

Argentine Cello



ZOE KNIGHTON
AMIR FARID

GINASTERA • BRAGATO • SOLARE • COBIAN • PIAZZOLLA • GUASTAVINO • GAITO

move

This CD has been the result of a joint love of Argentine music, a love of the tango and a love of playing together. We have so enjoyed this repertoire and each time we visit these pieces, we feel more attached to them. There are some threads running through our choice of repertoire – the first being an ongoing connection between Europe (specifically Italy) and Argentina. Vincenzo Piazzolla (Astor's father) is quoted by his son as saying that all best tango composers come from South Italy. We also follow a geographical thread with the region in Argentina known as the Pampas. Quite often, specific places give rise to a wealth of inspiration and it seems this region has done just that.

We begin the Argentine/Italian connection here with **Alberto Ginastera** being born to an Italian mother. Much like Beethoven, his works can be divided into three periods – objective nationalism, subjective nationalism and neo expressionism. This work falls into the first category with Ginastera being particularly attracted to the region of the Pampas. Written in 1950, the composer says, “without using any folkloric material, it recalls the rhythms and melodic trends of the Argentine pampas”. Inspired largely by his wife, Aurora Natola-Ginastera, this work may be seen as a precursor to the cello sonata. She gave the world premiere performance of Pampeana No. 2 on May 8, 1950 in Buenos Aires. His chanson “triste” was originally a song as part of a set of five in his opus 10 transcribed for cello by the French master, Pierre Fournier. The text is painfully beautiful.

*Under a lemon tree where the water didn't
run
I gave my heart away to someone who didn't
deserve it
Sadness is the day without the sun
Sadness is the night without the moon
But sader than this is wanting
without any hope
Translation: Penelope White das Graças*

The music has a sense of improvised abandon combined with the use of diatonic and pentatonic flavours, the latter being a characteristic of the Incan pentatonic scale. Ginastera provides some vital musical lineage in being taught by Copland and having taught Astor Piazzolla as well as being great friends with Carlos Guastavino.

Jose Bragato was a cellist himself and not just any cellist – he was most famous for being the cellist with Piazzolla's Tango Nuevo bands. Before this he was principal cellist with Buenos Aires Symphony Orchestra and a member of the Buenos Aires Quartet and the Carlos Pessina Quartet. He grew up (unsurprisingly) in a very musical family. Born in Italy (here's that connection again!), the young migrant family firmly made their mark on the cultural life of Argentina. With his role in Piazzolla's Nuevo Tango bands, Composer, arranger and conductor, there wasn't much that Bragato couldn't do. This piece represents his most well known offering. It is widely played in Europe as a piece for cello and string orchestra. 96 at the time of writing, he still composes music every day.

Astor Piazzolla is perhaps the most internationally recognised composer to have come from Argentina. Born to (you guessed it) Italian parents, his development of the tango was both revolutionary and controversial. We have Nadia Boulanger to thank for encouraging Piazzolla to follow his heart. After studying with Ginastera (on the suggestion of Arthur Rubinstein) he won a grant with his *Buenos Aires Symphony* to study in Paris. Boulanger could hear all of his influences, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartok but encouraged him to do what he did best and to find his own voice. He then went on to transform the tango tradition. There is an Argentine saying – “in Argentina everything may change — except the tango”. He met with enormous resistance with his use of instrumentation and inclusion of jazz elements. Sticking to his artistic vision, he consequently brought tango and his work into being a household name.

Juan Maria Solare is alive and well and living in Bremen, Germany where he teaches Tango. His father's parents were Italian and holds joint citizenship between Italy and Argetina. With influences as broad as The Beatles, John Cage and Helmut Lachemann. He writes:

Tengo un tango (2004) This work – the title is a pun freely translated meaning *I've gotta tango* – is dedicated to Nicola B. Lahn and Walter Samsel on the occasion of their marriage. It's one of my most successful pieces and actually I had to write at least a dozen arrangements for various ensembles ranging from Solo to Nonet.

Nómade (2002) is the second of the four movements of *Sonatango*, a classical sonata form but with unequivocal tango elements, and in this sense a work at the hinge – or in the gap – between “academic” and “popular” music. The title (also a “transparent word”) has autobiographical overtones: on the one hand it was written just days after finishing a one-year programme as composer in residence at the *Künstlerhäuser Worpswede* – and consequently facing an uncertain future; on the other hand, “tango nómade” is a quite established musicological concept referred to the tangos of the exile, the ones composed by Argentines overseas. *Nómade*, and actually *Sonatango* in its entirety, is dedicated to my sister María Mercedes. My warm thanks to Australian cellist Penelope Witt, with whom I performed *Nómade* twice in Buenos Aires, and that later passed on the score to Zoe and Amir. You guess the rest.

Talismán (2005) A plain tango written originally for the album *Arte del Tango* (Ricordi Munich, 2006). The first theme, of a quasi baroque texture, illustrates the tango concept of diverging articulations: the accompaniment *legato*, the melody being mainly *staccato*. The title is an example of a “transparent word”, which you can understand in several languages. My naive wish is that such words can stand as symbols of the feasibility of coping with the Babelian misunderstandings of today’s world.

Carlos Guastavino is one of the most prolific of our composers, having composed over 500 works. He was heavily influenced by folk music and his gift for songs has

named him “the Schubert of the Pampas”. He died in 2000 after a very long career and has influenced much of Argentina’s nationalism in music. Guastavino isolated himself stylistically from the modernist and avant-garde movements in the 1960s, his unapologetic embrace of nationalism made him an inspiration for popular and folk musicians throughout Argentina. *La rose y el sauce* (The rose and the willow) has become an iconic song in Argentina.

Juan Carlos Cobian died young at the age of 58. He was another revolutionary in the world of tango, being the first composer to embellish the bass line while the melody rests. Travelling, performing and composing took their toll. In his book, “The unknown Juan Carlos Cobian” Enrique Cadicamo wrote that when he sent some verses of a poem to Cobian, he believed them to represent his own life. He returned to his parents’ home after 23 years. The first verse is as follows ...

*Calm neighborhood from my past,
like a sad sunset,
I return, old, to your street corner...
I return older,
 life has changed me...
On my head a little silver it has painted.
I was a traveler of pain
 and in my dreamer’s wandering
I understood my life’s malady,
 and every kiss, I erased with drink
in a game of illusion
I dealt my heart.*

Completing the theme of Italy and Argentina, our final composer studied in Naples. **Constantino Gaito** then returned to Argentina and founded a conservatory as well as teaching at the National Conservatory. He certainly remains a mainstay of the Argentine history of “classical” music. His cello sonata is thoroughly romantic in nature with the form of the first movement firmly held in sonata form. It is intelligent, heartfelt and has a well constructed development of the main themes. He uses a very clever technique of bringing the work together by using the opening theme throughout the work.

ZOE KNIGHTON

Zoe is a founding member of Flinders Quartet and has toured internationally through Sweden, Canada and the UK. Flinders Quartet appears regularly at Australian festivals as well as their own celebrated subscription series. The group has commissioned many works and continues to be a champion of Australian Chamber music. “Flinders Quartet... whose players give such care and unanimity of musical thought to Australian Chamber Music” Peter McCallum, Sydney Morning Herald.

In 2008, Zoe founded the Melbourne Chamber Feast, as a biannual festival and in 2009 was the Artistic Director of the Montsalvat 20 concert series. She was an adjudicator for the 2009 Asia Pacific Chamber Music Competition and regularly acts as panel member and assessment

advisor. She is currently on the Musica Viva review panel.

A passionate pedagogue, Zoe and the Flinders Quartet are regular tutors for the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Mount Buller Chamber Music Summer School. Zoe coaches chamber music and cello studies at the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne where in 2008, she was Acting Co-ordinator of Strings.

In demand as soloist, she has performed concertos numerous times with Melbourne Orchestras and continues her Bach series every year. She has been guest lecturer at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and guest principal cellist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Zoe plays with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and is a core member of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

AMIR FARID

Winner of the 2006 Australian National Piano Award, pianist Amir Farid has been described as “a highly creative musician – a pianist of great intelligence and integrity. He brings strong musical substance to all that he does, imbuing it with his own particular



experience and understanding”, and who “in a well-populated field...distinguishes himself for all the right reasons”.

Throughout his career, Amir has been working and developing under the guidance of Professor Ronald Farren-Price at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. In 2009 he graduated with distinction from the Royal College of Music London with Professor Andrew Ball, and also attended the Australian National Academy of Music, studying with Rita Reichman, Geoffrey Tozer and Timothy Young. He has performed concerti with the Sydney Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Melbourne

Youth and ANAM Orchestras.

As a chamber musician, Amir is pianist of the Benaud Trio, winning the Piano Trio prize at the 2005 Australian Chamber Music Competition. As an accompanist, he was winner of the prize for best pianist at the 2006 Mietta Song Recital award, and the 2007 Geoffrey Parsons Award.

Amir is the recipient of various awards and scholarships, including the Australian Music Foundation, the Ian Potter Cultural Trust, the Royal Overseas League, the Swiss Global Artistic Foundation, the Tait Memorial Trust and the University of Melbourne’s Donovan Johnson Memorial Scholarship.

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Amir Farid and Zoe Knighton began their collaboration in 2009 to great critical acclaim with a debut in the Melbourne Recital Centre. Their first disc – *Mendelssohn Cello* was released on the Move label in 2010. Representing Melbourne’s wealth of chamber music talent, Amir and Zoe bring together a wealth of experience and friendship.

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ZOE KNIGHTON
cello
AMIR FARID
piano

“ A persuasive
partnership ...
elegant and
warm-blooded.”

Clive O’Connell,
The Age

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

1 Pampeana No. 2 9’02”

Rapsodia para violoncello y piano

2 Triste 3’39”

transcribed for cello and piano by

Pierre Fournier

Jose Bragato (b.1915)

3 Graciela y Buenos Aires 8’34”

Juan Maria Solare (b.1966)

4 Tengo un Tango 5’11”

5 Nomade 3’55”

6 Talisman 2’50”

Juan Carlos Cobian (1896-1953)

7 La Casita de mis Viejos 5’03”

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

8 Le Grand Tango 12’50”

Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000)

9 La rosa y el sauce 3’20”

Constantino Gaito (1878-1945)

Sonata for cello and piano

10 Allegro moderato 5’59”

11 Andante sostenuto 7’19”

12 Allegro moderato 5’44”

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