

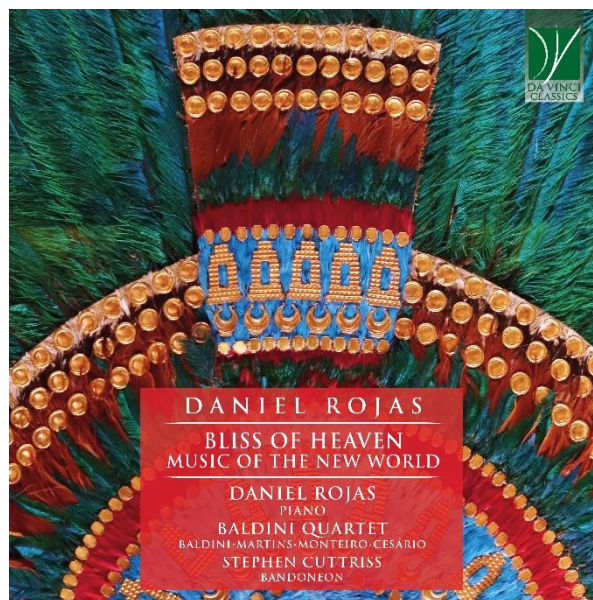
Daniel Rojas 'BLISS OF HEAVEN: Music of the New World' (DA VINCI CLASSICS) Album launch

Daniel Rojas, piano/composer
Baldini Quartet (Brazil)
Stephen Cuttriss, bandoneón

Irresistible rhythms and a melting pot of melodies, Chilean-born pianist and composer Daniel Rojas reimagines some of Latin America's best-loved tunes and tangos in his new album for Da Vinci Classics, 'BLISS OF HEAVEN: Music of the New World'.

A heavenly alchemy of mambo, salsa and Andean folk music fused with classical sensibilities - supported by the high-energy Ensemble Apex String Quartet featuring violinist Anna da Silva Chen - it's music you know but as you've never heard it before.

With Piazzolla's dramatic *Libertango*, Chucho Valdés' danceable *Mambo Influenciado* and the surprising Peruvian title track traced back to the 1600s, **Rojas' long-awaited album of sensitive arrangements and soulful original works is guaranteed to lift your spirits, and leave you wanting more.**



Dr Daniel Rojas is an award-winning composer specialising in the rich and vibrant Latin American aesthetic, and Australia's best Latin and tango pianist, earning acclaim for stunning improvisations at the keyboard. Program director of Composition at Sydney University's Conservatorium of Music, Rojas' prizes include the Fellowship of Australian Composers Award, Frank Albert Prize, and Miriam Hyde Memorial Award; a warm and exuberant performer, he has played for Sydney Festival, Melbourne Recital Centre, Newcastle Music Festival, City Recital Hall and more.

While this album was recorded in São Paulo, Brazil (pre-COVID) with the Baldini Quartet led by OSESP Concertmaster Emmanuele Baldini, and bandoneonist Stephen Cuttriss, tonight, as for Sydney Festival, Rojas performs with a string quartet from Ensemble Apex - Sydney's creative and charismatic collection of Conservatorium-trained young musicians led by Artistic Director/conductor, Sam Weller. **Exclusive signed copies of the new album available on the night.**

Album release date: Friday 12 March 2021

Launch concert in Sydney: Thurs 29 April 2021, 6:30pm at [Camelot Lounge](#), Marrickville

Buy the physical CD (in Australia) on Daniel's [website](#) and on Apple Music [here](#); streaming now on [Spotify](#), [Amazon Music](#)

Links: <https://davinci-edition.com/product/c00379/>

Promo clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STzeHqKRJlQ>

Performance/Artist enquiries: Jackie Thomas-Piccardi | Cinque Artist Management | E: jt@cinqueartistmanagement.com

Media enquiries: Jacqui Bonner Marketing and Management | M: 0411 473 198 | E: jb@jacquibonnermarketing.com

<https://danielrojas.com.au>

<https://www.facebook.com/DRojasComposer>

<https://emmanuelebaldini.com/>

<https://www.ensembleapex.com>

"musical escapism at its finest... Rojas is a master of his craft, both as a pianist and composer. He played with exuberance and a clear love of the style... free flowing cadenzas with precision and immense grace... It is a welcome diversion these days to be able to ignore the outside world and indulge in uplifting music on a summer's evening. Daniel Rojas and Ensemble Apex Strings provided a wonderful program of familiar music and inventive new pieces, complementing the environment they were in with gusto and exuberance." (4.5 stars)

– **Limelight magazine** (live review, Sydney Festival, Jan 2021)

“Latin America has become a haven for musical expression... a heavenly alchemical laboratory, where old and new musical currents catalyse a profusion of spirited harmonies, melodies, and rhythms.”

The musical panorama of Latin America is a sort of 'heavenly laboratory' where the old and the new meld together and erupt in a profusion of harmonies, melodies and rhythms from not only local traditions, but those of America, Africa and Europe.

As a Chilean-born composer and pianist living in Australia, I have nurtured a penchant for bringing Latin American vernacular music into the classical concert hall. Both of these musical traditions possess a vast canon of works, shaped by a myriad of interactions with vernacular music over several centuries: a brief survey of the Western tradition may identify composers such as Mozart and Beethoven engaging with Turkish music, Bartók with Eastern European folk music, or Bizet and Debussy with Spain.

In Latin America, the interaction of European, African and Amerindian musics have, for centuries, created a plethora of vibrant traditions across a vast geographic and demographic landscape. Each region has its complex family tree of genres, which can vary significantly even from one town to the next. It is hardly surprising that Latin America has become a haven for musical expression; to conjure an arcane metaphor, **it has become a heavenly alchemical laboratory, where old and new musical currents catalyse a profusion of spirited harmonies, melodies, and rhythms.**

My musical ideas for this album were forged by the conflation of two distinct lifelong creative pursuits: composing a substantial portfolio of solo, chamber, vocal and orchestral music; and arranging for, and performing in Afro-Caribbean and tango ensembles. Consequently, I have sought to develop and embrace a broad musical language, where classical and Latin American traditions intersect in an alluring cultural and sonic dance. **From the earliest stages, the arrangements and original compositions in this album were intended to be accessible to lovers of both traditions.**

To this end, I deemed it apposite to collaborate with classical musicians based in Latin America. I was incredibly fortunate to meet with Maestro Emmanuele Baldini, who at the time was the artistic director of the Orquesta de Cámara de Valdivia, Chile, and wanted to programme one of my compositions for an upcoming season. A remarkable friendship ensued that flourished into an enthusiastic and serendipitous collaboration. Maestro Baldini perspicaciously curated a bespoke quartet of Brazilian musicians... The studio recording sessions in São Paulo were truly magical: the personal and musical chemistry palpable, synergistic and inspirational. Heaven blew us a kiss and we bathed in its bliss!

- **Edited extract from album notes by Daniel Rojas (2021)**

Track list:

Tracks 1, 8, 9 and 4 recommended for airplay

- 1. DANIEL ROJAS - SalTango (4:39)**
- 2. ASTOR PIAZZOLLA, arr. Rojas - Libertango (7:29)**
- 3. CONSUELO VELÁZQUEZ arr. Rojas - Besame Mucho (7:28)**
- 4. JESÚS “CHUCHO” VALDÉS arr. Rojas - Mambo Influenciado (7:16)**
- 5. DANIEL ROJAS Navegar (6:27)***
- 6. MIGUEL ÁNGEL HURTADO DELGADO arr. Rojas - Valicha (3:15)**
- 7. DANIEL ROJAS - Brother (4:49)***
- 8. COMPOSER UNKNOWN, BAROQUE PERU (CA. 1632) arr. Rojas - Hanacpachap Cussicuinin (Bliss of Heaven) (4:51)**
- 9. ZEQUINHA DE ABREU arr. Rojas - Tico Tico No Fuba (2:36)**
- 10. DANIEL ROJAS Balada Idílica (8:17)**

Daniel Rojas, piano and composer | *Stephen Cuttriss, bandoneon

Baldini Quartet **Emmanuele Baldini**, violin I - **Amanda Martins**, violin II - **Elisa Monteiro**, viola - **Rafael Cesário**, cello

Recent review quotes:

“I don't recall encountering tango of this quality made in Australia since Jose Luis Betancor's bandoneon wizardry was here in the 1990s.”
[4 stars] – John Shand, *Sydney Morning Herald* (2019)

“brilliant” – *Sydney Arts Guide* (2019)

“solid musical integrity with a firm foot in both South American and European traditions bridged the divide with [Rojas’] typically formidable compositional fireworks.” – *Sydney Arts Guide* (2019)