

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

*Music*  
DEPARTMENT

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PRESENTS

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# **Piazzolla on Reeds**

**Cara Luffey, Bassoon**  
**Greg Luffey, Saxophone**  
**Oscar Macchioni, Piano**

April 1st, 2015

7:30PM

Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall

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# PROGRAM

## Le Grand Tango

Cara Luffey, Bassoon  
Oscar Macchioni, Piano

Astor Piazzolla

## Tango Etudes

Greg Luffey, Alto Saxophone  
Oscar Macchioni, Piano

Astor Piazzolla

- I. Decidé
- II. Anxieux et rubato
- III. Molto marcato e energico
- IV. Lento meditativo
- V. Sans indication
- VI. Avec anxiété

## Intermission

## Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas

Greg Luffey, Soprano Saxophone  
Cara Luffey, Bassoon  
Oscar Macchioni, Piano

Astor Piazzolla

- I. Verano Porteño
- II. Otoño Porteño
- III. Invierno Porteño
- IV. Primavera Porteña

## PROGRAM NOTES

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and spent part of his childhood in New York City. A virtuoso bandoneón player, Piazzolla made his trade mark in the thirties and forties as a *tanguero* in the band of Anibal Troilo, and then as the central figure in his own band. As his compositions grew in complexity, he turned to classical music. He studied composition with Alberto Ginastera and in 1954 was granted a scholarship to study in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. There he realized his destiny was not to abandon tango but to infuse it with classical and jazz influences. Since the beginning of Piazzolla's career, his tango arrangements and original compositions were not well-received due to his innovations and progressive musical ideas. In an interview, he said: "In Argentina you can change anything but the tango." It was a curse that followed him his entire career. However, the Argentine tango is one of the most recognized popular music genres in the world today, due to Piazzolla's prolific output and virtuoso concert style.

### **Le Grand Tango**

*Le Grand Tango* was written in 1982 and published in Paris (thus the French title). The piece is dedicated to the great Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, who did not play it until 1990. Although written as a single movement, it contains three distinct and contrasting sections. The two outer sections are energized by the use of accented rhythms, while the middle section contains expressive, lyrical dialogues between the cello and piano. In many ways, adapting a work for cello translates well to the bassoon since these instruments have such similar voices. The challenges come with the difference in range, the bassoon's inability to play double stops and lack of rests. Because bassoonists rely on breath to make sound, this piece is deceptively taxing. In this performance, the sections have been separated into movements with pauses in between to allow for necessary recovery. Luckily, the song like quality of the work makes the other elements easier to overcome and allows the spirit of the piece to shine through no matter the instrument.

## Tango Etudes

*Piazzolla* composed the *Tango Etudes* late in his life (1987) for solo flute. They quickly became popular with other instrumentalists and unaccompanied versions were adapted for violin and saxophone. The version you will hear this evening is sometimes mistakenly said to have been arranged by Claude Delangle, saxophonist and professor at the esteemed Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique of Paris. In fact, Delangle requested the etudes be harmonized by *Piazzolla* himself who indulged and scored the piece for saxophone and piano.

Unfortunately when the work arrived in the mail, the handwritten score was practically illegible as *Piazzolla* admitted in a letter that said, "Dear friend, finished the piano part...for saxo alto and piano...Good luck to Mr Delangle and please tell him to forgive my music handwriting. I was in a hurry..." At this point the score was shelved as *Piazzolla's* health subsequently deteriorated and could not be consulted about the manuscript before his death in 1992. Many years later pianist Yann Ollivo painstakingly deciphered the score and produced the realization that was published in 2003.

The etudes are a collection of melodies that alternate between bold energetic dance like figures and beautiful lyrical passages to keep the listeners attention. In classic *Piazzolla* style, the music sometimes becomes very angular and dissonant creating much angst, but eventually returns to a familiar theme. At times the melodies are rubato, almost recitative like while at other times they invoke a meditative or sad mood usually marked tristement. These six etudes take the performers on a wild adventure testing their technical and musical skills while leaving plenty of room for creative expression.

## **Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas**

*Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) were composed between 1965 and 1970. They were conceived as stand-alone pieces rather than a suite, although Piazzolla performed them together on a few occasions. To those born there, the word *Porteño* refers to the capital city of Buenos Aires. We present these pieces in the order the seasons occur in the southern hemisphere, where the year starts with Summer, followed by Autumn, Winter, and finally Spring. Typical of Piazzolla's music, each movement uses the juxtaposition of exciting rhythmic sections followed by expressive melodic ones. They also contain improvisation-like parts in which each instrument is given the opportunity to solo. This work was originally conceived for his quintet composed of violin, bandoneon, electric guitar, piano, and double bass. It has been arranged for several chamber formations including violin, cello and piano, which was the basis for our own arrangement for soprano saxophone, bassoon and piano. Since these pieces were essentially composed for strings, adjustments in tempo, articulation, dynamics, transposition and octave choices have been made to allow them to be played on instruments whose sound production is so different.



### **Cara Luffey**

A native of El Paso, was appointed Lecturer of Bassoon at the University of Texas at El Paso in 2014. Ms. Luffey earned her Bachelor of Music degree from the University of the Pacific, graduating summa cum laude and performing the Hummel concerto as winner of the concerto competition. She continued her studies, earning a Master of Music from Carnegie Mellon University and a Teaching Certification from Texas State University in San Marcos, TX. Her teachers include: Dr. Don DaGrade, Mr. David Granger and Ms. Nancy Goeres. After completing her degrees, Ms. Luffey won a position with the US Air Force Band at Langley Air Force Base, VA., and was later stationed with the USAFE Band in Sembach, Germany. During four years of service, she performed in various countries and settings throughout the Eastern US and Europe in quintets and concert bands.

Ms Luffey's love of chamber music began during her undergraduate studies where she was a finalist in the Coleman and Carmel Chamber Music competitions as a member of the Siren Trio. She has continued to perform chamber music throughout her career in recitals at Star Classics in San Francisco, CA, Shadyside Concert Series in Pittsburgh, PA, Texas A&M University at Kingsville, Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, TX, San Antonio, TX, Austin, TX, and with her colleagues at UTEP in El Paso.

Her varied career as an orchestral musician has taken her from Graz, Austria with the AIMS Festival Orchestra, to a tour of China with the Mantovani Orchestra. She has previously held principal seats with the Victoria Symphony, Laredo Philharmonic, and Corpus Christi Ballet Orchestra and has performed with the San Antonio Opera, San Antonio Symphony, Mid-Texas Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Corpus Christi Symphony. After playing third bassoon and contra with the El Paso Symphony for three seasons, she currently holds the principal seat in El Paso as well as with the Las Cruces Symphony.



### **Gregory Luffey**

Joined the music faculty at UTEP in 2009 after a twenty year career performing in US Air Force Bands. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Jazz Studies and Saxophone Performance from Virginia Commonwealth University. While at VCU, Mr. Luffey studied with Jazz patriarch Ellis Marsalis as well as with Skip Gales, Keith Young, and Charles West. Mr. Luffey's jazz and classical training enabled him to win a position in the USAF Band program where he performed and recorded extensively in the US and Europe. While overseas, he performed for many Heads of State including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. In addition to performing for dignitaries, he has performed for sold out audiences in the finest concert halls in Europe including Royal Albert Hall in London and The Gewandhaus in Leipzig.

During his tenure in the Air Force Band Mr. Luffey was a featured saxophonist in both concert and jazz band settings. He has performed John Williams' Escapades from the film "Catch me if you Can" and made the first recording of Bill Holman's arrangement of the jazz standard, My Old Flame. In 2008, Mr. Luffey was reunited with Ellis Marsalis performing Marsalis' composition Swingin' at the Haven at the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park. He has also performed with Benny Carter, Thad Jones, Tommy Newsom, Ed Shaughnessy, Eddie Daniels, Bob Mintzer, Eric Marienthal, New York Voices, Bobby Shew, James Genus, Victor Goines, and Rufus Reid. Mr. Luffey can be heard on 25 Department of the Air Force Recordings.



### **Oscar Macchioni**

A native of Argentina, is a Steinway Artist and an accomplished solo and collaborative pianist, professor, lecturer, author and adjudicator. He has been praised by the critics for his expressive phrasing and the amiable way in which he presents his programs. Oscar has performed extensively in his native Argentina, Italy, England, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Mexico, Thailand and the USA, at notable locations such as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Teacher's College at Columbia University and Steinway Hall in New York City; St-Martin-in-the-Fields and St James's Piccadilly in London, the Querceto International Piano Festival in Italy, and the National Conservatory in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His live performance in the esteemed Myra Hess Memorial Concerts at the Chicago Cultural Center has been broadcast on radio and television.

His lecture recitals and presentations at international conferences have received numerous accolades including the Second International Vernacular Conference in Puebla, Mexico (Outstanding Musical Presentation), and The European Piano Teachers Association (Diploma of Excellence). His book, *The Tango in American Piano Music* was published in 2010 by the College Music Society series Cultural Expressions in Music. His debut CD *Mostly Tangos: Piano Music from the Americas* has been released with favorable. A dedicated teacher and mentor, Dr. Macchioni is in demand as an adjudicator at state, national and international piano competitions, including MTNA, International Keyboard Odysiad Competition, the Bangkok International Chopin Competition, the European Piano Teachers Association and Piano Examinations Committee of Taiwan among others. Oscar Macchioni has been sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C. (Graduate Research Fellowship), the Polish Government, the Organization of American States, and the Leschetizky Association of New York. He received the Music Teachers National Association StAr Award, and was named "Distinguished Graduate Student" by the University of Arizona. He is a recipient of several grants, the latest one, by the Texas Commission on the Arts through the El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department to perform concerts at underserved communities.



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