

|quartz|

ROBERT MANSELL  
RHAPSODY  
PIANO WORKS

Engineer and Producer: Raphaël Mouterde  
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Venue: Jacques Samuels Pianos, London  
Piano: Bechstein Concert Grand D282  
Piano tuner: Jules Camio  
Photographer: Michael Carlo

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DAVID MALUSÀ piano

# RHAPSODY

1	<b>Toccata in F minor, 'Los Tangueros'</b> Op.36	9'45
2	<b>Prelude in E flat, 'Pulsation'</b> Op.37 No.1	2'25
3	<b>Prelude in B minor, 'Cortège'</b> Op.37 No.2	5'17
4	<b>Study in E flat minor, 'Molto appassionato'</b> Op.10	1'37
5	<b>Entrada in E minor</b> Op.9 No.1	4'06
6	<b>Entrada in A minor</b> Op.9 No.2	6'04
7	<b>Study in F minor, 'Windstorm in Atlas Mountains'</b> Op.12	2'54
	<b>Eight Piano Studies</b> Op.3	
8	Study in C minor, Adagio teneramente 'Mother with dying child' Op.3 No.1	1'41
9	Study in E minor, Lento doloroso 'Mother cradling her dead child' Op.3 No.2	2'18
10	Study in F minor, 'Presto impetuoso' Op.3	1'06
11	Study in B major, Andante 'Theme and Variations' Op.3 No.4	4'44
12	Study in C major, Vivace grocoso 'The Sneeze' Op.3 No.5	1'26
13	Study in E flat major, Allegretto 'Impromptu' Op.3 No.6	2'40
14	Study in C minor, Alla marcia 'The Yugoslav' Op.3 No.7	2'44
15	Study in B major, Andante ostinato 'The Little Donkey' Op.3 No.8	3'08
16	<b>Concert Fantasy in F minor, 'The Romantic'</b> Op.19	13'42
17	<b>Rhapsody in D, 'Adagio espressivo'</b> Op.13	6'44

Total playing time: **72'25**

- 1 The **Toccata in F minor, 'Los Tangueros', Op.36**, was written in 2007 and is developed around the general idea of a pair of lovers dancing through the streets of Buenos Aires. The sub-title roughly translates as *The Tango Dancers* and the piece, though not a true tango, is certainly in tango mood. It has five sections: a short introduction comes before the first sensuous statements of the main theme *Cantabile con espressione*. The music modulates to C minor for the slower love-making second section, *Lento rapsodico*. In the third section, *Allegro scherzando*, the lovers dance away happily. The fourth section returns to the tonic key and the music calms down as they disappear into a dark corner for a brief amorous interlude with perhaps a love-bird trilling above them, *Lento teneramente*. Finally, *Allegro maestoso e gioioso*, they are swept off with a great parade of dancers to an exuberant finale.

**Two Preludes, Op.37** were written in 2012 around the idea of persistently repeated rhythmic beats:

- 2 **Prelude in E flat, 'Pulsation', Op.37 No.1**, has a gentle opening of slightly discordant beats which are regularly interrupted by the pounding of whirling passagework. Two short *Maestoso* sections of simpler harmony interrupt the beating bass octaves only briefly, before four '*martellato*' discords return to the earlier passagework for a virtuoso closing coda. (Note that the opening measures of this piece are remarkably like the opening of Georg Telemann's Concerto for 4 violins written three hundred years earlier, but eerily Mansell was quite unaware of the similarity of that piece at the time he wrote this work!)
- 3 **Prelude in B minor, 'Cortège', Op.37 No.2**, is a slow funeral march in triple time. Becoming increasingly powerful it then subsides before six anguished cluster chords, *dolente gridando*, are followed by a central turbulent section in E minor,

*Energico e furioso*. Having climbed to A minor, after a powerful modulation back to the tonic key, the funeral march resumes *molto maestoso* and then six similar anguished cluster chords lead to a calming soft coda.

- 4 The **Study in E flat minor, Op.10**, *Molto appassionato ma sensitivo*, was written in 1987. It is regarded by Mansell as one of his best works. It is a short piece, bursting with lyrical ardour, which rises at the end to close exultantly in G flat major.

**Two Entradas, Op.9** were written for Guitar, but can also be played on a piano as here:

- 5 **Entrada in E minor, Op.9 No.1**, written in 1986, starts with a repetitive rhythmic pattern. This sensual phrase rises and falls through the tonic key and continues throughout most of the work apart from a brief interruption with a *deciso* section in the middle.
- 6 **Entrada in A minor, Op.9 No.2**, written in 1988, begins with a very short sensuous introduction before a simple melody *a tempo*, whose rhythmic phrase continues throughout the piece. Modulating first into C minor, then D minor, gradually building in energy towards the eventual reprise in the tonic key, which then rises to a climax of strummed chords *molto energico e con forza* rushing to the short coda.
- 7 **Study in F minor 'The Windstorm', Op.12**, *Furioso*, depicts a violent windstorm in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, where it was written in 1987. The whirling chromatic scales in the left hand and cascading octave *arpeggios* are only briefly

interrupted by a few calming measures before a central climax, *con gran espressione*, in B flat major; after which the storm resumes its inexorable rushing to a tempestuous close back in the original key.

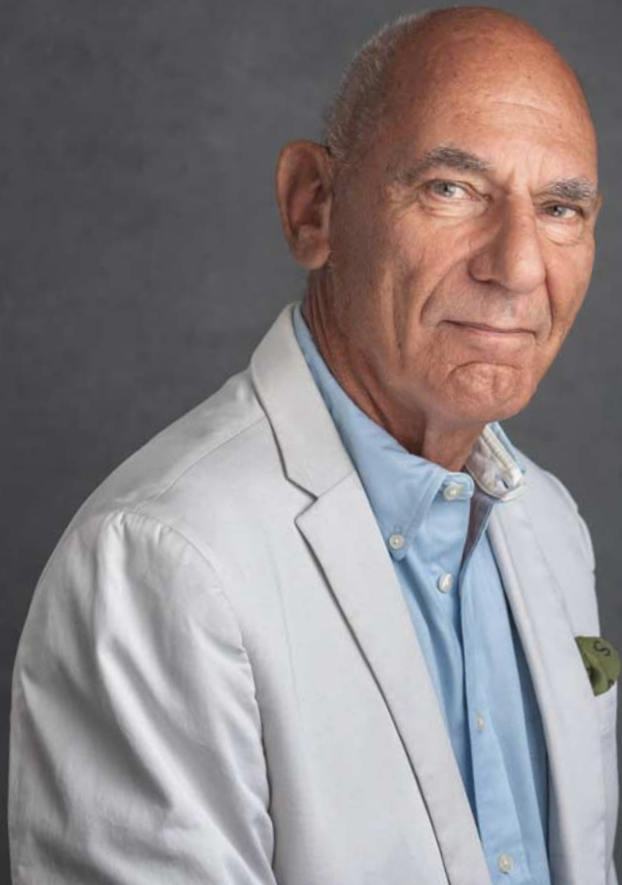
In 1967 Mansell started to write a series of short **Piano Studies, Op.3**, broadly based upon a descending chromatic scale:

- 8 **Study No.1 in C minor**, *Adagio teneramente*, was written around the concept of a mother cradling a dying child in her arms. Although starting and ending in C minor it modulates into an F minor climax before subsiding to close softly.
- 9 **Study No.2 in E minor**, *Lento doloroso*, when the child has died, starts with an anguished discordant scale first descending and then rising into A minor and briefly D minor, before closing gently in F major.
- 10 **Study No.3 in F minor**, *Presto impetuoso*, is a brief wild outburst; first in octaves, then chordal scales, then whirling semiquavers which ultimately ascend to a rushing close.
- 11 **Study No.4 in B major**, *Theme and Variations*, begins *Andante ma non troppo* with a theme of a simple chromatic chordal embellishment of the descending scale. After strengthening by repetition it is first varied in an *Allegretto*, then a *più adagio* section in B minor, reverting to B major for a brisk *vivo*. This builds *un poco meno mosso* and rhythmically increases to a jolly fortissimo, before subsiding to a forceful recapitulation of the original theme *molto maestoso*.
- 12 **Study No.5 in C major**, *Vivace giocoso*, starts with a 'nasal tickle', which gradually grows to end in a great sneeze.

- 13 **Study No.6 in E flat major**, *Allegretto*, is a warm, Schumanesque, impromptu. After a central section of scales and arpeggios the main theme returns *Allegro*.
- 14 **Study No.7 in C minor 'The Yugoslav'**, *Alla Marcia – Deciso*, written in Yugoslavia at a time of peace, contrasts a central 'crossed-hands' section in E flat major, *Allegretto cantabile*, with that of the opening and closing martial swagger.
- 15 **Study No.8 in B major 'The Little Donkey'**, *Andante ostinato*, written at the same time as the previous study, depicts a donkey contentedly jogging along a mountain path. Gradually the path steepens, until the animal becomes weary and finally lies down to sleep.
- 16 The **Concert Fantasy in F minor 'The Romantic', Op.19**, was written in 1992. It was designed as a full-blooded virtuoso showcase with the intention of emulating something of the passionate lyricism of composers such as Schumann, Chopin and Liszt. It describes the progress of a love affair from the initial excitement of first meeting, through the various stages of a relationship: lust, happiness, adoration, disagreement, and reconciliation – leading to the ultimate passionate union.  
Marked *Con Bravura* the introduction starts with a flourish – a glittering run, wide-leaping octaves and chords and some cascading passagework, leading up to a rhythmic accompaniment to the main theme of the work, a declamatory lyrical *Rubato*. A brief interruption by more cascading octaves leads to a repetition of the theme an octave higher in a slightly longer version. The second section, *Energico*, in triple time, starts in G minor then modulates into B minor and a *scherzo*-like section with some Chopinesque left-hand octave ostinato passages, leading through some exuberant key changes to an amended quotation from the beginning

of Schumann's Piano Concerto. The third section, an *Adagio affetuoso* in E flat minor, which is a *molto cantabile* elaboration of the main theme, gradually rises to a climax, ultimately reaching F major. A simple C major *arpeggio* up the keyboard leads to the fourth section, *Risoluto e drammatico*, back in the tonic key of F minor. This rather grandiose fragmented version of the main theme ultimately subsides with a soothing *calmatando* passage based upon the style of the opening run. The outline of the final section is basically one long emotional *crescendo*. It begins with a sweetly plaintive version of the theme, *Lento teneramente* in B flat minor. Gradually the music becomes increasingly more impassioned as the F minor tonic returns; the theme becomes more and more fragmented and the key gradually changes to an exultant F major. Finally some flamboyant passagework and the piece rushes to a close in a short virtuoso chromatic coda.

- 17 The **Rhapsody in D, Op.13**, written in 1990, starts as a soulful *Adagio espressivo* nominally in D minor and gradually gathers emotional power while remaining ever-lyrical, passing through *più andante* in A flat major which modulates to D flat major and then *con anima* D major, becoming increasingly impassioned and leading to a brief *vivo* coda which totally dissipates in the closing measures.



**Robert Mansell** was born in London, England, where he started writing music almost as soon as he began to play the piano. Towards the end of a career as a business executive, he moved to America where he stayed for thirty years before returning to Britain in 2009. During that period overseas he became musically associated with the American Reformed Church in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, and later was made the Music Director of the Frederick Lutheran Church there.

Mansell's music is quite traditional, never straying far beyond the bounds of conventional romantic tonality. It is rich in chromatics, which makes it harder to play than it might appear.

In addition to the instrumental works on this CD he has written an amount of religious music. He has also written much secular vocal and choral music and also some works for the stage – including *Marlene*, a musical based on the life and loves of Marlene Dietrich; and *Willm S*, based on the life and loves of William Shakespeare, which was premiered in Florida in 2005 and subsequently recorded as an Audio-book by Coolbeat (.biz.) More recently he has written other non-musical plays including *Cosima – Wagner's Widow*, which was premiered in a reading at the RADA Studio Theatre in 2015.

The Italian pianist **David Malusà** has given recitals as a soloist and chamber musician across Europe, China and the USA. He is gathering acclaim as an accomplished interpreter of a wide range of styles, most notably late Classical and Romantic.

Having obtained a Diploma in Pianoforte in Vicenza, he continued his studies at The Royal College of Music in London, with Niel Immelman and Vanessa Latache. David won the sixteenth Jaques Samuel Intercollegiate Piano Competition, and as a result of that, he made his debut recital at the Fazioli Concert Hall in Sacile as well as at the Wigmore Hall in London. A CD was released under S.W. Mitchell Capital records of his live Wigmore Hall recital.

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Much in demand as a soloist with orchestra, David has performed extensively throughout the UK and internationally, most notably Prokofiev Piano Concerto No.1 with Orquesta Sinfónica de la Región de Murcia (Auditorium Victor Villegas, Murcia), conducted by Beatriz Fernández; and Chopin *Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante* Op.22 with Orpheus Sinfonia, conducted by Thomas Carroll (St John's Smith Square, London). David is often invited to give lecture recitals, and to be a jury member for a number of UK music competitions. He is currently a visiting teacher at Wellington College, Berkshire.

