

Quinteto Astor Piazzolla – Bio

(revised September 2020)

In 1960, bandoneonist and composer Astor Piazzolla looked for a new instrument to interpret his ideas and put together his first great quintet. It was an unusual group, especially for tango, as it featured bandoneon, violin, electric guitar, piano, and double bass. Part chamber group, part jazz band, but deeply rooted in the spirit and history of tango, the quintet offered Piazzolla a broad range of resources and possibilities that proved critical for his New Tango.

A decade later, Piazzolla, always restless and attuned to the musical trends of the time, dissolved the quintet, experimented with other ensembles, and decided to settle for a time in Europe. But in 1978, back in Buenos Aires, he went back to the sound of the quintet, assembling a new group that would stay with him for the next decade. It was a superb group that performed his, by now, classics, and pushed him to create new masterpieces.

Piazzolla's death, on July 4, 1992, marked a new stage for his work. From then on, others would have to continue his efforts and champion his music.

With that purpose, Laura Escalada Piazzolla, his companion of nearly 20 years, created the Fundación Astor Piazzolla and, in 1998, founded the Quinteto Astor Piazzolla, a repertory group to perform and update the sound of his emblematic ensemble.

Creating an ensemble to play Piazzolla is no easy task.

Instrumental virtuosity is indispensable — but not enough.

This music also demands street wisdom, boldness, and a certain quality that the maestro called "roña" (grime) — the perfection of the imperfect.

Piazzolla thought of his quintet as a group of soloists and consistently chose musicians who were not only notable interpreters but also brought to his work different temperaments and musical experiences that he knew would enrich the music on the page.

That's the spirit of Quinteto Astor Piazzolla — Pablo Mainetti, bandoneón; Nicolás Guerschberg, piano; Serdar Geldymuradov, violin; Armando de La Vega, guitar; Daniel Falasca, double bass; and Julián Vat, musical director — an ensemble of soloists putting their impeccable technique at the service of a music both cosmopolitan and passionate.

Mainetti was educated in tango by great masters of the bandoneon and has recorded Piazzolla's orchestral works as soloist. But he is also a composer of symphonic and chamber music. Nicolás Guerschberg has not only studied and played with musicians in the Piazzolla lineage, such as the pianist and composer Gerardo Gandini, violinist Fernando Suárez Paz and drummer Daniel "Pipi" Piazzolla, grandson of the maestro but also has moved with ease between tango and jazz. Turkish violinist Serdar Geldymuradov, educated in conservatories back home and Russia, found his way into tango and continues the tradition of classically trained violinists in Piazzolla's quintet, such as the great Szymba Bajour. Guitarist Armando de La Vega

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has played with leading figures in contemporary tango, interpreted Piazzolla's music in a great variety of settings, and was a member of the group led by Pablo Ziegler, the great pianist of Piazzolla's second quintet. Meanwhile, double bassist Daniel Falasca, a musician with a rich classical and tango education, holds a key position in any Piazzolla quintet, anchoring and pushing the music. Flutist and composer Julio Vat, invited by Laura Escalada Piazzolla to join as musical director, knows Piazzolla's music intimately, as a producer, musical director, and interpreter.

In a career spanning more than twenty years, the Quinteto Astor Piazzolla has toured the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, receiving unanimous praise by the press and the Latin GRAMMY© for Best Tango Recording in 2019.

In recent years the Quinteto has released four albums (*Revolucionario*, *Fugata*, *En 3x4*, and *Triunfal*) in which the group not only updates classics such as "Contrabajísimo," "Tres Minutos con la Realidad", or "Buenos Aires Hora Cero," but also revisits some of the great pieces of his late period such as the "Camorra," "Tanguedia," and "Mumuki," as well as lesser known jewels that deserve to be heard such as "La Mufa," "Imágenes 676", and "Milonga Tres".

The Quinteto is preparing a 2021 international tour to celebrate what would have been Piazzolla's 100th birthday. In the words of Laura Escalada Piazzolla: "The best way to pay tribute to a creator is to play his music. The Quinteto Astor Piazzolla keeps Astor's legacy alive."

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