

Reflections

Contemporary music for Double Bass solo

Scelsi

Carter

Henze

Donatoni

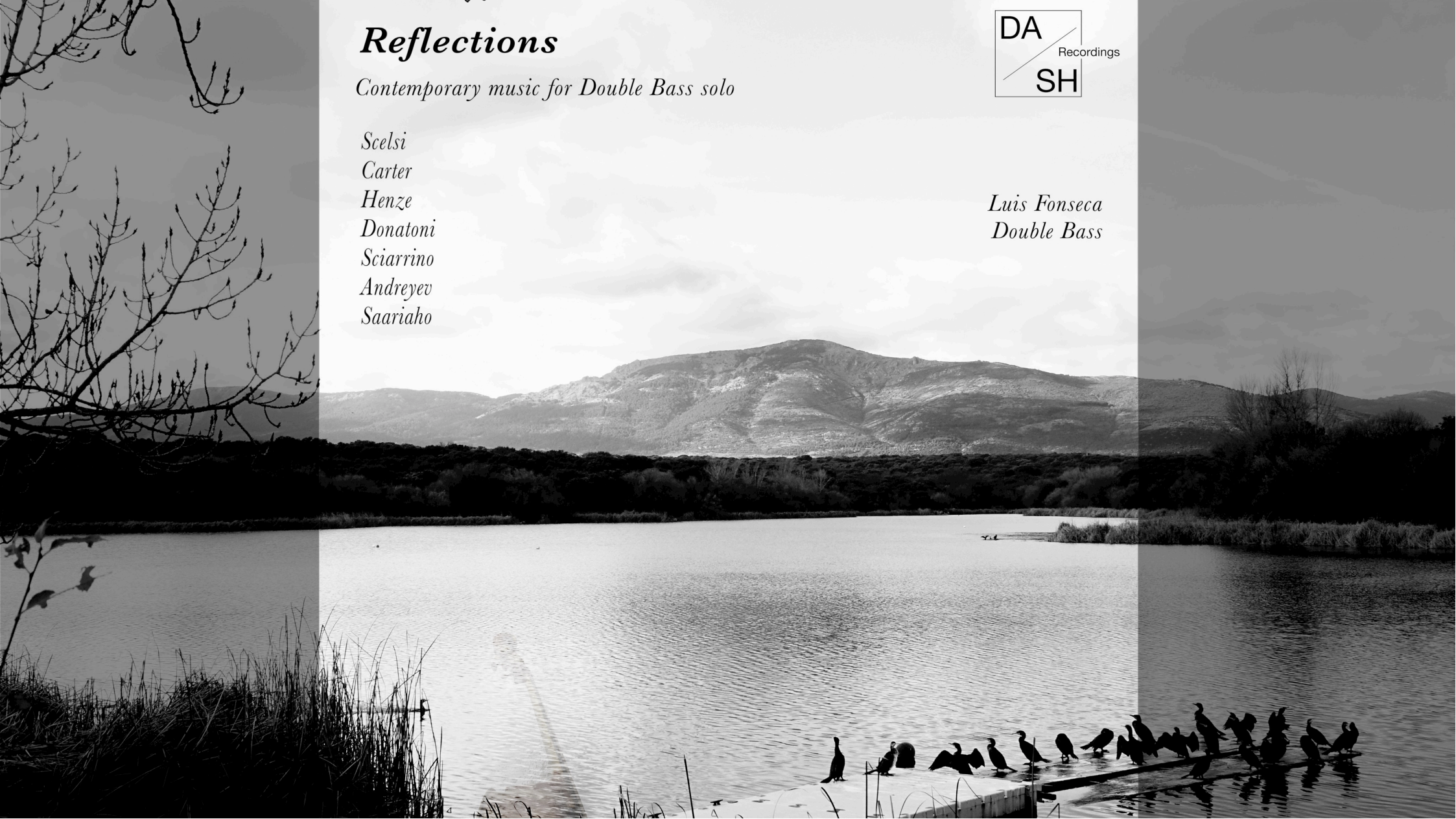
Sciarrino

Andreyev

Saariaho



Luis Fonseca
Double Bass



1	<i>Giacinto Scelsi - C'est bien la nuit</i>	(03:18)
2	<i>Elliott Carter - Figment III</i>	(03:11)
3	<i>Hans Werner Henze - S. Biagio 9 Agosto ore 1207</i>	(06:16)
4	<i>Franco Donatoni - Lem I</i>	(08:01)
5	<i>Salvatore Sciarrino - Esplorazione del bianco I</i>	(06:30)
6	<i>Samuel Andreyev - Lighting Up</i>	(11:56)
7	<i>Kaija Saariaho - Folia</i>	(14:18)
<i>Total time:</i>		(53:30)

Luis Fonseca, Double Bass

Reflections is a collection of recordings that combine pieces for one instrument solo from major composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Composers that have marked or changed the history of music or are about to do it, through the quality and brightness of their works.

These works are recorded in this Album as a reflections of their music on the Double Bass.



Giacinto Scelsi (Italy, 1905 - 1988)

C'est bien la nuit (1972) pour contrabasse solo

*is one of the two pieces inside the **Nuits** collection for solo Double Bass.*

Modal in its notes organization, full with repetitive motives and rhythmic, the piece explores different vibrato intensities and changing timbre, through different bow positions. Scelsi also requires a change of pitch for the forth string, half-tone up (F), but only using it for the repeated 16ths motive with F octaves.

Two more other pieces among other chamber music works have been dedicated to the Double Bass by this composer, showing this way, his special interest for the instrument.

Elliott Carter (USA, 1908 - 2012)

Figment III (2007) for solo contrabass

was dedicated to Donald Palma, one of the early members of the Speculum ensemble. The piece is a trip around the four octave range of the Double Bass, mixing lyrical phrases, aggressive chords and pizzicato lines which sometimes also accompany bowed singed melodies. "As a result, we have the orchestra, which is the figment of the listener's imagination".

Carter have written several pieces under the name of "Figment", making this one for Double Bass the number three. We can see also how Carter uses his creative chord relations system to compose this piece, developing it also to write horizontal phrases.

Hans Werner Henze (Germany, 1926 - 2012)

S. Biagio 9 Agosto ore 1207 (1977) - Ricordo per un contrabbasso solo

is a musical remembrance of Henze's first visit to the famous San Biagio Cathedral in Montepulciano - Italy, where the composer was an invited profesor to the summer courses in the same city. The impressiveness of the Cathedral was in such scale that Henze notated the exactly day and time that he has visited it and used it as the title of this piece, offering a real picture of the place, close to what he saw, by day and time. The piece is fully in Henze's style, using the 12 tones as sound organization and some traditional music elements such as progressions and triadic chords (tonal organization); in order to fulfill this music expression of his perceptions from this monumental building of Tuscany.

Franco Donatoni (Italy, 1927 - 2000)

Lem (1983) - Due pezzi per contrabbasso

were dedicated to the international renowned Italian bassist Franco Petracchi.

Donatoni has written in many compositional styles, going through serialism and aleatoric music along his life . On the 80's he has changed his style to a "ludic exercise of the invention", using a original musical cell to develop the whole piece, sometimes in fragments, through processes of transformation and permutation, which can be clearly heard in Lem I.

Also quite distinguishable is the non-metrical organization of the piece, through the absence of time signature and measures bar lines. There are changing of tempos in different sections, but no accelerandi or ritenuti, which are made sometimes in the piece by expanding or retracting the rhythmic figures or pauses.

Salvatore Sciarrino (Italy, 1947 -)

Esplorazione del bianco I (1983) per contrabbasso solo

“points out the primary hand movements on the paper sheet. The formulation of a space is a simple gesture, but everything in itself completes the journey into the unknown.”

Salvatore Sciarrino

The compositional material in this piece denies the nature of the Double Bass itself. The whole piece is developed into small repetitive harmonic motives, very high and unexpected in such an instrument. Its low bass sound appears in just one very short occasion in the whole piece. The texture of the harmonics are also notably important in the piece, where the same notes must be played in different and odd places in the string, going sometimes to the extreme of the technical possibilities. On the other hand, it becomes a unique sonority and atmosphere.

Samuel Andreyev (Canada, 1981 -)

Lighting Up (2016) for Double Bass

“Witness this landscape of molten gold, of bronze fired in ancient Egypt, in which an enormous sun leans on roofs so tottering with light that they are as if in a state of decomposition.”

Antonin Artaud, Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society

*Andreyev offers this quotation as an epigram to the piece printed in the score itself. The work explores multiple techniques, textures and gestures, exposing them in different sections and connecting them in such a mosaic form. The use of multiphonics and quarter-tones, mixed among all other different playing techniques make this piece extremely difficult for the interpreter, but also gives it a sensation of an interconnected sound exposition.
This is the world première recording of Lighting Up.*

Kaija Saariaho (Finland, 1952 -)

Folia (1994 - 95) for Double Bass with optional electronics

Written in the middle 90's, when the use of electronics was developing itself through the use of the new pre-amplifiers with fresh new programmable effects, created the right opportunity to a such interested in electronics composer as Saariaho, to use them in Folia for Double Bass. As these preamps where so expensive and with a low availability, Saariaho probably wrote the piece with “optional” electronics, so that it would be not condemned to a small number of

interpretations. Nevertheless, we can notice how the compositional processes of the piece were connected to the idea of using the electronic effects, as Saariaho uses a lot of timbre-environments, which get a greater dimension with the reverb, delay and pitchshifter effects, which are carefully written in the score. Time has passed since the composition of this piece and now electronics have an easier way to be generated, only with a simple Max patcher and a personal computer. The composer offers her own actualized electronics patcher on her website, nevertheless, Luis Fonseca has made his own personal patcher, following strictly the indications of Saariaho in the score, but giving his own personal reverb and delay timbre for an unique interpretation and recording.

All comments to the pieces by Luis Fonseca.

"It is amazing to work with pieces written by the hand of such good composers.

Double bassists have a traditional solo repertoire inheritance that, in exception of a few highlights, lacks the presence of good composers. From the 20th century on, we have received really amazing works that remain unknown for most of the Double Bass players.

After recording this Album, I realized that this are the kind of pieces that we should actually be playing all the time!

But of course, this are just a couple reflections of my own..."

Luis Fonseca



Luis Fonseca (Brazil, 1974 -) is a polyvalent artist, musician, composer, profesor and enterpriser stablished in Madrid, Spain.

He has studied Architecture in São Paulo, Brazil; Double Bass in Frankfurt am Main, Germany and period music in Basel, Switzerland. He has a Master degree in electroacoustic composition and a Doctor degree in Algorithmic composition, both in Madrid. He has played in many orchestras around the world, as well as a chamber musician and Double Bass soloist.

He taught Double Bass in different Conservatories in Spain and gave masterclasses in many other schools and festivals around the world.

As a composer he has won several international prizes and his music has been played in more than 15 countries.

He is up to date engaged in the Royal Opera Theater in Madrid as a Double Bass player and he is the co-founder, partner and artistic manager of Da_sh music in Madrid, beside a intense work as composer.

Luis Fonseca plays in this recording with a french Double Bass made by Jaquet Gand ca. 1870 and a bow specially made for him by Santiago Pardo (Madrid).

http://double_bass.luisfonseca.es

<http://composer.luisfonseca.es>

<https://www.dash-music.eu>

Special thanks to:

“The Da_sh music team for the wonderful work and recording.”

“Samuel Andreyev for his patience to listen and work his piece with me.”

“My dearest Jing Shao, for all her support and wonderful photos.”

Recorded at the Da_sh studios in Madrid/ Spain 2019 - 2020.

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Full digital album

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www.dash-music.eu

Recorded (2019-2020) in Spain.

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