



# Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla

By María Susana Azzi, Simon Collier

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**Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla** By María Susana Azzi, Simon Collier

Astor Piazzolla was a musical genius, a man who used the national dance of Argentina as raw material for a whole new musical genre. In *Le Grand Tango*, María Susana Azzi and Simon Collier vividly capture the life of this extraordinary musician--a visionary who won worldwide acclaim, but sparked bitter controversy in his native land.

Azzi and Collier trace Piazzolla's early life from his birth in Argentina in 1921 to his childhood years on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where he first developed a talent for the bandoneon, the accordion-like instrument central to the tango. They describe his return to Argentina at age 16 and his rapid rise in the intoxicating world of tango, where he quickly earned a place with the leading dance band, and then formed his own group. But at the height of his success, Piazzolla decided to take tango music to a new level and studied composition with the legendary Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Combining deft musical analysis and intriguing personal insight, Azzi and Collier show how he created a dramatically new style of tango music influenced by jazz and classical pieces--a tango music meant for listening, not dancing. But they also show that, in the birthplace of the tango, he met fierce resistance. He eventually left Argentina for Europe, where he emerged as an international celebrity.

Since Piazzolla's death in 1992, his influence has only grown. Jazz giants such as Gary Burton and Al Di Meola--and classical stars Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, and Daniel Barenboim--have all recorded albums of his works. Now Azzi and Collier have given us the first biography of this astonishingly gifted musician.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Square-built and accordion-like, the bandoneon is a unique instrument, difficult to play yet adaptable to many musical styles. One of its most famous masters, the Argentine composer and tanguero Astor Piazzolla, is the subject of this fascinating biography. Painstakingly researched, with revealing quotes from Piazzolla's family, friends, teachers and colleagues, the book provides an intimate look at the musician's life. In 1921, Piazzolla was born in Mar del Plata to first-generation Argentines of Italian descent. He was an only child with doting parents; his transient childhood involved numerous moves between New York and Argentina and was marked by his penchant for practical jokes. Piazzolla had a natural knack for the bandoneon, which he began playing at eight years of age, and he appeared on stage for the first time when he was 11. Seven years later, his collaboration with Anibal Troilo's famous orquesta típica led to his rise as an emerging tango star, and he was soon writing unique, innovative arrangements that caused a furor in Buenos Aires. His studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris confirmed his love for the instrument, and throughout his travels he incorporated elements of traditional tango, classical music and jazz into his work. The authors concentrate on Piazzolla's relationships with his first wife, Dedé Wolff, and their children, following their breakup and his subsequent marriage to Laura Escalada. Although lacking in deep musical analysis, this captivating tribute excellently portrays the man behind such masterpieces as "Adios Nonino" and "Mari de Buenos Aires." 42 halftones. (Apr.)

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From Library Journal

Argentine composer and performer Piazzolla (1921-92) updated tango music and brought it to the international concert stage, attracting a large following while angering tango traditionalists. Born in Mar del Plata on the Atlantic coast, 250 miles south of Buenos Aires, he spent most of his childhood on Manhattan's Lower East Side, slipping into Harlem clubs to hear Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington. A lover of tango, jazz, and classical music, he created and toured with various ensembles, wrote for the movies, and studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Azzi, a board member of the National Academy of Tango in Buenos Aires, and Collier, author of seven books on Latin America, provide both personal and professional details and musical analysis. This first biography in English, with discography (CD only) and extensive notes, will be valuable for collections focusing on world music or Latin American culture.

-Kate McCaffrey, Onondaga Cty. P.L., Syracuse, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

As a composer, arranger, bandoneonist, and performer, Astor Piazzolla's specialty was the music of Buenos Aires--the tango. Piazzolla, who died in 1992, was born in Argentina in 1921, spent his early years on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and returned to Argentina at age 16. Piazzolla brought to the tango influences as diverse as jazz, contemporary classicism, and Italian opera, out of which he distilled *Nuevo tango* (New tango). The authors chronicle his years working in New York and Europe, especially in Paris and Rome (his four grandparents were immigrants from Italy), his growth as a composer and bandoneonist, his two marriages, his relationship with his children, and his recording sessions with such artists as saxophonist Gerry Mulligan and vibraphonist Gary Burton. The authors base their book on 220 interviews with Piazzolla's family, friends, and fellow musicians. With great care and fidelity, the authors define Piazzolla's place and relevance in the world of twentieth-century music. *George Cohen*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Ellen Farnsworth:**

Book is actually written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a e-book. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A guide *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel a lot more confidence if you can know about every thing. But some of you think in which open or reading a book make you bored. It is not necessarily make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you seeking best book or ideal book with you?

#### **Harvey Hobbs:**

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#### **Kristy Douglas:**

The book untitled *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains the girl idea with easy means. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was published by famous author. The author will bring you in the new period of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice read.

#### **Sarah Acres:**

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher in which print many kinds of book. Typically the book that recommended for your requirements is *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* this publication consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This book was represented how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That is why this book appropriate all of you.

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