

"My love for the basses" - anecdotes

When I was 19 years old, Ovidiu Bădilă, then the new solo bassist of the Philharmonia Hungarica, approached me and wanted to form a duo. I was a piano student in the soloist class at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, more focused on Rachmaninov & Co and had never played together with a double bassist, let alone such a great one! Nevertheless, I said: "Yes." Our close collaboration began, which developed into a deep friendship.

We rehearsed whenever we could, often even at night. We only started working after the orchestra rehearsal in the evening, usually with a mandatory gyro break in the middle of the night. Such rehearsals often lasted until the early hours of the morning.

From those times, our Bottesini program was created, which we both played completely by heart and with which we won the 1st prize in the duo competition in San Sebastian, Spain. When asked by the jury how it could be that the pianist also plays everything by heart, which is very unusual, Ovidiu fibbed: "She can't read sheet music."

On our way home, we were stopped by the police in Biarritz with the fully loaded car. They had actually been looking for drugs, but found 12.000 marks in cash instead - our prize money from the competition. They had taken the car apart, scattered its contents on the street, searched the door padding and even wanted to open the bass.

At first, Ovidiu pretended not to know French, but as his anger grew, he eventually spoke the language perfectly. He became scared that the police would break open the lid of his beloved instrument. The police suspected that our 1st prize certificate could be a cover-up and called San Sebastian to expose the forgery. Their suspicion was not confirmed, and after many hours of psychological pressure, they finally left us alone. There we stood on the street in front of our "flea market" and had to somehow cram all these endless possessions back into the small Fiat Punto.

This is just one story of the many we experienced together. From 1989 to 1991, we often played concerts in Italy, and the live recordings come from a recital in Torino at the Teatro Regio. At another competition in Parma, we met all the other bass students, such as Pino Ettore, Alberto Bocini, and some masters from the jury, including Ruggiero Ricci (violin) and Franco Petracchi (double bass) - recognized figures and "old hands" today.

During our time together, Ovidiu and I also gave some courses together. Many of those former students are now good friends and members of top orchestras throughout Europe.

We also successfully auditioned for Ovidiu's professorship with Rococo Variations at the Trossingen Music University. At just 28 years old, he became the youngest bass professor of his time.

Our joint birthday parties in October were legendary. We celebrated and played music until dawn with friends, parts of the family, and half of the orchestra. The bass and the violin competed: Who can play Monti Czardas faster?

The intensity with which Ovidiu loved his bass and lived for music infected me. I shared in his enthusiasm, and it became mine. As a result, I have not left the bassist's side since that time, simply because it has become a matter very close to my heart.