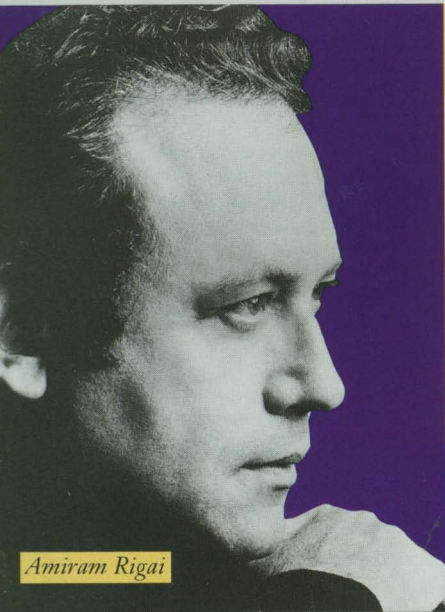


1829-1869 Louis Moreau

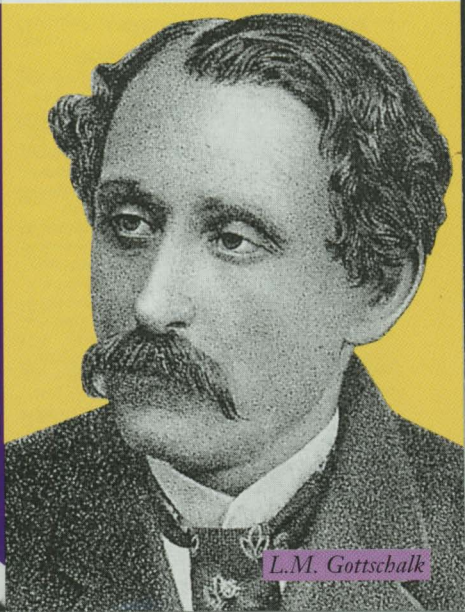
GOTTSCHALK

American Piano Music played by

AMIRAM RIGAI



Amiram Rigai



L.M. Gottschalk

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) American Piano Music by Amiram Rigai

Liner notes by Amiram Rigai

Tracks 1-11 were originally issued in 1979 on Folkways 37485;
tracks 12-17 were newly recorded in 1991.

1. *The Banjo*, Opus 15 (*Fantasia grotesque*) 3:22
2. *La scintilla: Mazurka*, Opus 20 (*The Spark*) 2:56
3. *Ojos criollos*, Opus 37 (*Les yeux creoles or Danse cubaine*) 2:15
4. *Marche funèbre*, Opus 64 (Posthumous) 5:28
5. *Bamboula*, Opus 2 (*Danse des nègres*) 7:12
6. *Souvenir de Porto Rico*, Opus 31 (*Marche des Gibaros*) 5:10
7. *The Dying Poet (Le poète mourant; méditation)* 5:00
8. *Le bananier*, Opus 5 (*Chanson nègre*) 2:41
9. *Pasquinade*, Opus 59 (*Caprice*) Arranged by Amiram Rigai 3:36
10. *Berceuse*, Opus 47 (*Cradle Song*) 3:45
11. *Tournament Galop* 2:57
12. *Ossian Ballade*, Opus 4, No.1 2:12
13. *Serenade*, Opus 11 4:24
14. *Morte*, Opus 60 (*Lamentation: She Is Dead*) 5:27
15. *Danza*, Opus 33 (*Porto Rico, November 1857*) 5:55
16. *Minuit à Seville*, Opus 30 (*Caprice*) 4:20
17. *La gallina*, Opus 53 (*The Hen: Danse cubaine*) 3:17

Cover photos: Amiram Rigai on the left, Gottschalk on the right.

Photograph of Amiram Rigai by Christian Steiner



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Born in nineteenth-century New Orleans to a Creole mother and an English-Jewish father, Gottschalk composed piano works that drew on elements of Creole, African-American, French, Caribbean, and Southern U.S. culture. He was the first American to earn international acclaim as a pianist-composer. Performed by renowned pianist Amiram Rigai, these selections encompass a variety of styles and reveal the breadth of Gottschalk's compositions.

Credits:

Selected, performed, and annotated by Amiram Rigai
Selections 11-17 were recorded in May 1991 at BMG/RCA Studios in New York City on a Steinway piano
Paul Goodman, recording engineer
Tom MacCluskey, Soundstream Music Editor
Remastered by Malcolm Adley and Joe Brescio,
The Master Cutting Room, New York
Reissue production supervised by Anthony Seeger and Matt Walters
with the assistance of Leslie Spitz-Edson
Design by Carol Hardy



**Smithsonian
Folkways**

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Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869),
American Piano Music Played by Amiram Rigai
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Some of these recordings originally appeared in 1979 on
Folkways 37485. Six new tracks were recorded in 1991

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Amiram Rigai Discography

LPs

I. Music Library

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <i>Music of Israel</i> | MLR 7077 |
| <i>Sonata for Piano, Suite No. 2 by Morris H. Ruger, with Works by Boskovich, Lauri and Rigai</i> | MLR 7083 |

II. Vox

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Music of the Middle East</i> | PL 12.570 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|

III. Decca

- | | |
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| <i>Piano Music of L. M. Gottschalk</i> | DL 710143 |
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IV. Musical Heritage Society

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <i>Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869):</i> | |
| <i>Ten Characteristic Pieces</i> | MHS 3135 |
| <i>25th Anniversary of Israel (two discs)</i> | MHS 1653/54 |
| <i>Music of Jacques Miller</i> | MHS 3749 |

V. Folkways Records

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Louis Moreau Gottschalk: American Piano Music Played by Amiram Rigai</i> | |
| | FSS 37485 |
| <i>Piano Music of the Middle East: Amiram Rigai</i> | |
| | FM 3360 |

Cassettes

I. Musical Heritage Society

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <i>Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869): Ten Characteristic Pieces</i> | MHC 2161 |
|---|----------|

Louis Moreau Gottschalk, 1829-1869 by Amiram Rigai

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) was the first American to earn international acclaim as a pianist-composer and the first American pianist to give solo piano recitals in the United States. His music draws instant universal appeal—an appeal that derives from its folk elements of Creole, African American, French, and Southern United States cultures, as well as from South American and Caribbean rhythms and dances. Gottschalk skillfully blended these with European Romanticism, and he was a strong force in the development of Romanticism in American music.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk was born in the French quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 8, 1829, of a Creole mother and English-Jewish father. His father was a businessman, a native of London, educated in Germany, with a wide cultural background. His mother was a descendent of a titled French family. Gottschalk's musical gifts surfaced early. He began playing the piano at the age of three. At the age of seven, he replaced his teacher at the organ at a High Mass on short notice. He mastered the violin before the age of twelve.

In 1842, Gottschalk sailed for France to complete his musical education in Paris, which at that time was aglow with the excitement of European Romanticism. He was rejected without audition at the Paris Conservatory, as it was strongly believed that America could produce only steam engines. Ironically, it was at the same Conservatory that, years later, he was appointed chief judge in a contest where his composition, *Bamboula*, was used as a contest piece.

Gottschalk studied piano privately with Halle and Stamaty, and was introduced to the pianistic principles established by Kalkbrenner and Mendelssohn.

Beginning with his highly successful Paris debut in 1845, and continuing through 1852, Gottschalk made triumphal tours in Europe, and was particularly successful in Spain. His compositions, based on African American and Creole melodies that he had heard in his youth, were included in his recitals. Among these were *Bamboula* and *Le bananier*, which became well known in Europe for their vital rhythmic

innovations and "exotic" coloration. Gottschalk also wrote many salon pieces, such as mazurkas and polkas. *La scintilla* (*The Spark*) is one of his early mazurkas and is included on this recording.

While in Paris, Gottschalk earned the recognition and appreciation of noted musicians such as Liszt, Berlioz, Chopin, Verdi, Borodin, Bizet, Offenbach, Thalberg, and Saint-Saëns, and he was accepted into their artistic circles. In 1853, Gottschalk returned to the United States, made his New York debut, toured New England, visited Cuba, and returned to New Orleans. He gave numerous piano recitals, particularly in New York in 1856-1857, and wrote new compositions, continuing to make use of American folk melodies in his music.

From 1857 to 1862, Gottschalk gave successful tours in the West Indies, often living among the natives in the tropical islands and absorbing the sounds of their musical rhythms and melodies. He continued to compose many piano pieces and two symphonies. In 1862, during the Civil War, Gottschalk returned to the United States and performed numerous concerts all over the country, often close to the battlefield.

In 1865, because of a personal scandal in San Francisco, Gottschalk fled to South America. There he conducted orchestras, arranged festivals, and wrote operas. The South Americans admired him, especially for the use of folk themes in his music, which included his arrangements of the national marches of Uruguay and Chile, the Brazilian national anthem and many Spanish, Cuban, and Puerto Rican folk songs.

Gottschalk's diary-autobiography, *Notes of a Pianist* (1881), reveals his many and varied interests. In it, not only are we treated to descriptions of his tours of the West Indies (1857-1862), the United States (1862-1865), and South America (1865-1869), but we are also presented with his free-wheeling social criticism and commentary on the treatment of slaves, slave rebellions, relations with publishers and music critics, Abraham Lincoln, racial problems, revolution in Peru, and his ideas on the use of music as therapy.

Gottschalk's sudden and untimely death from yellow fever in Rio de Janeiro on December 18, 1869, caused worldwide grief. A year after his well-attended funeral in Brazil, his body was brought to New York and was buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Unfortunately, after his death Gottschalk's music was forgotten for a long period and only today is emerging with all its power. The main reason for this lack of interest was an apparent change in musical taste, particularly in the United States. American musical authorities looked toward Western European music. They ignored American folklore and concentrated on educating the public in the aesthetic values of the compositions of Bach and Beethoven. Gottschalk's compositions based on American and Creole folklore and Latin American melodies were unacceptable to those who expected and appreciated the style of Western European composers. After his death his music gradually disappeared from the piano repertoire of performing artists, and the only pieces which were occasionally performed were those written in the melancholy style of *The Dying Poet*.

About the Music

To appreciate Gottschalk's music fully, one should understand all its elements: the vibrancy and vitality of exotic colors, the variety of melodies and rhythmic excitement compressed within classical form, and an innovative spirit. His innovations in the realm of piano playing are especially notable in his method of attacking notes and his distinct use of the pedals. Also characteristic of his music is the uninhibited use of colors (timbres), interesting high treble effects, and the poetic quality expressed in all his lyrical pieces. In this, he resembles Chopin and, like him, Gottschalk contributed greatly to the body of piano literature. The selections on this recording were chosen to represent the different facets of his musical creativity.

Serenade, *Bamboula* and *Le bananier*, which were based on African American dances and songs, represent Gottschalk's earliest youthful compositions. *La scintilla* and *Tournament Galop* show the influence of his Parisian musical education

and his acquaintance with composers such as Offenbach and Chopin. *The Banjo*, written after his return to the United States, reflects American folk music in the same way that the *Berceuse* recalls a French folk song known in Louisiana.

Souvenir de Porto Rico, *Ojos criollos*, *La gallina*, and *Danza* represent the period of Gottschalk's travels in the Caribbean Islands (1857-1862). *The Dying Poet* exemplifies Gottschalk's most romantic and sentimental style of writing. It was one of his most popular pieces during his lifetime. *Pasquinade*, which was composed in the last year of his life, has the atmosphere of a French gavotte and a style close to the ragtime of early jazz. It may reflect some of the earliest musical influences in his life. *Marche funèbre*, published posthumously, is a composition in the grand manner which has dramatic effects and poetic qualities, showing yet another aspect of his creativity. It can be favorably compared with works of similar style by Chopin and Liszt.

1. *The Banjo*, Opus 15 (*Fantaisie grotesque*)

The Banjo was composed in 1854 in the United States and was first published in 1855. Of special interest in this typically American piece is Gottschalk's transference of the banjo sound to the piano. This is particularly obvious in the last section of the composition where the thematic material is borrowed from the same folk tune that Stephen Foster used in *Camptown Races*.

2. *La scintilla: Mazurka*, Opus 20 (*The Spark*)

Gottschalk wrote this salon piece during his youthful Parisian period in 1848-1849. It is a romantic piece with a short introduction followed by a sparkling mazurka that contains two main themes and their variations.

3. *Ojos criollos*, Opus 37 (*Les yeux créoles* or *Danse cubaine*)

Ojos criollos, originally for four-hand piano, was composed in 1859. It was published in the same year and was performed in 1862 by many pianists in a multiple piano concert in Havana, Cuba. This version, for solo piano, was published in 1864 in New York City. It is a gentle work with two themes. The first repeats itself and the second, a rhythmical Cuban dance, reappears in variation form.

4. *Marche funèbre*, Opus 64 (Posthumous)

This composition could have a subtitle, "Tragic Fantasia." It is a unique composition that stands alone as a complete work and is not a movement of a larger piece. The introductory material resembles the sound of a brass instrument and creates a dramatic mood. The main theme is sorrowful and is developed with colorful variations. There is a constant solemnity which creates a mood of tragedy. Gottschalk makes great use of the high treble clef and low bass register of the piano in creating different harmonic color effects. In contrast to the first theme, the second one is a gentle nocturne—like a prayer after a passing storm. The dramatic mood recurs with the appearance of the main theme and the piece concludes with a repetition of the introductory material closing with a series of impressive chords. *Marche funèbre* should be counted among the important funeral marches in the piano literature.

5. *Bamboula*, Opus 2 (*Danse des nègres*)

Bamboula is based on African American dances and songs that Gottschalk heard during his childhood in New Orleans. He wrote it in France in 1844. It is one of his most successful compositions from that period and it became very well known in Europe after Gottschalk performed it in his concert tours. The grand style of the composition is full of rhythmic verve and exotic atmosphere. The piece is written in a form similar to that of a rondo where the main motif, a brilliant rhythmical dance, recurs several times between the other two themes of the composition. The third theme appears with variations and differs in its character from the two that precede it because of its lyrical quality, most evident in its last variation. *Bamboula* ends with an impressive series of majestic chords based on the first two themes.

6. *Souvenir de Porto Rico*, Opus 31 (*Marche des Gíbaros*)

Souvenir de Porto Rico is one of Gottschalk's best virtuoso piano works. In his journal, *Notes of a Pianist*, Gottschalk says that he wrote this composition in Guadeloupe in 1859. The main theme is based on a Puerto Rican folk song that

Gottschalk had heard during his visit to Puerto Rico in the years that he toured the Caribbean Islands. The principal theme, which appears after a short introduction, is developed in a variation form using a unique Caribbean rhythm. These variations are carried to a stormy, jazzy climax, leading to a repetition of the second variation. The piece fades away with the same introductory material heard at the beginning.

7. *The Dying Poet* (*Le poète mourant; méditation*)

This poetic and sentimental piece, written in 1864, was one of the most successful and popular of Gottschalk's compositions during his lifetime. A short introductory section leads to a main melody in 6/8 time, a slow waltz rhythm. The repetitive notes used throughout a short middle section are carried over into the return of the main theme which fades away with the coda. Obviously, Gottschalk was attempting to suggest the fading heartbeats of his subject.

8. *Le bananier*, Opus 5 (*Chanson nègre*)

This composition was written in 1845-1846. It enjoyed the highest popularity in Europe. Gottschalk played it innumerable times in his European concerts and prominent musicians transcribed it for other instruments. The composition is based on a Creole air. Gottschalk uses two complementary themes and brilliant effects with fast passages in the high register of the piano that contrast with the main melody.

9. *Pasquinade*, Opus 59 (*Caprice*) (Arranged by Amiram Rigai)

This composition was written in 1869 and was often performed in public after Gottschalk's death by Teresa Carreno and Rafael Joseffy. *Pasquinade* resembles a French gavotte and its rhythm is close to the ragtime of early jazz (or its precursors) that Gottschalk surely heard during his youth. Gottschalk uses special effects in the high treble register, giving a unique color to this composition.

10. *Berceuse*, Opus 47 (*Cradle Song*)

Berceuse is based on a French folk melody well-known in Louisiana and was composed around 1860 during

Gottschalk's Caribbean travels. This piece was also published in a voice and piano version. In his diary, Gottschalk mentions that the inspiration for this work was his memory of a much-loved younger sister's illness.

11. *Tournament Galop*

Tournament Galop was composed in 1854 and was published in the same year. It is written in a grand style and has a polka rhythm. It evokes the sound of trumpets, suggesting a band concert piece. Gottschalk frequently included this composition in his concert programs.

The following pieces were recorded in 1991.

12. *Ossian Ballade*, Opus 4, No. 1

According to Robert Offergeld's *Centennial Catalogue*, which lists the chronological publishing dates of Gottschalk's works, the Ballades, Opus 4, were written in 1846, inspired by the poetry of Ossian (the pen name of James Macpherson, a well-known poet in the 1850s). The introduction develops with running arpeggios for the right hand alone, playing on the black keys only (F-sharp minor). This introductory passage repeats after a lyrical, poetic section expressing the sad and melancholic mood found in the portion of a poem written by Ossian and quoted at the beginning of the composition: (translation from French) "... then calling the poet with the white hair, he asked what had weakened his memory. The poet looked about him with sadness because his age had obscured his memory. He would look for his friends but only see their sepulchres."

13. *Serenade*, Opus 11

This is one of Gottschalk's early works, composed in 1849 according to Robert Offergeld's *Centennial Catalogue*. The piece starts with a song-like introduction that is related to two lyrical themes, the first of which is mournful in comparison to the second, which is joyful. They are embellished by many chromatic runs and arpeggios and are accompanied by a strumming rhythm. The introductory material is repeated at the end of the composition.

14. *Morte!!* Opus 60 (*Lamentation: She Is Dead*)

This composition was written during 1868, in South America, and was first heard there. It became the last piece that Gottschalk played in public in Brazil, in a performance given shortly before he died. The composition is an elegiac funeral march whose sublime poetic quality can hardly be defined. This is a more mature work than his other pieces of similar sentiment. The fundamental pitch, F, is repeated over and over at the beginning of the piece and toward its end. The sound is similar to a funeral bell tolling against a Creole lament.

15. *Danza*, Opus 33 (*Porto Rico, November 1857*)

This is a work in distinctly Puerto Rican dance style, cast in rondo form and alternating exciting, brilliant material with two melodic dance tunes, one happy, the other nostalgic.

16. *Minuit à Seville*, Opus 30 (*Caprice*)

Minuit à Seville, also titled *Caprice*, was composed in 1856. In the original it was called *Aubade*. The piece is in the style of a Spanish dance and Gottschalk probably composed it after his visit to Spain with the twang of the Spanish guitars still ringing in his ears. The percussive effect of the repeated notes used here in a brilliant toccata style foreshadows both Albeniz and Prokofiev.

17. *La gallina*, Opus 53 (*The Hen: Danse cubaine*)

La gallina is a charming, humorously descriptive piece, similar in character and form to the Cuban dance titled *Ojos criollos*. The assertive character of the opening theme, reiterated according to the rondo form, is in contrast to the humorous second theme, imitating the clucking of the hen, which is treated in variation form. According to Robert Offergeld's *Centennial Catalogue*, it was probably composed in 1859 and was published several times in a variety of two- and four-hand versions. *La gallina* was performed by many pianists in a gigantic music festival in Havana, Cuba, in 1861.

About the Pianist

Amiram Rigai received his musical education in Israel and in the United States. While studying on the West Coast he won first prize at the UCLA Young Artists International Competition and subsequently concertized widely in California. Since his 1957 Town Hall debut in New York City, Mr. Rigai has frequently toured and performed recitals in the U.S., Europe, Israel, South America, the Caribbean, and Japan. He has given radio recitals in Hong Kong, Japan, Israel and Europe. Mr. Rigai has appeared with major symphony orchestras such as the Israel Philharmonic, American Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Boston Pops, Jerusalem Symphony and the Haifa Symphony. He has worked with prominent conductors such as Paul Klecki, Sirgiu Celibidache, Irwin Hoffman, George Singer, Arthur Fiedler



Amiram Rigai at the piano

and Mehli Mehta. Under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, he gave the American premiere of the Paul Ben Haim Piano Concerto at Carnegie Hall with the American Symphony. He has performed frequently on the recital stage in the United States and in Israel and has appeared in numerous radio and television broadcast recitals.

In May 1969 Mr. Rigai gave a full program of Gottschalk piano compositions at Steinway Hall in honor of the centenary of the composer's death. During the same month, New York radio station WQXR honored the 140th anniversary of Gottschalk's birth with a broadcast interview of Mr. Rigai that included a performance of his Gottschalk record for Decca.

Mr. Rigai edited a book of Gottschalk's piano compositions that was published by Chappell Company, New York, and which subsequently won the Paul Revere Award.

In honor of Gottschalk's 150th birthday, Amiram Rigai gave recitals of Gottschalk's piano works at the International House in New York and at the New York Historical Society.

In recent years, Mr. Rigai has given three concerts for the United Nations, introducing Gottschalk's piano works to an international audience.

In addition to his work as a performer, Mr. Rigai also edits and composes. His "Israeli Rhapsody, No. 1" appears on *Music of the Middle East* (Folkways 3360), available on cassette. His "Rhapsody No. 2, Israel Sings," and the song "Walls of Jerusalem" (in an arrangement for piano, cello and voice) appear on a Musical Heritage Society LP disc (No. 1653/54).

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