



GOTTSCALK AND CUBA

ANTONIO ITURRIOZ, piano



STEINWAY & SONS



Louis Moreau Gottschalk

Gottschalk and Cuba

When most people think of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), Creole pianist and composer, they think of pieces such as *The Banjo*, *Bamboula*, *The Dying Poet*, and other familiar pieces. But he was so much more than that. He was America's first important pianist-composer. He was the precursor to ragtime and early jazz and anticipated the works of Granados and Albéniz. He traveled the world and spent several years of his short, colorful and tragic life in the Caribbean where he fell in love with Cuba and its music.

This CD is a journey through 100 years of Cuban classical piano music circa 1850 to 1950, from classical to popular, much of it never before recorded. The story begins with Gottschalk's years in Cuba and is told chronologically as each important pianist-composer influenced by Gottschalk passes this influence on to the next generation, starting with Saumell to Espadero to Cervantes to de Blanck to Ernesto Lecuona and to his distinguished composer sister, Ernestina.

Influence flowed both ways, as Gottschalk was greatly influenced by the Cuban pianist-composers. He composed and performed so fluently in the Cuban musical idiom that it might be appropriate to speak of him as a "Cuban composer". His unique style combined his Creole musical heritage with the American, Latin American and Afro-Caribbean influences he absorbed – all expressed within the boundaries of European 19th century classical piano writing. Combining the musical heritage of the Creoles, the Afro-Caribbeans and other countries he visited, he created the first examples of multiculturalism in his music. *Fiesta Criolla*, the second movement of *A Night in the Tropics*, is a perfect example of the endless Afro-Caribbean rhythms that he applied to this piece using his own melodies.

As a pianist and documentarian, my repertoire ranges from Scarlatti to present day composers including the rarely-played works of Leopold Godowsky. Since I was a child I have been hearing the music of my homeland played by my mother and father, both wonderful pianists. I have always loved all the music of Cuba.

This album is an homage to my homeland, to my parents and grandparents, to the American genius Gottschalk, and to the great Cuban pianist-composers who inspired this recording. To quote Ernesto Lecuona's masterpiece, "Siempre en Mi Corazón".

— Antonio Iturriz

The New Orleans-born American composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk spent a half dozen years of his brief life in the Caribbean. His special love was for Cuba, and above all for Havana. Since his entire public career spanned a mere twenty years, this means that his Caribbean days accounted for nearly a third of his life as an artist. In no other city did the mature Gottschalk spend more time as an adult than in Havana. He thrived in the Cuban metropolis, presenting the public with countless new piano works and a grand orchestral tone poem in two parts, the first symphonic work by an American composer. He also produced a delightful thirteen-minute tonadillo for solo voices and orchestra entitled *Escenas Campestres*, a complete opera, *Amelia Warden*, and part of another, *Isaura di Salerno*. Gottschalk's experience in Havana decisively influenced everything that he did later.

Gottschalk's life in Havana began when he was twenty-four years old and, after a brief return to the U.S., extended to his thirty second year. The young artist was immensely talented, unattached, impressionable, and sociable. Why would Havana society not have lionized him? At the same time Moreau (as he was called) formed deep friendships with leading Cuban musicians, several of whose works are included here.

During his years in the Caribbean young Moreau was very much in search of himself. His austere Jewish father died in 1854, leaving him with the responsibility of sending monthly payments to sustain his spendthrift mother and three younger siblings. A Catholic, Moreau took this family responsibility seriously. Yet he seized the first opportunity to sail to the Caribbean, where he allowed himself to relax, at least partially. In a memoir written for publication, he wrote of giving himself over to pleasures of the flesh during months spent at a mountainside retreat in Guadeloupe.

Yet in those same months he composed an entire opera and the two-part First Symphony, known popularly as *A Night in the Tropics*. Gottschalk reported that at the premiere, "My orchestra of 650 performers—87 choristers, 15 solo singers, 50 drums and 80 trumpets, that is to say nearly 900 persons bellowing and blowing to see who could scream the loudest. The violins alone were 70 in numbers, basses 11 in numbers, and two triangles." He failed to mention that the ensemble also included several army bands and a troupe of Afro-Cuban drummers who enlivened the second movement. The latter was a first for a European or American composer.

Gottschalk originally composed this work for piano. In this recording we hear it for the first time in the original one-piano version. Pianist Antonio Iturriz and Gottschalk specialist Larry Lobel have reconstructed it using Artur Napoleão dos Santos' very incomplete one-piano version and Nicolas Ruiz Espadero's two-piano edition. Thanks to Iturriz and Lobel we hear this work for the first time as the composer originally conceived it. It is a delightful manifestation of what Manuel Marquez Sterling aptly called Gottschalk's musical genre painting. Hearing it calls to mind the words of writer Lafcadio Hearn, who called Gottschalk, "The alchemist and magician who extracted the musical perfume from the flowers of the Antilles."

It was in Havana that Gottschalk had his deepest encounter with the beguiling contradanza, which played the same role in Cuban society as the minuet in eighteenth century Europe. He immediately penned a series of endearing contradanzas that were admired and emulated by the likes of the acknowledged master of the contradanza, Manuel Saumell. This encounter with Cuban dance music occurred just at the moment the now ageing contradanza was giving way to the simpler danza form. One of his several Cuban students, Ignacio Cervantes, would later develop Gottschalk's gentle pieces in these genres into languorous tone poems dedicated to the cause of Cuban self-determination. One of his attractive early gems in this vein, included here, is *Ynez*.

At the same time Gottschalk was falling in love with the gentle and lyrical Cuban contradanza, this arch-Chopinian indulged his interest in the rising star of the piano, Franz Liszt. In the rousing *El Cocoye* and *Maria la O*, based on immensely popular Carnival tunes, he transformed Cuban vernacular melodies into grand and virtuosic fantasies. Gottschalk's close Cuban friend and protégé Nicolás Ruiz Espadero, followed Gottschalk

along these lines, and composed piano works that challenge the performer as much as they strike awe in the listener.

When Gottschalk composed *El Cocoye*, Cuba was still a Spanish colony and did not have its own national anthem. The storm of applause that met every performance of this work showed how subtly the composer had epitomized the nation's self-identity. Gottschalk, who was to perform variations on the United States' unofficial national anthem, *Hail Columbia*, throughout the American Civil War, fully grasped the importance of national airs and hymns. Later, throughout his travels around South America, he was to compose variations on national airs and anthems that were invariably met with wild cheers.

Moreau, who spoke French, Italian and Spanish, as well as English, was very well-read and, thanks to his personal contact with Hector Berlioz during his student years in Paris, an engaging and interesting writer. It was while he was in Cuba that he began his second career as a wry travel writer. As with Berlioz, his motive was mercenary—he needed the money. Later, as his experience broadened and deepened during the American Civil War, he infused his writings with deep insights into politics, public affairs, and especially education. For half a decade before his untimely death from peritonitis in 1869, Gottschalk crusaded for public education, elective politics, and civic responsibility in every country in Latin America he visited.

But this civic dimension was absent from Moreau Gottschalk's life and work during his years in Cuba and the other Caribbean islands. He was young, Cuba was enjoying a brief respite from its endless confrontations with its colonial overlords in Madrid, and the American Civil War was still several years in the future. Besides, he was busy composing. Indeed, this American composer, who had absorbed the entire repertoire of fashionable French and Italian operas while still a boy in New Orleans, now devoted every moment of his free time in Cuba to composing for the opera stage.

Unfortunately, this ended in disaster. Gottschalk had toiled for several years on an opera based on an 1833 opera by Daniel Auber, *Gustave III, ou Le bal masqué*. Unknown to him, Giuseppe Verdi had meanwhile been laboring over his own operatic reworking of Auber's plot. The result was his *Un Ballo in Maschera*, which

premiered on 17 February, 1859. The success of Verdi's work effectively killed Gottschalk's opera on the same theme. When he hurriedly left the island at the outbreak of the American Civil War, he entrusted the manuscript to his friend Espadero and it hasn't been seen since.

When he returned to the United States Gottschalk took with him his piano pieces from Cuba and the Caribbean and arranged for their publication. He rarely played them in public but their jaunty syncopations gained them a popular following nonetheless. Gottschalk was not the only musical influence on Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton but both evoked his work in syncopated pieces that manifest the "Latin tinge" first exploited by Gottschalk.

Later American composers, including George Gershwin (*Cuban Overture*, 1932) Aaron Copland (*El Salón México*, 1936) and Leonard Bernstein (*Danzon* from *Fancy Free*, 1944) were also to plumb Cuban and Latin American rhythms and melodies. But it is important to note that all three of these were one-way streets, with Cuba as the transmitter and the American composers the receiver. With Gottschalk the influence went in both directions. In both Cuba and the rest of Latin America echoes from Gottschalk's visits were audible for decades after he departed. Both Espadero and Cervantes acknowledged the New Orleanian as a decisive factor in their own development. Even Manuel Saumell, twenty-two years older than Gottschalk, acknowledged his influence and dedicated a moving tribute to him, *Recuerdos de Gottschalk* (included here), on the latter's death. Artur Napoleão, fourteen years younger than Gottschalk, fell powerfully under his influence and went on to an active composing career in Brazil. A Dutch composer named Hubert de Blanck arrived in Havana years after Gottschalk departed but quickly absorbed Gottschalk's influence through his disciples Espadero and Cervantes. His debt is evident in his *Souvenir de la Havana*, (included here). De Blanck in turn taught Ernesto Lecuona, later renowned as Cuba's premier composer. Though born only in 1896, Lecuona, in many of his 400 songs and 176 pieces for the piano, carried on the Gottschalk tradition, as did his older sister, Ernestina, whose *Amor Lejano* is recorded here for the first time as a piano solo.

What were the elements of Gottschalk's influence on Cuban musicians? When the general public thinks of "influence" in music the focus is usually on melodies. More specialized listeners may add harmonic patterns. Both of these were in play in Gottschalk's influence in Cuba. But equally important in Gottschalk's case was his performance style, which involved a light touch in the French manner he had studied in Paris. In spite of his ventures in Lisztian bombast, his playing was generally understated, featuring a solid and very rhythmic bass in the left hand and a right hand playing the melody in a much lighter, freer and more languid style. Much of this derived from Chopin's bel canto style, but Gottschalk was the first to apply it systematically to the music of Cuba and the Caribbean. Gottschalk's legacy in Cuba was grounded as much in his performance style as in his melodic sense and mastery of harmony.

We are fortunate to have in Havana-born Antonio Iturrioz a pianist who appreciates and understands these critically important features. Like Gottschalk, he is above all a Chopinian, but one with a solid command of the subtleties of syncopation. It is thanks to this mastery, and to Iturrioz' deep musical inquisitiveness, that we have this masterfully performed and deeply appealing tribute to the memory of Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Gottschalk's friends, including Saumell, Espadero, Cervantes, and Napolao, would doubtless have welcomed it, as do we now.

— *Dr. S. Frederick Starr*

Author of biography of Gottschalk, *Bamboula—The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* and editor of Gottschalk's *Notes of a Pianist*. Co-founder of Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble and author of numerous books on the history and culture of New Orleans. Chairman, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the American Foreign Policy Council.



Photo: Dr. S. Frederick Starr autographs a copy of his famous Gottschalk biography, *BAMBOULA* for Antonio Iturrioz as Gottschalk enthusiast and piano technician extraordinaire Larry Lobel (standing) looks on. Sonoma County, California, July 2017. Photo by Charles Sepos.

A Night in the Tropics, Symphony Romantique – A WORLD PREMIERE on one piano

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) This is a historic piece, the first symphony written by an American composer. It is the most revolutionary American concert music of the entire 19th century. It is the first appearance of *multiculturalism* as Gottschalk incorporated African drums of all sizes and shapes into European classical form.

In this recording we hear it for the first time in the original one-piano version, both movements, along the lines of how the composer originally conceived it. Pianist Antonio Iturrioz and Gottschalk specialist Larry Lobel reconstructed it using Artur Napoleao dos Santos' very incomplete one-piano version and Nicolas Ruiz Espadero's two-piano version, and several orchestral versions. The first movement, *Andante*, was transcribed by Gottschalk's colleague Napoleao. By some mysterious reason in his transcription he left out a very important theme. Iturrioz has added this theme back into the piece as it was originally written.

The second movement, *Fiesta Criolla* has been transcribed for one piano by Iturrioz for the first time and is included in this recording. So now, we have for the first time the entire two-movement symphony on one piano in a World Premiere recording.

Ynez – “Danza Compuesta por L. M. Gottschalk y dedicada a su bella discipula”

(Dance composed by L. M. Gottschalk and dedicated to his beautiful disciple)

Louis Moreau Gottschalk This danza written in 1860 or 1861 is light and charming, devoid of the pianistic and structural complexities of the other Cuban compositions. This is a contradanza within the Cuban traditional thought, Gottschalk limited himself to the structure of a Cuban contradanza. It comes close to the Saumell model than to any other of his works. In the second section of the piece he puts the cinquillo rhythm over the habanera rhythm simultaneously. This work makes one think of Scott Joplin, but was written 30 to 35 years before Joplin was composing.

Recuerdos de Gottschalk

Manuel Saumell (1817-1870) was one of the earliest Cuban composers and the one who most influenced Gottschalk. He was an innovator who Creolized the contradanza and Gottschalk used him as his model in his own contradanzas. He is considered the father of the Cultural Nationalist Movement. These works are noteworthy for expressing a variety of typical Cuban rhythms. Gottschalk biographer Dr. S. Frederick Starr writes that Saumell “stands at the head of the genealogy of lyrical syncopated music that extends through Gottschalk to a host of late nineteenth century Cuban masters and thence to Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Artie Matthews and other creators of American ragtime.” Saumell was a classical exemplar of the Cuban confluence of the cultivated and the vernacular. He sometimes signed his works with the pen name, “El Timbalero.” (The Timpanist). He wrote 51 contradanzas and dedicated three of them to Gottschalk. *Recuerdos de Gottschalk* is contradanza number 51.

Sur la Tombe de Gottschalk – WORLD PREMIERE

Nicolas Ruiz Espadero (1832-1890) was Gottschalk’s best friend in Havana. His personality was almost the complete inverse of the flamboyant Gottschalk’s. He hated playing in public and remained indoors with the shutters drawn in the company of his many cats. He was the most famous Cuban composer- pianist of his time. His large volume of compositions represents the romantic pianism of his times in Cuba. With Gottschalk’s help, Espadero’s work was published in France, Spain and New Orleans. Espadero was the first to publish much of Gottschalk’s music in Cuba. As a pianist his favorite composers to play were Chopin and Gottschalk. *Sur la Tombe de Gottschalk* is a requiem and pays profound homage to his friend. It was composed in 1870.

Serenata Cubana

Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905) As Saumell was the master of the contradanza, Cervantes was the master of the danza. He studied with Espadero and Gottschalk then went to study at the Paris Conservatory with Gottschalk's colleague Antoine Francois Marmontel. His danzas have in common with Saumell's contradanzas an economy of means notably lacking in the prevailing florid style of his day. He is best known for his 37 danzas for piano. The *Serenata Cubana* was published posthumously in 1910.

Souvenir de la Havane (Mazurka de Salon) – WORLD PREMIERE

Hubert de Blanck (1856-1932) Dutch composer and pedagogue, settled in Cuba and opened Cuba's first Conservatory in 1885. He was friends with Cervantes and Espadero. His pupil, Ernesto Lecuona, dedicated his most famous composition to him, *Malaguena*. Many distinguished artists studied with him.

Danza Lucumi; Palomitas Blancas; Siempre en Mi Corazón

Ernesto Lecuona (1896-1963) is the most famous Cuban composer of the 20th Century. He was writing music by the time he was eleven. His teachers were his sister, Ernestina Lecuona, Hubert de Blanck, and later Maurice Ravel in Paris. He was unique in having a dual career as a composer and concert pianist. He wrote more than 400 songs, 176 pieces for piano, 50 theatrical works, 31 orchestral works, 5 ballets, 1 trio and 1 opera, and wrote 11 sound tracks for cinema. He had the rare gift of combining both art music and popular songs. Like Gottschalk, he embodied many cultural streams that converged on his homeland—from the native Cuban 19th century dances to the ancestral Spanish (*Granada*) to the African (*Danzas Afro-Cubanas*) and even to the North American (*Tres Miniatures*). In Cuba he helped establish the Havana Symphony and lent his assistance to many aspiring musicians. He died in 1963 in the Canary Islands of an asthma attack, a condition he had suffered from since childhood.

Danza Lucumi is the fifth piece from his suite of Afro-Cuban dances for the piano. Pianistically they are an extension of Gottschalk's use of the piano.

Palomitas Blancas This song was never published as a piano solo. David Di Grazia and Antonio Iturrioz copied it down from listening to Lecuona's 1955 New York recordings.

Siempre en Mi Corazón This famous song was the runner up for an Academy Award in 1942 when Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* was the winner. As with *Palomitas Blancas*, Lecuona never wrote down this song as a piano solo. David Di Grazia and Antonio Iturrioz copied it down from listening to Lecuona's 1955 New York recordings.

Amor Lejano - WORLD PREMIERE

Ernestina Lecuona y Casado (1882-1951) was the sister of Ernesto Lecuona. She was a pianist, educator and prolific composer. She traveled with her brother on tour for many years. In 1937 she founded a Woman's Orchestra in Cuba. The song *Amor Lejano*, played as a solo here, has "ghost-like similarities at times to *The Dying Poet* by Gottschalk" (a quote from my friend Michael Lane).

El Cocoye - Grand Caprice Cuban di Bravura

Louis Moreau Gottschalk *El Cocoye*, written in 1854 (the year that Gottschalk arrived in Cuba), was a favorite of Cuban audiences. In this brilliant work he used two native themes that have the structure of the contradanza, the cinquillo and the habanera rhythms. He used the habanera in his famous work *Bamboula* when he was 17 years old, long before he visited Cuba.

Gottschalk's usual practice in his larger compositions was to use a danza as the basis of the piece. Being an improvisational genius, he would make variations out of the themes that he came up with, and use connective passages to go on to the second theme, make variations from that, and go to a third theme

and make variations on that. At times the structure may be viewed as an interesting and novel amalgamation of variations and rondo form. So combining the different sections he would make these extended grand piano works out of the basic materials of the danza. The danza is used as a point of departure with connective passages adding up to a large scale caprice.

Espadero persuaded Gottschalk to copy down his unpublished works in cryptic shorthand, understood only by the two of them. Espadero then wrote out the complete score on the basis of a thorough knowledge of Gottschalk's style and frequent hearings of the compositions. If Franz Liszt had been a Creole, he could have written this piece.

— Antonio Iturrioz



Concert pianist, documentarian and Steinway Artist **Antonio Iturrioz**, born in Cuba, came to the United States when he was 7 years old. Giving his first concert at 9, he played the Liszt First Piano Concerto for his orchestral debut at 15. His teachers have included his father, Pablo Iturrioz; Francisco De Hoyos, a pupil of Gyorgi Sandor; Bernardo Segall, who studied with the Liszt pupil Alexander Siloti; Aube Tzerko; and Julian White. He has taken master classes from Byron Janis, Alexis Weissenberg, Jorge Bolet, and Andre Watts.

While recuperating from an injury to his right hand, Iturrioz learned important and obscure works for the left hand, including the complete Godowsky arrangements and original compositions. This led to his first film, the unique documentary *The Art of the Left Hand: A Brief History of Left Hand Piano Music*, called "an important film" by *Clavier* magazine. His

second, *The Buddha of the Piano: Leopold Godowsky*, the only film about Godowsky, has been shown at international piano festivals, colleges in the U.S., and the Edinburgh Society of Musicians. Released to high praise from many pianists and scholars, Marc-Andre Hamelin said, "Antonio Iturrioz has performed a wonderful service to music lovers in general and pianophiles in particular...." Carlo Grante said, "As a musician and person of devotion to the cause of Godowsky's music, I think Iturrioz is the man we have been waiting for." Scotland's greatest pianist-composer Dr. Ronald Stevenson said of the film, "It is an important film for all pianists and pianophiles.... You reveal with skill, clarity and sensitivity the intricacies of his polyphonic piano writing." The film, translated into Italian and French, will soon be translated into Polish. Both films have been featured on national public television.

Iturrioz in 2013 gave the world premiere performance on one piano of L. M. Gottschalk's complete two-movement symphony, *La Nuit des Tropiques*, having transcribed for the first time for one piano the second movement, "Fiesta Criolla." The world premiere recording is included in this album.

Thank You

This album is an homage to the land of my birth, to my grandparents, my parents Pablo and Manuela Iturrioz, my sisters Martha and Manuela, and my fellow Cubans.

My profound thanks to my dear friends who made this album possible. Due to limited space, I can't name all of you, but you know who you are.

Special appreciation to Ratnakar Dev for designing my website, to Dr. S. Frederick Starr for his liner notes, to Andre Watts for his special endorsement, to Byron Janis for his inspiration, to Larry Lobel who encouraged me to transcribe the second movement of *A Night in the Tropics*, to David Di Grazia for his help in transcribing the Lecuona pieces, to Jane Weldon for her editorial expertise, to Melvyn Cornelius, Charles Gehring, Charles Sepos, and Will Puckett for their scholarship, Marcelo Siero for his lifelong friendship and support, and for hosting home concerts to raise funds for this project: Guy Sandler, Charles Wixson, Sue and Peter Witter, Michele and Michael Lane, Sharie Renault, Ricardo Hernandez, Camille LeBlanc, Charles Harris, Bob and Diana Chave, Kirk Whipple and Marilyn Morales. Posthumous thanks to Alfred Watson, James Moates, Thomas Clark, Richard Wahlberg and Marina Derryberry.

I can never thank my wife Mary enough for her encouragement, insights and energies throughout this project.

This list would not be complete without thanking my producer Leslie Ann Jones and her crew at Skywalker Sound for their excellent work, and my west coast Steinway representative Seromi Park for helping me find the extraordinary Steinway for this recording.

— Antonio Iturrioz

Gottschalk and Cuba

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Producer: Leslie Ann Jones

Engineer: Leslie Ann Jones

Assistant Engineer: Dann Thompson

Editing: Robert Gatley

Mastering: Michael Romanowski, Coast Mastering

Executive Producer: Jon Feidner

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Piano: Steinway Model D #237 (Hamburg)

Production Assistant: Renée Oakford

Photo of Antonio Iturrioz: Dennis DeNaut

Louis Moreau Gottschalk

A Night in the Tropics, Symphony Romantique (solo piano version)

- 1 I. Andante 15:52
- 2 II. Fiesta Criolla (Allegro Moderato)* 8:17

Gottschalk

- 3 Ynez (contradanza) 2:52

Manuel Saumell

- 4 Recuerdos de Gottschalk 2:56

Nicolas Ruiz Espadero

- 5 Sur la Tombe de Gottschalk* 12:27

Ignacio Cervantes

- 6 Serenata Cubana 5:59

Hubert de Blanck

- 7 Souvenir de le Havane (Mazurka de Salon)* 4:48

Ernesto Lecuona

- 8 Danza Lucumi (from Afro-Cuban Danzas) 2:58
- 9 Palomitas Blancas 3:31
- 10 Siempre en Mi Corazón 2:43

Ernestina Lecuona y Casada

- 11 Amor Lejano* 3:42

Gottschalk

- 12 El Cocoye (Grand Caprice Cubain di Bravura) 7:55

* WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

GOTTSCHALK AND CUBA

ANTONIO ITURRIOZ, piano

PLAYING TIME: 74:15



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