

# Mp3 David Pitman - Improvisations 1999



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A collection of live piano extemporizations in Classical forms and idioms, including two fugues and more. A must for any fan of Classical piano music, Baroque music, also highly suitable for mediation or relaxation. 9 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, NEW AGE: Ambient Details: (this information and more is available at [wdauid.pitman.name](http://wdauid.pitman.name)) --- About me... I grew up in Ipswich, a small city in Queensland, Australia. Most of my childhood was spent either reading, gardening or making music. I remember my first "garden" - a tiny jam jar with a flowering weed that I plucked out of the lawn as a four year old. Ten years later, my father started a huge vegetable garden that quickly took over the entire suburban yard - plus some of the adjoining industrial paddock (it's still going now). I was allotted various portions of that, culminating in a 100m<sup>2</sup> block of the said paddock that we "squatted" on and grew an abundance of corn, cucumbers, mango trees and other larger crops. Nowadays, I live in a tiny yard in Forest Lake (a master planned development in Brisbane) and only have a large styrofoam box to grow veges in. From reading grew writing. One evening when I was about nine years old I discovered that I had read everything in the house (it was nearly true) and decided that the only way I was going to get more reading material would be to write it myself. Instantly, I set about writing a short sci-fi novel. These efforts continued for about three years, producing three or four short sci-fi works and a few short stories. They were mainly copies and amalgams of my existing books, but they kept me very busy in "writing immersion" for weeks at a time. When I was twelve, I woke up one night feeling like those stories were all stupid, so I immediately threw them out and started again, but this time with poetry. The result of the next ten years is mostly documented in "12-21: A Celebration of My Youth". You can see how my thoughts became more esoteric over this time, climaxing in the ecstatic spiritual fantasy of "Asiana". (By the way, the opening page of "Asiana" is actually based on a short, but very vivid, dream that I had when I was about nineteen years

old.) I am planning more writings for completion in 2006-8, including a volume on music theory and analysis, a set of essays on philosophical and spiritual topics, and a volume researching and documenting world peace (as differentiated from the wars that most authors tend to cling to when regarding history). This brings me to music, in true "me" tradition, I've saved the best for last. I started wanting to play when I was around five years old, I found some volumes which had music notes and numbers on them, which corresponded with the numbers on my mother's small keyboard, and I (think that I) taught myself to read music from this. (If I was ever shown, I can't remember, and I also can't recall a time when I was unable to read music.) Real lessons (and a real piano) started when I was nine. I got serious a year or two later, and started practicing a couple of hours a day and composing regularly. By the time I was twelve, I was struggling with Chopin's larger Polonaises and Scherzi, playing hours of country and early rock with my Dad (who played guitar by ear), improvising in the style of Liberace (among others) and generally becoming a musician with a set of skills that were simultaneously advanced and backward. Backward technically (in terms of playing with a proper technical foundation), but advanced in the areas of chordal improvisation, style imitation, transposition and sight-reading. During high school I really taught myself most of the time, and I had truly outgrown my teacher (Julie Baldwin) in most respects. In fact, I seemed to do better when left completely alone to figure it all out. However, the turning point for me was entering the Conservatorium (Queensland). Under the leadership of Stephen Savage, I became quite obsessed with technical mastery and correcting the myriad faults in my foundation technique. (The technical obsession was mine more than his!) I think this obsession actually stalled my musical growth in some ways, because I was unable to just "let go", which is truly where good technique starts! During the later stages of my undergraduate degree, I became more drawn to contemporary works, and I premiered several local composers' works. The main composer here was (and still is) Khai-Wei Choong. I found (and still find) his music to be a great synthesis of transcendental classical technique at its (almost) unplayable maximum, and pop music style aural approachability. I premiered his first two sonatas in 1996-7 to great local acclaim and a mixture of infamous admiration and distant fascination from my pianist colleagues (who mostly couldn't even begin to get their hands around these pieces). In 1997, I decided that I wouldn't pursue performing as a full-time career option (at least not just yet), and applied to admission to post-graduate music therapy at the University of Queensland in 1998. This seemed to be a more socially relevant use of music, and one that made use of myself in

deeper ways that the piano virtuoso role did. However, I did manage to also enter and complete a Master in Performance Research (under the guidance of Eugene Geinger on piano and Dr Stephen Emmerson for my thesis) at Queensland Conservatorium in the same two year period - even if my music therapy lecturer warned me that this was possibly against University rules (to attend to separate universities full-time simultaneously). The topic for my Masters degree was Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. To most people that means nothing, but to those "in the know", they would know that I had reached to end of the line. I had been climbing the technical mountain for several years and had arrived at Everest himself. I've played a lot of piano music, and I can tell you that nothing compares to Sorabji - nothing. It's not so much the sheer technical challenge (commonsense tells you this music is impossible - but who said sense was common?), but more the total immersion required - if you don't shift your awareness into a tantric-like state, you don't "survive". But when you actually "pull it off", the world is never the same again. I played several of his smaller works, learned a few of medium size ones in "draft" mode (including a fair chunk of the notorious "Opus Clavicembalisticum"), and performed the Sonata One for my Master's recital. On the night I played the Sonata a bit below my best, however it's still a good rendition - and a well researched and thought out interpretation. (Some people said it was a bit too slow - I disagree - I had played it much faster in rehearsal and found that the intensity was gone for me. I like to play Sorabji in "bursts", and with a bit of a pioneering explorative spirit. Just because there's torrents of notes doesn't mean that he wants them played so fast that you can't hear anything.) After completing my performance and thesis, and satisfying the grueling requirements of the Music Therapy diploma, I was tired. Really tired. Tired of studying, tired of practicing, tired of living at my parents' house (I moved out in the last few months of my postgraduate study). I took it easy for a few months just teaching a bit and sleeping a lot. Early in 2000, I decided that I would remain a freelancer, but go full time, starting my own music therapy practice. Pretty soon I was driving everywhere therapy-ing and teaching. From 2000-2002, I drove all around the Brisbane area as a freelancer, meanwhile also getting engaged and married to Jan in 2001 and moving to Forest Lake immediately after. In late 2001 I decided to start my own business in the Forest Lake Village Shopping Centre. A music school which Jan helped name - Spiritt Music Centre. I wanted to make it a node for musical people in the community. My main aim was to provide really good and enthusiastic music tuition for people of any age, background and goals at an affordable price. This is something that's vitally important for Australian music right now (I'll write more on this issue elsewhere), but by 2005 it was

becoming clear that the Shopping Centre location was simply too expensive, and I found myself not only constantly short of ready cash, but also having to charge prices which were beginning to seriously undermine the goals that I started with. Many people were ringing in, but too many found it simply too expensive to continue (or even start). So in February 2005, the Spiritt Music Centre suddenly and sadly closed - too many students either could not or would not pay (enough of) their fees. Interestingly, our price rises of close to 100 over 2004 only resulted in about three students (out of over 100) actually defecting elsewhere for cheaper prices. This would seem to be a testimony to our quality of work, and our students' loyalty to us. The period 2002-2005 also witnessed the birth of our two sons, Elijah and Mason. Actually Elijah was conceived around our Spiritt Music Centre opening date (28th January 2002), and Mason was born (at home) the week that the Spiritt Music Centre closed it's doors (week of Monday, 21st February 2005). It's amazing how your life can so neatly fall into phases. So, here I am (in late April 2005), again freelancing, tidying up the pieces of the business, spending heaps of time with my family, and deciding that the best thing I can do now is to re-establish a performing career, write more words and more music, finish off the music websites that I've been developing for the last couple of years and perhaps get a position teaching in a university if Spirit wills it. Life suddenly seems very slow and easy, but I doubt that it will stay that way for too long! --- About Improvisations 1999 ... Extemporization in Classical music is an all-but lost art. Yet, the fathers of Classical music - the great composers of centuries past, were masters of the art of extemporization. There is a small resurgence of this wonderful artform, but it is limited mostly to 'early music' specialists who extemporize in the style of the great masters of the past. Yet, why can't someone extemporize in the style of themselves, but in the spirit of the Classical tradition? This recording is, to the artist's knowledge, unique - a collection of extemporizations using techniques and forms drawn from the Classical literature. This album was recorded at my home over a few sessions in 1999, everything I played in those sessions is included here, unchanged from the live version. It was recorded on a high quality handheld stereo cassette recorder. --- See you later. David Pitman

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