

Comparison of the soloist's part

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Free use for educational purposes - solo part digitalized without ammendments by Božo Paradžik

Giovanni Bottesini

From autographs:

Source 1: full orchestra score
Concertino

Source 2: strings score
Concertino in do min
per Contrabasso

Source 3: piano score
Concerto Contrabasso
("2°" added by other hand)

Allegro moderato 4 Solo espressivo

Moderato 4 espressivo

Allegro moderato 4 Solo espressivo

p

p

f *dim.* *p*

cresc. *f* *dim.* *p*

p *cresc.*

cresc. *cresc.*

p *cresc.* *cresc.*

sf *p* *cresc.* *cresc.*

p *cresc.*

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. It consists of three staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The second and third staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *cresc.* (crescendo).

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. It consists of three staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. The second and third staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The music continues with the complex rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings include *cresc.*, *f* (forte), and *dim.*.

33

Musical score for measures 33-37. It consists of three staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. The second and third staves are in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *cresc.*, and *f*.

38

Musical score for measures 38-41. It consists of three staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps. The second and third staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings include *p*, *crescendo*, and *fz* (forzando).

44

p *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *robusto* *p* *sf* *sf*

This system contains three staves of music in bass clef, spanning measures 44 to 47. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The second staff also starts with *p* and *cresc.*, and includes a *robusto* marking. The third staff starts with *p* and *cresc.*, and features dynamic changes to *sf* and *p* later in the system. All staves contain complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and slurs.

48

p *p* *p*

This system contains three staves of music in bass clef, spanning measures 48 to 51. The first staff has a *p* dynamic. The second and third staves also have a *p* dynamic. The music features intricate rhythmic figures with triplets and slurs.

52

cresc. *sf* *f* *sf* *cresc.* *fz* *f* *sf* *cresc.* *f*

This system contains three staves of music in bass clef, spanning measures 52 to 56. The first staff shows dynamics of *cresc.*, *sf*, and *f*. The second staff includes *sf*, *cresc.*, *fz*, and *f*. The third staff has *sf*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The music is highly rhythmic with many slurs and accents.

57

p *cresc.* *f* *fz* *f* *f* *sf* *cresc.* *f*

This system contains three staves of music in treble clef, spanning measures 57 to 60. The first staff has dynamics of *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The second staff includes *fz* and *f*. The third staff has *f*, *sf*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with slurs and accents.

63

63

p *sf*

f *p* *cresc.* *sf*

f *p* *cresc.* *sf*

Measures 63-66: This system contains measures 63 through 66. It features three staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), while the bottom two staves use bass clefs and a key signature of two flats (Bb). The music includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *sf* (sforzando), and *cresc.* (crescendo). There are also trill ornaments and triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes).

67

67

Measures 67-70: This system contains measures 67 through 70. It features three staves with the same clefs and key signature as the previous system. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns and includes triplet markings.

71

71

fz *dim.* *p* *sf*

f *dim.* *p* *sf*

Measures 71-75: This system contains measures 71 through 75. It features three staves. The music includes dynamic markings such as *fz* (forzando), *dim.* (diminuendo), *p* (piano), and *sf* (sforzando). There are also trill ornaments and triplet markings.

76

76

dim. *p*

dim. *p*

Measures 76-80: This system contains measures 76 through 80. It features three staves. The music includes dynamic markings such as *dim.* (diminuendo) and *p* (piano). There are also trill ornaments and triplet markings.

81

Musical score for measures 81-83. The first staff (top) begins with a dynamic of *p*. The second and third staves (middle and bottom) begin with a dynamic of *sf*. The second and third staves include a *cresc.* marking. The second staff ends with a dynamic of *fz*. The third staff also includes a *cresc.* marking.

84

Musical score for measures 84-87. The first staff (top) begins with a dynamic of *p*. The second and third staves (middle and bottom) begin with a dynamic of *p*. The first staff includes a *>* marking. The first staff ends with a dynamic of *fz*. The second and third staves include a *f* marking. The second and third staves end with a dynamic of *sf*.

88

Musical score for measures 88-91. The first staff (top) begins with a dynamic of *f*. The second and third staves (middle and bottom) begin with a dynamic of *sf*. The first staff includes a *3* marking. The first staff ends with a dynamic of *f*. The second and third staves include a *3* marking. The second and third staves end with a dynamic of *sf*. The word *Cadenza* is written above the first, second, and third staves.

96

Musical score for measures 96-99. The first staff (top) begins with a dynamic of *sf*. The second and third staves (middle and bottom) begin with a dynamic of *sf*. The first staff includes a *>* marking. The first staff ends with a dynamic of *sf*. The second and third staves include a *p* marking. The second and third staves end with a dynamic of *sf*. The word ** ten. (?)* is written below the second and third staves.

99

Measures 99-100 of the musical score. The system consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Dynamic markings include *ten. (?)* and *f*. There are also accents and slurs throughout the passage.

101

Measures 101-102 of the musical score. The system consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Dynamic markings include *f*. There are also accents and slurs throughout the passage.

103

Measures 103-104 of the musical score. The system consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Dynamic markings include *sf*. There are also accents and slurs throughout the passage.

108

Measures 108-110 of the musical score. The system consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Dynamic markings include *f*. There are also accents and slurs throughout the passage.

111

a tempo
tr
sf
tr
sf
a tempo
tr

Measures 111-116: This system contains six staves of music. The first three staves are in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests. Trills (tr) are marked above several notes. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando) and *a tempo*. The notation includes various articulation marks and slurs.

117

tr
sf
tr
sf
tr
tr
tr
f p
cresc.
3
p

Measures 117-121: This system contains six staves of music. It begins with trills (tr) and *sf* markings. The music continues with dense sixteenth-note passages. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The system concludes with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking and a *f p* dynamic.

122

cresc.
f p
cresc.
p
cresc.

Measures 122-124: This system contains six staves of music. It features continuous sixteenth-note passages across all staves. The dynamics range from *f p* (forn piano) to *p* (piano), with several *cresc.* (crescendo) markings indicating a gradual increase in volume.

125

cresc.
f

Measures 125-128: This system contains six staves of music. It continues with sixteenth-note passages. A *cresc.* marking is present in the first staff, and a *f* (forte) dynamic is marked in the third staff. The music concludes with a final chord in the last measure.

Performance practice notes

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From the early 20th century onward, training musicians in historically informed interpretation was largely neglected. The consequences of this neglect are still strongly felt today, as much of the notational practice used in earlier centuries has been forgotten. Thanks to the tireless work of leading musicologists of our time, who have carefully examined and compiled historical sources, many details of 18th- and 19th-century performance practice have been rediscovered and brought together into an increasingly complete picture.

Urtext editions such as this one, which faithfully reproduce 19th-century autograph scores, should not be approached solely through a modern interpretive lens. Performers are encouraged to consider the performance practices of Bottesini's time, which were deeply shaped by the Italian *bel canto* tradition. This aesthetic favored a beautiful, singing tone, seamless legato, and vocal-like articulation on all instruments.

Dynamics in this repertoire should be understood as expressive shaping rather than fixed volume levels. Markings such as *p*, *f*, and crescendo often imply a flexible range of nuance, frequently connected to harmonic tension, melodic direction, or rhetorical emphasis. Sudden contrasts may be intended more as changes of color and intensity than as purely loud or soft effects.

Articulation likewise reflects vocal models. Slurs generally indicate phrasing and breath-like continuity rather than mere technical grouping, while detached markings often suggest lightness and clarity rather than sharp separation. Bow strokes and finger articulation should aim to preserve a sense of line and cantabile flow, even in passages that appear technically demanding.

Tempo should also be treated with expressive flexibility. Indications such as Andante, Allegro, or Adagio describe character as much as speed, and performers are encouraged to allow subtle rubato, particularly at cadential points, in melodic climaxes, or in transitions between contrasting ideas. Such flexibility should remain organic and stylistically grounded, never disrupting the underlying pulse.

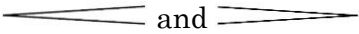
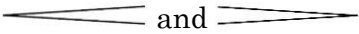
This interpretive approach shaped instrumentalists as much as singers, who consciously sought to emulate the expressive qualities of the human voice. Historical sources suggest that the prevailing sound ideal of Bottesini's contemporaries favored a lyrical, soft, and sweet tone. Composers' notational conventions reflect this aesthetic; many markings and indications found in the score assume this sound world and may therefore be misunderstood or applied too literally when interpreted from a purely modern perspective.

In the early 20th century, performance practice changed rapidly. The flexible, vocal-inspired phrasing of the 19th century gave way to greater precision, clarity, and structural awareness. Romantic expressiveness and free *rubato* were replaced by stricter tempos, clearer articulation, and closer attention to the composer's intentions. Innovations in instrument design and recording technology further influenced playing styles, ushering in a new era of technical brilliance and stylistic diversity.

This contemporary approach differs markedly from what a musician of Bottesini's time would have considered logical. To avoid misunderstandings when performing mid-19th-century notation, this short guide provides general hints for reading and interpreting the music of that period, based on insights from leading modern musicologists, and aims to support historically informed performance. In Bottesini's notation style, the most potentially misleading elements from a modern perspective are the articulation symbols. Therefore, the following table presents intensity grades from strongest to weakest, and indicates how they are presumed to be performed:

<i>sfz</i>	This articulation symbol / dynamic grade appears very rarely in Bottesini's works. He seems to have used it for the highest level of intensity.
<i>fz</i>	Applied to notes of elevated intensity and serves, within Bottesini's notational practice, a role comparable to the modern <i>sforzando</i> . However, its execution was presumably smoother in character and imbued with a considerable degree of <i>espressivo</i> .
<i>sf</i>	This symbol is applied to exposed notes, yet its initial articulation should be executed considerably more softly than is customary in contemporary performance practice. Bottesini employed it frequently and across all dynamic levels. Notes marked in this way may appropriately be performed at approximately one dynamic degree above the written indication for the respective passage.
>	This articulation symbol is applied to notes of particular importance - whether harmonically, melodically, or for other musical reasons. Such notes should be rendered with a degree of prominence, yet in a smoother manner than contemporary accent symbols, resembling more an <i>espressivo</i> emphasis than a pronounced attack. This emphasis should presumably remain within the same dynamic range as the surrounding passage.

The following observations are intended not as commentary only on Bottesini's individual compositional style, but as guidance regarding the broader performance practices of the 19th century. Given the substantial evolution of musical interpretation since that time, these conventions may easily be misread from a contemporary perspective and thus warrant careful consideration:

-  and 
Throughout the 19th century, hairpins were primarily used to indicate subtle changes in tempo rather than dynamics, as is commonly assumed today. Nevertheless, they could also imply a corresponding increase or decrease in loudness.
- Tempo markings at the beginning of a movement, according to the musical conventions of the 18th and 19th centuries, generally applied only to the first theme. Subsequent sections or themes could adopt their own tempo, which did not necessarily correspond to strict metronomic accuracy.
- Dots placed above or below notes generally indicate shorter, detached articulation; however, their precise meaning—ranging from slightly detached to very short—varied considerably between composers and was often combined with other markings such as accents or *marcato*. This resulted in complex and inconsistent usage prior to standardization. Because the interpretation of such symbols remained composer-specific, they present a particular challenge for modern performers. In Bottesini's works, a light detachment of the notes is generally recommended, in accordance with the broader principles of *bel canto*, rather than performing them as very short staccato. There is no historical evidence indicating how Bottesini himself approached such situations, nor does his method provide instructions regarding the execution of dotted notes.

As a soloist, Bottesini often employed a scordatura on the double bass that was tuned approximately a whole tone higher than the tuning commonly used in orchestras today. Because concert pitch had not yet been standardized in the 19th century, a variety of pitch levels coexisted. In addition to the frequently used pitch of A \approx 435–440 Hz, the older Baroque pitch of A \approx 415 Hz remained widespread, particularly in Great Britain. This resulted in a difference of almost exactly a semitone. For this reason, the accompaniments to many of Bottesini's compositions exist in two versions: one at the notated pitch, and another transposed a semitone higher, the latter intended for use with lower-pitched keyboard instruments or orchestras. Bottesini often wrote stronger dynamics and clearer articulations for lower-pitched instruments—whose sound is naturally softer—in order to balance the ensemble.