



Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet

Friday, October 24, 2025

7:30 PM

Depot - West Concourse

Astor Piazzolla

(1921-1992)

Hailing from Argentina, Astor Piazzolla was a tango composer and bandoneon virtuoso. Drawing from his classical training and early exposure to jazz in New York City, Piazzolla blended tango his over 750 works with classical music and jazz improvisational techniques. His studies with composer and conductor Nadia Boulanger in Paris were life changing, encouraging him to embrace his Argentine roots rather than subscribe to European classical norms.



This program opens with “Michelangelo '70”, a fiery work in Piazzolla’s Nuevo Tango style. Nuevo Tango is a fusion of traditional Argentine tango with jazz and classical music. Named after the famed Buenos Aires nightclub Michelangelo 70, where Piazzolla frequently performed, the piece captures the city’s nightlife in the 1970s. With its driving melodies and intricate harmonies, Michelangelo '70 is a pillar of modern tango.

Also featured on this program is Piazzolla’s “Invierno Porteño” (or Buenos Aires Winter) is part of his celebrated “Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas” (Four Seasons of Buenos Aires), inspired by the concept of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. Composed in the late 1960s, this piece evokes the introspective chill of winter in Buenos Aires, blending melancholy melodies with Piazzolla’s signature rhythmic drive and complex harmonies.

Pedro Giraudo

(B. 1977)

Bassist and composer Pedro Giraudo will be performing a number of his original works during his concert! Originally from Argentina, Giraudo moved to New York City in the 1990s, quickly becoming a sought after performer and conductor. In similar fashion to Piazzolla, Giraudo combines tango music with jazz harmonies and improvisation techniques. With ensembles ranging from intimate quartets to full orchestras, Giraudo crafts compositions that are rhythmically vibrant and emotionally charged.

Giraudo's "Desenfreno", or "Frenzy", was originally composed as an orchestral work that captures the emotional intensity of tango. "Desenfreno" was released in 2024 as part of the album *Strata*, but has been rearranged for the Tango Quartet for this concert. Giraudo's blend of classical, jazz, and Argentine traditions portray passionate and lyrical introspection.



Also featured is "Dartmouth", a composition that blends tango, classical, and jazz born from his 2024 residency at Dartmouth College. The piece originated from a traditional tango motif Giraudo recorded during his visit, and was later developed into a full composition, reflecting the cultural and artistic exchanges experienced during his visit.

Francisco Cafiero

(1910-1986)

Francisco Cafiero was an Argentine bandoneonist (an instrument very similar to the accordion) and tango composer. Cafiero's compositions, such as "Cachirulo", featured in this program, showcase his ability to blend lyrical phrasing with dance rhythms, making his music a favorite among dancers and musicians alike. Cafiero's work remains a testament to the collaborative spirit and musical innovation that flourished in mid-20th century Buenos Aires.



Cafiero's "Cachirulo", first recorded in 1941, is a vibrant piece that showcases the rhythmic drive and expressive phrasing of Argentinian tango. Cachirulo captures the elegance and energy of traditional tango, making it a staple among dancers and musicians.

Interestingly, images of Cafiero are exceedingly difficult to find. However, the image above is a promotional image of the recording of "Cachirulo".

Graciano De Leone

(1890-1945)

Graciano De Leone was an Argentine bandoneonist and composer who helped develop early tango. Born in Buenos Aires, he began his musical journey as a guitarist before switching to the bandoneón. De Leone quickly became a fixture in the vibrant tango scene of early 20th century Buenos Aires, performing in cafés and dance halls. De Leone left a lasting legacy with works that captured the emotional depth and urban pulse of tango. Hearing his music can almost draw the listener back to Buenos Aires just after the turn of the 20th century.



Featured on this program is De Leone's "Reliquias Porteñas" ("Porteño Relics"), which captures the nostalgia of Buenos Aires through lyrical melodies and poetic imagery reflecting on the city's working-class neighborhoods. Its beautiful phrasing and rhythmic drive make it a favorite among dancers and musicians alike!

Rosita Melo

(1897–1981)



Composer and pianist Rosita Melo is celebrated as the first female tango composer in Argentina. Raised in Buenos Aires, Melo demonstrated prodigious musical talent from a young age. At just 14, she composed “Desde el Alma” (“From the Soul”), a waltz that would become one of the most loved and well-known pieces in the tango repertoire. You will also hear “Desde el Alma” on this program! Melo’s compositions reflect the emotional depth and melodic elegance of early 20th-century tango, often blending romanticism with subtle melancholy. Melo stands out not only for her masterful craft of the tango, but also for breaking gender barriers in a genre dominated by male composers and performers.

Agustin Bardi

(1884-1941)

Agustín Bardi was an essential figure in the development of Argentine tango. Bardi was largely self-taught and began his musical career as a pianist and violinist in the early 20th century. He performed in cafés and dance halls during tango's formative years, contributing to the genre's evolution from a popular street style to a sophisticated musical form.

Bardi composed over 70 tangos, waltzes, and milongas, many of which remain staples of the traditional tango repertoire. Pieces like "Gallo Ciego", featured on this program, are celebrated for their lyricism and structural complexity, bridging the gap between dance music and concert performance.



"Gallo Ciego" is one of Bardi's most iconic tangos, composed in the early 20th century and first recorded in 1927. The title translates to "Blind Rooster," with some interpretations suggesting that the "blind rooster" symbolizes a wounded yet proud survivor of life's struggles. This instrumental tango is known for its lyricism and complex harmonies typical of Bardi's compositional style. "Gallo Ciego"'s enduring popularity speaks to its powerful narrative and musical sophistication, making it a cornerstone of the traditional tango repertoire. You are absolutely sure to love this piece!

Mario Demarco

(1917–1970)

Argentine Mario Demarco bandoneonist, composer, arranger, and orchestra leader composed tangos that bridged traditional form with innovation.

Demarco began his career in the late 1930s accompanying solo singers. His pivotal tenure with Alfredo Gobbi's orchestra from 1942 to 1951 helped shape his distinctive musical voice, blending rhythmic intensity with lyrical nuance. He formed his own orchestra in 1951, recording 18 pieces and composing original works like Pata Ancha, featured on this program. Despite health challenges late in life, Demarco remained a vital force in tango until his death in 1970.



“Pata Ancha” features driving bandoneon lines and rich harmonies that beautifully portray the elegance of Buenos Aires tango. The title, which translates roughly to “wide-legged”, suggests a grounded stance that mirrors the music’s assertive character and driving rhythms. It remains a favorite among dancers and musicians for its expression and danceable energy. This piece features Anna León & Cristian Bravo; you’re sure to love this striking and commanding finale to the Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet concert.

Matt Wilson, Program Notes

Matt Wilson, the author of the program notes that you hopefully found illuminating and inspiring, is a violinist and violist from South Carolina. He received a Bachelor's in Music Education from Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, before teaching in the North Carolina public schools for several years. He received a Master's in Music Education from UNC Greensboro and a Ph.D. in Music Education from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. He is an active researcher, often focusing on issues of gender and sexuality in music education. Dr. Wilson is currently on the faculty at Penn-Griffin School for the Arts, where he teaches history, philosophy, music theory, and music appreciation.



Dr. Wilson has been an active member of the North Carolina and Kansas Music Educators Associations. He is a member of the National Association for Music Education and the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). He is currently on the ASTA's RIA committee, continuing to share in creating inclusion and diversity within music education.