



AMPLIFIED SOUL

GABRIELA MARTINEZ

DE 3526



AMPLIFIED SOUL

GABRIELA MARTINEZ, piano

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN

Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Moment Musical in B-flat Minor, Op. 16, No. 1

MASON BATES

White Lies for Lomax

DAN VISCONTI

Amplified Soul (world premiere recording)

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

Variations in B-flat Minor, Op. 3

Total Playing Time: 54:50

AMPLIFIED SOUL

GABRIELA MARTINEZ

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN:

Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3 (24:52)

1. Presto (7:18)
2. Largo e mesto (9:07)
3. Menuetto: Allegro (2:51)
4. Rondo: Allegro (4:36)

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF:

5. *Moment Musical in B-flat Minor, Op. 16, No. 1* (6:56)

MASON BATES:

6. *White Lies for Lomax* (7:01)

DAN VISCONTI:

7. *Amplified Soul* (4:59) *

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI:

8. *Variations in B-flat Minor, Op. 3* (11:59)

Total Playing Time: 54:50

* Written for the artist; world premiere recording

Every piece on this recording has a life of its own, a soul, and a personality. To me, Beethoven's music is life-changing and miraculous; through his music, I find hope and inspiration. In the *Piano Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3* – with its beauty, innocence, drama, and intensity – he explores every human emotion. This sonata is a very enigmatic piece that fills me with joy. Subtleties and complexities abound, yet it remains very elegant and concise.

The Rachmaninoff *Moment Musical* is a mournful, reflective work with a melody that resembles a decadent song. It is idyllic, passionate music that transports me to a beautiful place that feels like old-world glamor.

In *White Lies for Lomax*, Mason Bates dreams up a subtly bluesy homage to ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, who explored (and recorded) "the soul of the land" in the American South.

I commissioned a solo work from Dan Visconti, a wonderful American composer. The result, *Amplified Soul*, reflects on the evolution of melody and the way resonance can "amplify" a musician's soul.

Szymanowski's *Variations in B-flat Minor, Op. 3* is a set of romantic, brilliant, and colorful variations; they are remarkably inventive and expressive, exuding a sense of freshness.

Words are not my strength; I have always expressed myself best through music. Being an integral part of my life, music colors my every feeling, thought, and desire. Inspired by the then-upcoming birth of my daughter, I recorded these pieces because I love them and because I want to share the magic that they embody. They have all been part of the constant soundtrack of my life, and have indeed amplified my soul.

— Gabriela Martinez



The ***Piano Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3*** – written in 1798, when Ludwig van Beethoven was twenty-seven – stands out for the extreme emotional contrasts it contains. It is famous, above all, for its deeply tragic second-movement *Largo e mesto*, yet the rest of the sonata is lighthearted, even playful. The irrepressible energy of the first movement takes many forms: in turn joyful, passionate, and romantically sensitive. Then, in the slow movement, an abyss of the deepest despair opens up. The main theme circles obsessively around a single note; the second idea starts out more peacefully but soon takes a highly dramatic turn. The entire movement is a portrait of profound anguish, abounding in harsh dissonances, widely fluctuating dynamics, and massive chords juxtaposed with plaintive melodic lines. It is also one of the first instances in Beethoven where expression has a direct impact on musical form: the emotions overflow to the point of requiring an extended coda in which another explosion takes place, more powerful and more devastating than anything we have heard before.

The third movement is almost too fast for a minuet, but does not quite have the rambunctious quality of many of Beethoven's scherzos. It is cheerful and uncomplicated, providing the necessary release after the preceding turmoil. The central trio section is an Austrian folk ländler with some typical Beethovenian twists.

The real *scherzo* (joke) in this sonata comes in the finale. The fragmented main theme, interrupted by rests in the most unexpected places, is a source of musical humor of a most delicate kind. This very unusual theme introduces an eventful rondo in which one surprise follows another right up to what pianist-musicologist William Kinderman called an "open, dissolving conclusion."

This sonata is one of three dedicated to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne. Together with her husband, the countess belonged to a group of influential patrons who played a major role in Beethoven's life during his early years in Vienna in the late 1790s and early 1800s. These wealthy and enlightened aristocrats, who

were extremely knowledgeable about music, not only supported him financially but also provided him with a receptive audience at private concerts, cementing his reputation as the leading pianist-composer in the Imperial capital.

A new star was born when, on May 19, 1892, the nineteen-year-old Sergei Rachmaninoff had his conservatory graduation piece, the opera *Aleko*, performed at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater, in a double bill shared with *Iolanthe* by his mentor, Tchaikovsky. In the years that followed, Rachmaninoff's reputation as a composer, as well as a pianist of extraordinary gifts, grew steadily. His writing for solo piano also reached new levels of depth and complexity in the 1890s – witness the six *Moments Musicaux* ("Musical Moments"), his most ambitious piano work to date, and a precursor of the mature preludes and *Etudes-tableaux* that were yet to come.

The title came from Schubert – or, more precisely, from the publisher Leidesdorf, who had printed six of Schubert's shorter piano works under that title in 1828. Sixty-eight years later, Rachmaninoff, now twenty-three, reimagined the genre on a much larger scale. His six musical "moments" are expansive pianistic tone poems that, stylistically, have less to do with Schubert than with Chopin. Rachmaninoff built upon such Chopinesque genres as the nocturne, the etude, and the barcarolle; yet the musical language he used was entirely his own. As he said in a 1941 interview: "What I try to do, when writing down my music, is to make it say simply and directly that which is in my heart when I am composing."

The first piece in the set – the ***Moment Musical in B-flat Minor, Op. 16, No. 1*** (1896) – starts out in the style of a nocturne, with a characteristic duality in the rhythm: the left hand consistently plays three notes against two in the right hand. Developed at some length, this melody is followed by two faster variations. The first of these makes the regular patterns of the melody irregular by the use of mixed meters; then, after a brilliant cadenza, a highly virtuosic second variation follows. The piece ends with a recapitulation of the theme close to its original

form, but Rachmaninoff inserted a brief reminiscence of the first variation as well as a final rapid flourish before the quiet ending.

— Peter Laki

It is still a surprise to discover how few classical musicians are familiar with Alan Lomax, the ethnomusicologist who ventured into the American South (and elsewhere) to record the soul of a land. Those scratchy recordings captured everyone from Muddy Waters to a whole slew of anonymous blues musicians.

White Lies for Lomax (2007) dreams up wisps of distant blues fragments – more fiction than fact, since they are hardly honest recreations of the blues – and lets them slowly accumulate to an assertive climax.

— Mason Bates

Amplified Soul (2014) is a piano work inspired by the primal sound of early medieval music and the beauty with which a simple, chant-like melody becomes beautiful and complex when resonating in a large space. The piece takes advantage of the piano's natural resonance in suggesting first distant chant and later the clanging of cathedral chimes. The way in which acoustic resonance can amplify a musician's true soul seemed like a fitting metaphor as I composed a new work for pianist Gabriela Martinez, a musician who pours all of her spirit into every performance.

— Dan Visconti

Like Rachmaninoff, his senior by about a decade, Karol Szymanowski grew up in the Russian Empire that ruled over eastern Poland. He came from a family of Polish landowners and grew up on an estate in what is now central Ukraine.

Showing great musical talent at an early age, he trained as a pianist with his relative, Gustav Neuhaus – whose son Heinrich later became a celebrated piano professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Szymanowski himself went to Warsaw for further studies. There, with a handful of colleagues, he formed the group “Young Poland,” with the goal of bringing about a renaissance of Polish music.

After starting his compositional career with some piano preludes and etudes that (like those of Rachmaninoff) were strongly influenced by Chopin, Szymanowski began to take some decisive steps toward an original style with his **Variations in B-flat Minor, Op. 3**, written at the age of twenty while he was still a student. The refinement of the harmonic language, the assurance of the piano writing, and the ingenuity of the variations announced the arrival of a promising new talent. Those who predicted a bright future for Szymanowski were proven right by the highly distinctive voice the composer soon developed.

The theme begins simply enough, with the melody played in octaves by both hands. Within the space of sixteen short measures, however, the harmony grows increasingly complex and the stage is set for the twelve variations, in which elegance and deep feeling are combined with a highly virtuosic piano texture. By using, in turn, rapid figurations, arpeggios, cross-rhythms and full-voiced harmonic progressions, Szymanowski produces a great variety of moods and characters. Among the variations, we might single out No. 3, which turns the theme into a mazurka, and No. 9, which gives it the form of a graceful waltz. The final variation, perhaps the most difficult of all, was modeled after Schumann’s *Toccata in C Major, Op. 7*.

Szymanowski dedicated this piece to Artur Rubinstein, the great Polish pianist. Only sixteen years old when the two first met in 1903, Rubinstein was already well on his way to international stardom. It was the beginning of a close friendship that ended only with Szymanowski’s death thirty-four years later.

— Peter Laki

Versatile, daring and insightful, young Venezuelan pianist **Gabriela Martinez** is establishing a reputation on both the national and international stages for her compelling interpretations, the lyricism of her playing, and her elegant stage presence. An artist equally at home with both established and contemporary repertoire, by composers ranging from Beethoven and Rachmaninoff to Mason Bates and Adam Schoenberg, she has performed throughout the United States as well as in Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

Among the concert venues in which she has appeared are Carnegie, Avery Fisher, and Alice Tully Halls in New York; the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto; Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco; Bass Hall in Fort Worth; Palace of Versailles in Paris; Grosses Festspielhaus in Salzburg; Semperoper in Dresden; and Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. As a soloist, she has performed with such distinguished organizations as the San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, and Fort Worth symphony orchestras in the United States; the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, MDR Rundfunkorchester, and Nürnberger Philharmoniker in Germany; and with Venezuela's Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra, to name a few. Festival credits include the Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, and Rockport festivals in the United States; Italy's Festival dei Due Mondi (Spoleto); Switzerland's Verbier Festival; Festival de Radio France et Montpellier; and Japan's Tokyo International Music Festival.

First Prize winner of the Anton G. Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Dresden and a semifinalist at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition – where she also received the Jury Discretionary Award – Gabriela Martinez began her piano studies in Caracas, Venezuela, and made her orchestral debut at age seven. She emigrated to the United States to attend The Juilliard School, where she earned her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees as a full scholarship student of Yoheved Kaplinsky. Ms. Martinez was a fellow of Carnegie Hall's The Academy, and a member of its celebrated Ensemble ACJW, while concur-

rently working on her doctoral studies with Marco Antonio de Almeida in Halle, Germany. Her wide-ranging career includes world premieres of new music, live performance broadcasts, and interviews on TV and radio. Her performances have been featured on National Public Radio, CNN, PBS, *60 Minutes*, ABC, *From the Top*, Radio France, WQXR and WNYC (New York), MDR Kultur and Deutsche Welle (Germany), NHK (Japan), RAI (Italy), and on numerous television and radio stations in Venezuela. Ms. Martinez resides in the United States.

www.gabrielamartinezpiano.com



I would like to thank David Frost and Tim Martyn for this incredible recording experience. My warmest thanks also go to my husband, Grant, and my parents, as well as to Marco and Laura, for their loving support in bringing this project to life!

– G a b r i e l a M a r t i n e z

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