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ABOUT ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Composer and bandoneonist Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) transformed the national dance of Argentina, the tango, into an entirely new musical genre of concert music. Born on March 11, 1921 to Italian immigrant parents in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Astor Piazzolla grew up in New York City. At a young age he was exposed to music of both classical and jazz styles and developed a remarkable talent for the bandoneon, the accordion-like instrument central to tango. At age sixteen he returned to Argentina where he earned a place performing in the band of legendary *tanguero* Anibal Troilo and later formed his own group. He immersed himself in classical music, studying composition with Alberto Ginastera and analyzing the music of Bartók, Stravinsky and Ravel. He later traveled to Paris to work with renowned composer/educator Nadia Boulanger, teacher of Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Quincy Jones, and many others. It was Boulanger who encouraged him to follow the path of his roots and to form his own voice.

Piazzolla left Paris and created *nuevo tango*, a synthesis of tango fused with classical and jazz styles; music meant for listening, not dancing. His innovations were met with fierce resistance in the birthplace of tango, so in 1958 he left Argentina for New York City and Europe. New audiences enthusiastically embraced his music, and Piazzolla emerged as an international celebrity. In the following years, Piazzolla and his quintet collaborated with jazz greats and classical stars who performed and recorded his music worldwide. Since his death in 1992, his music has gained increasing popularity, and his work continues to inspire countless performers.