

CHANNEL CROSSINGS

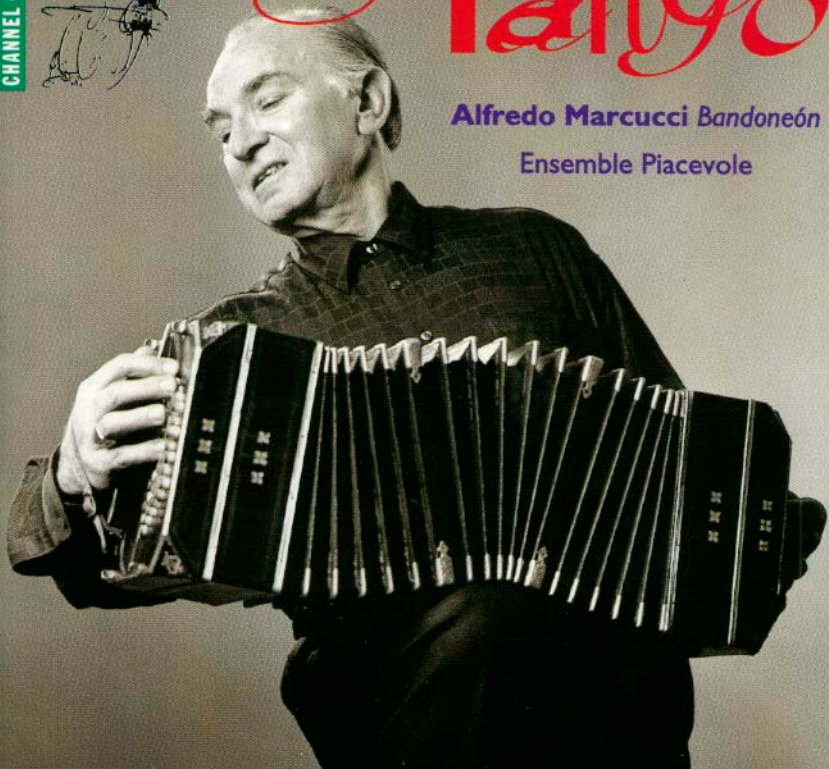
CCS 10997



Timeless
Tango

Alfredo Marcucci *Bandoneón*

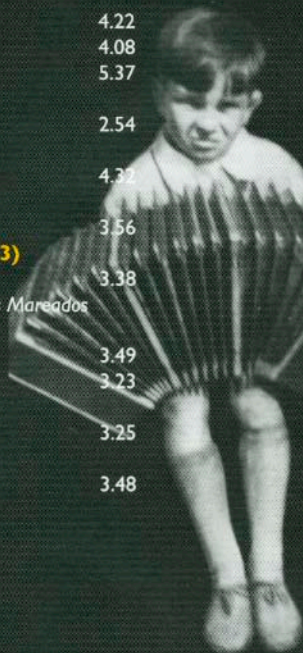
Ensemble Piacvole





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|----|--|------|
| 1 | Balada para un Loco | 2.51 |
| 2 | Oblivion | 3.01 |
| 3 | La Muerte Del Angel | 3.29 |
| | Carlos Marcucci (1903-1957) | |
| 4 | Aires Españoles | 3.14 |
| | Astor Piazzolla | |
| 5 | Melodía en la menor | 4.22 |
| 6 | Buenos Aires Hora O | 4.08 |
| 7 | Tristeza de un Doble A | 5.37 |
| | Julio de Caro (1899-1980) | |
| 8 | Boedo | 2.54 |
| | Dirk Brossé | |
| 9 | Tango | 4.32 |
| | Vicente Greco (1888-1924) | |
| 10 | Ojos Negros | 3.56 |
| | Juan Carlos Cobian (1896-1953) | |
| 11 | Selección de Tangos | 3.38 |
| | <i>Nostalgias/Nieblas Del Riachuelo/Los Mareados</i> | |
| | Astor Piazzolla | |
| 12 | Fuga Y Misterio | 3.49 |
| 13 | Libertango | 3.23 |
| | Julio de Caro | |
| 14 | Guardia Viega | 3.25 |
| | Astor Piazzolla | |
| 15 | Chiquillín de Bachín | 3.48 |

Total time: 57.17



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Channel Classics invites you to listen to examples of an earlier release from Alfredo Marcucci. You will find these by programming your CD player to tracks:

16 *Milonga de mis ambres - Milonga / Pedro Laurenz*

17 *Prepárense - Tango / Astor Piazzolla*

from CCS 5393 **Tango, an anthology**, with Baltazar Benítez, guitar





Timeless
Tango

Alfredo Marcucci - 8 years



Piacevole was founded in 1990 by the doublebass player Ludo Joly. The name of the ensemble derives from the same Italian music term, meaning 'graceful, and pleasing', all of which can describe their interpretations of the music they perform as well as their approach to their artform.

The basis of the ensemble is a string quintet which can be enlarged in all musical directions. Their repertoire also extends in all areas from the classical and romantic masters to the 20th century, including contemporary works.

Nico Baltussen began his violin studies at a very early age with Andre Delacourte. In Sint-Niklaas he was awarded the government medal for chamber music and violin. He received the European prize, was a prizewinner in the Tenuto-competition, and received an award from the Festival of Flanders. He received his advanced diploma in violin from the Lemmens Institute, where he now teaches. After several years as concertmaster of the Nieuw Belgisch Kamerorkest, he is currently concentrating on building a career as soloist and chamber music player.

Gudrun Vercampt began her violin studies at a very early age. She received the advanced diploma in violin from the Royal Conservatory of Brussels in the class of Philip Hirschorn. Currently she teaches violin and participates in several orchestras and ensembles.

Yves Cortvrint studied with Edith Volkaert, Marcel Debot, and Michèle Babey. He is currently first solo viola in the orchestra of the National Opera and professor of viola at the Mons Conservatory. He appears regularly as a soloist. Appearances include Mozart's Symphonie Concertante, Berlioz's Harold in Italy, and Bartok's viola concerto

Luc Dewez is finishing his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and is completing his education in the Koningin Elisabeth band and the Hochschule of Delmond. He appears regularly as a soloist with well known orchestras. He also appears regularly as a valued chamber player at festivals in Belgium and performs all over the world. He has recorded CDs of the cello concerti of Boccherini.

Ludo Joly studied at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, where he received the advanced diploma in double bass with M. Aerts and the advanced diploma in chamber music with A. van Lysebeth. He teaches double bass at Louvain, Tournai, and Mol, and performs as soloist with the National Orchestra of Belgium.

It all seems so ordinary. Behind the front door of a semi-detached house in Belgium, the scent of old-fashioned vegetable soup creeps into the nostrils. The walls in the living room are hung with diligently embroidered panels and friendly family photographs. The paterfamilias shuffles, like an essential prop in the scene, over the warm tile floor. There is more here than meets the eye.

Behind the facade which seems to belong to a retired blue collar worker is the emotion and passion of the Argentinian tango. This is the house of Alfredo Marcucci, a man who imbibed the tango with his mother's milk, and one whose roots are still anchored in the sung and played tristessa of the Argentinian immigrants.

Marcucci first saw the light of day in 1930, in Buenos Aires, center of the tango's beating heart. Cafes, nightclubs, dance halls, patios, living rooms, every corner of the city was drenched in the melancholy of the Argentinian people, translated into sound. Every evening the numerous competing orchestras stood ready to offer their audiences danceable consolation or steamy oblivion. Any ensemble worthy of the name had four or even five bandoneon players, four violinists, a pianist, a bass player, and two singers who provided a clearly understandable text for the love and grief of the music. In the traditional tango, the singers were the stars of the show. The alternately languorous and biting rhythms and the predictable interludes were only the ground on which the poets could engrave their unhappy loves, unfulfilled desires, and burning homesickness.

In this environment, Marcucci succumbed completely to music. At an early age he already had a bandoneon on his lap, the German squeezebox that had been promoted to mouthpiece of Argentina. His uncle, the well-known orchestra leader Carlos Marcucci, taught him to play the instrument and formed the young Marcucci into a gifted bandoneonist. In order to absorb the atmosphere from the inside out, Marcucci played in various children's bands before making the leap to professional groups. "We often had only one score for the pieces that we played", Marcucci remembers. "We had to manage with that, there were no copiers at the time. The music was put on the pianist's stand and we tried to read along a little. That way I learned to play a lot of repertoire by heart."

He became a professional sooner than he expected.

In an age without social security, the death of a family's head meant a serious financial loss. Child labor was not a subject for discussion, but rather a necessary evil for the sake of survival. At the age of 15, Marcucci lost his father. "To play in a professional orchestra you had to be at least 18, but my uncle gave me a chance and took me into his orchestra."

That was the starting point for the career of a traveling musician, a story of playing evening after evening in Buenos Aires, a story of the orchestra of Julio de Caro and lucrative but long journeys, particularly to Japan. "In the 50s Japan was almost a myth", says Marcucci. "Every tango orchestra wanted to play there."

The call of Europe and the Middle East proved to be another good source of income. When the world-famous orchestra of Carlos di Sarli, where Marcucci had played since 1956, was disbanded because of the leader's illness, Marcucci joined a traveling company that performed jazz and tango music.

In Istanbul, the jazz orchestra crossed paths with Los Paraguayos. The best known folk band of the time invited Marcucci to take over the bass guitar and the bandoneon. "I forgot the tango a little. It's true that we played a couple of tangos with Los Paraguayos, but as for the great tango renewal of that period, which was initiated by Astor Piazzolla, I missed it completely. I was a little old-fashioned, and I still am."

For a moment a look of nostalgia passes over Marcucci's face. "I don't have much left from my Argentinian years, no souvenirs, almost no recordings...Look, I bought this in the Netherlands."

In a moment the traditional tango orchestra of Carlos di Sardo emerges from the hissing grooves of an old LP. Marcucci stands there, lost in thought, and conducts along with every turn of the melody. His hands dance to the melancholy of the music, his eyes move back and forth to the angular rhythm.

"The age of tango in Argentina is over, it's not the way it used to be", he says. "I have another life here in Belgium."

In the 1960s the bandoneonist settled in Belgium, where Los Paraguayos had their

headquarters. He married, had children, made some fifty LPs with Los Paraguayos, and was on the road more often than he was at home. "As the children grew up, it got harder and harder for me. For a bachelor, a life full of fame, meeting the Beatles and royalty and so on, is wonderful, but I dreamed of just coming home in the evenings to my family."

In 1976 Marcucci made a dramatic decision. Without a single regret, he ended his career as a musician and became a factory worker in Brussels. Ten years of his life were dedicated to a plastic factory. "It was very difficult for him", says his wife in an unguarded moment. "They were hard years. You can't deprive a real musician of his music, it's the breath of life for him."

And that was true. Even before Marcucci took early retirement, the blood of the tango was once again flowing in his veins. By day he answered the call of the factory, and by night he was on stage in a tuxedo with his Trio al Sur. Several ad hoc groups came next. The bandoneonist was back where he belonged.

That was how he encountered the Belgian string quintet, Piacevole. "They're such good musicians", says Marcucci. "I've played with good violinists in Argentina, but these guys can play a complicated work like Piazzolla's Fuga y Misterio just like that. Yes, most of the pieces we perform are by Piazzolla. I'm not much of a composer myself, I'm much too precise for that. And I don't need to be, there's so much beautiful tango music available. When I make arrangements I always put in a little bit of myself."

Alfredo Marcucci confirms his words with a firm nod, picks up his bandoneon, and plays. For a moment he is no longer in the living room of a Belgian worker's house. Carried on the sounds of Piazzolla's La muerte del Angel, his thoughts are in the language of the bandoneon, the Argentine soul that bends enchantingly across his knees.

Paul Janssen (*translation: David Shapero*)