players mixing and mastering the many diverse schools of bass playing technique is producing great performers. Today, virtuosos such as Duncan MacTier, Joel Quarrington, François Rabbath, and many others, have expanded the opportunities for new performance possibilities. Many of these performers have changed the common notion that the double bass is a limited instrument, creating their own challenging and interesting compositions.

Composers and performers such as Edgar Meyer and Gunther Schuller use composition as a way of exploring new and different kinds of music. Edgar Meyer states the following; "It has been my experience that the pieces of which I am most proud are the ones that during the writing of them, I learned the most."9 Gunther Schuller, a scholar, composer and trombonist, states that his double bass concerto is a piece that explores a wide range of musical possibilities of the bass string instrument with chamber orchestra. It is demanding in a wide variety of techniques."10 Performer-composers will continue to be important sources for new literature

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written specifically for the double bass, since an understanding and a desire to take advantage of various playing techniques is becoming more commonplace.
CHAPTER 2
ANOTATED CATALOGUE OF SELECTED CONCERTOS FOR DOUBLE BASS

1. “Islands” Concerto for Double Bass and String Orchestra by Peter Askim.

Peter Askim\(^\text{11}\) was born in Maine on May 7, 1971. He obtained four degrees Yale University and was a member of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra for eight years. As a composer, Askim has had commissions and performances with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, the Honolulu Symphony, the International Society of Bassists (ISB) and the Yale Symphony Orchestra. His compositions are published by Liben Music Publishers and the International Society of Bassists, and his music is recorded on the Gasparo and Albany labels.

Askim’s concerto features a continuous dialogue between the soloist and sections of the ensemble: sometimes between the string and sometimes between the woodwinds or brass sections. Reviewer Maggie Williams of The Strad Magazine wrote: “A Modern Master, Askim is one of the figures from the 20th and 21st centuries who have played pivotal roles in the double bass’s continuing development. He is a contemporary musician who has combined bass playing with a successful career as composer.”\(^\text{12}\) The “Islands” concerto was recorded during the 2005 ISB Convention in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The concerto is approximately sixteen minutes long and is organized as follows:

I. KAUAI: NA PALI CLIFFS – Distant, but pointedly rhythmic – Awakening”
II. OAHU: Surf – Smooth, with wave-like motion
III. MAUI: Haleakala Sunrise – Hushed, dark, gentle
IV. HAWAII: Lava Field

\(^{11}\) http://www.idyllwildarts.org/academy/arts/music/music_fac.html

Example 2-1, Askim, “Islands” Concerto for Double bass and String Orchestra, mvt. 1, mm. 1-30.

The “Islands” concerto is colorful and tonal, centered within C Major and its relative, A minor. The four sections are played “attacca”. It features minimalism with an emphasis on consonant harmony and steady pulse that creates a hypnotic effect. Askim uses several fast, arpeggiated 16th-note harmonics in the bass solo. The second movement is written using only harmonics, which brings up the soprano register. Askim states that “it’s a traditional use of instrumentation found on several famous double bass concertos, and I just try to find new colors within that tradition.” Here the soloist needs to have a clear understanding of the harmonic

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13 E-mail from the composer, December 14, 2008.
function of the double bass. “Islands”\textsuperscript{14} is written by someone who knows the instrument very well. It is a challenging but ultimately very playable “intermediate to advanced” concerto.


Sir Richard Rodney Bennett\textsuperscript{15} (b. 1936) is an English composer renowned for his film scores and his jazz performances as much as for his challenging concert works. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music. During that time, he attended summer courses where he was exposed to serial music. He later spent two years in Paris as a student of the prominent serialist Pierre Boulez. As one of Britain’s most respected and versatile musicians, Bennett has produced over two hundred works for the concert hall, and fifty scores for film and television. He has also written and performed jazz songs for fifty years. His studies with Boulez in the 1950s immersed Bennett in the techniques of the European avant-garde, though he subsequently developed his own distinctive style. In recent years, he has adopted an increasingly tonal idiom. Despite his early studies in modernist techniques, Bennett has written in a wide range of styles, particularly in jazz.

His concerto for double bass was commissioned by the Secretariat of the 1978 International Double bass Competition with funds provided by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon.\textsuperscript{16} It was printed and published by Novello & Company Limited in 1978. The concerto is approximately nineteen minutes long, has reduced piano accompaniment in “solo tuning”\textsuperscript{17} and is organized as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [1.] \textit{Declamato}
  \item Quasi cadenza, drammatico
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{16} Richard Rodney Bennett, \textit{Concerto for Double bass & chamber orchestra, score} (Great Britain: Novello & Company Limited), 1978.

\textsuperscript{17} The double bass is tuned E A D G which is the regular tuning, often called “orchestral tuning”. When the double bass is featured as a solo instrument, it often uses scordatura or “solo tuning” in which the double bass is tuned a whole step higher (F# B E A) than the orchestral tuning.
2. *Elegiaco*
Quasi cadenza, liberamente con fantasia

3. *Energico*


This concerto presents both technical and musical challenges throughout, such as chromatic passages and combinations of quick motivic melody lines with *pizzicato* and *arco* combined. It also has a wide range of dynamics, articulations and several double-stops. A mature composition for a mature performer, this concerto can be rewarding to learn and perform. It can be categorized as "very difficult."

Victor Bruns\(^{18}\) (1904-1996) was a bassoonist and composer, born in Finland, near St. Petersburg. He studied bassoon at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Alexander Wassilliew and composition with Vladimir Stscherbatschow. Bruns graduated with his first Bassoon Concerto Op.5, in 1933. He actually performed as the soloist with the Leningrad Philharmonic. Among his many impressive accomplishments, one of the most important was the GDR (German Democratic Republic) Art Prize. This is a prize for important achievements in all fields of the art. Another occurred in 1990 when the International Double Reed Society (IDRS) named him an Honorary Member. Most of his compositions are instrumental concertos and chamber music.

This concerto is only available in the USA and Canada from G. Schirmer Music Publishers. It was first published by Breitkopf and Härtel and is available in solo tuning, reduced piano accompaniment and the full orchestra score for rental. This concerto is approximately eighteen minutes long and is organized as follows:

1. *Allegro animato*
2. *Andante tranquillo*
3. *Allegro resoluto*

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This concerto is rhythmically steady and the predominant rhythmic figure is triplet-eighth notes. There is one short and charming cadenza in the first movement and another technically challenging one in the third movement. This movement contains modern writing and also ambiguity of key center. The range covers the low to mid-high register and there are some unusual melodic lines with many accidentals. The second movement seems to be centered in a minor key and is lyrical, with several extended melodic lines and several accidentals as well. This movement is written for the mid-range of the bass. The third movement is a compilation of melodic lines of the first and second movement in a march-like fast tempo. In general, this is a mature bravura concerto with a modern sound and some tonal ambiguity which can be categorized as “advanced.”

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Richard Gavin Bryars\footnote{Keith Potter, –Gavin Bryars”, in Stanley Sadie, ed., The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 4 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), p. 524.} (b. 1943) is an English composer and double bassist who has been active in a variety of styles of music, including jazz, free improvisation, minimalism, experimental music, avant-garde and neoclassicism. Bryars studied philosophy at Sheffield University before studying music for three years. His first works as a composer owe much to minimalism and the so-called New York School of John Cage, with whom he briefly studied. Bryars was a founding member of the Portsmouth Sinfonia, an orchestra whose membership consisted of performers who played popular classical works. Bryars has written many other works, including three operas as well as several instrumental pieces. Included among the instrumentals are three string quartets and several concertos. In 1987, Bryars wrote his first double bass concerto named By the Vaar. Brief information about this work is included in the list of other important concertos.

“Farewell to St. Petersburg” is available only in orchestra tuning and in full orchestra score from Schott Music Ltd., London. The length of this concerto is approximately twenty-seven minutes and is organized as a single movement marked Molto lento, with a rich, lyrical and dark melody of the bass in unison with an optional male chorus in Russian, with optional English translations.
Example 2-4, Bryars, *Double bass Concerto “Farewell to St. Petersburg”*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-25.

This is an elegant and imaginative composition in which the solo bass is constantly singing except in one passage (mm. 308-367) which contains high natural harmonics that are within a slow tempo, not too technically demanding. The concerto is written within the most used range of the instrument.

Melodically mature in contrast to many other new concertos, it does not have virtuosic or dazzling passages. A good example of a melodically mature concerto that shares some similarities with the concerto *Farewell to St. Petersburg*” is Edward Tubin’s *Concerto for*
Double bass and Orchestra. The concerto “Farewell to St. Petersburg” is accessible to a wide number of bassists with various levels of technique. It can be categorized as “intermediate to advanced”.


Aldo Clementi\(^{21}\) (b. 1925) is an Italian composer who grew up in a family of amateur musicians. His father was a violinist, and his grandfather made sure the family was exposed to the study and appreciation of the great composers such as Schubert, Brahms and Mendelssohn. Clementi studied composition and piano, and graduated in 1946 from Catania University. He also studied with Schoenberg in Vienna. In 1956 he worked at the electronic music studio of the Italian radio broadcaster RAI in Milan. He won several music awards and also taught music theory at the University of Bologna from 1971 to 1992. His music has been featured at Ultima, the Oslo Contemporary Music Festival (2009) and performed and recorded by ensembles, including the Quatuor Bozzini, the Ives Ensemble, and the Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales. His works have also been broadcast by BBC Radio. Clementi himself describes his concerto as “an extremely dense counterpoint.”\(^{22}\) The score of this concerto does not have a time limit because it depends on the performer and the ensemble to extend it or not. However, it could last approximately six to eight minutes. The concerto is available from the composer and on loan through some university libraries.

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\(^{22}\) Aldo Clementi, *Concerto per contrabbasso, strumenti e carillons*, score. Copyright by A. Clementi. All rights reserved (1976).
Example 2-5. Clementi, *Concerto per contrabbasso, strumenti e carillons*, full score, mm. 1-16.
This is a modern composition in which the composer employs an unusual form of score writing. The score is notated in real pitches and repeated an indefinite number of times. Repetition is left to the discretion of the bass player. After an exploration of the various possibilities of sound effects, special techniques, virtuosic skills, the bass line brings the work to a conclusion. The bass line ranges from two to six notes in each bar. The solo violin ranges from 0 to 2 notes, while the other instruments, except the celesta and glockenspiel, play their single note in the measure, guided by the conductor. Each bar will be determined by the sequence of notes played by the double bass. After the last note, the conductor marks the attack of the next bar. For each instrument, and even more for the bass solo, the composer has written indications of how timbre, dynamics, colors, attacks, and so on, must be achieved. This is a modern composition that explores combinations of sections and solo instruments to their fullest. It features the double bass in its widest possible range. This concerto would be a great project for a chamber recital. It cannot be reduced to only piano and bass because of the importance of the lines of the percussion and the sounds and timbres of the other instruments involved. The concerto, for its complex writing, orchestration, colors, and combinations can be categorized as “advanced.”


Jean-Michel Damase\(^\text{23}\) (b.1928) is a French pianist, conductor and composer who began studying piano at age five and began composing by age nine. He was admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris in 1940 to study piano. He won first prize for piano in 1943 and first prize for composition in 1947. The same year he won the Grand Prix de Rome. Damase composes in a style that can be compared to Fauré, Poulenc, Ravel, Prokofiev, Roussel, and Stravinsky. He incorporates many of the rhythmic and harmonic complexities associated with twentieth-century French music. Damase has remained a traditionalist throughout his career, continuing the post-tonal line of Debussy and Ravel. His music is accessible without being lightweight; unabashedly melodic, with a distinct delight in "obsessive" motifs; tonal, though, paradoxically, harmonically complex; rhythmically surprising; playful; respectful of tradition.

and form; and always superbly crafted. All these features are found in Damase's concerto for double bass. This concerto was published in 1980 and is available from Gérard Billaudot Editeur S.A Reference: GB2943, and from United Music Publishers Ltd. in solo tuning. Both piano accompaniment and full orchestra scores are available. The concerto is approximately twenty-two minutes long and is organized as follows:

1. Allegro
2. Adagio
3. Allegro moderato

Example 2-6. Damase, *Concerto Pour Contrabasse et Orchestre*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-23.

The first movement, written within a comfortable range for the bass, is tonal, in C major. It does not have a cadenza and is rhythmically exciting. The use of treble, bass and tenor clefs seem to be equal in all movements. The main challenges seem to be the many melodic lines, heavily chromatic arpeggios, meter changes (3/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/4) and variations of these meter

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24}}\text{Ibid.}\]
changes. There are some combinations of two measures bowed, followed by quick *pizzicato* passages played with harmonics which could present the problem of slowing down the tempo in the solo part. The second movement is a long melodic *Adagio* written within a comfortable range that features many changes in tempos markings and arpeggios with extended intervals. The last movement is in bravura style but rhythmically steady, using a somewhat higher range on the bass. There are also passages that combine *arco* and *pizzicato* playing and repetition of double-stops in thirds, fourths and fifths. This concerto can be classified as ‘intermediate to advanced.’


Thomas Christian David25 (1925-2006) was an Australian composer and teacher and son of the outstanding composer and teacher Johann Nepomuk David. Thomas Christian David was a choirboy at Leipzig’s Thomaskirche and studied with his father at Hochschule für Musik. He also taught flute at the Salzburg Mozarteum and was founder-director of the South German Madrigal Choir. In Vienna he taught harmony and composition at the Academy of Music. Several of his compositions won awards such as the Radio Paris Composition (1963), the Austrian Medal for Science and Art (1981) and the Grand Medal in Gold (1996). His works are noted for their innovative, modernistic uses of contrapuntal devices. David believed that ‘music as a language must be spoken in an idiom understandable to players and audiences alike.’26 His music is also characterized by expanded tonal development of small motivic units, polyphonic writing and cantabile lines.

This concerto is available through Ludwig Doblinger Publisher with string orchestra and reduced-piano score in solo tuning and is written in three movements as follows:

1. *Allegro*
2. *Molto moderato*
3. *Tarantella-Molto vivace*


26 Ibid.
It is a difficult concerto. There are several lengthy passages with busy sixteenth note melodies and some acrobatic jumps. This is the longest and most challenging movement both technically and musically. It also features several measures with syncopated rhythmic motives that need special attention. These measures might present difficulties with the bow. The second movement is lyrical. It is based on an extended, beautiful melody with an interruption in the middle of a brief allegretto played by the accompaniment. The melody returns and ends the movement. This movement has a con sordino section marked p and gradually crescendo to f which is very lyrical. This section could present problems of sound projection if executed literally; in other words, if executed p and con sordino, it would be difficult to hear. There are no cadenzas but all movements have sections marked to be played cadenza-like or “free” (quasi-cadenza). Throughout the whole concerto, there is a wide variety of bow strokes displayed, harmonics, high register melody lines, double-stops and a section played pizzicato that can be enjoyable if played in a jazz oriented style. In this concerto the composer explores the most common range of the bass for solo playing.
The third movement is written in the traditional Italian Tarantella style. This concerto is well-written for the bass and is worth learning while performing with piano or string orchestra accompaniment. It can be rated as ‘advanced.’


Peter Maxwell Davies\(^\text{27}\) (b.1934) is an English composer and conductor, whose compositions are in a contemporary style. He was born in Salford, Manchester. He took piano lessons and composed from an early age. He was educated at Leigh Boys Grammar School, University of Manchester and at the Royal Manchester College of Music. He was also a member of New Music Manchester, a group committed to contemporary music. From 1992 to 2002 he was associate conductor and composer with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. He has conducted a number of other orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Davies is also Composer Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, for which he wrote a series of ten Stratchclyde Concertos\(^\text{28}\) in which each work features an instrumental soloist and small orchestra. Davies has been awarded a number of honorary doctorates at various institutions including Oxford University. He has served as President of Making Music (The National Federation of Music Societies), and has held the title Master of the Queen's Music.

This concerto is an atonal and modern composition, written for orchestra tuning double bass and reduced-piano accompaniment as well. It is available at Boosey & Hawkes Music Publisher,


Ltd. (SBB0010 1994). This concerto was premiered in City Hall, Glasgow in 1994 by virtuoso Duncan McTier.

The concerto is approximately twenty-one minutes long and is written in two main movements; each movement is divided in two sub-movements with challenging cadenzas. It is organized as follows:

1. **Moderato**  vi *g* oroso  *(Cadenza)*  **Meno mosso, con fantasia**  **Lento**
   
   Andante

2. **Lento**  **Allegro**  **Andante**  *(Cadenza)*  **Adagio**  **Vigoroso brillante**

   for Duncan McTier and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra

   STRATHCLYDE CONCERTO No. 7
   for Double Bass and Orchestra

   ) Solo Double Bass  

   PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

   Example 2-8. Davies, *Strathclyde Concerto No. 7* for Double bass and Orchestra, mvt. 1, mm. 1-17.

   The first movement appears to be the most demanding, featuring rhythmical complexities such as numerous changes of rhythm in almost every measure, which suggests rhythmic
instability. This movement is also characterized by an ambiguous tonal center and includes a plethora of chromatic passages. It is written mostly in bass and treble clefs and has a very complex cadenza, which features arpeggiated melodies and chords, fantasy-like melodic motives, double-stops of thirds, fourths, sixths and even double-stops in octaves. There are also jumps ranging from some of the lowest notes of the bass to very high, harmonic notes followed by passages of sevenths, sixths, and fifths consecutively. This cadenza is quite imaginative and acrobatic. This movement also features a section that seems similar to some of Bach’s cello suites, using the bass in a polyphonic manner playing a melodic line and accompanying at the same time.

Some methods with etudes and exercises that would help to achieve accurate execution of these passages are Bille’s *Nuovo Metodo per contrabasso* Part II, No. 4 and the Hrabe’s *86 Etudes*, Book 1 for string bass. The first section of the second movement (*Lento*) is written entirely in harmonics. Some of these harmonics are “false” or “artificial” and they can be a challenge to play clearly. In order to execute them correctly, the thumb stops the note and the octave or other harmonic is activated by lightly touching the string at the relative node point. This technique is a part of the “extended technique” or more modern approach to the double bass, which extends its range considerably. This extension is necessary in order to execute the movement appropriately. Throughout the entire concerto, there are rarely repetitions of the same melodies or musical ideas. Several rhythmic patterns are the same, especially in the second movement. The piano accompaniment is, in fact, rather demanding as well. This is a technically challenging concerto. It features modern sounds, colors and a musical language different from the traditional bass concertos. It would be a beneficial learning experience for bassists of this generation. I would rate it “Advanced”.


Paul Desenne³⁰ (b. 1959) was born in Caracas, Venezuela and is one of the only Latin American composers who wrote a concerto for double bass. He studied cello during his

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³⁰ http://www.pauldesenne.com/
childhood and began composing at age fourteen. In 1976 he moved to Paris, where he studied cello and composition. During a decade in Paris, he played with several South American groups and was exposed to music of several different cultures, including Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia and the Caribbean. He adapted and arranged a great deal of popular music for cello in a variety of chamber formats. The exposure to all sorts of popular Latin genres led to his first "serious" works – chamber pieces for woodwinds, strings and **cuatro** (the Venezuelan four-stringed guitar). Some of these were recorded by Desenne’s students in Caracas in 1990. Many of his works have been played by U.S. soloists and ensembles.

Desenne’s concerto was commissioned by the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas (POA) and Alondra de la Parra, for Edicson Ruiz, who is currently the first and youngest in the history of Latin American musicians to perform with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The concerto was premiered at Alice Tully Hall, New York City in June 2006 by Edicson Ruiz and the POA. This concerto is approximately seventeen minutes long and is available through the composer. It is organized in the three standard movements in concerto form as follows:

1. **Sísifo** - Fluido, Absurdo
2. **La Noche** - Andante serenissimo
3. **Pink Bull**

### Bass Concerto

Paul Desenne 2006

for Alondra, Adriana and Edicson

In this concerto Desenne presents the bass solo as the leading and outstanding musical line with a mixture of hybrid musical styles such as the asymmetrical *Son Cubano*, and other forms of Latin dance music that are combined with theatrical, virtuosic and gymnastic (bravura) passages. The accompaniment also presents attractive and colorful melodic lines, especially when not accompanying the solo double bass. The first movement, *Sísifo* (Sisyphus), begins with a rhythmic beat by the orchestra followed by a lyrical interlude for the solo bass. Subsequently, the composition leads into a vivid moment of *pizzicati* and riffs by the orchestra. The movement ends with a modified but still asymmetrical *Son Cubano*, which exposes the solo bass player to the spotlight of a Caribbean dance music orchestra. The second movement, *La Noche* (The Night), is also somewhat referential to the orchestral sounds and characteristics of Latin music of the fifties such as *Salsa*, *Son Montuno*, *Guaracha*, *danson*, *mambo*, Spanish music, and Latin Jazz. However, the heart of the piece is a dark meditation of the solo voice over a regular, slow harmonic swing. In the last movement, *Pink Bull*, the composer combines flamenco and disco music and a miniature drum set that is played by a standing percussionist next to the soloist. The soloist and the drummer create a playful duo while the accompaniment introduces a rhythmic mixture, alternating between binary dance and ternary flamenco meters without warning. The drummer freely improvises and takes the lead on some of the binary dance rhythms, making it a double featured ending. This is an “intermediate to advanced” work that has the potential to be an enjoyable new experience for double bassists as well as for the rest of the orchestra.


Jean René Désiré Françaix

Jean René Désiré Françaix was a French composer, pianist and orchestrator known for his prolific output and lively style. His gifts as an artist were encouraged from an early age by his family. His father was a musicologist, composer, pianist and director of the Conservatoire of Le Mans. His mother was a talented voice teacher. Françaix was only six years old when he began composing, and his first publication occurred in 1922. Its publication caught the attention of Nadia Boulanger. She encouraged Françaix's career, considering the young composer to be one of her foremost students. Françaix was an accomplished pianist from an

early age, and he earned a First Prize in Piano at the Paris Conservatory. He often performed his own works. Françaix's primary occupation was his extraordinarily active compositional career. He remained prolific throughout his life; even in 1981 he described himself as "constantly composing," barely finishing one piece before beginning another. He maintained this relentless work ethic until his death. Françaix wrote pieces in many of the major large musical forms, including concerti, symphonies, opera, theatre, ballet, and other styles of the 20th century. His music is marked by lightness and wit. A stated goal of his was to "give pleasure." His music was also characterized by a conversational style of interplay between the musical lines. It changed little throughout his career. He was influenced by composers he admired such as Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, and Francis Poulenc. The concerto was recorded by Bayer Records in 2001 and is available in CD format. The name of the CD is "Der Moderne Kontrabass" #100324, from CD Universe, #1576317. The reduced piano accompaniment is available from Schott Publisher: 49011032 in solo tuning. Orchestra and piano reduced accompaniment are also available from Publisher.

This concerto is written in three movements as follows:

1. *Tempo di Marcia*
2. *Scherzando--trio testeso*
3. *Andante--tempo di valse--Tempo di Marcia*
The first movement, *Tempo di marcia*, features the solo bass playing nearly constantly, except in a section in which a solo violin is featured. In this section, the solo bass is written in as being “optional”. This section is rhythmically and melodically challenging. Both violin and bass performing unison would result in a charming and pleasant-sounding segment. This movement explores the most standard range of the double bass (see example on page 12) and is based on four rhythmic motives that are altered and/or modified (mm. 3, 4, 6, 9) but are not too complicated. The second movement, *Scherzando*, with a *trio testoso* section, is a short, charming and not too technically demanding movement based mainly on one musical motive throughout (mm. 5-6, 7-8). It has two key areas (A minor and B major). These keys are bright and few concertos are written using them. The third movement, *Andante*, is basically an extensive melody built on eighth notes in B major (except in the last six measures). With the use of dynamic contrast, the performer could transform it into a lyrical and attractive movement. The fourth movement is fast, written mainly in triplets which give the piece the spirit of the *Tarantella*. It begins in the lowest range of the bass and stays within this range until beyond the
middle of the movement. It also contains a short, flashy cadenza written in the mid-to-high range of the bass, followed by an elegant *tempo di valse* section. This last one is followed by a challenging *Tempo di marcia* marked *molto marcato* which is to be played using entirely harmonics. After the march, there is a short *subito cantabile e capriccioso* section that leads to a *molto piú lento* (only three measures). The *piú lento* precedes the *Tempo di marcia*, to the end.

These many quick changes of characters, tempos, dynamics, and registers of the bass, as well as a passage with double-stop on triplets and syncopated bowings, are written in a high register. This movement gives the performer a great opportunity to display mastery of virtuosity as well as musical maturity. The score contains clear indications and bowing markings from the composer such as articulation(s), *spiccato*, *staccato*, open notes, bow directions, specific fingering on a specific string, and brackets for positions in the fingerboard. The score is carefully annotated by the composer, who requires specific sounds on specific notes to create his musical ideas. It depends, however, on the level of technical mastery of the performer to use and/or modify these markings as needed. All the features found in this concerto categorize it as difficult but it is a rewarding and important work which deserves to be included in the repertoire as well.


Erik Funk (b. 1949) was born in Montana. He holds degrees from Portland State University and is currently employed as a member of the faculty at Montana State University teaching composition and orchestration. He also serves as artistic director and host for Montana PBS-TV. Funk has composed over one hundred major works. Approximately one-third of his works completed to date were commissions, including seven symphonies, four operas, sixteen concerti, five string quartets, several choral works of various size, and chamber works. There are currently five CDs of his music available, featuring performances by the Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and the Moyzes String Quartet. This concerto is available in orchestra tuning and full score exclusively from the

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32 http://www.ericfunk.com/ericfunk.com/About.html. Copyright(c) 2003 Eric Funk. All rights reserved.
composer. This concerto is roughly twenty-two minutes long and is organized in three movements with cadenzas in the first and third movements as follows:

1. Allegro
2. Adagio: Love’s Song
3. Cadenza (freely) Moderato con moto

CONCERTO for Double Bass
and French Horn, Timpani & String Orchestra


The first movement is rhythmically straightforward but quite busy; it has only two short breaks using fermatas and a few empty measures towards the end. It requires much endurance from the performer. It is written within the mid to high register of the bass and the notes are written mostly in treble clef. The tonal center is C with a change of key to the parallel minor towards the end. The biggest challenge in this movement seems to occur in mm. 88-92 and mm. 94-98, which contain double-stops of thirds, fourths, fifths, and octaves consecutively that might need special attention for intonation purposes. The second movement is centered in E minor, in a low register. It also lacks dynamic and articulation indications. Because of this, the performer
might face challenges with sound projection. The solo part has no break from the beginning to the end of the movement but it is rhythmically steady. It depends on the performer to make this movement musically interesting. Perhaps approaching the piece in a non-literal manner and adding contrast and dynamic colors would make it more interesting to the listener.

The last movement begins with a quiet and simple but pleasant cadenza in a high register, which introduces a solo by the French horn that is followed by the accompaniment. After the cadenza, the movement turns into a busy conversation between the solo bass and the other solo instruments. However, the bass is, for the most part, the predominant voice. This movement is entirely written in treble clef and contains several sforzandos and fff dynamic markings. This concerto is pedagogically significant because it reinforces the importance of learning works featuring more than one solo instrument. It is a great composition for a chamber recital or chamber concert that can be rated as "intermediate."


Paul Walter Fürst (b. 1926) is a Viennese composer. He is best known as a solo violist with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra Musicians, as violist with the Vienna Philharmonic, and as the founder of the annual music symposium at Castle Courtyard, Lower Austria.

This concerto is approximately eighteen minutes and was premiered by bassist Heinrich Schneikart in Vienna in 1977. It was published by Doblinger Musikhaus and Verlag Publisher in 1976. It is available in solo tuning, piano reduction, and full orchestra.

The concerto is written in three movements:

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro


Although there are no cadenzas, it is a very demanding concerto technically and musically, especially in the second movement, which features double-stops with intervals of tritones. It is also characterized by tonal ambiguity and acrobatic jumps. This movement emphasizes sonorities beyond tonality and employs the most common range of solo bass playing (see page 19). It also has some beautiful melodic lines. This movement ends with an *Allegro assai* that features *arco* and *pizzicato* playing, within wide dynamic contrasts. The first movement is the longest, with some terraced dynamics and several intervals of fifths progressing by *glissando* into other double-stop in thirds and fourths. This movement is rhythmically steady and also presents some use of the whole-tone scale. The third movement sounds like a serious, sophisticated conversation between the soloist and the orchestra, with varied dynamic changes and a display of virtuosity by the bass attempting to produce modern sounds with high harmonics and double-stops. This composition lies well within the instrument’s range and is a rewarding concerto to learn. It could be rated as ‒intermediate to advanced‖.

Harald Genzmer\(^34\) (b. 1936) was born in Blumenthal, near Bremen, Germany. He studied composition with Paul Hindemith at the Berlin Hochschule für Music and taught at the Volksmusikschule Berlin-Neukölln. During the early part of the Second World War he served as a military band clarinetist. He also taught at the Munich Hochschule für Musik.

This concerto was printed and published in 1997, and the piano reduction was published in 1998 by Ries & Erler, Berlin. It is available through WorldCat (FirstSearch) and in several university libraries as well. It is written in four movements with cadenzas in the first and fourth movements, fast second and fourth movements and a lyrical third movement. It is organized as follows:

1. Allegro moderato
2. Presto
3. Adagio
4. Vivace


The introduction in the first movement by the accompaniment (in the first four measures) is followed by an expressive melodic line written in the lower register of the bass that features significant rhythmic patterns. These lines feature many accidentals which might suggest an ambiguous tonal key center. The movement also features various tempo and dynamic changes and a nice, short cadenza in the style of the Italian *Tarantella*. The second movement begins on the lowest register of the bass and gradually extends to the middle of the fingerboard (in harmonic octaves). This movement is to be played mostly using *tremolo* which presents a good opportunity for the development of flexibility and bow control. The third movement presents some of the same features found in the first movement such as low register, lyrical melody lines and many accidentals. The fourth movement is perhaps the most rhythmically complex with
combinations of quick meter changes, rhythmical alterations such as hemiolas and fast runs written mainly in the higher register using treble clef. This concerto could be categorized as “intermediate” to “advanced.”


John Harris Harbison\(^{35}\) (b. 1938) is best known for his operas and choral compositions, but his works include several symphonies, string quartets, and concerti for violin, viola, and lately, bass viol (double bass). He has had commissions from the Metropolitan Opera, the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. The concerto was published by Associated Music Press Inc. and is available in two versions — C or D — in accordance with the soloist's tuning. Piano reductions — in C and D — are available (Print-on-Demand) from G. Schirmer and Associated Music Publishers Rental Department. It was commissioned by the International Society of Bassists in memory of David Capoccioni and Michael Hammond and has been funded by the family and friends of Capoccioni, whose son, Hunter Capoccioni, is an ISB member. There were fifteen major American orchestras involved in this project as well. This is certainly a unique and pioneering event in the bass world. It is hard to think of any prior compositions that have featured so many musicians stepping out of the ranks to solo with their own orchestras. It is certainly a project that emphasizes the strong sense of community among bassists. This concerto is roughly twenty minutes long and is written in three movements as follows:

1. *Lamento*
2. *Cavatina*
3. *Rondo*

The first movement, *Lamento*, begins with an Introduction which reminds the listener that the bass viol is the oldest instrument in the modern orchestra. The *Lamento* briefly invokes cadences of a medieval viol consort. The second movement is a Cavatina, which is defined in the Italian dictionary as "a sustained Air." The Cavatina combines the solo bass in a series of pleasant duets with other solo voices, always grounded by the bass line played by the rest of the bass section. This is a playful movement that allows the performers to demonstrate their mastery of technique. The last movement is a Rondo (return of themes). An extremely chromatic lament follows. The Rondo is a movement that allows the performer to demonstrate the versatility of different styles of music, such as jazz and classical.
The use of the term "bass viol" was very deliberate according to Harbison. When he began to work on this commission, Harbison began studying more of the solo bass literature, including the Koussevitzky Concerto and the Bottesini Concerto No. 2 in B minor, in addition to newer pieces such as Edgar Meyer’s Bass Concerto No. 1 and Double Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. Although Harbison had written for bass before and had written concertos for the other string instruments, the double bass began to present some challenges. “There were some similarities [to writing the other string concertos], but there were some very startling differences,” says Harbison. “In terms of the balance, which is clearly the most delicate issue, it is not so different than certain problems that come up with the viola concerto, or certain registers of the cello. One of the issues with an instrument like the viola or the bass, for the way I write, is that I don’t feel comfortable with the orchestra taking over and making a huge sound. I wanted the scale of the orchestra to be something that would make the reentry of the bass sound appropriate. I think the other problem in writing a bass concerto is what do you do with the bass—the actual bass line. And I think that is the really difficult one. At some points I decided that the actual bass of the texture should be the solo.”

Harbison also comments about the changes in bass playing over the years in which he has been conducting and composing. "There’s a big change in the way the instrument is presented. When I first started conducting Bach cantatas, I’d have to say there was a general assumption—there were certainly exceptions, obviously, there were always bassists who were highly developed in certain ways—but the general assumption was that the tone would always be absorbed as part of another sound. Just in the years I’ve been doing Bach cantatas, the sound of the bass line has changed. The kind of playing that is going on at the bottom of a Bach orchestra now I’d have to describe as more polished and soloistic. It’s now harder, although I do go for it at times in this concerto, to get that sort of strained or crude effect out of the bass which a lot of early solos want...like the Fourth Act of Othello, or Mahler 1, where I think the assumption is that you’ll get a certain kind of roughness and strangeness. Often when we hear those passages now, we don’t hear that. We hear quite a different voice. The bass has evolved toward a different

ideal." These quotations and comments about the concerto are important not only because they come from the composer himself but they help to approach this concerto properly. This concerto can be rated as “advanced.”


Wolfgang Hofmann⁴² (1922-2003) was a German composer who wrote more than 360 compositions. His music features classical notation, but he wrote bitonal and very rhythmical compositions for nearly all instruments and ensembles (solo, duets, quartets, symphony orchestra). It is sometimes difficult to tell when to call a composer “Modern” as opposed to “Romantic”. In general one can say that the Modern Era in music started around the year 1900. However, many composers continued to write pieces in a Romantic fashion long into the 20th century and Hofmann was one of these composers. This concerto features four movements, each dealing with a different aspect of the sonic palette of the double bass. It was published by Henry Litolff’s Verlag and is available from Peters Editions (EP8054) in orchestra tuning and is organized as follows:

1. *Allegro moderato* (Der Elefant)
2. *Flageolett*
3. *Andante*
4. *Allegro* (Die Hornisse)


⁴² [http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/hofmann](http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/hofmann)

The opening movement is titled *'Der Elefant'*, an affront to any serious bassist and not a joke as some conductors and audiences seem to think⁴³. The movement begins with simple notations (quarter notes) in a comfortable low register; it gradually becomes higher and rhythmically complex. Halfway through the movement, there is a section with double-stops of major and minor thirds, perfect and diminished fourths and fifths, tritones, major and minor sixths in sequence. It seems like the bass plays two melodic lines at the same time. This section might need special attention to master it for intonation. After this section there is another passage to be played entirely with natural harmonics followed by a variation of the previous section. These are both technically challenging sections in this movement. The second movement is melodious; it is a beautiful song that can be categorized as *‘bel canto’* music; this form of music works perfectly for the double bass and is to be played with natural harmonics. In the third movement, however, the role of the bass solo is switched. The bass accompanies the entire orchestra in the first fifteen measures using a three-measure *pizzicato* pattern played in the low register. This section is interrupted by a short section with challenging double-stops and, then, it

returns to a similar *pizzicato* line played in a higher register. The two main musical figures here are the *pizzicato* line and the melody with double stops. The fourth movement is a non-stop (*motto perpetuo*) sixteenth note pattern *Allegro* bass line with some dynamic contrasts and a light accompaniment as well. After measure 81, the movement becomes increasingly difficult. The movement is similar to the *Scherzo* Op. 12 *for Cello* by Daniel Van Goens, but this movement is much longer. This concerto, and especially the last movement, is excellent for developing endurance and bow control. This concerto can be categorized as “intermediate to advanced”.


Robin Greville Holloway\(^{44}\) (b. 1943) is an English composer who has been described as a "neo-romantic" composer,\(^{45}\) reflecting his own affinity for music of the last part of the 19th and early 20th centuries.\(^{46}\) He has held several important positions, including serving as Assistant Lecturer in Music and later as Full Lecturer and Reader in Musical Composition and Professor of Musical Composition at the University of Cambridge. He is also a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Holloway's doctoral thesis, *Debussy and Wagner*\(^{47}\), discusses a close relationship between music and language as well as romanticism and tonality. This relationship can be heard in some of Holloway’s works. His concerto for double bass was written in 1996 for virtuoso bassist Duncan McTier and premiered in 1999-2000. It is in orchestra tuning and organized as follows:

1.  *Con moto non allegro*
   With stealthy undeviating steadiness
2.  *Scherzo*  Tight, precise, footling
   Trio: Very lively


3. Finale

Slowish----Quite lively----Con moto moderato---Alla valse gracios---Con moto moderato---
Allegro non troppo ma ritmico----poco aminato---Cadenza---EPILOGUE (con moto dolce e
trianuillo).

Example 2-16, Holloway, *Concerto for Double bass and Small Orchestra* Op. 83, mvt. 1, 
mm. 1-16.

The first movement has eight sections that gradually explore each position of the bass's 
fingerboard. The second movement is mostly a *pizzicato* —walking bass line,” commonly found 
in jazz playing, followed by a *Trio* that uses a mixture of meters within the tempo. The *Finale* is 
an extended movement with several sections in which —rasgueado chords,” a cadenza, a wide 
range of dynamics, several accidentals and long, lyrical melodic lines are found. The cadenza in 
this movement is a quotation from the first movement somewhat modified. This concerto 
features the bass in its lower register emphasizing the beauty and sonority characteristic of the 
instrument. It is likely that this concerto will present difficulty in terms of projecting the sound 
over the orchestra or the piano, since it does not use solo tuning. Even with this possible 
difficulty, this is one of the finest concertos written recently. It can be classified as —intermediate 
to advanced.”

Konstantin Ivanov⁴⁸ (1907-1984) was born in Yefremov, Tula District (Russia). He studied at the Moscow Conservatory and later gained fame as a conductor of both the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra and the USSR State Symphony Orchestra. His other large-scale works include a Symphony-Cantata "The Glory of Youth," his Space Symphony in F sharp minor in (1975) and his almost unknown concerto for double bass. There is a recording available from MELODIYA S-10 08773-4 (LP) (1978). The piano reduced accompaniment and solo part in orchestra tuning are available from the composer and also at several university music libraries for loan. The concerto is written in three movements and is organized as follows:

1. *Allegro risoluto*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro con brio*

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This concerto is more of a traditional work in the style of Capuzzi, Sperger, Vanhal and Dragonetti. It features the bravura style. The first movement is centered around A minor and explores the low to mid-high register of the bass. It also has a playable cadenza centered in D minor with clear marks and indications of bowings and fingerings which seem to be helpful. Movement II, like the first movement, is tonal, but with several changes of key center all in a relatively short movement (C, C minor, D, B, C, F# minor, and E minor). This concerto could be used as a substitute for one of the traditional concertos. It could be labeled as ‘intermediate.’

18. "a little concerto" for double bass and string orchestra (1972) by Gordon.

Gordon (Percival Septimus) Jacob⁴⁹ (1895–1984), was born in London and he studied

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composition, theory, and conducting at the Royal College of Music. Because of an injury when he was a child, his instrumental abilities were limited. He studied piano but never had a performing career. He taught at the Royal College of Music from 1924 until his retirement in 1966. Jacob was one of the most musically conservative composers of his generation. This conservatism later caused his works to fall out of fashion when the 1960s establishment favored the avant-garde. Jacob was prolific, publishing over seven hundred pieces in addition to four books and numerous essays on music. His concerto was written for bassist Robert Meyer in 1972 and published by Rodney Slatford and York Edition in 1974. It is written in orchestra tuning in three movements as follows:

1. *Introduction and Scherzo*
2. *Largo*
3. *Allegro*

Example 2-18. Jacob, "a little concerto" for double bass and string orchestra, mvt. 1, mm. 1-19.
The main characteristics of this concerto are its short thirteen minute length, its writing in the standard three movement concerto tradition, and its use of the most common playing register of the bass. The first movement includes an introduction marked Andantino, followed by an Allegro con brio, then a Scherzo, followed by a Trio and a key change marked Meno mosso, and at the end, a Tempo I (Allegro con brio). The second movement, however, is melodious and starts in the low register of the bass, reaching around the middle part of the bass, which is the standard playing register for a young bassist. The third movement is somewhat challenging. It contains several meter changes (2/4 and 3/4) that alternate. There is a short lyric section marked tranquillo in the middle of the movement and then, a tempo section with many triplet and sixteenth note figures that leads to the only cadenza in the concerto. This is a short cadenza which features double stops, triplet sixteenth notes and a quasi presto section at the end. This is another enjoyable and relatively undemanding concerto suitable for a less experienced bassist.


Uroš Krek 50(1922 - 2008) was a Slovenian composer and renowned personality of Slovenian music after the Second World War. He studied at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana. He was also an editor of symphonic broadcasts and later a chief editor of music at Radiotelevizija Slovenija. He taught composition and music theory at the Music Academy in Ljubljana at the Institute of Ethnomusicology. He was president of the Society of Slovenian Composers. In addition, Krek was a member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) and corresponding member of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Although he was strongly influenced by earlier 20th-century classical music and use of neo-classicism, he also incorporated elements of folklore into his compositions. Krek's compositions covered virtually all musical ensembles, but his best works were created for string instruments. He has also composed chamber music as well as music for films, theater, and choral work.

This concerto is the only contemporary composition for string quartet and solo Double bass in the form of a concerto included in this document. It has three movements with a cadenza in the first. The movements are named as follows:

PRELUDIO \hspace{1cm} \textit{Tempo piu mosso}

AD LIBITUM \hspace{1cm} \textit{Allegro}

------------------ \hspace{1cm} \textit{Allegro giusto}

\textbf{Contrabbasso concertante}

\textit{per contrabbasso e archi}

\textbf{I. PRELUDIO}

\textit{Tempo piu mosso}


The solo bass part has many accidentals, high notes and even a section with three and four note chords to be played pizzicato. It is perhaps best played \textit{\textasciitilde rasgueado\textunderscore } like a guitar or like \textit{\textasciitilde rolled chord\textunderscore } on the piano. The best \textit{\textasciitilde rasgueado\textunderscore } effect in the bass would be to play the chord with the right thumb. These \textit{\textasciitilde rasgueado\textunderscore } chords accompany the viola on several passages. The third movement uses the bass clef only in the first 28 measures. The rest of the movement is mostly written in tenor clef and a few measures in treble clef.
If desired, it is appropriate to augment the string quartet and perform it as a concerto for string orchestra and solo double bass. In general, this is an intermediate level concerto and enjoyable to perform as part of a chamber concert repertoire.

20. *Konzert für Kontrabaß und Streicher* Op. 44 (1970) by Fritz Leitermeyer. Fritz Leitermeyer (1925-2006)\(^5^1\) was an active Austrian composer and violinist throughout his long and productive career. Although there is little biographical information about him translated into English, his contributions are widely recognized. This concerto was published by Doblinger Music and is available in full orchestral score as well as in reduced piano accompaniment in orchestra tuning. It is written in three movements as follows:

1. *Half note* = 120
2. *Quarter note* = 50
3. *Quarter note* = 180


The tonal center of the first movement is rather ambiguous, but it appears to be A minor.

\(^5^1\) [Link to Sheet Music Database](http://sheetmusicdb.net/detail.php?kat=4&artnr=5354)
It is a bravura concerto featuring busy and extended arpeggiated melodic passages with double-stops and many accidentals. Despite the many sixteenth notes and glissandos on double-stops, it is rhythmically stable. It has ricochet bowing markings and some passages to be played using “false” or “artificial” harmonics. The tempo marking is 2/2 and the half note is M.M. =120. Thus playing any passage here is technically challenging. There is a cadenza based on music from the introduction that requires virtuosic playing. The second movement has a more modern sound; it combines melodies using pizzicato, glissando, and long chromatic lines of sixteenth note patterns. The greatest contrast in tempi and dynamics happens in this movement, rendering it the most mature and complex in the concerto. It has certain similarities in sound to Hindemith’s *Sonata for Double bass and Piano*. The third movement requires a prodigious technique that masters bow control for clarity of sound production. It also requires the performer to be efficient with fingering choices; it has many chromatic passages. This is definitely an advanced bravura concerto that uses more contemporary writing techniques.

21. *Concerto for Double-Bass and Percussion Instrument* (1973), by Usko Merilainen. Usko Merilainen (1930-2004) was a Finnish composer. He studied orchestral conducting and composition at the Sibelius Academy, obtaining his diploma in 1955. He was an active conductor at various orchestras in his country as well as Vice Chairman of the Society of Finnish Composers from 1976 to 1980. Post-war Finnish modernism, Neoclassicism, dodecaphony and post-serialism are all documented in his compositions, which might suggest his minimal usage of traditional styles. His music contains rhythmic richness and diversity. For example, he utilizes dance-like ostinatos, frequent changes of time signatures, chromatic passages and various combinations of syncopation. This suggests the influence of Stravinsky, as seen on the solo bass excerpt. This concerto is available from Helsinki: Fazer Music ©1974. Edition #/ISBN: F 05660-6 and can also be borrowed from several libraries through WorldCat (FirstSearch). The concerto is organized in three movements as follows:

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52 The string is stopped with the thumb, and then fingered (with the middle or ring finger) at a point a fourth or a fifth above the stopped note.

1. *Introduzione; Lento – liberamente*

2. *Lento Assai*

3. *Vivace, ritmico*

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This concerto is written for solo bass and percussion instruments, but the solo bass is predominant throughout. The bass part is written in a high register, especially the first movement. The bass is constantly displaying new sonorities, with the use of *ponticello* and *col legno* using high natural and artificial harmonics. The use of treble clef is obviously more common in this movement because of the many notes written in the high register. Although this
movement is rhythmically complex with frequent changes of meter, many cues from the other instruments provide a pulse reference. The movement features sections where a percussion instrument begins a melody that is continued by another percussion instrument or by the solo bass. This compositional feature creates a constant conversation between the solo instruments. It also features highly chromatic melodies, some very short and some very fast. The second movement is a melody in the low register which slowly and gradually reaches a very high range. It is less rhythmically involved but it is a movement that searches for some of the possibilities of new language and sounds in the bass. The third movement is fast but rhythmically steady, with interconnected lines among the soloists as well. In other words, some of the same ideas of the second movement are expanded and played in a much faster tempo in this movement. This is a difficult concerto but it has contemporary features that young performers need to incorporate into their musical experiences. This concerto is, in my opinion, a great composition to select for a chamber recital or for a concert featuring contemporary pieces.

22. RAPSODIA ELEGIACA (1977)
(II Concerto per Contrabbasso e Orchestra) by Virgilio Mortari.

Virgilio Mortari⁵⁴ (1902-1993) was born in Passirana di Lainate, near Milan. His compositions cover many different genres, mainly vocal, with strong neo-classical styles and solid formal structure. Mortari studied at the Milan Conservatory and the Parma Conservatory and taught composition at the Venice Conservatory from 1933 to 1940. Afterwards, he was a professor at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. He was artistic director of the Accademia Filarmonica Romana from 1944 to 1946; from 1955 to 1959 director of Teatro La Fenice in Venice. In 1963 he became vice president of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. His bass concerto is interesting for a number of reasons: it was written by an important Italian pedagogue, composer and performer of the double bass, it was written for another Italian virtuoso and pedagogue of the double bass. It is written mostly in the high register of the double bass (thumb position), and, therefore, uses mostly treble and tenor clefs. It is not a difficult

concerto. The concerto is named *Rapsodia Elegiaca*. Rhapsody\(^{55}\) is defined in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians as "a recite of epic poetry, without instrumental accompaniment", often of Nationalistic character. Elegy is defined as "a lament" or "commemorative composition."\(^{56}\) All of these are characteristics of several existing concertos written by Italian composers as well. This work is written for solo tuning and is organized in three movements as follows:

1. *Preludio*
2. *Intermezzo*
3. *Introduzione e canzone a ballo*

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Example 2-22. Mortari, *Rapsodia Elegiaca (II Concerto per contrabbasso e orchestra)*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-17.

This concerto was edited (fingerings, bowings, articulation and dynamic marks) by Francesco Petracci. A helpful approach for a bassist interested in learning this concerto is to familiarize oneself with Petracci’s *Simplified High Technique for the Double bass* and Giovanni Bottesini’s *Method for the double bass Part Two*. These etude books focus mainly in the development of the thumb and higher positions and also contain examples of passages that are similar to those found in this concerto. Also the *Etudes for the Double bass* by Virgilio Mortari is a useful reference source in order to become familiar with the composer, his music and especially this concerto.

The concerto begins in a rhapsodic, recitative-like style but shortly develops into a bravura style. The concerto features busy and long passage of sixteenth notes in the higher register of the bass and has indications to play *fortissimo* (ff), *con molto fuoco*, *Vigoroso*, and
con spirito throughout. This movement would help develop endurance and consistency for its practitioner. In the second movement, as in the first, the soloist is almost constantly playing. It requires a great amount of endurance. The whole movement is written in tenor and treble clefs throughout and features lyrical melodic lines and lengthy sixteenth note passages as well. The third movement is very similar to Bottesini’s Tarantella in D concerning form and sonority. It begins with a declamato-like passage and, then, switches to a section in 6/8 marked Allegro Vivo. The bravura style is even more predominant in this movement. This concerto is based on fast, long and dazzling melodic runs. It is, however, not too difficult. The main focus of this concerto is the emphasis on the performer's technical ability. It can be labeled as «intermediate to advanced.”

23. Concertos by Frank Proto.

*Concerto in One Movement*, for Violin, Double bass and Orchestra (1972)
*Concerto No. 2 for Double bass and Orchestra* (1982, 2006)
*Concerto No. 3; Four Scenes after Picasso, for Double bass and Orchestra* (1996-97)

Frank Proto⁵⁷ (b. 1941) is a prolific, self-taught composer/double bassist from Brooklyn, New York. He began piano studies at the age of seven and double bass at the age of sixteen at the High School of Performing Arts. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. For his graduation recital in 1963, Proto confronted the typical bass player’s lack of literature for the instrument. He programmed a baroque work, a romantic piece, and an avant-garde composition using electronic tape, but he wanted a contemporary composition in a more American style. Unable to find one he liked, he decided to write his own. The resulting piece, *Sonata 1963 for Double Bass and Piano*, was his first composition. This piece has been performed hundreds of times worldwide and has entered the standard double bass repertoire. During the early 1960s, Proto earned his living as a freelance bassist in the New York City area. He performed with various orchestras including the Symphony of the Air, American Symphony, the Robert Shaw Chorale and the Princeton Chamber Orchestra as well as with various Broadway and Off-Broadway show bands and in

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⁵⁷ http://www.liben.com/FPBio.html. Copyright © 1997-2000 Graphire Corporation - All rights reserved.
several jazz clubs of New York. Proto joined the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in 1966. The early opportunities given to him by the CSO to compose and arrange for the orchestra resulted in a thirty year period in which the orchestra premiered over twenty large works and countless smaller pieces and arrangements composed for Young People's concerts, Pops concerts, tours and special occasions. Proto believes in maintaining the connection between composing and performing. He continues a busy musical life as both a composer and performer.

During the research and preparation of this treatise, several concertos featuring the double bass and other instruments were found. The *Concerto in One Movement*, for Violin, Double bass and Orchestra was chosen because it has been available for several years and also because Proto is an important composer in the bass community and not just for his many compositions featuring the double bass. In some of his compositions Proto places the double bass at the same level as other solo instruments, such as the violin.

This concerto was commissioned by and dedicated to Thomas Schippers (1930–1977), an American conductor who was well regarded for his work in opera. The premiere of this concerto was given by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on October 13, 1972 at Music Hall in Cincinnati, Ohio. Thomas Schippers served as conductor, while Ruggiero Ricci took up duties as violinist and Barry Green as bassist. The concerto is approximately fourteen minutes long. It is available from Liben Music Publishers and is printed in orchestra tuning with piano reduction. The full orchestra score is available from the composer and through Liben Music Publishers for rental.

The main characteristics of this concerto are its virtuosic writing, strong jazz influence, rhythmic activity and the bravura cadenzas that comprise much of the solo lines. It is a technically demanding concerto for both the violin and the double bass and takes experienced artists to play it. There are some unison passages among the soloists, but for the most part, these are separate melodic lines and in some cases the bass is accompanying the violin’s melody. There are often changes of meter (almost in every measure) and throughout the entire concerto
there are many double-stops, in both the bass and violin parts. There are also glissando parts, *ad libitum* passages, and directions for how some parts should be executed with notes explained by the composer in the score. The concerto is challenging, but Proto demonstrates once again the great capabilities of the double bass as a solo instrument.


This concerto is available with piano reduction in orchestra and solo tuning and full orchestra score from Liben Music Publisher. It is also available on the Red Mark Compact Disc: Proto – Works for Double bass and Orchestra DC- 9204. The concerto is roughly thirty-four minutes long and is organized in four movements as follows:

1. Slowly
2. Fast--Meno mosso--Tempo primo
3. Slowly
4. Slowly--Presto--Slowly--Prestissimo

The concerto was dedicated to François Rabbath. It features elements of jazz style such as swing and improvisation, and requires virtuosic skills that are present in sections of the orchestra and the piano accompaniment. The bass part is very clean and does not include any fingering or bowing marks; however, it would be beneficial to be familiar with Rabbath’s technical approach to the double bass. One would expect that a concerto written for François Rabbath would be technically demanding, and Concerto No. 2 is exactly that! High range melodies, extensive double stops, artificial harmonics, improvisation, quartertones, etc, make this concerto technically challenging. The piano reduction is obviously lacking in orchestral color, but this will hopefully allow focus on the bass part. Fast runs, melodic and rhythmic ideas are developed in the piano part. Then the texture becomes thin for the entry of the soloist. Some sections of this concerto are to be improvised in a jazz style, and there are written-out passages that “must swing,” according to the composer. Proto suggests that this concerto be amplified when performed with orchestra. He believes that “in the age of electronic technology that we live, why not take advantage of it”\(^{58}\). This concerto is without a doubt an “advanced” one.

25. *Concerto No. 3; Four Scenes after Picasso, for Double bass and Orchestra* (1996-97).

This concerto is available in both orchestra and solo tuning and the full orchestra score is available through Liben Music publisher. It has been recorded by François Rabbath and is available through Red Mark Label CD-P-2001 lasting roughly 30 Minutes. The score contains program notes and explanations from the composer of how to perform certain passages. It was written for François Rabbath and is inspired by four paintings of Picasso. It is organized in four movements as follows:

1. *Chat saississant un oiseau* (Cat Catching a Bird) – 1939
2. *La femme qui pleure* (Weeping Woman) – 1937
3. *Les premiers pas* (First Steps) – 1943

\(^{58}\) Author’s conversation with the composer at the International Society of Bassists (ISB) Convention at Pennsylvania State University, June 2009.
Example 2-25. Proto, *Concerto No. 3; Four Scenes after Picasso, for Double bass and Orchestra*, mvt. 1, solo bass introduction ad lib.
These paintings (movements) are related to each other. They reflect in various ways the tension, turmoil and emotions caused by wars.\textsuperscript{59} This is a lengthy concerto, which requires significant talent and stamina from the performers, since they must collectively tell the story of the paintings while simultaneously performing difficult passages.

The first movement is a colorful and playful dialogue between the orchestra/piano accompaniment and the bass solo. The second movement begins with a slow, light sounding introduction that introduces an extended slow melody in 3/8 by the double bass. The third movement is in 6/8 with fast passages and includes sections that are to be played freely. The fourth movement is slow and very expressive. Rabbath succeeds in telling the story by focusing on the music and not on his virtuosic and flawless style of playing the bass. Four Scenes after Picasso is a very important double bass orchestral work produced at the end of the twentieth century. In CD Plus format, it includes a wide variety of video and biographical information which may be accessed over the Internet. These are helpful resources to follow for a successful performance. By just looking at the score and the bass part, one can easily conclude that this is not the traditional type of concerto. It involves virtuosic embellishments, double-stops, long and fast passages with long bowing markings and a wide range of interval jumps. If performed accurately, the piece demonstrates the wonderful qualities of the soloist. This is without a doubt one of the most colorful and difficult contemporary concertos existing for the double bass.


François Rabbath\textsuperscript{60} (b. 1931) was born in Aleppo, Syria into a musical family. He began experimenting with the double bass at the age of thirteen when one of his brothers brought an instrument home. He actually studied on his own with a method book by E. Nanny. Several years later, Rabbath moved to Paris because he wanted to study with Nanny at the Paris Conservatory, but he learned after going to Paris that Nanny had died in 1947. While in Paris he began to earn his living as an accompanist for Jacques Brel, Charles Aznavour, Gilbert Bécaud, Michel Legrand and others. In 1963 he made his first solo record album. Although never advertised or promoted, the Philips album \textit{Bass Ball}” became one of the most sought after


\textsuperscript{60} http://www.liben.com/FRBio.html. Copyright © 1997-2000. Graphire Corporation - All rights reserved.
recordings of its time. From 1964 he became active composing music for movies and the theater. At the same time he started to play solo recitals, first in France, then throughout Europe. His American debut was in Carnegie Hall in 1975.

Rabbath refuses to accept any traditional limitations in the double bass. Whether performing his own compositions, or the classical repertoire, one is always moved by his musicianship and impressive virtuosity. His playing is notorious for his sense of security and he makes difficult passages sound effortless. In 1978 Rabbath and Frank Proto met and developed a close friendship. They both share many of the same musical experiences and philosophies; they both disagree with the ideas that separate classical, jazz and ethnic musicians. Both are comfortable playing chamber music at a formal concert one day and improvising with jazz musicians the next.\textsuperscript{61} Rabbath is important to the development of double bass playing; his playing can be compared with that of Paganini to the violin. During the early 1800s Niccolò Paganini established the violin as a virtuoso instrument; Rabbath helped to do the same with the double bass today!

Rabbath’s contributions to the field of bass pedagogy are presented in his three-volume *Nouvelle technique de la contrebasse*. Some differences in Rabbath’s approach from that of the traditional double bass method of Franz Simandl’s are Rabbath’s use of the left hand and his unique use of the bow arm. In Simandl’s system, first position (below thumb position) encompasses only a whole step. In Rabbath’s method, the entire fingerboard is divided into only six positions, defined by the location of natural harmonics on the strings. Playing the bass with six positions is possible by using a technique called pivoting. Pivots are often mistakenly called extensions or shifts. An extension is a widening of the hand to reach a new note. A pivot\textsuperscript{62} is a rocking of the hand to reach a new note where the thumb remains stationary but all fingers gain the technical freedom to move anywhere else that is possible or required. Pivots thus enable the fusing of several different positions at once. By placing the thumb in the appropriate place and rocking the hand back and forth the player can use, for example, both half, first, and second


positions without the need for shifts. Usually, the thumb should be behind the index finger or closer to the middle finger (when not in thumb position) so the bassist can fully utilize the weight of the left arm. The reason a pivot is not a shift is because the thumb does not move either on the string or behind the neck. A shift requires that the whole hand moves and results in a change of position.

Another revolutionary technique used by Rabbath is the Crab technique, so called due to the way the hand moves similarly to a crab's sideways walking. The Crab, as outlined in the third volume, allows for part of the hand to move while the other part remains and vice versa. In this way, the hand can move up and down the string in certain passages without "technically" ever fully shifting. Rabbath is not the first person to use Crab techniques. These techniques are found on the first page of Petracci’s *Simplified Higher Technique*. Some small examples can be found in standard techniques as well as Simandl, but it is impossible to know whether these were intended as crabs or shifts, as they are not fully explained. Becoming familiar with these approaches to the double bass before learning this concerto would be wise.

The concerto is approximately fifteen minutes long and is available on the CD Carmen! François Rabbath (Red Mark 9203). The score was published in 1987 and is available from Liben Music Publisher in orchestra tuning.

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This is a single movement concerto in three musically related sections, with two cadenzas and a tutti chord after the last cadenza that ends the work. In general, this concerto is rather demanding technically in both right and left hands. There are some long bowings and passages loaded with sixteenth and thirty-second notes in the high registers of the bass (thumb positions and higher). Most of the concerto is written in treble clef. Rabbath’s *Art of the Bow* method, which focuses mostly on the development of the bow, is an excellent and useful resource to consider as well when preparing this concerto.

This concerto, like most of Rabbath’s music, is built around a specific sonority and techniques. Rabbath chooses short rhythmical and/or musical motives and creates many variations of these motives. The result is a composition strikingly similar to jazz improvisation.
The music in this short concerto (only 244 measures) fits the fingers nicely, as does all of Rabbath’s music. The piano accompaniment achieves a sense of support characteristic of a pianist accompanying a singer. It is necessary to understand that mastering Rabbath’s style of playing will ultimately help performers understand this concerto at a deeper level for a more appropriate performance. However, an important point here is not to copy or imitate Rabbath’s style but to obtain a correct execution of complex passages and to attempt a personal interpretation. This concerto is labeled as “advanced.”


Alan (John) Ridout⁶⁴ (1934-1996) was born in West Wickham, England and studied at the Royal College of Music, London, where he later taught. His teachers included Gordon Jacob and Michael Tippett. He also taught at the University of Birmingham, the University of Cambridge, the University of London, and at The King’s School, Canterbury. Ridout was a profoundly religious man, and towards the end of his life, he converted to Catholicism. His works include church, orchestral and chamber music, much of it for children. His style is mostly tonal, though in younger life he wrote some microtonal works. Ridout worked regularly with the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra. His bass concerto was commissioned in 1974 for a world tour made with Rodney Slatford as soloist the following year. This concerto is published by Yorke Edition in orchestra tuning; both reduced piano accompaniment and full orchestra scores. It is organized as follows:

1.  *Grave* (half note = c. 60)
2.  *Giocoso* (quarter note = c. 126) with seven Variations and a Cadenza towards the end.


The popularity that this concerto gained during the tour motivated Rodney Slatford to encourage Ridout to write several other compositions for double bass. The concerto is written for double bass and/or cello and could be used for examination purposes by young players because it is based on scales and a variety of bowing. The concerto is relatively short, written mostly using bass clef, exploring the lower to mid register of the bass. There are only fourteen measures that use tenor clef and twelve measures using treble clef with natural harmonics, typical of many bass concertos, found towards the end of the first movement. The second movement is a set of seven variations. The first variation uses mainly eighth note scales and the second uses triplet-eighth notes. Variation III is short, written mostly in treble clef using the mid to high register and sixteenth note melody lines. Variation IV features *col legno* chromatic lines combining the lower to high register of the bass. Variation V indicated *put bow down*; the entire variation is based on simple chords and intervals of perfect fourths played *pizzicato*. Variation VI contains three sections; the first is written mostly in treble clef, marked to be played using natural harmonics,
and the second section is written in bass clef, in a lower register. The third section is a return to the first section with harmonics. Variation VII is a combination of melodic runs using passages of sixteenth, eighth and four note-chords to be played with bow, followed by a cadenza. The cadenza is simple but imaginative and features glissando, pizzicato, harmonics and three note chords. This cadenza also explores the low to relatively high register of the bass. This concerto can be categorized on a more advanced level than Gordon Jacob's concerto.


Walter Ross (Beghtol)\(^6\) was born in Lincoln, Nebraska on October 3, 1936. He became a professional orchestral French horn player by the age of seventeen. Many of Ross's works are representative of his current interest in neo-modality. His works are widely performed, and many of his compositions have been published and recorded. Currently a resident of Charlottesville, Virginia, he has served as president of the Southeastern Composers League and as a judge at international composition symposia. Ross is currently a member of the board of the Capital Composers Alliance. He has written a number of major orchestral concertos for instruments such as oboe, bassoon, flute and guitar, trombone, and tuba. He prefers the concerto form to that of the symphony because of its more varied possibilities for artistic expression in contrasting the solo against the orchestra. Ross wrote this concerto for bassist Mark Bernat, who premiered it in April of 1995 with the University of Richmond Orchestra. The score and parts are available from the composer in both solo tuning and reduced piano accompaniment. There is a recording by Mark Bernat with the Polish National Radio Symphony available in CD format named "Live in Recital at London's Purcell Room", Label: MAD Recordings. It is approximately 18 minutes long and is in three movements as follows:

I  *Drammatico* - Allegro fantastico  
II  *Grazioso*  
III  *Allegro energico*

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Although the orchestral parts can be performed by a college orchestra⁶⁶, the solo part requires virtuosic abilities.

The melodic and harmonic orientation is modal/tonal/pandiatonic. In a letter from Professor Ross, he explains, “As far as an analysis of my concerto is concerned … the concerto is more baroque in structure than classical. That is, there are no Sonata Allegro movements. The movements are in sectional form with episodes. The sections in each movement are indicated by the rehearsal letters: A, B, C, etc.” The solo bass part uses solo tuning or scordatura (F♯-B-E-A), thereby allowing the bass to project sound better over the piano or orchestra. The first movement is 210 measures long, with an Aeolian mode as tonal center. It contains eight motives and five episodes. The next section is “Allegro Fantastico”. Ross distributes the music between the orchestra and the soloist into excerpts that are eight measures long. Most of the notes could be played strictly using harmonics, which creates a mellower or “fluted” sound than the natural

⁶⁶ E-mail from the composer. December 23, 2008.
sound of the string. Natural harmonics are strong on the bass. The extra length and thickness of
the strings means that they are more reliable than on violin or viola.
This concerto can be categorized as “advanced”.


Marcel Rubin67 (1905 -1995) was born in Vienna. He studied music theory at the Vienna
Academy of Music and then moved to Paris to study composition as a private student of Darius
Milhaud. His first successes as composer were in Paris. Afterwards, he returned to Vienna to
resume his studies in Law. He became a music critic, conductor and accompanist for his own
compositions. Rubin also concentrated on non-experimental music.

This concerto was written for virtuoso Ludwig Streicher and is available from Verlag
Doblinger, Wien, Munchen in solo tuning and the full orchestra score. It is approximately
twenty-two minutes long, and there is a recording in LP format available from AMADEO OST,
Schallplaten, Ges, MBH (# 415 828-1 B). The concerto does not have a cadenza and is organized
as follows:

1.  *Allegro capriccioso*
2.  *Molto tranquillo ed espressivo*
3.  *Vivace con spirito*

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This concerto might sound unstable in terms of its tonal center because of the many chromatic melodies; however, there are some moments where E minor is evident. There are sections where the solo bass “converses” (almost as a question/answer session), taking turns to play different musical ideas with the clarinet, sometimes with the violins or the flute, and sometimes against the orchestra. The first movement seems to be the most technically challenging. It features a section with consecutive double-stops with intervals of thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths (major and minor) and frequent meter changes combined as follows: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, then 5/8, 3/4, 4/4, followed by 5/4. This section needs special attention and methodical slow practice in order to master the changes in rhythm. Helpful cues in between the sections from the clarinet and violins are written in the bass part for the soloist to follow in case there is a loss of counting. The second movement is less technically challenging and the most beautiful in terms of sonority and expressiveness. There are, however, some interesting chromatic melody lines that are only two or three measures long. It also features wide interval jumps using mostly the mid-to-low range of the bass. This movement is a great way of showing the richness and beautiful natural sound of the double bass. The third movement is fast, dazzling and rhythmically complex.
with many meter changes as well. The expressiveness is demanding and requires much bow control. This concerto can be leveled as "very difficult."


Armand King Russell⁶⁸ (b. 1932), was born in Seattle, Washington. He received both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Washington with a major in music composition. He also received a Doctorate in music composition from the Eastman School of Music. Professionally, he played the double bass in symphony orchestras, including the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops Tour Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic and Civic Orchestras, and the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. He also taught as a visiting professor at the Eastman School of Music. Dr. Russell's career at the University of Hawai'i's Music Department spanned from 1961 until his retirement in 1994 as Professor Emeritus. He was a prolific composer with an impressive variety of works, including works for double bass and percussion in solo, chamber and concerto formats and several works for chorus. The Harlequin is available in orchestral or solo tuning. Orchestral parts are also available from Zimmerman Press. It was published in 1975 and is a three movement concerto, organized as follows:

1. *Burlesca-*Allegro moderato
2. *Romance-*Allegro moderato
3. *Encounter-*Allegro con spirito

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By just taking a glance at the score one might conclude that it is easy to handle, but this concerto requires a mature player who knows perhaps more than just the standard basic schools and approaches to the double bass. The concerto is only moderately difficult in terms of technical issues. The main challenge is that this composition represents a unique character, Harlequin. Teachers will find this concerto pedagogically valuable as it features essential techniques that bassists use regularly.

The first movement is in a bravura style, in G minor and is written within the most commonly used range of the double bass. The many sixteenth note figures, along with the dynamic contrast and the tempo marking, imply that it is a busy movement for both hands. This movement also seems to require much physical stamina. The only major issue that needs to be addressed in the second movement is the often quick changes of character; there is a switch between *Allegro moderato* to *Allegretto* with varied dynamic changes as well throughout the movement. It seems that these quick changes of dynamics and moods represent the facets of *Harlequin*. The third movement is also busy with sixteenth and eight note melodies and fast passages, but it is written within the lowest to mid range of the bass. This concerto could be a
great composition for an educational or a children’s concert; it can be approached lightly or as a serious composition; either way, it would be an enjoyable and rewarding performance.


Stuart Sankey*69* (1927–2000) was one of foremost pedagogues of the double bass in the United States. His students included Gary Karr (the first bass player of the modern era to make a career as a solo artist, virtuoso/composer), Edgar Meyer, and many others. Sankey taught for nearly fifty years at the Aspen Music School. He also held teaching positions at the University of Texas, Indiana University, and the University of Michigan. He made a large number of transcriptions for the double bass, which are available at International Music Company. His concerto was printed and published in 1986 and is available in both full orchestra and with piano-reduced accompaniment versions. The concerto is written in solo tuning and has three movements, organized as follows:

1. *Appassionato*
2. *Dolente*
3. *Con fuoco*

![Example 2-31. Sankey, *Concerto for Double bass*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-12.](http://www.ur.umich.edu/9900/May08_00/21.htm)
The first movement has two cadenzas. The other movements however, are without cadenzas. The first cadenza sounds like melismatic singing at the beginning whereas the second cadenza features slap (Bartók) *pizzicatos*, and polyphony that can pose intonation challenges to the solo bass. There is a wide variety of dynamic contrasts as well in the movement. The majority of the notes are written within the mid to high range of the bass, therefore very few passages are written in bass clef; mostly tenor and treble clefs. The solo bass part has written fingerings suggested by the composer. These help simplify technical issues and make learning easier. This concerto looks rather busy on the page with long passages of sixteenth notes, but the suggested metronomic markings are not too fast, which allows these passages to be more playable. The second movement demands a rhapsodic approach which requires smooth shifting of the left hand and also smooth bow changes unless the string crossing can not be avoided when preparing this movement. It is important to point out the string crossing issues for the sake of sustaining the melodic lines and for consistency, balance and sound projection. Frequent long phrases and passages with many slurred notes are a feature of this movement. This is especially noticeable in the second movement (section No. 12-14) and in the third movement section 25-26). Using Rabbath's fingerings and bowing techniques would be helpful in the preparation of these passages.

In the third movement there are measures with left hand *pizzicato* markings and improvisation on specific notes. This movement features long acrobatic melodies and uses mostly the middle-to-high register of the bass. Here Sankey demonstrates his knowledge of the capabilities of the double bass by writing wide glissandos, arpeggiated melodies using combined harmonics with natural notes, challenging fast passages with string crossings, improvisation on specific notes, double-stops, heavily chromatic melodic motives and quick changes of rhythm and characters.

Learning this concerto will help the student or performer to focus on the bow distribution and bow stroke usage and also bow crossing issues. This concerto can be categorized as "advanced."

Lalo Schifrin\(^70\) (b. 1932) is a pianist, composer and conductor. As a young man in his native Argentina, Schifrin received classical music training and also studied law. He came from a musical family. His father, Luis Schifrin, was the concertmaster of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Buenos Aires. Lalo continued his formal music education at the Paris Conservatory during the early 1950s. At the same time, he became a professional jazz pianist, playing and recording in Europe. His music is a blend of traditional and twentieth-century techniques, and his early love for jazz and rhythm are strong attributes of his style. He has written more than one hundred scores for films and television. Among the classic scores are "Mission Impossible," "Dirty Harry," "The Cincinnati Kid" and "Rush Hour." \(^71\) Schifrin has conducted major symphony orchestras such as the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Argentina, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the Lincoln Center Chamber Orchestra. As a jazz musician he has performed and recorded with great personalities such as Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Stan Getz and Count Basie.

Schifrin’s concerto was commissioned by Gary Karr and the Pacific Symphony. It was premiered and recorded by Gary Karr and the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra with Schifrin as the conductor in Paris, France in 1988. The concerto is available in CD format from ALEPH RECORDS, # 015 and from Cybelia DC, CY- 1106. The full score is available from MMB Music, Inc. The concerto is written only in solo tuning, and there is a reduced piano accompaniment available as well from the composer and publisher. Gary Karr asked the composer to write something lyrical. The composer decided to write a concerto in the form of an opera, where the solo bass would be the leading role. However, before he began writing the concerto, Karr helped him develop a catalogue of possible extensions, figurations, bowing


\(^71\) [http://www.filmreference.com/film/94/Lalo-Schifrin.html#ixzz0rnr9IMmf](http://www.filmreference.com/film/94/Lalo-Schifrin.html#ixzz0rnr9IMmf)
techniques and articulations, which the composer proceeded to integrate into the work.\textsuperscript{72} The tonal center of this concerto seems to be different in each movement. It is written in three movements as follows:

1. \textit{Allegro barocco}
2. \textit{Adagio pensieroso}
3. \textit{Allegro giocoso}

\textbf{Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra}

\begin{quote}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example2-32}
\caption{Example 2-32. Schifrin, \textit{Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra}, mvt. 1, mm.1-11.}
\end{figure}
\end{quote}

The first movement explores a wide range of the bass. It also has a quasi cadenza section followed by a cadenza that features the bravura style. Both the quasi cadenza and the cadenza sections are equally demanding technically; both are written within the mid-to-high register of the bass and both have double-stops in thirds, fourths, fifths and descending and ascending arpeggios with many accidentals. The second movement begins in 5/8 with the solo bass playing a four-note motive that gradually accelerates to \textit{a tempo vivo}. The repeated motive in this

\textsuperscript{72} Lalo Schifrin & Gary Karr, \textit{―Lalo Schifrin conducts Stravinsky, Schifrin, and Ravel‖}, compact disc # 15, Aleph Records (1999).
section looks similar to the minimalistic introduction of the Peter Askim’s “Islands” concerto. Often there are changes of character from lyrical to very rhythmical, sudden meter changes, and many dynamic changes as well. At the end of this movement there are “rasgueado” chords that are to be played using harmonics. In the third movement, the tarantella-like bravura style is much more prominent. The three movements are equally challenging rhythmically and technically. This is, without a doubt, an “advanced” concerto which explores the potentials and possibilities of the double bass.


Kurt Schwertsik\(^3\) (b.1935) was born in Vienna and established as one of Austria’s leading composers. He has worked as a horn player with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, as a teacher at the Vienna Conservatory and as a Professor of Composition at the Musikhochschule. A pupil of Stockhausen, he was also influenced by the music of Cage and Cardew. Schwertsik rejected serialism and reoriented himself towards tonality as a means of musical communication. This concerto is tonal and more centered to the 18th-century styles and characteristics. It is lively, with a very noticeable absence of any rhythmic variations. It is written for solo tuning in three movements as follows:

1. *Ruhig und heiter* (Quiet and serene)
2. *Mit inniger Empfindung* (with inner feeling)
3. *Sehr rasch und lustig* (Molto vivo)

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The first movement, by glancing at the score, seems to be in a classical style. The opening is in a 3/8 with many sharp notes, sequential motives and scalar passages. The second movement looks more like a Gigue from a Bach cello suite. The pedagogical value of learning this piece is that it requires the player to know the fingerboard well and master the use of the bow in order to produce the appropriate sounds. The three movements include traditional harmonies and classical forms. This is an enjoyable and not too difficult concerto that might be suitable for a fourth-year undergraduate or a first year master's student.

34. Concerto for Double bass (1975) by Emil Tabakov.

Emil Tabakov (b. 1947) is a Bulgarian conductor, a composer and double bassist. He graduated in 1974 from the Bulgarian State Music Academy in Conducting and Double bass.

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In 1978 he received a Diploma in Composition at the Bulgarian State Music Academy. In 1977 he was the winner of the Nikolai Malko International Competition for Young Conductors in Copenhagen. He tours world-wide with the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra and serves as guest conductor of orchestras in Germany, England, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, Austria, United States, Australia, and other countries. He is a versatile composer with dozens of works to his credit. Many of his compositions have been awarded prizes by the Union of Bulgarian Composers and have been frequently performed in Bulgaria and abroad.

His concerto for double bass was published by Muzyka Publishers in 2005 and is available in orchestra and solo tuning with piano accompaniment. It is written in three movements as follows:

1. Allegro
2. Lento
3. Vivace

Example 2-34. Tabakov, *Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-14.
After the first ten measures, there is a change of meter in almost each measure. The busy rhythmic activity is as follows: 5/4, 2/2, 3/4, 2/2, 3/4, 2/2, 5/4, 2/2, and so on. The notation however is not too busy; mainly quarter notes and the range is within the middle of the bass for at least the first fifty measures. After the sixtieth measure the notation becomes busier and there are more chromatic and arpeggiated passages. Double-stops using diminished fifths and fourths begin to appear and passages become increasingly complex (syncopated) in the higher register. These passages are now longer and combined with chromatic fast runs. The second movement also has some double-stops using diminished and augmented intervals that are not too challenging, due to the much slower tempo of this movement. The range here is not too high and the dynamic range is varied. This movement is colorful, with short rhythmic and melodic motives and also intervals that require wider jumps. The third movement is the longest and most technically challenging. Most of the notes are to be played using fast bowing such as tremolo on ff dynamic markings. From mm. 251 to 273, the music seems similar to the composer’s well known “Motivy” for solo double bass. Some of the same features such as octaves and double – stops used in “Motivy” are present here as well. This concerto is a great one for a display of the thumb positions in the higher registers. This is a technically advanced concerto.

35 “Concer Tina”, Opus 6 (1993) by Tina Ternes.

Tina Ternes⁷⁶ (b. August 1969 in Kaiserslautern geboren.1969) was born in Kaiserslautern, Germany. She showed musical talent early and these talents were developed through piano lessons at age five, followed by double bass and music theory studies at age 15. She studied at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz and completed her main studies with film music at Wiesbaden-Based Music Academy in 1994. Ternes’s compositional approach is to extend tonal music. She likes to experiment with non-European elements, and since 2002, she has been using American minimalism on her compositions. She has written orchestral, chamber music, musicals, stage music and film music. Her works can be found at Verlag Heidelberg Publishers, Munich.

This short and moderately easy concerto is included with the intention of covering all possible levels of musicianship and curricula. This concerto can be introduced to young students in order to teach them the value of learning concertos at an early stage.

Example 2-35. Ternes, "Concer Tina", mvt. 1, mm. 1-15.

The concerto is approximately fifteen minutes long and the main idea is to produce the dark sound of a 5-stringed double bass (if available), which is tuned as usual in orchestral tuning. It can also be played on a bass with an extension as well. The concerto is in three short movements. The first movement is in D minor, based on the sonata-form principle. It contains some passages with accidentals and arpeggios, all within the most comfortable range of the bass. The second movement is a quasi Passacaglia (similar to a street song or a courtly Spanish dance). The third movement is reminiscent of a Spanish dance and has some combinations of rhythmic figures which might awaken interest in a young student. There is some use of harmonics in treble clef and the range is wide. The tonal center is C minor. In general, this is a nice, short concerto that is suitable for a young bassist. It can be rated as "easy."

Domenico Torta⁷⁷ (b. 1957) is an Italian composer, born in Riva presso Chieri, in the Province of Turin. Torta has produced a significant number of compositions for double bass over the past few years, particularly for double bass ensemble (quartet and sextet). Torta’s music is noted for its strong rhythmic momentum and drive, connected to inventive harmonies and melodies. In 2002, Torta was commissioned by the Teatro Regio in Turin to write the incidental music for Patrick Susskind's play —*The Double Bass,*” which was premiered later that year. His other works for double bass include Chili Suite (4Db), Recalling Rossini (4Db), and Verdi & Friends (4Db). Orchestra parts and reduced piano parts in solo tuning are available upon request from the composer. This Concerto was recorded by virtuoso bassist Emilio Benzi⁷⁸ for Nbbbrecords (No.NBB18) before his premature death. It is available from the composer and is written in three movements as follows:

1. *Tempo- Allegro Moderato*
2. *Tempo- Quasi tango*
3. *Tempo- Allegro Vivace*

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⁷⁷ [http://www.vitoliuzzi.com](http://www.vitoliuzzi.com)

⁷⁸ [www.emiliobenzi.it](http://www.emiliobenzi.it). Realizzato da Uby Web & Multimedia
Example 2-36. Torta, *Concerto per Contrabbasso e Orchestra D'Archi*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-19.

The first movement in the key of D minor uses mainly harmonic minor scales as well as many chromatic scale passages. It contains double-stops and some changes of meter but is not too rhythmically demanding. The work also features many passages with string crossings. Fortunately, there are also a great number of bowings and articulations written in the solo part by the composer. The second movement is in reality, a “tango,” just as it is titled, in the key of D minor. The third movement sounds similar to the Scherzo of Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 4. This movement is the only one with a short cadenza, which is not too technically difficult. It
seems to be in G minor. The entire concerto features most of the characteristics found in standard Italian concertos for double bass. The three movements are written mostly in the mid to high register of the bass, making equal use of treble, tenor and bass clefs. It is a well written and both rewarding concerto, musically and technically. It can be leveled as “intermediate to advanced.”


Armando Trovaioli\(^79\) (b. 1917) (also "Trovajoli") is an Italian film composer and conductor, who has worked with many jazz scores for films of the *Commedia all'Italiana* genre. Trovajoli had his first glimpse of music through his father, a violinist. At the age of four he started playing the violin and by the time he was six, he had begun piano and studying general music. He earned his piano degree *cum laude* at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music in Rome. A passionate jazz lover, for many years Trovajoli has been considered to be the most important jazz player in Italy. He was invited to represent his country at the International Jazz Festival held in Paris at the Salle Pleyel, playing alongside legends such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, Stéphane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt and many more. *Sconcerto per Contrabasso e Orchestra*, his best-known classical composition, was composed for Franco Petracci and performed at the Academia di Santa Cecilia by Petracci himself.

The concerto has been recorded by bassist Jens Bomhardt and is available in CD format from the Label Ambitus CD Number: amb 96907. The concerto was published by Ricordi Music Publishers and is available from Boosey & Hawkes in solo tuning, with reduced piano accompaniment. It is available from the composer upon request. The concerto is in four movements and is organized as follows:

1. *Tempo di blues*
2. *Allegretto*
3. *Pavane*
4. *Scherzo*

Example 2-37. Trovajoli, “Sconcerto” *per contrabasso e orchestra*, mvt. 1, mm. 1-25.

The first movement, in G minor, begins with a *pizzicato* walking bass line that features influences of blues, followed by another bluesy section, but this time the bassist plays it with the bow. These two sections are written in a low range of the bass and are relatively easy. Unless the bassist has been exposed to the basics of jazz playing, the jazz nuances could be difficult to execute. The second movement presents melodies in a higher register and there are eleven key changes. There is a plethora of string crossings as well as a large number of arpeggios, both of which require special attention. This movement is not too technically demanding, but it is melodically complex. Since the melodic lines are written in a high register (treble and tenor clefs), it is perhaps best played using thumb positions. There are arpeggiated fast runs, double-stops with harmonics and string-crossing passages. The third movement is lyrical, and the pleasant melodies are written mostly in the mid-to-high register. Again, the thumb position would be best to execute them clearly and easily. This is the easiest movement of the concerto.
The last movement, Scherzo, in contrast, is the most rhythmically and melodically challenging. It contains eleven key changes as well. It has a few *pizzicato* passages but mainly is arco throughout. The movement also features string-crossing, chromatic and arpeggiated melodies as well as some dramatic dynamic changes. This concerto is rated “advanced” because it presents challenging modulations and the basics of jazz using the bow.


Erich Urbanner\(^8^0\) (b.1936-) was born in Innsbruck, Austria. He studied piano, composition and conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. He has held such positions as director of the Institute for Electro-acoustic and Experimental Music, professor of composition, harmony and counterpoint, and director of the seminar for twelve-tone music in Vienna. Among Urbanner's many prizes are the Composition Prize of the City of Innsbruck (1980), the Music Prize of the City of Vienna (1984) and the Grand Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria (2001). He is published by Doblinger Musik Verlag. Since 1968 he has also been active as a conductor.

The concerto was written for Ludwig Streicher (1920-2003), who was well-known to the bass community as the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra's contrabass first chair and soloist. This concerto is approximately twenty-two minutes long and is available through Doblinger Musik Publisher with reduced piano accompaniment as well as a full score, for rental. There is a recording available of this concerto by Streicher in LP format (6.42045), from TELEFUNKEN (LC 0366). This recording is helpful for a bassist who would like to learn this concerto. The concerto is written for solo tuning in three movements with a concluding Zwischenspiel (interlude, interplay or intermezzo) as follows:

1. *Recitativ* (quarter note = 72)
2. *Langsam* (quarter note = 54)
3. *Schnell* (quarter note = 92)

This concerto has two cadenzas. The first one, the introduction of the first movement, features double-stops as well as high harmonics. The second cadenza found in the last movement explores mostly low sonorities. The first movement begins with a soft lyrical melody followed by very high harmonic passages in intervals of major and minor seconds. These harmonics are followed by a fast, jazz-like passage requiring the use of *arco, sul ponticello*. This movement also features triplets, quadruplets and syncopated rhythms. There are often changes of meter switching from 2/4 to 3/8 and 5/8, going back to 2/4 and vice versa. These constant changes of rhythms can be rather challenging. However, the composer writes cues from other instruments in the bass part. The second movement contains many *glissandos* on regular notes and also glissandos in harmonics and double-stops. In the third movement, there are fast passages with *spiccato, sul ponticello* and ricochet bow markings. There is a section (m. 61) marked *senza misura* (without division of measure lines), but it is not a cadenza. This section, however, is guided by cues from the harpsichord (the piano part plays the harpsichord cues). This concerto features a variety of dynamics ranging from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. The writing for the solo bass part as well as the accompaniment is imaginative and colorful. The score includes important parts for winds, six violins, harp, celesta, harpsichord, piano, and several percussion instruments. On every change of tempo and/or character the composer writes a suggested tempo marking,
which helps the performer to execute the changes in mood at the correct speed. This concerto is rhythmically complex. Technical mastery and mature musicianship are equally important to ensure a successful performance.


Daniel Wolff\(^8^1\) (b. 1967) is the first Brazilian to receive a doctorate in guitar performance at the Manhattan School of Music under guitarist Manuel Barrueco. In addition to a successful career as a performer, Wolff is also an accomplished composer, arranger and teacher. Mr. Wolff was the first prize winner of both the Mozarteum Guitar Contest and the Villa-Lobos Guitar Competition. He is also the first guitarist to win the Porto Alegre Symphony Orchestra Young Soloists Competition. He has a successful career, with performances in Brazil, Argentina, Italy, Germany, Greece, Austria, Uruguay and the United States. He has appeared as a soloist with the SODRE Orchestra (Uruguay), MSM Contemporary Music Ensemble (New York), Sinfonia Cultura and USP Symphony Orchestra (São Paulo), the Symphony Orchestras of Salvador, among others.

Wolff’s concerto was written for University of Georgia’s double bass professor Milton Masciadri, who commissioned the work during the Londrina Music Festival in July 2001. It was sketched between August and December of the same year, while the complete orchestral score was finished in March 2002. It is written in solo tuning and is approximately twenty minutes long. This concerto is in the three-movement form traditionally found in concertos for a solo instrument and orchestra as follows:

1. *Allegro Moderato*
2. *ELEGIA* – Homage to George Harrison
3. *Danza Concertante*

\(^8^1\) http://www.danielwolff.com/about.htm. © Copyright 2009, Daniel Wolff.

The first movement is an expanded sonata form, in which a variety of themes result from the transformation of a small quantity of thematic material. The second movement is an elegy. Throughout the movement, only portions and variations of the theme are heard; the complete theme appears only at the end. The final movement, *Danza Concertante*, is indeed a collection of dances laid-out as a rondo form. *Hora*, a dance inspired by Jewish music constitutes the recurring theme of the rondo (a theme which was already heard—in a transformed manner—as the introduction of the second movement). It is interspersed with a Brazilian march, featuring beautiful South-American melodies, a slower dance in uneven meters and a fanfare.  

This concerto is suitable for an intermediate to advanced performer.


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Gareth Wood\textsuperscript{83} was born in Cilfynydd, Wales in 1950. He studied composition and double bass at The Royal Academy of Music, joining the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in 1972. Since then he has toured extensively with the orchestra, appearing at some of the world's major music festivals. His concerto for double bass was commissioned by the Wiltshire Youth Orchestra in 1994 and first performed by Tim Gibbs in 1995. Wood has written two more concertos for Tim Gibbs. This concerto is available from Maecenas Music Publisher with a full score and a piano reduction in orchestra tuning. It is approximately twenty-seven minutes in length and is organized in the standard three movement concerto form as follows:

1. \textit{Moderato}
2. \textit{Andante}
3. \textit{Allegro}

Some characteristics of this concerto are thick texture in the accompaniment and different colors that can be heard throughout the three movements, particularly the first movement. It also contains a section with arpeggiated open notes, similar to those found in cadenzas of concertos by Dragonetti and Capuzzi. The first movement contains an idiomatic cadenza which combines virtuosic and melodic passages with various bowing markings and *pizzicato* immediately followed by bowed double-stops. This cadenza also features some challenging double stops with intervals of fourths, fifths and octaves in the lowest and high registers of the bass. Some of these intervals can be played using both harmonic notes and one harmonic note and a regular note, opening the fingers as needed. The second movement presents neo-classical traits with a mix of minimalist music. These are examples that might suggest influences by Stravinsky, Britten and Handel. Apart from the sustained, tied long notes found in several passages using eighth and sixteenth notes, the melodic lines are lyrical and fairly easy to play. The third movement features
typical characteristics such as those found in the standard repertoire of concertos for the double bass; fast, flashy passages that combine motives and ideas from previous movements. This concerto can be grouped among those written by composers who know the double bass and understand the issues of writing a double bass concerto. This concerto is not too demanding technically but is a rewarding new piece to learn. It can be categorized as "intermediate."
CHAPTER 3
OTHER EXISTING CONCERTOS
An overview and/or analysis of these and other existing concertos will hopefully encourage
teachers, students, and virtuosos of the double bass to incorporate these concertos into the
standard repertoire in the near future.

1. *Double bass Concerto* (2005) by Kalevi Aho. This concerto features complex
counterpoints (particularly fugues) and also neo-classical traits. Score and parts are available
from the composer.

2. *Concerto for Double bass, Strings and Harp* (1997) by David Anderson. This
concerto is currently available only from the composer and will soon be available for purchase.

3. “*Song of the Bow*”; *A Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra* \(^{84}\) (1991) by Milton
Barnes. This concerto was commissioned by Richard Murrin for Joel Quarrington. The music is
available in full orchestra and piano-reduced accompaniment with a solo tuning bass part and is
available from Canadian Music Center 20, St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Canada 4Y IJ9.

4. “*Hogboy*”; a short concerto for double bass and small ensemble (1993) by Kristian
Blak. This concerto is a commission from the Northlands festival in Scotland. More information
is available at:
www.musicwebinternational.com/classrev/2004/Sept04/Blak.htm#ixzz0pp03e1Dd.

5. *Ghost Nets: Concerto for Double bass* (1988), by Henry Brant. This concerto is in
one movement, and is composed for solo double bass with two widely separated chamber
orchestras and one isolated horn. It was commissioned by Lewis Paer, who presented the
premiere performance at Bennington College in August 1988. The score is available from the
composer.

6. *Double bass concerto* (2007) by Katarzyna Brochocka. This concerto was
commissioned by the State Philharmonic Orchestra in Olsztyn, Poland, and performed with
piano reduction for the first time at the International Society of Bassists Convention in 2009 at
Pennsylvania State University. The entire score and parts are available from the composer.

7. **Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra** (1982) by Johanna Bruzdowicz. This concerto was commissioned by the Minister of Culture of France. It was dedicated to virtuoso bassist Fernando Grillo and premiered in 1984. The concerto is approximately twenty minutes long and the score is available from CHOUDENS-PWN Publisher, Paris/Cracow. A CD recording is available from Pavane Records OCC329, 1984.

8. **By the Vaar**, the first concerto for double bass by Gavin Bryars, was written in 1987 as an extended Adagio for the jazz bass player Charlie Haden. The concerto is accompanied by strings, bass clarinet and percussion. It was commissioned by the Camden Festival and first performed there in 1987. It was written in the style of Charlie Haden's bass playing. A recording is available from CBC Records (SMCD5223), from the Label: Philips, CD ASIN: B0000040V7, and from GB Records: BCGBCD12. The entire score and parts are available from the composer.

9. **Concerto for Double bass: Shadows of Noh** (1979) by Barry Conyngham. This concerto was written for virtuoso double bassist and pedagogue Bertram Turetzky and was published by Universal Edition, 1979. The concerto is available for rent from the publisher. Library Availability: Q 784.275186/CON 1 for loan.

10. **Kangaroo Island: concerto for double bass and orchestra** (2009) by Barry Conyngham. This concerto was commissioned for Robert Nairn and premiered in 2009 with the Pennsylvania State Orchestra. Its duration is nineteen minutes. It is available from Australian Music Centre and from the composer.

11. **Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra** (1997) by Ariel Davidov. This concerto is twenty-two minutes in length and is available in orchestra and piano-reduced accompaniment for rent from the composer. More information is available at: www.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/icl/davidovariel.htm.

12. “**Jack and the Beanstalk**” **Concerto for Contrabass and Orchestra** (1991) by Jon Deak. This concerto was published and is available from Carl Fischer (CF.CY2337). ISBN: 0825871557.

13. **Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra** (1987) by John Downey. This concerto was commissioned and written for Gary Karr and premiered in September 1987 at the Sydney Opera House. The World Premiere Recording was released in 1992 in England and is available from...
CALA Records CACD-1003. It is approximately twenty-five minutes long. Score and parts are available from Theodore Presser Company.  


15. Concerto for Double bass and String Orchestra (1994-95) by Andrei Eshpai. This concerto is approximately sixteen minutes in length. The score is available from Low Note Musikverlag KS-AE-990986 and a recording is available from Albany Records, 2000. TROY367.


17. Concerto in One Movement (1985) by Keith Fitch. It is available from Basso Music Publications in full score form, and available for rental in both solo and orchestra tuning. It is also available with reduced piano accompaniment.

18. Double bass Concerto (2010) by Dai Fujikura. This concerto was written for Enno Senft and the London Sinfonietta. The score and parts were published and are available exclusively from G Ricordi & Co. (Munich) Ltd. It is approximately twenty minutes in length.

19. Concerto for Double bass and Chamber Orchestra (1986) by Lubomir Georgiev. The composer was awarded the Grand “Valentino Bucchi” Prize of Rome, Italy 1986 for this concerto. It was first performed by Professor Bruce Bransby with the Indiana University Chamber Orchestra in the Recital Hall at the School of Music on October 15, 1989 (Program / Indiana University School of Music; 1989-1990, no. 199). Subsequently it was performed by Stephen Tramontozzi, Assistant Principal Double-bassist with the San Francisco Symphony and the Chico Symphony Orchestra in Laxson Auditorium of California State University on October 3 and 4, 1992.

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20. *Concerto for Double bass and Chamber Orchestra* by Robert Gibson. This is a traditional concerto in form and movements (three movements of concerto form). The intension here is to present the bassist with a virtuosic challenge in an orchestral setting which would provide diverse instrumental colours and allow the double bass to be heard as a solo voice. Structurally each movement makes melodic and harmonic use of a single interval—half steps in the first movement, whole steps in the second and thirds in the last movement. It is approximately 19 minutes long. Score and parts are available from the composer by request at: http://robertgibsonmusic.com/music/orchestral-music/concerto-for-double-bass.

21. “*Microncerto*” *For double bass and orchestra* (2004) by Gareth Glyn. The Microncerceto was written to a commission by BBC Radio 3 as a short virtuoso piece to show off to children the double bass as a solo instrument. It displays the whole pitch range of the bass (here five and a half octaves) as well as many playing techniques and some special effects. Its range of dynamics and expression is also exploited. The work was premiered by Dominic Seldis with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in 2004, and given its North American premiere by Leonid Finkelshteyn and the North Carolina Symphony in June 2005. It has since been given performances with the BBC Concert Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Score and parts are available from the composer by request.

22. *Concerto for Double bass* and string Orchestra or Piano (1985, 1988 Rev.) by Michael Horwood. Score and parts, with orchestra and piano reduced versions, are available from The Canadian Music Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1J9.


24. *Concerto for Contrabass* (1972-73). Ketil Hvoslef. This score’s duration is approximately twenty-two minutes. A recording is available from AURORA Contemporary NCD B 1919 and the score is available for rental from the composer.

25. *Double bass Concerto* Op. 118 (1980) by Wilfred Josephs. The concerto was first performed on August 1, 1981 at Chester Cathedral (Chester Summer Festival). It was

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commissioned, premiered and recorded by Gary Karr at Chester Summer Festival with Arts Council of Great Britain funds. It is approximately thirty minutes in length and the score is available from Recital Music. Recording by ABC Classical – DISCOVERY- 476-3527

26. Concerto for Double bass and symphony orchestra Opus 76 (1994) by Nikolai Kapustin. This concerto is approximately twenty minutes long. It was premiered in Bonn in 1999. It is a blend of West European classical and post-classical art music with the inclusion of modern idioms of jazz and rock. It is available on CD Triton DICC 26075 and the score and parts are available from the composer by request.

27. Double bass Concerto (1999) by Ståle Kleiberg. This concerto was commissioned by the Trondheim Symphony and premiered the following year. It is a very demanding concerto for the soloist. A recording is available at www.amazon.com (Treble & Bass: Concertos by Ståle Kleiberg, 2L59SACD). The score is available from Music Information Centre Norway P.O. Box 2674 Solli, N-0203 Oslo.

28. Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra (2000)\textsuperscript{91} by Anders Koppel. Edition Wilhelm Hansen AS. Bornholmsgade 1. DK-1266 Copenhagen. www.ewh.dk. This concerto is a one movement work and is approximately seventeen minutes long. The score is available from Chester Music & Novello & Co.

29. Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra (1996) by Ernest Ludwig Leitner. This concerto is approximately twenty-two minutes in length and is available for sale with reduced-piano accompaniment at http://www.di-arezzo.co.uk. The full score is available from Doblinger Musikverlag as well as from the composer. There is a recording available from the Label Ambitus CD #: amb 96870 recorded by bassist Christine Hoock with the Blaserphilharmonie Mozarteum, Salzburg.

30. Concerto for Double bass\textsuperscript{92} (1997) by Raymond Luedeke. This concerto is approximately twenty-four minutes long and is available from the composer for rental only and through the American Composers Alliance (ACA). It was composed for and premiered by Joel Quarrington. The tuning is CGDA in fifths. The concerto is based on Shostakovich’s Cello Concerto No.1 Op. 107.


31. *Concerto for Double bass* (1983) by Gian Carlo Menotti. This concerto is available from Schirmer only for rental in full orchestra score. It has not yet been recorded. It is approximately twenty-three minutes long.

32. *Concerto No. 2 in B Major for Double bass* (2003, Revised 2006) by Edgar Meyer. This concerto is approximately twenty-three minutes long. It is available for rental at Boosey & Hawkes and directly from the composer.

33. *Concerto for Double bass in D* (1993)\(^93\), by Edgar Meyer. This concerto is approximately seventeen minutes. It is available for rental at Boosey & Hawkes and from the composer as well.

34. *Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra* (1986) by Gunther Neubert. This concerto was recorded in 1990 by bassist Gerd Reinke and the Filharmonica Orchestra YASI Recording. It is available from the Label Querstand on CD format Number: VKJK9911. The score is available from the composer. The composer used many of Mozart’s works as an inspirational base for this concerto.

35. *Concerto for Double bass & String Orchestra* (1997) by Tony Osborne. This concerto is the composer’s most recent work for double bass. Approximately twenty-five minutes long, it is rhapsodic with no formal structure. It was commissioned by David Heyes to celebrate his 50th birthday. Bassists Dan Stiffany (Norway), Miriam Chong (USA) and Ben Groenevelt (UK) also helped fund the piece. This concerto is available from Recital Music: (www.recitalmusic.net) and from the composer.


37. *Concerto for Double bass, Cello obbligato and String Orchestra* (1975), by Laurent Petitgirard. The first performance and recording was in 1975 by François Rabbath. The score is available for rental from United Music Publishers Ltd.


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piano accompaniment. Further information is also available at www.myspace.com/leonardopresicci.

39. Taon, *Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra* (2000) by Veli-Matti Puumala. This concerto was commissioned by the Tapiola Sinfonietta and is available from Warner/Chappell Music Finland Oy. Further information is available at http://www.wcnordic.com

40. *Concerto for Double bass (or Cello) and Orchestra* (1993, 1995) by Elizabeth Raum. This concerto was commissioned by the Saskatoon Symphony for their Bach and Friends Series. It was premiered in April, 1993. There are separate parts for double bass and for violoncello. It is available from Canadian Music Centre in orchestra tuning and full orchestra score only.

41. *Contrabass Concerto* (1985) by Christopher Rouse. Publication: 1985. This concerto is approximately eighteen minutes in length. It was commissioned by James Vandemark and is available from the composer.

42. *Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra*, opus 26 (1976-77) by George Sachinidis. It is available from Orpheus Music Publisher and from the composer. There are parts for double bass and piano in A and G minor, critical edition with CD. Athens: M. Nikolaidis-Orpheus Edition. ISMN: 979-0-801150-30-1.

43. ―Antaeus‖ *Concerto for Double bass and Orchestra* (2007) by J. Mark Scearce. This concerto was commissioned by the North Carolina Symphony for its principal bassist Leonid Finkelshteyn. It is approximately twenty minutes. The score and parts are available from the composer in full orchestra version.

44. *Double bass Concerto* (1973) by Friedrich Schenker. It is approximately twenty-four minutes long and was published by Breitkopf und Härtel. It is available in the USA and Canada only from Schirmer, Music Inc. and Associated Music Publishers.

45. *Konzert für Kontrabass und Kammerorchester* (1991) by Joseph Siderits. This concerto was dedicated to the Hungarian Double bass virtuoso and pedagogue Professor Lajos Montag who also premiered it. Its duration is approximately seventeen minutes. It was edited by

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Klaus Schruff and published in solo tuning and piano reduced accompaniment by Low Note Musikverlag, Germany, in 1991.


47. *Concerto for Double bass* (1977-78) by Glenn Stallcop. It was first performed by John Casey, bassist with the Phoenix Symphony in 1979. This concerto is approximately twenty-three minutes long and is available from the composer and from the American Composers Alliance (ACA). More information at: http://www.stallcop.com/works.htm#DB

48. *Concerto for Double bass* (2006?) by Donavan Stokes. This is a concerto for the intermediate level student. It was premiered in May of 2007 in Chicago, IL. Both recording and score are available from Outofstep Publications (837101146111) and from the composer.

49. *Concerto corto: a duet for 5 string double bass & piano with symphony orchestra* (1990) by Harvey Woolsey and Richard Casilli. This concerto is available with piano reduction for loan from its composers.

SUMMARY

After reviewing all compositions presented in this treatise, one can clearly see how much the repertoire of original concertos for the double bass has grown since 1970.

Several factors account for the growth. With the latest advancements in computer science, composers are able to experiment with a large variety of electronic sounds. It seems, however, that these technological advances make composing for solo instruments unattractive to many composers.

Close relationships between composers and performers also led to more writing for solo instruments. These virtuosos include Gary Karr, Francesco Petracci, Duncan McTier, François Rabbath, Joel Quarrington, Ludwig Streicher, and Edwin Barker. They and others have inspired composers to write significant concertos.

The fusion and mastery of techniques, approaches, and styles has resulted in the formation of many virtuosos recently. These virtuosos have heightened expectations regarding the possibilities of the double bass. Composers and performers, aware of these expectations, have created outstanding compositions. These compositions have enhanced the repertoire of original concertos for the double bass. However, a large number of double bass concertos probably still remain unidentified.

Important compositions which can be categorized alongside concertos for double bass include concertinos, fantasia concertantes, concert pieces, divertimento concertantes and concert-variations. Several such compositions have great pedagogical importance. These works should be studied, documented and incorporated into the double bass repertoire as well.

This document is intended to provide a practical and helpful guide for the double bassist relating to the concerto literature for his instrument. Providing a list of recently written concertos will hopefully encourage others to search, analyze and include more concertos in our repertoire as well. Although some may complain that the literature is not sufficiently vast, this compilation demonstrates that there is a rich body of varied concerto literature to help educate and inspire double bassists.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nestor E. Zayas received the Doctor of Music degree in double bass performance from the Florida State University in 2010, where he was a student of Professor Melanie Punter. Mr. Zayas is a U.S. Citizen, born in the Dominican Republic. He studied at the Conservatorio Nacional de Musica in Santo Domingo, where he was a student of Professor Jacinto Roque Diaz. Nestor Zayas holds a Master of Music degree from the Florida State University and a Bachelor’s of Music Education from the University of Georgia where his teacher was Professor Milton Masciadri. Mr. Zayas has participated in master classes and/or lessons with David Anderson, Thierry Barbe, Edwin Barker, Jeff Bradetich, Michael Johnson, Gary Karr, Edgar Meyer, Francesco Petracci and Hal Robinson. He performs with the Festival Orchestra and the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of the Dominican Republic. Mr. Zayas was also the principal bassist of the Albany (GA) Symphony Orchestra, has been a member of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Gainesville Symphony, Macon Symphony Orchestra, the University of Georgia Symphony Orchestra, Wind Symphony, and Jazz Ensemble and the Columbus (GA) Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Zayas is a member of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, the Mobile Symphony Orchestra, the North Florida Symphony Orchestra. He also teaches and enjoys repairing string instruments. Mr. Zayas has been a member of the International Society of Bassists (ISB) since 2002.