

PABLO ZIEGLER'S QUINTET FOR NEW TANGO
with special guest, CLAUDIA ACUÑA
Ensemble Members' Biographies

PABLO ZIEGLER (composer/arranger/pianist)

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Latin GRAMMY winning pianist Pablo Ziegler artfully blends classic tango rhythms with jazz improvisations, adding a new voice to the tango lexicon. Howard Reich of The Chicago Times writes, "There's no question that Ziegler takes the tango to levels of sophistication and refinement probably undreamed of by Piazzolla", and Eric Salzman of Stereo Review, writing of Ziegler's CD, *Tango Romance*, affirmed that the CD "solidifies his (Ziegler's) claim to be the outstanding representative of the nuevo tango in his generation."

In 1978, Mr. Ziegler was invited to join Astor Piazzolla's New Tango Quintet, and for over the next ten years, he performed with this group throughout Europe, Japan and North America, at the Montreal Jazz Festival, Nice Jazz Festival, Sapporo Jazz Festival, Central Park SummerStage, and the Istanbul Festival, among many others.

Pablo Ziegler formed his own Quartet for New Tango in 1990 and has been touring extensively throughout the world with his trio, quartet and quintet. Performances in recent seasons have included Carnegie Hall (as part of the JVC Jazz Festival with guest artists Paquito D'Rivera, Joe Lovano and Gary Burton), the Savannah Music Festival, Blue Note, UCLA, the University of Texas-Austin, the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in Maryland, the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the International Festival of Arts & Ideas with pianist Christopher O'Riley in the duo *Los Tangueros*, the New World Symphony in Miami, New York's Knitting Factory with Emanuel Ax, the Cape May Music Festival in New Jersey, and the San Francisco Jazz Festival amongst many others. Ziegler's quintet has also been performing annually at the Jazz Standard in NYC since 2002, with guest artists including Paquito D'Rivera, Stefon Harris, David Sanchez, Randy Brecker, and Kenny Garrett. Important international engagements have included the Umbria Jazz Festival (with guest artists Paquito D'Rivera, Joe Lovano and Richard Galliano), The Lapataia Jazz Festival in Punta del Este (Uruguay), and the Verbier Festival (Switzerland), as well as performances throughout Europe. He also performed at the Piano 2003 Festival in Manchester, UK, and has done 16 European tours to date.

2007 marks the release of a new Live CD, *Buenos Aires Report* (Saphrane) from a performance recorded at The Bimhuis in Amsterdam during his recent European tour in April 2006 as well as a live from the Jazz Standard recording with guest artist Stefon Harris, *Tango Meets Jazz* (Kind of Blue). Pablo Ziegler's discography also includes *Tango Romance: Music of Buenos Aires* with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (BMG/RCA); *Los Tangueros: the tangos of Astor Piazzolla* played by Ziegler and Emmanuel Ax (with two piano arrangements by Ziegler) (SONY); *Asfalto: Street Tango* (BMG/RCA); *Pablo Ziegler Quintet for New Tango* recorded with guest artist Joe Lovano (BMG/RCA); and *Bajo Cero* with Quique Sinesi and Walter Castro (Zoho Music) which won the Latin Grammy Award for Best Tango Album in 2005. Pablo Ziegler also appears as a guest artist on two of Gary Burton's recordings, *Piazzolla Reunion* and *Libertango*, both on the Concord Jazz label, as well as making an appearance as arranger and accompanist on *The Lost Days*, a recording with renowned mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves, released in 2003 on BMG/RCA. Mr. Ziegler's compositions are performed and recorded by many musicians throughout the world.

Claudia Acuña (vocals)

From Chile, Claudia Acuña knew early on that she wanted to be a singer but had no idea that she would find her way to jazz, as there were few opportunities for jazz encounters in Chile. She began by singing Chilean folk and pop music and later tried rock, fusion and opera before coming upon her first musical career model —Frank Sinatra— at age 15. After years of always improvising instead of just singing the notes on the page, Acuña finally felt at home when she heard Sinatra, Erroll Garner and then Sara Vaughan. She thought to herself: This is what I needed to find.

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So, after finishing high school, Acuña moved to Santiago and headed for the one jazz club in town. She quickly made a name for herself in the small Santiago jazz scene and was featured on the club's live radio broadcast. Musicians told her she was a born jazz singer and she began sitting in with them, including with such foreign jazz stars as Wynton Marsalis, Michel Petrucciani, Joe Lovano and Danilo Perez.

Finally Acuña decided she had to move to New York City if she were to fully explore jazz and make her way in the music. Not knowing much English, her goals were to learn the language, visit the legendary Village Vanguard and join in on jam sessions. She did all three and soon became a fixture at Small's, the influential jazz club in the Village, at the time which recently closed. At Small's she jammed regularly and befriended many musicians including Jason Lindner, now her pianist, collaborator and friend. But it was her job as a coat check girl at the Blue Note that provided Acuña with her highest-profile jam opportunity - a chance to sing in front of Betty Carter, one of her idols. Afterwards Carter came up to Acuña and proclaimed, "Surprise, surprise, the coat check girl can sing."

And after five years in New York City, Verve Records signed the coat check girl and issued two well-received recordings: *Wind from the South* and *Rhythm of Life*. Critics praised the newcomer: "... the voice of an angel." (Newsday). The Los Angeles Times said of Acuña, "...Although Acuña did not come to the United States until she was in her early twenties, she has mastered the essential elements of jazz with startling effectiveness... Acuña's voice is an instrument of wonder..."

The jazz community was quick to embrace the naturally gifted singer, and Acuña received invitations to sing at clubs and festivals around the world. She immediately stood out due to her pure, compelling alto voice and her ability to reinvent jazz standards by changing the phrasing, updating the arrangements and fusing Latin rhythms with her instinctive jazz sensibility. In addition, she introduced Spanish language songs to new audiences, making it clear that music crosses all barriers, particularly when performed with her distinctive brand of authentic emotion and passion.

Pedro Giraudo (double bass)

Originally from Córdoba Argentina, Pedro Giraudo moved to New York City in 1996. Since then he has become an in-demand bass player, arranger and composer working in a great variety of musical projects. He leads the Pedro Giraudo Jazz Orchestra for which he composes and arranges, and with which he has released three critically acclaimed CDs: *'Destiny of Flowers'* (2000), *'Mr Vivo'* (2004) and *'Desconsuelo'* (2006). As a sideman he has performed with William Cepeda, Kenny Garrett, Marco Granados and Eternal Tango; and recorded with Fernando Oteros X-Tango, Marta Topferova, Lucia Pulido, Mo'Guajiro & Jose Conde. Pedro Giraudo has participated in various jazz festivals throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, South America and the Caribbean and performed in venues such as The Blue Note (Japan), Birdland (Vienna), Kennedy Center (Washington DC), Iridium, Jazz Standard, Blue Note, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall (NYC).

Héctor del Curto (bandoneon)

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, bandoneon player Hector Del Curto has traveled the world both as soloist and chamber musician, having shared the stage with Astor Piazzolla, Osvaldo Pugliese, Julio Bocca, Orquesta Sinfónica de Buenos Aires, and Teatro Colon Ballet, among many others. In April 1999 he appeared in Carnegie Hall with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, joined by world-renowned artists Gary Burton, Joe Lovano, Pablo Ziegler, and from Buenos Aires, singers Jose Angel Trelles and Maria Graña. The New York Times review included the following statement: "Hector Del Curto played wistful, piercing solos on the bandoneon."

Hector Del Curto appears on recordings with Luis Borda Cuarteto Linea de Tango (Jazz and Fusion Records), Osvaldo Pugliese (live in concert), Pablo Ziegler *Asphalt* (BMG, USA), *Tango Magic* (Sony Music, USA in Video and DVD), and *Quintet for the New Tango* (BMG, USA). Also he participated as guest musician in recordings like *Master Pieces* with the renowned Tito Puente and others.

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He won Best Bandoneon Player Under 25 when he was only 17. The Italian-American Network awarded him the Golden Note Award in recognition of his artistic achievements in 1999. As a conductor he directed the show *Forever Tango* on Broadway as well as numerous other concerts featuring Tango music.

Franco Pinna (drums)

Franco Pinna started his musical career in 1988 in his native Tucumán, Argentina, where he performed and recorded with some of the most distinguished folklore musicians, such as Raul Carnota, Lucho Hoyos, Leopoldo Deza, and Popi Quintero. In January of 1998 Franco moved to Boston to enter the Berklee College of Music where he obtained the "Outstanding Musicianship" scholarship and graduated Magna Cum Laude in 2000 under the Professional Music Diploma program. During his two years tenure at this institution he studied with excellent teachers with an extensive resume in the jazz and world music scenes.

Pinna is a founding member of the New York-based group "Los Changos" that performs original music based on Argentinean rhythms. The drummer has dedicated a big part of his life to studying all the different rhythms from South American folklore, creating a unique way to interpret them incorporating some traditional percussion instruments into the drum set and developing his own style based on folkloric percussion techniques. In the US Franco has performed and recorded with many artists including Julio Santillan, Marta Gomez, Fernando Huergo, Fernando Isella y Los Makanudos, Santiago Greco, Daniele Camarda, Manuel Santos, Katie Viqueira, Danilo Perez, Nando Michelin, Pablo Ablanedo, Bonnie Raitt, Livingston Taylor, Bruce Barth, Oscar Stagnaro, Chris Cheek, Jeff Ballard, Oscar Feldman, Emilio Solla, Emilio Teubal, Marta Topferova, Hiroya Tsukamoto among others.

As a sideman, Franco has recorded more than 30 CDs, some of them released by prestigious labels such as "Fresh Sound", "Chesky Records", "BigSur Records", "Putumayo" and "Sony".

Claudio Ragazzi (guitar)

Claudio Ragazzi graduated Magna Cum Laude in Jazz Composition and Arranging from Berklee College of Music in 1984 and was the recipient of the Duke Ellington Master's Award and the Boston Music Awards that same year. After graduating from Berklee Mr. Ragazzi recorded the top 30 Jazz CD *Amazoni a* with his instrumental ensemble Ananda. For the past ten years he has been scoring music for film and television, theater and ballet as well as performing both as sideman and with his own group.

Mr. Ragazzi has worked with some of Boston's most respectable and recognized film directors including Brad Anderson, for whom he scored his MIRAMAX feature film *Next Stop Wonderland*; Jan Egleson, scoring the soon to be released *The Blue Diner*; and Sam Weissman. In 1998, *Next Stop Wonderland's* CD reached Billboard's TOP TEN list, sustaining it for more than twelve weeks. He also wrote the music for the critically acclaimed *Blue Tango* for The Boston Ballet and the staging of William Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*.

Ragazzi has also written numerous music scores for many other independent films as well as for the award winning series, NOVA, American Experience, Sesame Street; and has worked on many television series for the Discovery Channel, National Geographic, Telemundo, and PBS.

As a world class guitarist, Ragazzi is a member of the acclaimed Pablo Ziegler Quintet for New Tango and has recently performed with jazz legends Gary Burton, Joe Lovano and Paquito D'Rivera at Carnegie Hall and with world renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma on the music television series Sessions at Studio 54. Other performances and recordings include those with jazz pianist Danilo Pérez, guitarist Ralph Towner and Latin legend Mario Bauzá. Ragazzi was also featured as guest soloist with The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, directed by John Mauceri.