

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) was born in Mar de Plata, Argentina. After moving to New York in 1925, he was exposed to multiple genres of music he would incorporate into his style, including jazz and classical music. He showed a great talent in tango music from a very young age, learning to play the bandoneon and writing his first tango, *La Catigna*, in 1932. In 1933 he would begin his studies with Bela Wilda, a classical pianist from Hungary. From here he would proceed to study composition under composer Alberto Ginastera, pianist Raul Spivak, and even the legendary French composer Nadia Boulanger after one of his works, *Buenos Aires Symphony in Three Movements* (1951), won him the Fabian Sevitzky award. He would go on to become the most important composer of the *nuevo tango* genre, which introduced different instrumentation and musical structure to the traditional tango style.

Histoire du Tango was composed in 1986, and as the name suggests the piece's movements convey the history of tango. The energetic first movement, "Bordel 1900", pays homage to the tango's origin in Buenos Aires. "Cafe 1930" is much slower and melancholy, reflecting the public's shift from dancing to listening to the tango. "Nightclub 1960" combines the tango with the *bossa nova* genre that was popular at the time, and "Concert d'aujourd'hui" demonstrates the current state of the tango, with influence taken from 20th-century composers such as Stravinsky and Bartók.

A New York native, **Lita Grier** (b. 1937) has been composing since she was a teenager. She won First Prize in the New York Philharmonic's Composer Contest at the age of sixteen for her *Three Episodes for Piano* (1953). She has studied under Peter Mennin at The Juilliard School, Lukas Foss at Tanglewood, Roy Harris at UCLA, and Aaron Copland through masterclasses. After leaving UCLA she took a thirty-year hiatus from composing, during which she would work in broadcasting and streaming European festivals through the radio in the United States and Canada. She made her return to composition with the 2009 album *Songs from Spoon River*, which received critical acclaim from Peter Jacobi of the Bloomington *Herald-Times* and American Record Guide, among others.

Grier wrote the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* in 1956 and dedicated it to her flute professor at the time, Julius Baker, who described it as "a new classic in the standard flute repertory." After leaving it to rest for a few decades, Grier showed the piece to Chicago-based flutist Mary Stolper to put together a live performance. Since then, it has been performed live, appeared in albums, and broadcasted over the radio. The piece is reminiscent of compositional trends of the 1950s: most notably, parts of the piano line allude to George Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. The extended range of the piece as well as the constantly shifting meter offer a hearty challenge to the performers. In 1996, Grier rearranged the piece as a concertino titled *Renascence*.

Domingo “Mingo” Rullo (1920-2001) was first introduced to the bandoneon at the age of five, when Juan Maglio Pacho came to the city of Arias in Argentina. He would quickly integrate himself into the Argentinian world of music, moving to the city of Rosario to study under bandoneonist and conductor Juan Rezzano at the age of eight. Here he joined a local orchestra, which played for weddings and dances. A 1938 performance in Venado Tuerto led to him meeting bandleader Roberto Zerrillo, who encouraged Rullo to go to Buenos Aires. Here he had a successful career as a bandoneonist, playing in orchestras led by Tito Roberto, Miquel Zabala, and Rodolfo Biagi. Rullo moved from Argentina to Peru in 1948, where he would work as a bandleader. In collaboration with Rodolfo Coltrinari he formed the Coltrinari-Rullo Orchestra, which went on to release multiple recordings in addition to in-person performances at parties. These recordings included original compositions, such as “Tengo que agradecer,” “Polillita,” and the iconic “Jugo de Piña.”

“Jugo de Piña” (“Pineapple Juice” in English) was first recorded by the group Enrique Lynch y su Orquesta in the early 1970s, where it would spread to the rest of Latin America. It saw great success, particularly in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. The piece has been performed by many Latin American musicians, including El Super Show de los Vasquez, Los Sonor’s, and Lucero.

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César Franck (1822-1890) was born to Nicolas and Marie Franck in modern-day Liège, France. He was enrolled in the Royal Conservatory of Liège by his father as a child, where he studied with Joseph Daussoigne-Méhul. He gave his first concert at the age of twelve, moving to Paris the following year. He enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire in 1837, where he studied with pianist Pierre Zimmerman, organist François Benoist, and composer Aimé Leborn. Franck would win several prizes in performance and composition before leaving the conservatory in 1842. After working as a church organist, lesson teacher, and organist of the Sainte-Clotilde Basilica, he returned to the Paris Conservatory in 1872 as the organ professor. Here he taught Henri Dupart, Louis Vierne, and Vincent d’Indy, and wrote several chamber, symphonic, and keyboard works.

Franck’s *Sonata in A Major* was originally composed as a violin sonata. Franck dedicated it as a wedding present to Eugène Ysaÿe, a Belgian composer, conductor, and violinist. It was first performed at Ysaÿe’s wedding on September 26, 1886. After Franck’s death, arrangements of the sonata were made for the clarinet, cello, and the flute, among many other instruments.