



ESCUALO

PIAZZOLLA, MOLINELLI & BACALOV

GIAMPAOLO BANDINI GUITAR - CESARE CHIACCHIARETTA BANDONEON

A beautiful journey into the Argentinian rhythms with the most celebrated pieces by Astor Piazzolla and Louis Bacalov, Academy Oscar Award® winner with "Il Postino" soundtrack (1996), played with the most representative traditional instruments: guitar and bandoneon. And a new piece by Alberto Molinelli.

The Giampaolo Bandini - Cesare Chiacchiaretta Duo formed in 2002 pursuing the clear aim to propose Argentine music through the charm and magic of its most representative instruments. The duo immediately became an important point of reference in the international concert circuit thanks to their great communicativeness and extraordinary charisma.



CD 4814984 – DIGITAL / DECCA

ESCUALO

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 1 | Escualo | 3.34 |
| 2 | Ave Maria | 6.10 |
| 3 | Muerte Del ángel | 3.31 |
| 4 | Milonga Del ángel | 7.14 |
| 5 | Cadenza | 5.12 |
| 6 | Bandoneon | 4.10 |
| 7 | Escolaso | 4.44 |
| 8 | Whisky | 4.38 |
| 9 | Zita | 4.50 |
| 10 | Chiquilín De Bachín | 4.40 |

ROBERTO MOLINELLI (1963)

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | Milonga Para Astor | 5.54 |
| | Stefano Cerrato, Francesco Cerrato, Anastasiya Petryshak,
Federico Mazzucco, Federico Marchesano | |

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 12 | Oblivion | 4.46 |
| 13 | Libertango | 3.56 |

LUIS BACALOV (1933)

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|
| 14 | Il Postino | 4.41 |
| | Francesco Cerrato, Stefano Cerrato | |

GIAMPAOLO BANDINI GUITAR
CESARE CHIACCHIARETTA BANDONEON



When Astor Piazzolla first presented his Double Concerto for bandoneón, guitar and orchestra at the Liège Guitar Festival in 1985, not only did he create a wonderful piece of music, one of the most important in his entire output, but he also invented a novel chamber duo, implicit in the choice of instruments, that of guitar and bandoneón. The two instruments open the concerto with a long solo dialogue that reveals all the potential timbres of the combination, one which Piazzolla's music could hardly be better suited to.

There had always been a dialogue between guitar and bandoneón in the colourful world of the tango: the guitar, the gaucho's instrument par excellence was a permanent presence in tango orchestras, long before the arrival of the bandoneón. It also played a role in Astor's life (his father enjoyed playing guitar and accordion), and throughout his career he had made use of it in his orchestrations, with the collaboration of such musicians as Horacio Malvicino, Oscar López Ruiz, Cachó Tiaro (who gave the first performance of the Double Concerto, under Leo Brouwer) and many others. However, the instrument he had used had generally been the electric guitar, and the guitarists listed, for all their exceptional gifts in terms of technique and musicality, came from the world of popular music and jazz. Towards the end of the 1970s Piazzolla moved instead into the world of the classical guitar, and with the involvement of such players as Sergio and Odair Assad, Roberto Aussel and Baltazar Benítez, wrote a whole series of works for the instrument, both solo (the *Cinco Piezas* of 1980), duo (*Tango Suite*, 1984), and flute and guitar (*Histoire du tango*, 1985) as well as the concerto and other ensemble pieces.

The bandoneón was one of the most successful of the many variants of the accordion that proliferated in Europe around 1830 (another, the concertina, is associated with Giulio Regondi, one of the greatest guitar virtuosos of the second half of the 19th century, who played both with equal mastery). It was taken to Argentina at the end of the 19th century by European immigrants, and immediately entered tango bands, supplanting the accordion as a result of its more expressive sound.

Piazzolla was born into a family of Italian origin in Mar del Plata in 1921 and died in Buenos Aires in 1992. He spent part of his childhood, from 1925 to 1937, in New York, where he became familiar with jazz, which he heard on the streets, and tango, which was common among Argentinian immigrants. At the prompting of his father Vicente ("Nonino"), when he was barely eight years old he began to play the bandoneón. As well as absorbing the *aire de tango* at home and then in Mar del Plata where his family settled when they returned from the USA, Astor had an amazing encounter in New York when he met Carlos Gardel, Argentina's greatest star, whose name was almost synonymous with tango itself. Piazzolla served as a kind of general dogsbody while Gardel was in New York, and as Gardel became fond of him, he was given the chance to appear in a tiny role in one of his films (*El día que me quieras*, 1935). Piazzolla's early encounter with the world of film also proved to be a source of significant future developments.

Only chance, and Vicente's insistence, meant that Astor did not comply with Gardel's wish for him to come along on what proved to be his last trip, to Colombia, where he died in a plane crash some months later, along with his entire staff.

Piazzolla had an unconventional musical education, with many teachers from the sphere of popular music, but also some important figures, not least the classical composer Alberto Ginastera, with whom he studied for six years, from 1943 onwards. But Piazzolla had his real schooling in the nightclubs of Buenos Aires, the city he had moved to in 1939, where the great performers and first innovative figures of tango held sway. One of the leading orchestras was that of Aníbal Troilo, which Piazzolla was welcomed into, and where he rapidly made his way. His exceptional gifts as an arranger were immediately noticed, and Piazzolla began to introduce elements from classical music and jazz into his style, such as counterpoint, dissonances, and rhythms not normally found in the regular, four-square dance. His innovations proved too much for him to remain in Troilo's group, and he went on to found the first of the many ensembles that marked his career as a composer and performer. But his *Orquesta Típica* did not at first meet with popular approval, as Piazzolla's thinking was now that the tango was music to listen to and not necessarily to dance to, an attitude that provoked anger from traditionalists. So the time then arrived when, with the help of a French government grant, he travelled to Paris to complete his classical training with Nadia Boulanger in 1954. In fact, it was at this very juncture that he came to understand that he already had a defined musical personality, and managed at last to reconcile the inner conflict he felt between classical music and tango.

With the weight of this psychological and creative burden lifted from his shoulders, the Piazzolla that we know came into being: the Piazzolla of *nuevo tango*, the inspired blender of genres, able to express himself in a variety of instrumental ensembles (where the guitar always had a place) and at various moments leaning towards rock and electronic music. He never turned his back on popular music, though, not spurning even the simplest genre, the song, but never ceased to consider himself a classical composer. His international reputation continued to grow (he had very strong ties with Italy, where he lived for a long time), and he gained a wider audience with such pieces as *Adiós Nonino* (1960), *Balada para un loco* (1969), and, most of all, *Libertango* (1974). He also initiated prestigious collaborations with leading jazz musicians as well as writing a considerable amount of music for film. But it was only at the end of his career that he won the approval that he probably most craved, that of the world of classical music. The first musicians to believe in the unqualified value of Piazzolla's music and to include it in their recital programmes were Daniel Barenboim, Gidon Kremer, the Kronos Quartet, Yo-Yo Ma and Mstislav Rostropovich, and now his music has an abundant presence in concert programmes all around the world.

Piazzolla's output at his death amounted to more than three thousand pieces, still to be catalogued completely, which are now played by a countless array of different instrumental combinations. In any case, Piazzolla himself was continually making new versions and arrangements of his own work (there are at least twenty versions by him of *Adiós Nonino*), and in fact his talent for arranging, although a more appropriate term might be "orchestrating", was one of the gifts that he was most sought after for at the beginning of his career.

There is a reason why the great man's music works so well in different orchestrations.

Piazzolla's style has influences from multiple sources, from jazz to progressive rock, from the most unalloyed salon music to traditional Jewish music (Klezmer) and even the most disparate borrowings from such composers as Bartók or Stravinsky. Nevertheless, I think that the most useful key for a performer to unlock the secret of Piazzolla's music comes from the Baroque style and aesthetic.



Legend has it that the young Astor used to listen to Bach when he was still in New York, from behind the door of his neighbour, the Hungarian pianist Béla Wilda, his first proper teacher and a pupil of Rachmaninov, and it must have left a lasting impression on him, at least as much as his brief association with Carlos Gardel.

Quite apart from a craftsman-like approach to composition, the strong presence of counterpoint and fugue, the use of fixed forms that produce rigorously symmetrical, closed structures, an affinity with Baroque music can be found in his music's regular rhythmic pulse and the similarly constant harmonic rhythmic achieved through an unremitting use of progression. Not only that, but Piazzolla also favoured the suite form, a chain of dances linked by subtle intertextual reminiscences, minor keys and a kind of improvised melodic variation that was unquestionably jazz-like, but understood in a Baroque sense as a thematic variation in diminution. The most characteristic structure of his tangos and milongas (ABA) suggests the alternation of movements (Allegro – Adagio – Allegro) in a Baroque concerto. As with Bach, Piazzolla's music works in transcription for various combinations because it has a universality that allows the musical values to be transferred intact.

All this can already be seen in the earliest of the works included in this collection: the *Muerte del Ángel* and *Milonga del Ángel*, both of which come from the suite (Introducción, Milonga and Muerte to which he added *Resurrección del ángel* in 1965) which Piazzolla took from the incidental music for Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz's three-act play *El tango del ángel* of 1962. The tense melody of the heart-wrenching *Milonga* makes it, together with *Oblivion*, probably one of Piazzolla's most beautiful slow movements. In contrast, the three-part fugue of *Muerte del ángel* (Muñoz's play described the arrival in Buenos Aires of an angel that, in its attempt to save souls, falls victim to a furious knife-fight) is one of the most effective examples of Piazzolla's counterpoint: listen out for the use of the ostinato bass that contrasts rhythmically with the fugue subject, and the controlled pile-up of dissonances that leads to the culmination of the piece.

Chiquilín de Bachín (1968) is also the product of a literary collaboration, a song in waltz tempo on a text by Horacio Ferrer, the poet who the same year provided the libretto for *María de Buenos Aires*, Piazzolla's only opera.

Chiquilín is another word for *niño*, little boy, or *lunfardo* in Buenos Aires dialect, a mixture of a wealth of different languages brought in by immigrants, such as Italian, and which, being spoken in the city slums, had strong links to the tango and the *tangueros*. *Bachín*, on the other hand, was the name of the restaurant that Piazzolla and Ferrer used to frequent, where a *chiquilín* would sell flowers to customers. One such little boy did in fact exist, and this deeply melancholy song is dedicated to him. The collaboration with Ferrer produced further songs, like the *Balada para un loco* of 1969.

The pieces from the 1970s stand out for their strong rhythmic character, even more pronounced than usual for Piazzolla, and the groups that he assembled during that decade always included a drum-kit and percussion.

The *Suite troileana* (*Cadenza-Bandoneón, Escolaso, Whisky, Zita*) dates from 1975, and is a heartfelt homage to the great master of the bandoneón, Anibal "Pichuco" Troilo, who died that year. Piazzolla may have left Troilo's orchestra, where he had his first important professional engagement, but the two men remained friends, and had subsequently got back together to collaborate. The four movements paint a portrait of Anibal through his passions, in order of affection and importance. In first place, of course, we find *Bandoneón*, which consists of a *cadenza* and a vivid fugue. This is followed, in the original sequence, by *Zita*, the name of Troilo's wife, then comes *Whisky*, and finally the betting game *Escolaso*. The predominant tone of the suite is more witty than sad, although there are plenty of meditative moments; altogether it is a homage that Troilo would certainly have enjoyed, and one of the most consistently inspired suites by Piazzolla.

The same mood is to be found in the famous *Libertango*, written in Italy in 1974, and the masterpiece *Escualo* that gives this disc its title. In *Libertango* the obsessive repetition of the accompaniment figure acquires a thematic importance, as is often the case with Piazzolla, but in the *ritornello* the composer manages to superimpose on to it one of the most beautiful, polished melodies he ever wrote. The piece was immediately seized on by singers and arrangers (Grace Jones made a well-known version) who together made it an international hit, and it has now become a standard.

Escualo (1978), meaning "dogfish", was the title track of an album on which every piece was inspired by Piazzolla's beloved hobby of shark-fishing, which he used to do at Punta del Este in Uruguay. It is not surprisingly another of his most famous pieces, as here he is at the height of powers in playing on alternating rhythms, held together by a constant pulse. The players consequently have to be utterly disciplined in maintaining the urgent tempo, reminiscent of that of a *Presto* in a Bach suite.

During the 1980s Piazzolla was at a peak of inspiration, and he produced some of his finest works, including the elegiac *Ave Maria* and *Oblivion*, both taken from the soundtrack to Marco Bellocchio's 1984 film of Pirandello's *Enrico IV*. In its original setting, the *Ave Maria* was called *Tanti anni prima* ("Many years before") and was written for oboe and piano, but has since become established in this later guise. As with *Oblivion*, it gives an image of a mature artist at the height of his powers, able to sustain endless melodic arcs in an unexpected way. The choice of the title *Oblivion* has to do with the subject of the film: an actor playing the role of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV falls from his horse, losing his memory, and believes that he really is the Emperor kneeling before Matilda of Canossa. His relatives support him in this belief in typical Pirandellian style, until the ultimate revelation, and the hypnotic nature of the theme, with the bandoneón's opening note emerging in a long crescendo over the unrelated guitar arpeggios, makes it one of the most atmospheric musical evocations of an abstract concept (loss of memory), in a melody that has become unforgettable.

The Piazzolla collection is rounded off by *Milonga para Astor* by the viola player and composer Roberto Molinelli (born in Ancona in 1963). He wrote this deeply-felt homage to Piazzolla in 1988, when the composer was still alive, and captured his style in his own, highly personal manner, at a time when the great Piazzolla's music had only just found a place on the concert stages of the classical world. It was originally conceived for viola, violin and string orchestra, and the version heard here was made for the Bandini-Chiacchiaretta duo. The piece is in two parts, preceded by a short, prelude-like introduction. Guitar and bandoneón take the theme in alternation, but the exposition of the final part of the principal theme is left to the strings, which pour out the beautiful, nostalgic theme of the *Milonga*, tinged with foreboding, given that Piazzolla was to die not long afterwards.

Michael Radford's 1984 film *Il Postino* is associated with an even more tragic epilogue, in that the main actor, Massimo Troisi, died at the end of the production. The music for the film was written by Luis Enrique Bacalov, born in San Martín in Buenos Aires in 1933. Bacalov has



many traits in common with Piazzolla, quite apart from their shared origins, particularly in a vast output of film scores and connections with popular music and song. This is his most famous film score, and it won him an Oscar in 1986.

Stefano Campagnolo

Giampaolo Bandini - Cesare Chiacchiaretta Duo, guitar and bandoneon, formed in 2002 pursuing the clear aim to propose Argentine music through the charm and magic of its most representative instruments. The duo immediately became an important point of reference in the international concert circuit thanks to their great communicativeness joined to an extraordinary charisma. Invited by the most important festivals and theatres in the world, they have toured in Mexico, Romania, China, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Croatia, Russia, Slovenia, Turkey, the Czech Republic and Hungary meeting outstanding critical and audience approval. The duo had the privilege to play Astor Piazzolla's Double Concerto "Hommage a Liegi" conducted by Maestro Leo Brouwer at the Auditorium Paganini of Parma and for the Unione Musicale of Turin with the renowned Moscow Virtuosi chamber orchestra conducted by Pavel Berman. In 2004 Bandini – Chiacchiaretta Duo was awarded the 15th "Beniamino Joppolo" Città di Patti Prize (in the province of Messina, Italy) for remarkable artistic achievements in the field of music.

In 2005 the duo made their debut in the prestigious Grand Hall of Saint Petersburg Academic Philharmonic achieving such great success that they were immediately asked to play for the following two years. Their peculiarity of living music to the full and without boundaries leads them to work together with prominent artists such as Arnaldo Foà, Elio delle Storie Tese, Amanda Sandrelli and musicians such as Fernando Suarez Paz, Michele Pertusi, Corrado Giuffredi, Danilo Rossi, Massimo Quarta, Enrico Bronzi, Franca Masu, Maria Estela Monti, Enrico Fagone and many others.

Their first CD "Hombres de Tango" sold more than ten thousand copies and was greeted with great enthusiasm by the critics. They have recorded for the most important radio and television broadcasters in Italy and abroad.

Recently, a concert held in Brussels was broadcast via satellite in more than twenty countries. As teachers, they are requested by the most renowned Academies and Universities and hold classes at the Institutes of Higher Education "Luigi Boccherini" in Lucca and "Tito Schipa" in Lecce as well as at the Summer Festivals of Gubbio and Portogruaro.