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Héctor Del Curto Tango Quintet, World Music Series, February 1, 2016

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Héctor Del Curto
Tango Quintet

Monday, February 1, 2016 • 8 p.m.
Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Héctor Del Curto, bandoneon and band leader
Jisoo Ok, cello
Gustavo Casenave, piano
Pedro Giraudo, double bass
Sami Merdinian, violin

Michelangelo 70                        Astor Piazzolla
Derecho Viejo                          Eduardo Arolas
Emancipación                          Osvaldo Pugliese
[tile unknown]
Zum                                   Piazzolla
La Mufa                                Piazzolla
Palomita Blanca                       Anselmo Aieta
Introducción al Ángel                 Piazzolla
Invierno Porteño                     Piazzolla
Verano Porteño                       Piazzolla
Revirado                              Piazzolla
Romance del Diablo                   Piazzolla
Adiós Nonino                         Piazzolla
Encore: Muerte del Angel             Piazzolla
HECTOR DEL CURTO, bandoneon

Praised by The New York Times as a “splendid player,” Argentinean bandoneonist Héctor Del Curto’s career, spanning for more than twenty-five years, has encompassed the traditional tango, new tango, jazz, classical and world music. As one of the most sought-after bandoneonist, he has performed with luminaries across many musical genres including the tango legends Astor Piazzolla and Osvaldo Pugliese and appeared with prestigious orchestras such as Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Mobile Symphony and Buenos Aires Symphony Orchestra.

Born into a family of bandoneon players, Del Curto was introduced to the world of tango and bandoneon by his grandfather, Héctor Cristobal. By the age of 17, he had won the title “Best Bandoneon Player Under 25” in Argentina and was invited to join the orchestra of the legendary Osvaldo Pugliese, the “Last Giant of Tango.” In 1999, Del Curto received the Golden Note Award from the Italian-American Network in recognition of his artistic achievements. As a music director, he directed the spectacular show Forever Tango on Broadway and founded the Eternal Tango Orchestra (now the Hector Del Curto Tango Orchestra), a ten piece ensemble.

His celebrated quintet has appeared in venues and festivals such as Lincoln Center, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, Eastman School of Music, Bay Chambers Concerts, National Folk Festival, Levitt Pavilion for the Performing Arts, Fiesta Iberoamericano de las Artes in Puerto Rico, Festival Internacional da Sanfona and Copa Fest in Brazil among many others.

A musician who is dedicated to the education, outreach and preservation of tango music, Del Curto founded the Stowe Tango Music Festival, the premier tango music festival in the United States, noted both for its unique series of performances and its high level of musical training. As the festival’s Artistic Director, he directs the Stowe Tango Music Festival Orchestra, a 20 plus piece tango orchestra comprising world-class artists and talented students from all over the globe.
Del Curto recently produced and released his second album *Eternal Piazzolla* featuring his quintet with a sold out CD release concert at (le) Poisson Rouge in New York City. He was featured along with his first CD *Eternal Tango* on BBC News which was televised nationally and internationally and on Public Radio International's *The World*.

He appears in numerous recordings with artists such as Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla on *Finally Together* (Lucho); Pablo Ziegler on the albums *Asphalto, Quintet for the New Tango* (BMG) and *Tango & All That Jazz*; Paquito D’Rivera on *Funk Tango, Jazz Clazz* and *Panamericana Suite*; Tito Puente and Eddie Palmieri on *Masterpiece*; Plácido Domingo’s *Encanto del Mar* (Sony Classical); Erwin Schrott on *Rojotango* (Sony Classical); Denyce Graves’ *The Lost Days* (BMG); Absolute Ensemble on *Bach Reinvented* (Sony Classical); Fernando Otero on *Plan, Vital* and *Pagina de Buenos Aires*; Ricardo Arjona’s *Quién Dijo Ayer* and *Santo Pecado* (Sony International); and Shakira’s *Laundry Service*.

**GUSTAVO CASENAVE, piano**

Originally from Montevideo, Uruguay, pianist and composer Gustavo Casenave is considered by the Uruguayan press as “one of the best pianists of our country” (Diario El Pais–Uruguay). An active performer in the jazz world and the contemporary classical scene, as well as being the one of the most sought-after tango composer, pianist and educator in the US. He moved to New York City in 1997 after graduating with honors from the Berklee College of Music where he was selected among the ten best composers.

A 2012 Latin Grammy Award Nominee for his track “Miñoqui” from the album *Tango Casenave* (Watchcraft Music) with special guest Eddie Gomez, Casenave has been performing at numerous venues worldwide such as Blue Note, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Harris Theatre, NY City Center, Symphony Space, Lincoln Center and Kodak Theatre among many others. He has worked as musical director, pianist, composer and producer of multiple international tango shows, including *Tango Fire, Forever Tango, Eternal Tango Orchestra, Painting Tango, Tango Casenave, Tango Buenos Aires, Tanguardia, New York Tango Trio, Tango Noir, Avantango* and New York–Buenos Aires Connection.
With more than 20 years of teaching experience, he is a current guest artist for master classes and lectures at The Juilliard School. He has also taught at NYU, Yale University, University of Florida, University of Uruguay, Waldorf Schule and Klagenfurt Music Conservatory (Austria) and directed the jazz department at the Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts. In 2012, he was invited to appear on Uruguay’s most prestigious music series, Los Grandes Musicos del Uruguay with a sold out performance at Teatro Solis.

Casenave was Bette Midler’s musical director for two years, and worked also as her accompanist and private teacher. He was commissioned to do an arrangement of his original compositions for The Twelve Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic, and co-wrote, arranged and recorded the tango Volvere with actor Robert Duvall, which was premiered at The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. He performed and recorded with several Grammy and Oscar award winners and many internationally acclaimed artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Mark Egan, Jane Ira Bloom, Manolo Badrena, John Benitez, Miguel Zenon, Avishai Cohen, Bette Midler, Neil Sedaca, Robert Duvall, Charlie Persip and Curtis Lundy.

**SAMI MERDINIAN, violin**

Hailed by La Nacion for his “beautiful sound and exquisite musicality,” Argentinean violinist Sami Merdinian has received worldwide recognition for his outstanding performances as a soloist and chamber musician. Merdinian has appeared with the Montevideo Philharmonic, the Argentinean National Symphony, the Charlemagne Orchestre, the Symphony Pro Musica, the Gangneung Philharmonic, the Philharmonia of the Nations at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Buenos Aires Philharmonic at Teatro Colon.

Merdinian has performed in the prestigious Concerti di Mezzogiorno at Spoleto Festival in Italy, The Perlman Chamber Music Program, I Palpiti Festival, Green Mountains Music Festival in South Korea and Al Bustan Festival in Lebanon and has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Izumi Hall and Seoul Arts Center.
Merdinian has won several international competitions including the Gold Medal in the XII International Young Solo Instrumentalists Competition in Argentina and the New Talent Competition in Slovakia organized by the European Radio. He has also received the Rising Star Award by Tiffany & Co., was named Outstanding Artist of the Year by the *Argentinean Press*, and has been featured on WQXR in New York, *Spiegenzall* live from the Concertgebouw, Argentinean Classical National Station and the BBC.

Also highly sought-after as a tango violinist, Merdinian has been a member of Hector Del Curto’s quintet since 2006. Together, they have toured throughout the US, Mexico and South America and recorded two albums with guest pianist Pablo Ziegler. Merdinian received a Latin Grammy Nomination for Best Tango Album for Cuartetango’s *Masters of the Bandoneon* recording, including collaborations with artists such as Leopoldo Federico, Nestor Marconi, Lisandro Androver, Hector Del Curto and poet Horacio Ferrer. Merdinian was recently the solo violinist of Opera Hispanica’s production of Astor Piazzolla’s Opera *María de Buenos Aires* which *The New York Times* called “stimulating as a cup of espresso.”

As a violinist of string quintet Sybarite5, Merdinian has recently performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Zankel Hall, Library of Congress, Aspen Music Festival, UC San Diego, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Chautauqua Institution, Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival, Time Warner Center and Tishman Auditorium. The Quintet’s debut EP disc *Disturb the Silence*, featuring music by Radiohead and Piazzolla, plus two original works written for Sybarite5, quickly reached the top ten on Billboard’s classical crossover chart.

Merdinian’s discography includes recordings for Universal Records, Canary Classics, CAG Records and Green Parrot Records.

While at The Juilliard School and Yale University, Merdinian was a pupil of Dorothy Delay, Naoko Tanaka and Peter Oundjian. He is the co-founder and artist director of the New Docta International Music Festival in Cordoba, Argentina.
**JISOO OK, cello**

Cellist Jisoo Ok is a multi-faceted musician who has distinguished herself as an interpreter of classical, tango, jazz and contemporary music. She has closely collaborated with distinguished musicians such as pianist Pablo Ziegler, bandoneonist Héctor Del Curto and clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera. Ok has performed with renowned jazz violinist Regina Carter, bass legend Ron Carter, gypsy guitarist Dorado Schmitt and vibraphonist Stefon Harris.

Ok performed worldwide in venues and festivals such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Aspen Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society’s SummerFest, Laguna Beach Music Festival, the Chautauqua Institute, Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, Miami International Piano Festival, Concerti di Mezzogiorno at Spoleto Festival, *Festival dei Due Mondi* in Italy, Houston International Festival and SummerStage at Central Park among others.

Her recording appearance includes two critically acclaimed albums, *Eternal Tango* and *Eternal Piazzolla*, which she co-produced with her husband, Hector Del Curto, and *Rojo Tango* with Erwin Schrott released on Sony Classical. She appears as a guest artist on *Horizon: Piano and Chamber works by Gareth Farr* with pianist Henry Wong Doe; on *Django Festival Allstars* with Dorado Schmitt; and on *Introducing Letizia Gambi* with Lenny White, Chick Corea, Ron Carter, Gato Barbieri, Gil Goldstein and Patrice Rushen.

Ok is the founder and executive director of Stowe Tango Music Festival, the premier tango music festival in the United States. Every August, the festival brings together world-class artists and talented students to present a unique series of performances throughout the Stowe, Vermont region.

Born in Seoul, Korea, she grew up in New Zealand and began cello studies at the age of eleven to escape from studying violin. She received her bachelor and master degrees from The Juilliard School studying with Bonnie Hampton and Fred Sherry, and she received chamber music coaching from Itzhak Perlman and Robert Mann.
PEDRO GIRAUDO, double bass

Originally from Córdoba, Argentina, Pedro Giraudo moved to New York City in 1996. A highly versatile bassist, he is very much in demand performing in a wide variety of musical projects, both his own and as a member of several prominent ensembles ranging from tango to jazz.

Giraudo has collaborated with Grammy award winner Pablo Ziegler, nine-time Grammy award winner Paquito D’Rivera, Latin American icon Ruben Blades and Dizzy Gillespie’s protégé William Cepeda, as well as Tango meets Jazz guests Branford Marsalis, Kenny Garret, Regina Carter, Nestor Torres and Miguel Zenon among others. Giraudo has also been the musical director of Mariela Franganillo Company’s Tango Connection and Tango Recuerdo and performed with the United State’s most prominent tango ensembles including Hector Del Curto’s Eternal Tango, Fernando Otero’s X-Tango and Daniel Binelli’s Tango Metropolis.

As a composer and arranger, Giraudo leads his 13-piece ensemble, the Pedro Giraudo Jazz Orchestra, and has been hailed by critics as one of the most creative and daring bandleaders on the scene today. The band has performed regularly in the most prestigious jazz clubs in the New York City area, including the Jazz Standard, Birdland, The Jazz Gallery, Blue Note and Joe’s Pub as well as abroad. Giraudo has also conducted the world renown WDR Big Band and the Cologne Contemporary Jazz Orchestra.

His discography includes award-winning album Córdoba (Zoho Music 2011), El Viaje, Desconsuelo, Mr Vivo and Destiny of Flowers. He has played bass on dozens of recordings for leading labels such as Sony, Warner, Nonesuch, Naxos and Harmonia Mundi as well as for independent projects, and in movies including Oliver Stone’s Wall Street II.

In 2008, Giraudo was commissioned to compose a piece by the Jazz Gallery in New York, and in 2010 he was commissioned by JazzReach to compose a new work for their Big Drum/Small World main-stage program.
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Hector Del Curto Quintet
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Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Zafir with Simon Shaheen
Friday, April 1, 2016 • 8 p.m.
Lawrence Memorial Chapel

Gamelan Cahaya Asri Concert
Monday, May 30, 2016 • 3 p.m.
Stansbury Theatre, Music-Drama Center

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