



ART PIANOS

NEW YORK • *to* • BUENOS AIRES





New York to Buenos Aires

ArtPianos: Irena Powell Małgorzata Jackowska

ArtPianos duo was founded in 2010 in Gliwice, Poland by Małgorzata Jackowska nad Irena Jakuboszczak (now Irena Powell).

The two pianists were introduced by a mutual friend—a composer from Lviv—Uljana Biłan-Leżańska in the marvellous Kawiarnia z Pasją (Cafe With Passion) in their home town, and they dedicated to play together there and then.

Irena Powell studied at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice with Joanna Domańska.

Małgorzata Jackowska studied at the Academy of Music in Kraków with Danuta Mroczek-Szlezer, including a post graduate chamber music programme.

After their studies both pianists took up teaching post and were active as chamber musicians.

The duo's choice of repertoire reflects the performers wide musical interests and, as such ranges from music originating in the Balkans to South America including the choro tradition of Brazil.

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Fantasy on Gershwin's Porgy and Bess (1951) PERCY GRAINGER

George Gershwin composed *Porgy and Bess* during 1934—5. The 'American folk opera' is based on a play about a beggar in Charleston, South Carolina, which was written and adapted by DuBose Heyward. Gershwin wrote part of *Porgy and Bess* when living on an island near Charleston during the summer of 1934.

During the 1940s Percy Grainger became enthusiastic about the music of Gershwin and in 1944 he performed his *Piano Concerto*.

He considered him one of the world's supreme melodists and referred to *The Man I Love* as one of the great love songs of all time.

Being a brilliant pianist possessed of great improvisational skills, Grainger would frequently play Gershwin's music in solo, and with his wife Ella, duo and duet arrangements. Starting in 1944, several Grainger transcriptions of Gershwin songs were published, culminating in 1951

with the appearance of an extended arrangement of themes from *Porgy and Bess*.

The *Fantasy* consists of the following sections: 'Introduction', 'My Man's Gone Now', 'It Ain't Necessarily So', 'Clara, Don't You Be Down-hearted', 'Strawberry Woman', 'Summertime', 'Oh, I Can't Sit Down', 'Bess, You Is My Woman Now', 'I Got Plenty O' Nuthin', and 'I'm on My Way'.



Meu amigo Radamés (Chôro) (1994) ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM

The Chôro Meu amigo Radamés appears on Antonio Brasileiro, Jobim's 15th studio album which he completed 11 months before his death in December 1994.

If the work was also written during this period, it is one of Jobim's last compositions. Bachian elements (recalling Villa-Lobos' much earlier tributes to the composer) are juxtaposed between richly chordal, lilting passages that demonstrate Jobim's harmonic

distinctiveness and his lifelong connection to the bossa nova.

It's maybe not widely known that Jobim, Brazil's most widely recognised composer of popular music (Música Popular Brasileira), had in fact studied with a German-born disciple of Schoenberg (Hans-Joachim Koellreutter) during his years of apprenticeship. But he also soon befriended Gnattali and, like many other young musicians of his generation, came to see him as a mentor. Gnattali remembered that

'I lived at the Igreja building [by Copacabana beach] and Tom used to show up. He was depressed and asked for advice:

"Come on, Tom, no one will teach you anything. I know what you mean, it happened to me too. You have to let it come out, that's all. Don't break it, or it won't come out. You don't need to look for help, because no one can teach you that stuff. You go back there and compose something for piano and orchestra. You conduct and I play

the piano". And he did.' Jobim recalled: '[in the early years of my career] (...) I was scared to death at the National Radio, with all those musicians starring at me. They can be really disgusting. They control the time in their watches and they might stop the rehearsal because the time is over. Radamés has helped to face these wild things in my life'.

In 1993 Jobim wrote a poem in memory of Gnattali: ▶

Hello, Radamés, I've already bought the peanuts

I want to praise my friend and say how much I miss him.
My friend Radamés is the best thing there is.
He's a sunny day in the forest, he's the grace of a wishing well.
Radamés is high water, a fountain that never runs dry.
He's a waterfall of love, he's a chorão
King of shuttlecock.
He gave without knowing, and gave much more than he had.
The bread and the sardines were multiplied.
Radá is a soloist, composer, pianist, orchestrator, great conductor.
And most of all he's a friend, he navigates alongside you,
He is permanent giving.
He helped everyone and helped me even more.
Hello, Radamés, I'm calling you.
This is Tom Jobim speaking.
Let's have a beer.
I'll pick you up at the usual corner, I've already bought the peanuts.
Five years missing you.



Danzón no.2 (1994)
ARTURO MARQUEZ

Both Marquez' father and grandfather were musicians and so, from an early age, he was exposed to a wide variety of music, especially Mexican folk and salon music. His family emigrated to the US while Marquez was still a child, and it was there he started studying music in earnest. But he soon returned to Mexico, to attend the conservatoire

in the capital, and subsequently received awards for further studies in Paris (from the French Government) and the California Institute of the Arts (a Fulbright Scholarship) where his professors included Morton Subotnick.

In the early 1990s he embarked on a series of *Danzones*. Gustavo Dudamel chose *Danzón no.2*

for the 2007 tour of the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra; it became one of the orchestra's signature pieces and thus gave Marquez huge international exposure.

Commissioned by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, *Danzón no.2* received its first performance in 1994 in Mexico City by the Orchestra

Filarmonica de la UNAM under the direction of Francisco Savin. Marquez was apparently inspired to write the piece while visiting a ballroom in the Veracruz region of Mexico.

This arrangement was made by an anonymous transcriber.



Jamaican Rumba (1938) ARTHUR BENJAMIN

Born in Australia, Benjamin fought in WW1 as an airman, until his plane was shot down by the young Hermann Göring in July 1918. He returned home the next year but was lured back to Europe in 1921 by a professorship at the Royal College of Music, London. He also worked as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, and this work took him around the globe, including to the West Indies. Benjamin composed *Two Jamaican Pieces* for orchestra in 1938 using melodies from the Caribbean. The second section –

Jamaican Rumba – has become Benjamin's most popular work, and is frequently heard in his own arrangement for two pianos. Benjamin was also active as a film composer, producing scores for Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Fire Down Below* (1957) starring Rita Heyworth and Jack Lemmon.





Brasileiana no.8 (1956)
i. Schottische ii. Valsa
iii. Chôro (Tocata)
RADAMÉS GNATTALI

Both of Gnattali's parents were Italian immigrant musicians who arrived in Brazil at the end of the 19th century. Since childhood Radamés was involved with both classical art music as well as jazz, popular music and Brazilian genres, especially the instrumental forms of chôro. During the 1920s and 30s Gnattali worked with and got to know the first famous generation of choroos (chôro musicians), including Ernesto Nazareth and Pixinguinha. The latter Gnattali remembered as 'my brother. We worked together for

a long time at RCA and we also played in orchestras. I used to go to his house in Catumbi quite often, where he held spiritual scéances, and later in Olaria, where he gave birthday parties (...) When I went to work at the Rádio Nacional, in '36, I used to meet him in the bars behind the Radio'. Many of Gnattali's concert works incorporate traditional Brazilian Chôro, and elements of jazz into a Neo-Romantic style that is rhythmically highly charged and often harmonically sophisticated.



Sarau para Radamés
(before 1980)
PAULINHO DA VIOLA

Born Paulo César Batista de Faria, Paulinho met most of Rio's samba elite as a child as his family was deeply connected to the city's traditional music making. He would encounter such luminaries as Jacopo do Bandolim

and Pixinguinha in the family home at rehearsals. He got his nickname in 1965 after a record company publicist decided that a name as common as Paulo César was not a great name for a sambista ('viola' means 'guitar'). Da Viola is probably the most beloved composer of traditional samba music in the second half of the 20th century, and still lives in Rio and performs regularly. Sarau means 'soirée' or party; this piece is a homage to Radamés Gnattali.



Bachianas Brasileiras no.1 (1930)
Introdução (Embolada), Prelúdio (Modinha), Fuga (Conversa) [Conversation]
HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Originally written for an ensemble of cellos, this suite is the first of nine similarly entitled works that Villa-Lobos wrote during the 1930s and 40s. The pre-eminent Brazilian composer of his time, Villa-Lobos fused local ingredients with European, sometimes modernist, influences. Not surprisingly, therefore, most of the movements of the suites have a dual title: one Bachian (prelude, fugue etc), and another Brazilian-Portuguese one. Although some hear in these pieces a fusion of Bach's music and Brazilian popular

and folk idioms, others have felt that the works more represent an attempt to submit Brazilian materials to archetypically Baroque treatments, especially contrapuntal ones. Of all the strains of Brazilian indigenous music, it was the chôro that attracted Villa-Lobos the most during the period of composing the *Bachianas*; having its roots in the 19th century, chôro achieved mainstream success in Rio by the 1930s, the early days of radio. An instrumental genre, a typical ensemble would consist of a

clarinet or flute, guitar and cavaquinho (a smaller guitar-type instrument), although later many other instruments could be involved. Many Brazilian classical composers, such as Gnattali, were deeply influenced by and personally involved in performing chôro; other celebrated composers such as da Viola continue the tradition to this day. This concert transcription for two pianos was made by the Russian opera conductor and pianist Aron Bubeľnikov (1911—1989).



Milonga (1965) & Adios Nonino (1959) ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Like Gnattali, Piazzolla also hailed from a family that formed part of the wave of emigration from Italy at the end of the 19th century. His family arrived in Argentina from Trani, in Puglia, but moved again in 1925 to New York, where Astor spent his childhood and teenage years. He soon started listening to his father's tango records of Carlos Gardel but also experienced jazz and classical music. His father found him a bandoneon in a pawn shop and brought it home for his son in

1929; a few years later, aged only 13, Piazzolla junior had mastered the instrument to an extent that he was invited by Gardel – then visiting the US – to join him on his current tour. Luckily, Piazzolla senior decided that Astor was too young for such an adventure: Gardel and his entire orchestra all perished in a plane crash on the same trip. Piazzolla would later joke that had his father not been so careful, he would now be playing the harp, rather than the bandoneon. After settling in Buenos

Aires, Astor led an exhausting existence playing in tango clubs at night (for some time he was hired by the leading exponent of the day, Anibal Troilo), studying classical composition with Alberto Ginastera by day, and attending rehearsals of the orchestra of the Teatro Colón in order to hear the latest scores of Stravinsky, Bartók and others. It was this intense combination of influences that allowed Piazzolla to break free from the strictures of tango composition of the day, and produce

groundbreaking works. His ensembles usually had no singer, and had an intensity of European modernist chamber music. His *nuevo tango* made him a controversial figure in his native land both musically and politically, but he gained acceptance in Europe and North America. His reworking of the tango was embraced by some liberal segments of Argentine society, who were pushing for political changes in parallel to his musical revolution.

Adios Nonino was written in October 1959 while Piazzolla was in New York, in memory of his father who had died a few days earlier. The piece is based on his earlier tango *Nonino*, composed in 1954, of which he kept the rhythmic part and re-arranged the rest with some additions. The word *milonga* can mean a place where a tango is danced, or a dance itself, a forerunner of the tango. It originated in the Río del Plata area of Argentina and Uruguay; this is where

Piazzolla's family first settled after arriving from Italy, and where Piazzolla would like to spend his holidays. *Milonga del Ángel* is typical of Piazzolla's later compositions: complex but hypnotic, with sudden contrasts of texture and mood. These arrangements for two pianos were made by the exceptional pianist Pablo Ziegler (1944—), who played with Piazzolla in his second quintet.

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