

# New Recording Features Composers from Chile: *Mobili*



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*Mobili*: Music for Viola and Piano from Chile. [Georgina Isabel Rossi](#), viola; [Silvie Cheng](#), piano; [New Focus Recordings](#): FCR268; Duration 69:02; Available through [New Focus Recordings](#).

Georgina Isabel Rossi (viola) and Silvie Cheng (piano) present an album of world premiere recordings featuring Chilean composers Carlos Botto (1923-2004); David Cortéz (b.1985); Rafael Díaz (b.1962); Federico Heinlein (1912-99); and Juan Orrego-Salas) (1919-2019). From the stunning cover art and well-written liner notes, crafted by Rossi, to the music within, this is a treasure-trove for anyone who loves the deep, rich sound of the viola.

Rossi enjoys a career as soloist, performing on stages in North and South America. Born in Santiago, Chile, Rossi began her musical studies with her mother, Penelope Knuth. At age sixteen she was accepted at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan before continuing her viola study in New York. She holds a Master of Music from the Juilliard School and the Bachelor of Music from the Manhattan School of Music. She is a member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. This is her debut album.

Highly acclaimed pianist Silvie Cheng performs on the world stage and has recorded extensively. She also collaborates with her brother, Bryan Cheng ([The Cheng2 Duo](#)). She is a teaching-artist at the Manhattan School of Music's Distance Learning and for the Bridge Arts Ensemble in New York City.

The music includes works by two living composers along with three beloved composers born during the early 20th century. This collection, so beautifully assembled by Rossi, is not in search of a national style. Each composer speaks with a unique voice; yet all five share a love of Chile and the natural world.

The recording begins with two pieces by Díaz, composer and ethnomusicologist. "¿Habr  alguien que sus manos sostenga esta caer?" ("Will There Be Someone Whose Hands Can Sustain This Falling?" (2009), for amplified viola and the only piece for solo viola, makes for a riveting start. Rossi's bold yet refined extended technique illuminates the composer's almost cinematic use of melodies he collected from indigenous people of the Andes Mountains. D az counts "Al fondo de mi lejan a se asoma tu casa" ("In the Depths of My Distance Your House Emerges" (2013) as his Op.1 composition, referring to a childhood memory, walking alone to school across a pampa in Patagonia. Applying a pastoral motivic device (M6); he created a tune we can all remember. And accompanied with the piano's watery set of ostinatos, it provides a lovely contrast that reflects the magnificent and diverse geography of Chile.

"Fantasia," Op. 15, for viola and piano (1962), by Botto, did not break new ground but rather synthesized trends of the mid-20th century. He spun colorful lines into conversations between the two instruments; creating expressions through textural density; and he used long pauses that keep the listeners' attention. Botto is remembered for his teaching and academic contributions at the National Conservatory in Santiago.

Heinlein was born in Berlin, raised in Buenos Aires, and became a citizen of Chile, where he spent his career as a writer and composer. His 1985 composition, "D o: *Do Not Go Gentle*," refers to Dylan Thomas' poetry; it's edgy yet beautiful. Cheng's strong playing coupled with Rossi's lush tone summons the emotion of the text.

Originally penned for viola and orchestra, "Tololo" (2011) was premiered by Penelope Knuth and the Orquesta de C mara de Chile. Imagining images through a telescope at the great observatory, Cort s' work can be described by timbre, texture, pitch, amplitude, and duration; the features of post-modern music. This arrangement, by Miguel Far as, is splendid, but I hope that Rossi will perform this with orchestra in the near future; and I would like to be there for the occasion.

The last composition is Juan Orrego-Salas' *Mobili*, Op. 63. The only work for viola by the composer, who is also an architect, stands like a towering skyscraper among the others. Rossi writes, "....the impeccable designs of his 1967 *Mobili* are gleaming in their precision, with melodies that emerge like light through intricate latticework." Deservedly, the album is named and dedicated to his memory. It is an exquisite closing to a remarkable collection.

Rossi plays "El Sampedrino" a song by a romantic Argentinian composer, Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000) (arr. Kim Kashkashian, Robert Levin). A sweet melody, it feels like a sad farewell kiss.