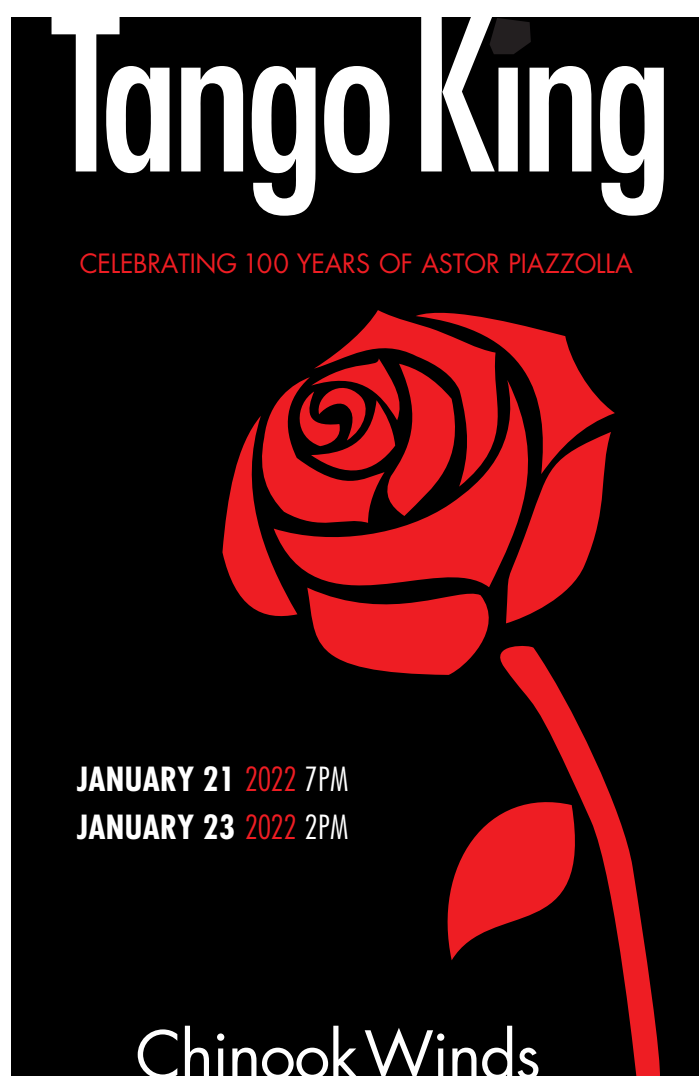


Chamber Music Series



Astor Piazzolla

Oblivion

6 MINUTES

Heitor Villa-Lobos

***Trio for Oboe,
Clarinet, and bassoon***

Animé

Languissammente

Vivo

19 MINUTES

Júlio Medaglia

***Suite Belle-Époque
in South America***

El Porsche Negro (Tango)

Traumreise nach Attersee (Vals Paulista)

Requinta Maluca (Chorinho)

9 MINUTES

Astor Piazzolla

L'Histoire du Tango

Bordello, 1900

Continental Café, 1930

Nightclub, 1960

Modern Day Concert

22 MINUTES

Nick Davies
CLARINET

Norman Menzales
FLUTE

Madeleine Folkerts
HORN

Natalie Law
BASSOON

Paul Chinen
OBOE

Astor Piazzolla
Oblivion

One of Astor Piazzolla's many hits, *Oblivion*, evokes a haunted sadness and nostalgic atmosphere. The original lyrics for the piece speak of a romance fading away and being forgotten, repeating several times the phrase, "when our love passes to oblivion." *Oblivion* was most famously featured in Marco Bellochio's 1984 Italian film, *Enrico IV (Henry IV)*. It begins in the dance style of a slow *milonga*, which is considered to be a precursor of the tango. The *milonga*, a genre from Uruguay and Argentina, is typically characterized as a faster dance style with less complicated movements than the tango, which allows for more relaxed motions from the dancers.

Oblivion has been arranged numerous times for different instrumentations, from solo instruments to full orchestra versions. Jeff Scott, former hornist of the renowned Imani Winds, created this arrangement for woodwind quintet. Scott's contribution to the wind quintet repertoire cannot be understated. His compositions and arrangements for the ensemble have infused genres and styles of playing not typically performed by this instrumentation into the standard repertoire. *Oblivion* is no exception and allows the performers to express Piazzolla's masterpiece in the context of the wind quintet.

Notes by Natalie Law



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Heitor Villa-Lobos
Trio pour hautbois, clarinette, et basson

Anime
Languissammente
Vivo

Heitor Villa-Lobos is rightly regarded as Brazil's first great composer, one whose music synthesizes the folk and popular music of Brazil with compositional methods of western Europe. Born to a well-off family, his musical talents were evident at an early age, particularly as a performer of popular and musical hall favorites. His music fits squarely into the nationalistic trends of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, starting with composers such as Antonín Dvořák and Mikhail Glinka, and ending with Béla Bartók and Alberto Ginastera. While nationalism in classical music was predominantly a rejection of the centrality of the German, French and Italian schools of music, much of this school remained indebted to the pedagogy of the great masters. This was certainly no exception for Villa-Lobos, whose contrapuntal masterpieces known as the *Bachianas Brasileiras* (roughly translated as Bach-inspired Brazilian works) remain his best known and loved works.

The *Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon* is considered to be the most important chamber work by the composer written before the 1920s, consolidating as the *chôros*-like experimentation Villa-Lobos made in similar works from 1916 onwards. The *chôros* is a Brazilian urban musical style that dates as far back as the 1870s, featuring improvisation, variations and counterpoint. The translation of the word, *chôros*, is "weeping" and the performers were called "*chorões*" or "weepers" or "cryers." Some *chôros* are slow and sentimental, and others fast and highly syncopated, approaching the samba style. The *Trio* encompasses the full range of these characters. Series of instrumental improvisations can be heard over Stravinsky-like ostinato patterns, while contrapuntal ingenuity is apparent, especially in the final movement. Quoting Villa-Lobos biographer David Appleby:

"In the *chôros* series he sought to amplify the idea of providing a panoramic view of the improvisatory techniques of street musicians."

Taking advantage of the primal sounds woodwinds offer, the *Trio* indulges in harmonic clashes, rhythmic dexterity, improvisatory figures, and dynamic extremes, all charged with a captivating Brazilian ethos.

Notes by Nick Davies

Júlio Medaglia
Suite Belle-Époque in South America

El Porsche Negro (Tango)
Traumreise nach Attersee (Vals Paulista)
Requinta Maluca (Chorinho)

Júlio Medaglia was born in Brazil in 1938. He studied music in São Paulo while he was growing up, and moved to Germany to continue his studies in music theory and conducting. Medaglia returned to Brazil in 1966, where his career as both a composer and conductor took off. In the following years he traveled between Brazil and Germany, and his music can be found in the soundtracks of movies and TV shows in both countries.

This suite was composed for the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet, who met Medaglia on a tour to Brazil. Following the initial meeting, he composed several pieces for the ensemble, many of which are based on South American dance forms. This piece is no exception, featuring a tango, a waltz, and a *chorinho*, each of which are infused with folklore and vitality. *El Porsche Negro*, the tango, combines typical tango rhythms with glissandos that almost invoke the image of a rewing car. The second movement is a waltz from São Paulo, featuring two contrasting sections with prominent flute and oboe melodies. *Requinta Maluca*, translated as “Crazy baby-clarinet,” is a *chorinho*, which is a popular instrumental music genre in Brazil. Although *chorinho* translates as “little lament,” the genre features virtuosic, fast-paced music. This movement is no different, featuring the E-flat clarinet in an exciting finale.

Notes by Madeleine Folkerts

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Astor Piazzolla
L'Histoire du Tango

arr. Ulf-Guido Schäfer

After a series of misunderstood and therefore unsuccessful attempts to establish himself in Argentina, the turning point came when young and persistent Astor Piazzolla traveled to Europe in the 1950s to study conducting with Hermann Scherchen. It was then that he met Nadia Boulanger, the famous teacher of composition in Paris. In his words,

“When I met her, I showed her my kilos of symphonies and sonatas. She started to read them and came out with a horrible judgement. ‘It’s very well written,’ she said, but here you are like Stravinsky, here like Bartók, here like Ravel—but I cannot find Piazzolla.’ After I confessed to her that I was a cabaret tango musician, she asked me to play on the piano some bars of a tango of my own. She suddenly opened her eyes, took my hand and told me, ‘You idiot, that’s Piazzolla!’ And I took all the music I composed, ten years of my life and sent it to Hell in two seconds.”

Once back in Buenos Aires he formed his first octet in 1955 and, by using what he learned from Boulanger and, earlier from his mentor Alberto Ginastera, as well as phrasing borrowed from jazz, he made his tangos swing with new life. As was to be expected, this caused quite a stir in the ranks of the conservative tango players.

But Piazzolla was not to be deflected from his new course. From now on, his tango was a distinctively modern form that he exploited with his new quintet which achieved fame with their “*Tango Nuevo*.” International recognition was at last his. From the 1960s until his death in 1992, his success never stopped growing.

From 1980 onwards, many classical guitarists started playing his music, and it was in response to a commission from the Argentinean guitarist Roberto Aussel that Piazzolla began writing for the guitar.

Along with the *Double Concerto for Guitar and Bandoneon*, *Histoire du Tango*, originally written for flute and guitar, is one of his most notable compositions.

The Movements

Bordello, 1900: The tango originated in Buenos Aires in 1882. Arrangements then came to include the piano, strings, and now, woodwind quintet. This music is full of grace and liveliness. It paints a picture of the good-natured chatter of the French, Italian, and Spanish women who populated these bordellos, as they teased the policemen, thieves, sailors, and ruffians who came to see them.

Continental Cafe, 1930: This is another age of the tango. People stopped dancing it as they did in 1900, preferring to simply listen to it instead. It became more musical, and more romantic. This tango has undergone total transformation: the movements are slower, with new and often melancholic harmonies. Tango orchestras come to consist of two violins, two concertinas (similar to an accordion), a piano, and a bass. The tango is sometimes sung as well.

Night Club, 1960: This is a time of rapidly expanding international exchange, and the tango evolves again as Brazil and Argentina come together in Buenos Aires. The *bossa nova* and the new tango are moving to the same beat. Audiences rush to night clubs to listen earnestly to the new tango. This marks a revolution and a profound alteration in some of the original tango forms.

Modern-Day Concert: Certain concepts in tango music become intertwined with modern music. Bartók, Stravinsky, and other composers reminisce to the tune of tango music. This is today’s tango and the tango of the future.

Notes by Norman Menzales and Astor Piazzolla

