

Meridian

Burlesque for Double Bass - Concerto for Double Bass - Leon Bosch - Peter Martens - CPO

CDE 84602

Meridian

A Natural Sound Recording

CDE 84602

TT 62'00"



LC 13637

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ALLAN STEPHENSON

[1] Burlesque for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (1974) 8:47

Concerto for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (2005)

[2] Allegro energico 10:25

[3] Poco lento 6:35

[4] Vivace - Meno mosso - Vivace 5:04

Concerto for Cello and Full Orchestra (2004)

[5] Allegro energico 16:20

[6] Poco lento 8:15

[7] Molto vivace 7:04

Recorded at the Hugo Lambrechts Music Centre
Cape Town 21, 22 and 23 December 2010.

Recorded by Richard Hughes

Produced by Leon Bosch and Peter Martens

Edited by Susanne Stanzeleit

Cover Painting: Cottages by Harold Kimmel

Leon Bosch - Double Bass

Peter Martens - Cello

Cape Philharmonic Orchestra

Conducted by Allan Stephenson

p & m Meridian Records 2011
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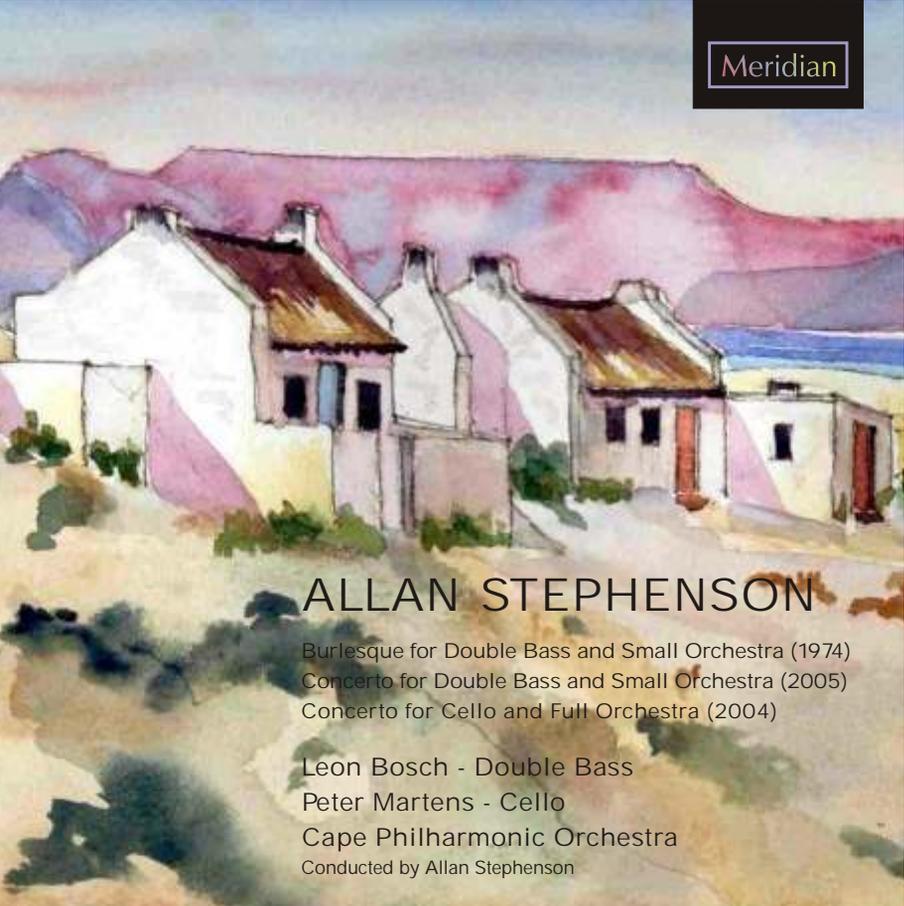
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ALLAN STEPHENSON

Burlesque for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (1974)

Concerto for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (2005)

Concerto for Cello and Full Orchestra (2004)

Leon Bosch - Double Bass

Peter Martens - Cello

Cape Philharmonic Orchestra

Conducted by Allan Stephenson

Burlesque for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (1974)

Soon after my arrival in Cape Town in 1973 to start my first full-time orchestral job as sub-principal 'cellist in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, I decided to write an entertaining virtuoso burlesque for Zoltan Kovats, the principal bass player that would also not neglect the instrument's capacity for melodic warmth. It was he who introduced me to the mysteries of solo bass tuning and, for unforced balance considerations, I decided on an orchestra of strings with flute - doubling piccolo, clarinet and bassoon, providing a delightful mix of timbres yet powerful enough to allow wind versus string alternations. In the light of Leon's successful 2004 première in Johannesburg I revised some aspects of the solo part.



Structurally the work is in a very loose sonata design, with exposition and recapitulation clearly audible and a development section in the middle. I use, unusually, a pair of first subjects - the first sounds are a rising solo on his four open strings, and this is then developed more lyrically (with woodwind interjections taking over the rhythmic element) until a brusque tempo change to *allegro molto*. The solo bass now gives the second of the pair as a vigorous downward thrust on those open strings. A more lyrical strain in the orchestra quiets down to reveal the second subject - a *cantabile* bass melody in harmonics. These two ideas are developed imitatively until an orchestral ritornello builds a climax to a cadenza where I tried to demonstrate the varied range of the instrument's potentials. After a 'standard' recapitulation a brief virtuosic coda uses the opening flourish to round things off rumbustiously.

Concerto for Double Bass and Small Orchestra (2005)

- I. *Allegro energico*
- II. *Poco lento*
- III. *Vivace - Meno mosso - Vivace*

Straight after Leon's return home to the U.K. following his success with my *Burlesque* in Johannesburg came his gratifying request for a full concerto. This time I enriched the string section with a quintet of woodwind (Fl. Ob. Cl. Fag and Horn) - a favourite tonal palette I first used for its colouristic opportunities in my *Concertino Pastorale* (1984) for clarinet.

The first movement is in conventional sonata form, opening with the theme on clarinet; when taken over by the soloist, he begins the immediate development of its motivic elements which permeate the whole - a technique I used throughout. Some of the English folksong ideas do glance unashamedly backward stylistically to Vaughan Williams! The cadenza emerges lyrically from a haze of tremolo violins, incorporates the main theme, and builds exuberantly into the shortened recapitulation which ends with a brief final flourish.

The slow movement is a *Siciliana* - a favourite dance for me, in which I keep the tonal centres very flexible and use various motives in continuous development. I used the four tranquil introductory bars in transformation to build to the climax of the movement near the close. In our interpretation we aimed for expressive subtleties to relieve any possible monotony to the hypnotic rhythms.

The finale is a tour de force for the soloist, exploiting the vigour of the driving Italian *tarantella*. A lively introduction beginning on lower strings prepares for the soloist's first entry; different variants of this are then passed around the orchestra. At the *Meno mosso* in duple time the lyrical woodwind link leads to an extended *cantilena* for the soloist with woodwind interpolations. These elements are extensively fused at a lively tempo until the clearly defined coda, where I tried to provide the soloist with technical fireworks dazzling enough to drive the music to a photo finish.

**Concerto for Cello
and Full Orchestra (2004)**

- I. *Allegro energico*
- II. *Poco lento*
- III. *Molto vivace*

My Cello Concerto was the result of the gracious cajoling from Peter and others – or was it constant nagging? - "You're a cellist and a composer.....so why haven't you written your own concerto?" That's not an easy proposition, given the formidable competition ... Dvorak, Elgar, Walton, two from Shostakovich ... and I couldn't give it less than my very best.

Finally, over Christmas 2004 I took the bull by the horns and managed to create something I was happy with. But I'm fully aware it's always for the listener to decide how successfully I handled the challenge.

It is a serious piece of half an hour in the traditional three movements. The opening sonata *Allegro* has

clearly defined 1st and 2nd subject areas, a well worked out development section, with the cadenza placed soon into the recapitulation. The lyrical slow movement has somewhat melancholic overtones, with yet another cadenza at its heart. The life-enhancing finale bursts out with headlong abandon. I tried to use all my cellistic expertise, incorporating all the tricks of the trade to create an unstoppable roller-coaster momentum – albeit with an oasis of melodic respite.

I hope to have provided a stimulating and original musical experience for players and listeners alike – well aware that this will come at the expense of a certain amount of wear and tear on the soloist.

Allan Stephenson



Allan Stephenson was born in Wallasey, Cheshire in England and studied piano from the age of seven and the 'cello at thirteen. He entered the Royal Manchester College of Music in 1968 and left with an A.R.M.C.M IN 1972. He moved to South Africa in 1973 as sub-principal 'cellist with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until the demise of the orchestra.

Mr. Stephenson's debut with the CTSO saw the first performance of his 1st Symphony, a work begun on the pier at Llandudno, Wales, and completed in Cape Town. Since then he has conducted all the major symphony orchestras in South Africa in concert and ballet performances. His repertoire is large and wide-ranging, incorporating orchestral and choral music and he has been responsible for a number of first performances in the country from Nielsen's *Inextinguishable* to P.D.Q. Bach's *1712 Overture*. With his *Concertino Pastorale for Clarinet* he produced the first serious music CD to be made in S.A. and he has recorded many works by South African composers including Zaidal-Rudolph's *At the End of the Rainbow*; Klatzow's *States of light* and his Brahms transcription of the string quintet in G major;

Thomas Rajna's 2nd *Piano Concerto* and *Harp concerto* to name a few. From 1978-1988 he was the music director of the UCT College Orchestra and founded the Cape Town Chamber Orchestra and ran I Musicanti (a String Chamber Orchestra) for a number of seasons.

Mr Stephenson's catalogue of works now numbers over 110 compositions in all genres from orchestral to chamber; three operas, including *The Orphans of Qumbu* (which has seen some 3,000 orphans of all races taking part) and the opera who-dunnit *Who killed Jimmy Valentine*; and concerti for almost every orchestral instrument.

As well as on the concert platform and in indoor and outdoor venues, Allan Stephenson can also be found in the orchestra pit conducting

his own ballets and ballet arrangements: *Tales of Hoffman*, *Camille* and *Sylvia in Hollywood* – all to choreography by Veronica Paeper and others. In 2002 he conducted the South African Ballet Theatre's first season of performances of *Romeo and Juliet* with a live orchestra at the Civic theatre, Johannesburg. In 2005, he arranged and conducted their very successful production of *La Traviata* which also toured to Port Elizabeth.



2005 saw the première of his *Concerto for Bassoon and Guitar* with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, 2006 he conducted a season of Veronica Paeper's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *The Merry Widow* and returned to the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg for a season of his *Traviata* ballet and last year with *Cinderella* in a very successful partnership with the J.P.O. Last year saw two performances of his *Cello Concerto* in Bloemfontein and Cape Town with Peter Martens as soloist., plus the premiere of his *Violin Concerto* with Suzanne Martens.

Allan Stephenson's music publisher:
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Leon Bosch

The South African-born virtuoso double bassist Leon Bosch is one of today's most versatile and imaginative artists. His wide-ranging interests have taken him in many directions, all of which have fed into a unique career and helped to establish his international reputation as an outstanding musician. In addition to a high-profile orchestral life – he is currently principal double bass of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields – he is sought after as a chamber musician, recitalist, concerto soloist, teacher and programmer. In addition he has built up a varied portfolio of commissions and world premieres and is developing a recording catalogue of an unusually diverse repertoire.

Born in Cape Town, though now a British citizen, he graduated from the University of Cape Town before continuing his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester,



gaining distinction in the Professional Performance Diploma. The recipient of many prizes, he quickly found his vocation. Since 1984, when he made his London solo debut with the Philharmonia Orchestra, he has appeared as a concerto soloist with many distinguished musicians, including Pinchas Zukerman, Sir Charles Groves and Nicholas Kraemer, and as a guest principal and performer with leading orchestras and ensembles.

As an award-winning recitalist he has been invited to play at festivals and music clubs throughout the UK and in Germany, Bulgaria, Ireland and South Africa. Collaborations are a central part of Leon Bosch's work and highlights of his chamber music partnerships have included engagements with the Lindsay, Belcea and Brodsky String Quartets, I Musicanti, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble and the Moscow Virtuosi as well as fruitful associations with such pianists as Maria João Pires, Mikhail Rudy, Vladimir Ovchinnikov, Peter Donohoe, Martin Roscoe and, most recently on CD, Sung-Suk Kang.

His innovative approach to music-making and his commitment to the double bass – his enthusiasm for his instrument communicated fluently both from the platform and through teaching, examining and adjudicating – have done much to raise the profile of the instrument. His formidable technique and keen musicianship, combined with his artistic vision, have enabled him to carve a remarkable niche in the musical world.

On the borders of, and beyond, the classical arena Leon Bosch has contributed to recording tracks of such pop artists as Madonna, Robbie Williams, Michael Jackson and Björk while his constantly expanding horizons have led him to explore challenging and little-known music for double bass both in live performance and on disc. He has been responsible for a number of important first performances including *Pueblo*, a commission from John McCabe, several works by Allan Stephenson and music by the South African composers Paul Hanmer and Hendrik Hofmeyr.

Complementing his contribution to a clutch of chamber music recordings is a solo discography embracing virtuoso repertoire, albums of British and Russian repertoire and, on forthcoming releases, Hungarian music and works by the brilliant Italian bassist Domenico Dragonetti.

As well as his deep immersion in all aspects of musical life in this country, Leon Bosch is a graduate of the University of Salford in Intelligence and International Relations. He lives on the outskirts of London with his wife and two sons. www.leonbosch.co.uk

Peter Martens studied with Dalena Roux at Stellenbosch University and Heidi Litchauer at the Mozarteum in Salzburg where he performed extensively as solo cellist for the Austrian Ensemble for Modern Music and as section leader of the chamber orchestra, *Salzburger Musici*. In 1993 Peter returned to South Africa and occupied principal positions in a number of orchestras before moving to the University of Stellenbosch where he currently holds the positions of Artistic Administrator and Director of the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival.

Concerto engagements have resulted in collaborations with a number of fine conductors including Victor Yampolsky, Bernard Gueller, Douglas Boyd and Jonas Alber. He has participated in festivals in Holland, Salzburg, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Portugal as well as having performed in the U.K and U.S.A. Many South African composers have written for him, the most notable composition being the Cello Concerto by Allan Stephenson.



He is a member of the *Amici String Quartet* and *Bass-ically Brilliant* with bassist Leon Bosch. Other chamber music activities have included partnerships with the late Lamar Crowson, Nina Schumann, Luis Magalhães, Benjamin Schmid, Daniel Rowland, Tom Carroll, Suzanne Martens, Ivory Gitlis and members of the *Osiris Piano Trio*, Amsterdam. Concerto engagements have resulted in and Portugal as well as having performed in the U.K and U.S.A. Many South African composers have written for him, the most notable composition being the Cello Concerto by Allan Stephenson. His recent recording of the complete Beethoven Sonatas with pianist Luis Magalhães was released in January this year.



"Peter Martens delivers brilliantly incisive and spirited accounts of all these works..."
Joanne Talbot – The Strad Magazine Feb 2011

Peter plays on a Lockey Hill Cello and is married to violinist, Suzanne Martens.

Cape Philharmonic Orchestra

The Cape Philharmonic Orchestra is arguably the most versatile and active orchestra on the continent of Africa and contributes handsomely in making Cape Town part of a global culture.

The Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, South Africa's "orchestra for all seasons", is a financially and culturally sustainable, multi-functional orchestra delivering a world-class musical experience to all communities of the Western Cape. The CPO is one of only three full-time professional symphony orchestras in South Africa and continues a long and proud history of symphonic music since Cape Town's first symphony orchestra was formed in 1914. The orchestra recently returned from a highly successful concert tour in the United States of America where it received standing ovations and excellent reviews.

Apart from traditional symphony concerts presented in the historic City Hall with its excellent acoustics for orchestral music, the CPO also performs at the Artscape Theatre Centre with Cape Town Opera and Cape Town City Ballet for their opera and ballet seasons. Further engagements include performances with prestigious visiting musicians, "symphonic pops" concerts for special occasions as well as constant collaboration with community musicians and choirs. This all adds up to a staggering 140 performances per year. The orchestra runs a vast outreach and community programme that includes two youth orchestras and grassroots training projects in various townships.





The soloists and composer wish to express their sincerest thanks and gratitude to the management and members of the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra for their generous support.