

Meridian

Tango: Body and Soul

Enrique M. Francini
Julio De Caro
Eduardo Alonso-Crespo
Juan Maria Solare
Luis Jorge González
Astor Piazzolla

Trio Cordilleras

Elizabeth Kipper - Violin
Thomas Heinrich - Cello
Alejandro Cremaschi - Piano



The tango is more than a dance or song. As a symbol of passion, transgression and desire it has sparked the imagination of countless artists, writers and musicians in its 100 years of existence. The pieces on this CD bear witness to the dazzling history and irresistible nature of the tango. They include arrangements of early classical tangos as well as examples of its transformation in the 1960s. It also features works by contemporary classical composers inspired by the genre.

The tango was born at the end of the 19th century in the Plata River region, which comprises Buenos Aires, in Argentina and Montevideo, in Uruguay. A typical urban genre, it was born as a fusion of elements brought to these cities by immigrants from the countryside and from Europe. Born as music for the lower classes and performed in brothels and bars, the tango was not well regarded among the wealthier society until it became popular abroad, especially in France and England in the 1920s.

Enrique Mario Francini was a popular tango composer and band musician, but also a classical violinist (he played in the Buenos Aires Philharmonic for many years). His tango *La vi llegar (I saw her arrive)* features desolate and dramatic lyrics, written by Julián Centeya. Like many other tangos of this era, it depicts a man who lost his lover either to another man, or to death -- the lyrics in this case are not specific. The following strikingly theatrical line serves well to illustrate the dramatic character of the piece: "Lost in darkness, my hesitant steps keep looking for her in the agonizing road of my pain." Appropriately attuned with the melodrama of the genre, Francini is said to have died on stage while playing the famous tango *Nostalgias*.

The composer and violinist **Julio de Caro** led popular tango bands in Argentina during the Golden Age of the tango. He became one of the pioneers of the "Guardia Nueva", the new sentimental and dramatic tango style born in the 1920s. In his widely popular tango *Guardia vieja (Old guard)*, written in 1926, de Caro pays homage to the lighter and more joyful style of older tangos from the 1900s. De Caro dedicated this tango to the Argentine president Marcelo T. de Alvear as a thank you gift after the president declared himself one of his fervent fans.

Trio Cordilleras commissioned the Trio Op.30 by **Eduardo Alonso-Crespo** in 2013. Alonso-Crespo is an Argentine composer and conductor who studied at the Universidad de Tucuman in Argentina and Carnegie Mellon University in the US. According to Prof. Claudio Aprile from the National University of Tucuman this Trio is a work with a clear South American profile, particularly in its use of tango-like rhythmic cells and melodic turns. Written as a one-movement piece, it is actually a work in four continuous movements preceded by a slow introduction, all derived from the same melodic material. It opens with a slow prologue, a sad and pensive introduction for a soon to follow energetic piece of music, full of counterpoint and momentum. An active and vigorous *Allegro giusto* is followed by an *Andante* that features a very expressive and lyrical solo for the cello, one of the highlights of the piece. It is followed by an *Allegro scherzando* that provides a fresh and uplifting moment to the piece. This short section moves directly into the *Finale*, which ends with an unexpected picardy third, providing an extra bit of charm to a work full of inventiveness.

According to an enthusiastic reviewer, *Tengo un tango* by **Juan María Solare** is “one of those pieces about which you wonder how it is possible is hasn't existed for ever.” Solare wrote this charming, natural and slightly nostalgic piece as a wedding gift in 2004. Solare is very adept at combining “jazzy” harmonies with a very authentic sense of tango. The composer studied piano, composition and conducting at the Buenos Aires Conservatoire, and currently lives in Germany, where he directs the “Orquesta No Tipica” (untypical orchestra) and teaches at the University of Bremen. He feels equally at home in styles that range from tangos to experimental contemporary music; he acknowledges Piazzolla and Stockhausen as some of his inspirations.

The musicologist Karl Kroeger, when discussing the works of **Luis Jorge González** on the CD “Fervor,” (Meridian Records CDE84609) stated that the tango, with its subtle syncopations and elegant and elusive melodic figurations, has informed and enriched much of González's music. Rhythmically, González is attracted to irregular subdivisions of duple meter (e.g., the division of 4/4 time into groups of 3+3+2 eighth notes). He is also fond of 5/8 and 7/8 meters. All of these rhythmic elements, combined with a finely tuned ear for melodic phrasing, harmonic color, and structural design are on display in *Montaje de la esperanza* (*Montage of hope*). This work, premiered by Trio Cordilleras in 2013, represents a journey from gloom to joy, meandering through moments of agitation, excitement, desolation and inner peace. The epigraph by philosopher Baruch Spinoza, included in the score, marks the ethos of the piece: “Hope is an inconstant joy that has arisen from an idea of something of the past or the future about which we may have doubts.” The piece opens with a gloomy and dissonant introduction, followed by a pensive, mourning melody presented by the piano and repeated by the strings. The second section, written in 10/8 is a delicate and playful dance that cannot completely

shake off the melancholy of the first section. This section resolves into an unsettled cadenza where the three instruments are pitted against each other in short bursts. A solo violin bridge then leads to a luminous and soaring melody, presented three times, first in the high register of the cello, then in the violin, and then by the two instruments in unison, finally meeting in joyous ecstasy.

Ástor Piazzolla's music is a hybrid of different classical traditions, jazz and the tango. As such his music is cherished by many different types of audiences. A masterful *bandoneon* player and a student of Nadia Boulanger and Alberto Ginastera, Piazzolla created his “Nuevo Tango” style in the 1950s and 1960s by combining some elements of the traditional tango with sophisticated harmonies and new forms, without ever abandoning the popular ethos of the genre. His well-loved *Cuatro estaciones porteñas* (*Four seasons of Buenos Aires*) were composed as separate pieces between 1965 and 1970, but were premiered as a set by Piazzolla's Quinteto Tango Nuevo in 1970. They paint the different moods of the four seasons in Buenos Aires: a vigorous spring, an oppressive summer, a sentimental fall, and a cozy and melancholic winter. The set also represents a respectful homage to Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Like the Italian master, Piazzolla uses Baroque devices such as fugal imitation, counterpoint, sequences, cadenzas, strong rhythmic drive and sound painting. In this recording, Trio Cordilleras perform versions largely based on José Bragato's arrangements of these four pieces.



Trio Cordilleras was formed in Boulder, Colorado in 2006. A Cordillera, both in English and Spanish, is a chain of mountains, like the one that stretches out along the Americas from Argentina to Canada. Trio Cordilleras has premiered works by Argentine composers Luis Gonzalez and Eduardo Alonso-Crespo, and performs works by composers of the Americas and Spain. The trio's first CD, "Las Puertas del Tiempo: the Music of Luis Jorge Gonzalez," released by the British label Meridian Records in 2009, was warmly received by the specialized press.

Elizabeth Kipper, violinist, made her solo debut at the age of seventeen at Carnegie Hall with the New York Youth Symphony performing the Barber Violin Concerto. Spending three summers as a fellow at Tanglewood, she served as concertmistress under the direction of Seiji Ozawa. Upon graduating from the Juilliard School, Ms. Kipper was a member of the Fort Worth Symphony and the Colorado Symphony. She has performed extensively throughout the United States, England, France, Costa Rica, South Korea and Japan. Her solo performances have been broadcast on WQXR Radio New York, BBC and PBS. Ms. Kipper has studied with world-renowned violinists and teachers Robert Mann, Robert Lipsett, Ani Kavafian, Masao Kawasaki and Glenn Dietterow.

Thomas Heinrich, cellist and a graduate of Eastman and the Cleveland Institute of Music, made his solo debut with the Vermont Symphony at age sixteen. A member of the Colorado Symphony since 1997, Mr. Heinrich also serves as principal cellist of the Grand Teton Music Festival orchestra. At the Bellingham Festival of Music he appeared with Janos Starker and the American Sinfonietta performing the Vivaldi Double Cello Concerto. Mr. Heinrich has also collaborated with Ida Kavafian, David Krakauer, Elmar Oliveira, Todd Phillips, and William Wolfram. He is a founding member of the Boulder Piano

Quartet. Mr. Heinrich's performances have been broadcast across North America on CBC Radio's Chamber Music at Noon, NPR's Performance Today, and CPR's Colorado Spotlight. He has recorded for the Summit, Koch, and EMF20 labels. Mr. Heinrich has served on the faculties of Memorial University of Newfoundland and the University of Colorado at Boulder. His principal mentors and teachers include Leopold Teraspulskey, Alan Harris, and Aldo Parisot.

Alejandro Cremaschi, a pianist born in Mendoza, Argentina, currently teaches piano and piano pedagogy at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He received a Doctorate degree in Piano Performance from the University of Minnesota, and undergraduate degrees from the University of Maryland in Baltimore and the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Argentina. He studied piano with Dora De Marinis, Nancy Roldan and Lydia Artymiw. His repertoire includes works from the traditional European canon, as well as works by American and Argentine composers such as George Crumb, Carlos Guastavino, Juan Jose Castro, Luis Jorge Gonzalez and Alberto Ginastera. Praised as an intelligent and sensitive pianist, he has played in numerous cities worldwide, including Buenos Aires, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Montreal, London, Washington, Kuala Lumpur and New York. He was a prize winner at the International Beethoven Sonata Piano Competition in Memphis, Tennessee in 2001.

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Tango: Body and Soul

Enrique M. Francini 1916-1978

Arranged by Werner Thomas-Mifune

[1] La vi llegar (I Saw Her Arrive) 3:35

Julio De Caro 1899-1980

Arranged by Werner Thomas-Mifune

[2] Guardia vieja (Old Guard) 3:41

Eduardo Alonso-Crespo b. 1956

[3] Trio Op.30 12:20

Juan María Solare b. 1966

[4] Tengo un tango (I Have A Tango) 5:16

Luis Jorge González b. 1936

[5] Montaje de la esperanza (Montage of Hope) 12:20

Ástor Piazzolla 1921-1992

Cuatro estaciones porteñas (Four Seasons of Buenos Aires)

Arranged by José Bragato

[6] Primavera (Spring) 5:02

[7] Verano (Summer) 7:27

[8] Otoño (Autumn) 5:54

[9] Invierno (Winter) 6:46

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