

VENTURA COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS



**LAUREL  
PROJECT**  
FACULTY & GUEST ARTIST CONCERT SERIES

**DUO DE AMOR**  
OVANES ARAKELYAN, PIANO

Tangos by Astor Piazzolla

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022  
7:30 PM

HELEN YUNKER AUDITORIUM  
4700 LOMA VISTA ROAD  
VENTURA, CA 93003

*Ventura*  
COLLEGE

DUO DE AMOR  
OVANES ARAKELYAN piano  
Tangos by Astor Piazzolla

PROGRAM

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*Sensuel* (Sensual)

Astor Piazzolla  
(1921–1992)

*Ausencias* (Absence)

*Vuelvo Al Sur* (I return to the South)

*Oblivion*

*El Viaje* (the Voyage)

*Duo De Amor* (Love Duet)

*Mumuki*

*Street Tango*

~INTERMISSION~

*Sin Rumbo* (Aimlessly)

*Suita Del Angel* (Suite of the Angel)

I. Milonga del Angel (Milonga of the Angel)

II. La Muerte del Angel (Death of the Angel)

III. Resurreccion del Angel (Resurrection of the Angel)

*Milonga for Three*

*Libertango*

## OVANES ARAKELYAN piano

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Ovanes Arakelyan began his musical studies in Armenia, and later in Russia. He moved to the United States and pursued his studies in Southern California earning a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Southern California, with intensive training in the class of Professor Daniel Pollack. In 2007 he moved to Fresno, CA and established a music school there while pursuing his Master's degree as a full time student at California State University, Fresno where he also taught an introductory piano course as a Teaching Associate. After obtaining his MA, he moved back to Los Angeles where he obtained a Doctorate Degree in Musical Arts in 2015 from Claremont Graduate University under the tutelage of Dr. Stewart Gordon. At CGU he conducted original research on the piano music of Armenian composers.



Dr. Arakelyan has had numerous performances throughout the United States and abroad, reaching concert stages, such as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and the Ford Amphitheatre, among many California colleges presenting various lecture recitals. From 2004-2007 he concertized with his sister, Gianeh Arakelyan. They were invited to perform at the 39th Gala Concert with the American Youth Symphony at the esteemed Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in the Los Angeles Music Center, performing the "Carnival of the Animals" by C. Saint-Saens on two pianos, directed by Maestro Alexander Treguer. In 2006 the duo was selected to perform at the Weil Recital Hall in New York's Carnegie Hall in the Musical Armenia concert organized by the Armenian Prelacy of New York. In 2004, they released an album dedicated to the Centennial Anniversary of Aram Khachaturian. The album was broadcast on classical radio stations in Portland, Oregon and in Las Vegas, NV. In 2012-13 Dr. Arakelyan performed as a winner of the Beverly Hills Audition in numerous concerts presenting chamber works with Dr. Chika Inoue on the Saxophone.

(Artist bio cont'd on next page)

## OVANES ARAKELYAN cont'd

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From Fall, 2016 he has been teaching numerous classes at Glendale Community College, including class piano, keyboard harmony, applied and chamber music. In January 2019 he organized the first music competition for High School seniors at Glendale Community College, which brought together many talented young musicians from the community to compete, perform and receive masterclasses from GCC professors. From 2020 he began teaching at Ventura College and Oxnard College, where he has taught class and applied piano, music fundamentals, understanding music and dance for the elementary instructor and rock history. He is currently writing a textbook on keyboard harmony, which will be used in college classes.

Dr. Arakelyan also works with intermediate and advanced musician at his private studio to enhance and propel their musical studies, many of whom have received honors and awards. The current program on Piazzolla's tangos is scheduled to be recorded professionally this fall. The pieces will be available on iTunes and Spotify by the end of the year.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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Astor Piazzolla, in full Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla, (born March 11, 1921, Mar del Plata, Argentina—died July 4, 1992, Buenos Aires), Argentine musician, a virtuoso on the bandoneon (from the concertina family of instruments). His works revolutionized the traditional tango into a new style termed nuevo tango, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music.

In 1925 Piazzolla moved with his parents to New York, where the family lived until 1936. He received his first bandoneón at age eight and learned to play both that instrument and the piano as a child. When the family returned to Mar del Plata in 1936, Piazzolla began playing with a variety of tango orchestras. At age 17 he moved to Buenos Aires without his parents. He joined the orchestra of the bandoneonist Aníbal Troilo, which would become one of the greatest tango orchestras of that time.

## PROGRAM NOTES cont'd

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By 1941 he was earning a good wage, enough to pay for music lessons with Alberto Ginastera, an eminent Argentine composer of classical music. It was the pianist Arthur Rubinstein, then living in Buenos Aires, who had advised him to study with Ginastera and delving into scores of Stravinsky, Bartók, Ravel, and

others, Piazzolla rose early each morning

to hear the Teatro Colón orchestra rehearse while continuing a gruelling performing schedule in the tango clubs at night.

In 1940 Piazzolla met a girl named Odetta (Dede) Wolf, who found Astor “a rather ugly boy with a round face.” Piazzolla, however was very fond of Dede and told his parents immediately that he had a girlfriend. Over the next couple of months they began going out, and he soon had a man to man talk with Dede’s father. Astor said, look, Don Emilio, don’t form a bad opinion of me just because I work in a cabaret. My intentions are different. I am going to study music, and conduct a symphony orchestra.

And in 1946, Piazzolla formed his orchestra, composing new works and experimenting with the sound and structure of the tango. About the same time he began to compose music for film. In 1949 he disbanded the orchestra, unsatisfied with his own efforts and still interested in classical composition. Having won a composing contest with his symphonic piece *Buenos Aires* (1951), he went to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. In 1954 he and his wife left their two children (Diana aged 11 and Daniel aged 10) with Piazzolla's parents and travelled to Paris. Piazzolla was tired of tango and tried to hide his tango and bandoneon compositions from Boulanger, thinking that his destiny lay in classical music. She urged him to remain true to himself and to continue his experiments with the tango. Henceforth he combined his two musical passions, despite much criticism from tango traditionalists.

(Program notes cont'd on next page)

## PROGRAM NOTES cont'd

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He returned to Argentina in 1955 but moved once again to the United States, where he lived from 1958 to 1960. When he returned again to Argentina, he formed the influential Quinteto Nuevo Tango (1960), featuring a violin, electric guitar, piano, double bass, and *bandoneón*. Though many of his 750 compositions were written for that quintet, he also composed pieces for orchestra, big band, *bandoneón*, and cello. His innovations, including counterpoint and new rhythms and harmonies, were initially not well received in his country, but they were greatly admired in the United States and Europe.

During the period of Argentine military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, Piazzolla lived in Italy, but returned many times to Argentina, recorded there, and on at least one occasion had lunch with the dictator Jorge Rafael Videla. However, his relationship with the dictator might have been less than friendly. During his stay in Italy, he began writing tangos in a newer style and newer energy.

In 1985 he returned to Argentina, where at last Piazzolla's new tango gradually gained acceptance, and his music influenced a new generation of tango composers and was featured during the 1970s and '80s in film scores, television programs, and commercials. His career as a performer and composer really took off even in Argentina, and was named Illustrious citizen of Buenos Aires.

Piazzolla suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in Paris on August 4, 1990, which left him in a coma, and led to his death in Buenos Aires, just under two years later on July 4, 1992, without regaining consciousness.

The pieces that will be performed tonight are not originally written for piano, but are transcribed to the instrument by various composers/pianists. Some of the pieces contain *ad libitum* sections where the performer is encouraged to improvise. No two recordings of the same piece that Piazzolla recorded himself are identical. Some contain different instrumentation, as well as highly improvised sections. He also plays with many changes of speed as well as extensive usage of *Rubato*.

The melody is freely embellished by the various instruments, including the *bandoneon*.

Each piece will be tied to a time in Piazzolla's life, including his time in New York and Buenos Aires. The pieces were all written at various times and locations, however there can always be a story told based on actual events and a bit of imagination.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

**Monday, October 3rd at 7:30pm**

**The Laurel Project presents**

DUO IMAGINALIS

HUGO NOGUEIRA guitar

EKATERINA BESSMELTSEVA piano

19<sup>th</sup> century & modern Brazilian music

Yunker Auditorium, PAC @ Ventura College

**Friday, October 14 at 7:30pm**

**A certain Slant of light**

music set to the poetry of Emily Dickinson

The Ventura College Chorus and Singers

BRENT WILSON conductor

MARK HOLMSTROM piano

Yunker Auditorium, PAC @ Ventura College

**Thursday, October 27 through Saturday, October 29**

**The Turn of the Screw**

Benjamin Britten's haunting music drama

BRENT WILSON director

JAMIE BIRKETT scenic design

Studio Theatre, PAC @ Ventura College

## DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS FACULTY & STAFF

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### SPECIAL THANKS

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