

CHANNEL CROSSINGS

CCS 13798



music of **astor piazzolla**

Baltazar Benítez



GUITAR

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CHANNEL CLASSICS

1 campero	4.53
2 romántico	4.36
3 acentuado	3.36
4 tristón	4.24
5 compadre	3.25
6 contrabajando #	3.05
7 milonga del angel #	4.52
8 la muerte del angel #	3.36
9 verano porteño #	4.30
10 primavera porteña #	5.51
total time	43.30

transcriptions: Baltazar Benítez

producer: Alexander Weissenburger
recording engineer: Roddy de Hilster
recording date: 1984
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liner notes: Baltazar Benítez

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BALTAZAR BENITEZ

Baltazar Benítez was born in Uruguay, where he began playing the guitar when he was twelve years old. In 1966 he continued his studies under Abel Carlevaro, teacher at the National Conservatory of Music in Montevideo. Two years later Baltazar Benítez started his professional career with success; he was chosen by the "Jeunesses Musicales" from his native country to give a series of concerts. In 1969, he was first-prize winner in a contest organized by the Uruguayan radio. Numerous important concerts followed, including several radio- and television performances, where Baltazar Benítez displayed an extremely diverse repertory: among others, concerts with orchestral accompaniment such as Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Joaquin Rodrigo's world-famous "Concierto de Aranjuez".

One year later, he won yet another Uruguayan contest, organized by the Centro Cultural de Musica and in the same year he received a grant from the Spanish Cultural Institute to study in Santiago de Compostela under Andrés Segovia. Again one year later, in 1971, Baltazar Benítez won first prize at the annual international guitar competition in Santiago de Compostela. The following year he was sent by his country as the official delegate, to the 26th World Congress of the "Jeunesses Musicales", which was held in Augsburg, Germany. There he was greatly acclaimed for his playing, particularly for his interpretations of South-American music.

Following this, in 1973, he won first prize in the 7th International Tárrega-contest in Benicásim (Spain).

His debut recording appeared in 1976, dedicated to Latin American Music. It includes the first recording of Manuel Maria Ponce's "Theme, Variations and Fughetta" on a theme by Antonio Cabezón. As a result of his musical research

Baltazar Benítez displayed his superb feeling for European baroque music in 1980 when his 2nd album appeared. A high-standard interpretation of J.S. Bach's famous "Suite in e-minor", and several "Sonatas" by Domenico Scarlatti (all transcribed & arranged by Mr. Benítez) were very well received - not only by guitarists - but in the general musical world as well. In 1984 he recorded another long-play record of Latin-American music, with works exclusively composed by Astor Piazzolla. Baltazar Benítez dedicated this album to Piazzolla, which contains - besides the Fine Pieces for guitar - also a number of pieces, which Mr. Benítez transcribed for guitar. In 1985 he made a tour in South-America, together with the Argentinean musician/composer Astor Piazzolla. In Montevideo (Uruguay) on December 23rd 1985, they performed together the Latin-American premiere of Piazzolla's "Concierto para Bandoneon, Guitarra y Orquesta".

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Astor Piazzolla was born in Mar del Plata, Argentine, in 1921, the son of Vincent Piazzolla and Asunta Manetti. They moved to New York in 1924. Piazzolla began studying the bandoneon when he was nine years old, and showed prodigious advances in it. He returned to Buenos Aires in possession of solid technical knowledge, and an unusual command of the instrument. He then performed with several tango ensembles. Later on he joined the now famous orchestra of Aníbal Troilo, who was astonished by the young player's dexterity. In 1944, Piazzolla founded his own orchestra, in order to accompany the singer Francisco Fiorentino.

Piazzolla studied composition with the grand maestro Alberto Ginastera, and then continued his studies with the renown Nadia Boulanger in Paris (1954), whose influence was to be so decisive in his later evolution.

Astor Piazzolla's contribution has meant an integral synthesis of the tangos whole range, from its early foundations to our days. Piazzolla displayed a marked modernist inclination. He firmly believed that new musical criteria should be incorporated to the tango, especially in relation to its harmonic and formal contents. He always knew, although he was not arrogant about it, the scope and significance of his work, geared towards a universalisation of the tango which could not have been achieved through any other path than that of artistic excellence.

After a long struggle to impose his new concept of tango (which was harshly berated in traditional tango circles), Piazzolla was awarded the title "Illustrious Citizen of Buenos Aires" on December 4, 1985, for his achievements as a representative of the music of Rio de la Plata. Paraguay's Ministry of Education and Culture invited him to inaugurate his "Double Concerto for Guitar, Bandoneon and Orchestra". The performance, in which I also participated, was held on December 23, 1985 in Montevideo. Eventually both capitals of Rio de la Plata were to unanimously acknowledge "the tango had entered the concert hall".

On July 5, 1992, after two years of struggling against a terrible illness, the eminent musician died in Buenos Aires.

IN THE FIVE PIECES

written in 1980, Piazzolla recreates the different styles of tango in its evolution through time, reminding us of its origins in the "milonga", which, in combination with the "habanera" and "tango andaluz", constitute the creole tango.

CAMPERO

This is a slow and melancholic "milonga campera" air, which evokes ancient "payadoresca milongas" that render accounts of Gaucho exploits. Piazzolla

suggests the creole ambiance of guitar players from earlier days, introducing the "milonga" with a short prelude which almost imperceptibly conjures the air of a "vidalita".

ROMANTICO

This is an evocation of the romantic tangos of the Forties, nostalgic and free. Behind the melody we can almost guess the words of an imaginary text, evoking the tangos by Francisco de Caro.

ACENTUADO

This has the air of the "canyengues", the heavily accentuated tangos of 1955, the generation Piazzolla most represents. Sometimes a melody barely hinting at "milonga" is displayed in the central part, followed by a contrast of percussion and glissandos.

TRISTON

This piece has the contained and tragic air of a slow and majestic tango, lento obstinato, with a melody that persists in making unanswered questions until its tragic, moving finale.

COMPADRE

This is a parody of the tangos ("compadritos" and "milongueros") of the beginning of this century, seen from the present. Its rapid movement in the style of a "milonga", its accents, adornments, the contrasts of canyengue and percussion, suggest to us the ancient tangos played by trios of flute, violin and guitar.

THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

of five of the most representative tangos of Astor Piazzolla date from 1977, the year we met for the first time in Paris. I began with "La muerte del Angel" (The Death of the Angel), which Astor approved enthusiastically, motivating me to continue. Astor was quite interested in my way of adapting his tangos, as well as in the guitar-like effects with which I evoked his quintet. The "Five Pieces" (1980), the "Double Concerto" and "Histoire du Tango" for flute and guitar (1984), are an example of his interest for the guitar, an instrument which is inseparable from the evolution of the tango itself.

CONTRABAJEANDO

This tango was composed with the cooperation of Aníbal Troilo in 1954, to highlight the values of the double bass, an instrument which is usually relegated during tango accompaniment. "Lo que vendrá" (What will come) appeared jointly with the avant-garde tangos with which Piazzolla broke with the form of the lyrical and romantic tangos of the Forties.

MILONGA DEL ANGEL

This belongs to the series of the Angel, composed in 1962. It is the slow and melodic "milonga" taken to its most idealized heights and lifted out of its traditional harmonic molds. Its simple melody is ornamented with "glosas", which confer a great rhythmic and expressive freedom to it.

LA MUERTE DEL ANGEL

This belongs, like the previous one, to the Angel series. This cheerful and milongated tango ("tango milonguero"), composed exclusively for dancing, evokes the turn of the century.

VERANO PORTEÑO

This piece corresponds to the series on seasons composed around 1968. Piazzolla's new style is already defined, in which an accentuated rhythmic movement is counterplaced against a slow, lyrical and phrased part.

PRIMAVERA PORTEÑA

Its syncopated rhythm goes in "crescendo", developing in variations of the same theme until it reaches a climax, dies in a pianissimo and gives way to a second movement of great contained lyricism. Its coda explodes in glissandos and strummings, to end in an expected, apotheotic finale.

Baltazar Benítez

Translation: Anabel Torres

Payadores

Payadores are singers who accompany themselves on the guitar and tell of patriotic acts of heroism. They usually improvise on the décima, a 10-verse rhythmic combination.

Milongueros

Over time, the payadores started moving to the cities. The result of this urban transformation is called milonguero. They sing of the cold steel duels fought to win a lady. They generally use quartets (4-verse stanzas).

Compadritos

A combination of a dancer, singer and proud flambloyance. They are often confused with milongueros.

Vidalita

A vidalita is a slow, melancholic song, accompanied by a guitar. From the second half of the 19th century on it has been sung in the Río de la Plata region.

Milonga Campera

A milonga campera is a guitar-accompanied song, sung by the rural payadores.

Canyengue

The canyengue is a rhythmic figure used in orchestral interpretations of the tango.

Glosa

Glosa is a Spanish golden - age name for the way to make variations on a melody.

BALTAZAR BENITEZ
MUSIC OF ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

[1] CAMPERO	4' 53"
[2] ROMANTICO	4' 36"
[3] ACENTUADO	3' 36"
[4] TRISTON	4' 24"
[5] COMPADRE	3' 25"
[6] CONTRABAJEANDO*	3' 05"
[7] MILONGA DEL ANGEL*	4' 52"
[8] LA MUERTE DEL ANGEL*	3' 36"
[9] VERANO PORTEÑO*	4' 30"
[10] PRIMAVERA PORTEÑA*	5' 51"
TOTAL TIME:	43' 30"

Instrument: Ignacio Fleta 1976

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