



Multiple Reviews

Pablo Ziegler's Nuevo Tango Passion: Amsterdam Meets New Tango and Tango Nostalgias

By [DAN BILAWSKY](#), Published: May 17, 2013

[Astor Piazzolla](#) invited jazz into the world of tango, birthing a hybridized form of music that's outlived its creator; jazz, proving equally hospitable, opened its doors to Piazzolla and nuevo tango. High-end artists like saxophonist [Gerry Mulligan](#), vibraphonist [Gary Burton](#), and guitarist [Al Di Meola](#) all collaborated with the legendary composer/bandoneon player, helping to raise his profile and that of nuevo tango music on the whole. Piazzolla had a notable influence on, in addition to all three of these musicians, countless others in jazz's past and present, but none of those figures took up the mantle of nuevo tango figurehead; pianist [Pablo Ziegler](#) did.

When Piazzolla departed this Earth in 1992, the torch was passed to his longtime pianist who's been carrying it proudly ever since. Ziegler continues to push the art form forward through his own work and supportive largesse. These two projects shine a light on both artistic-cum-promotional paths being paved by nuevo tango's leading living exponent.



Pablo Ziegler & Metropole Orkest
Amsterdam Meets New Tango
[Zoho Music](#)
2013

Despite any sense of titular redundancy, it's tempting to dub this a "new nuevo tango" album. In marrying his small group with the Metropole Orkest, and expanding the stylistic reach of his own nuevo tango compositions, Ziegler has taken the tradition one step further. The sultry and sensual sounds that are expected in this style of music appear, but something

altogether sinister is afoot at times. A sense of controlled and highly focused discord, underlined by percussive intensity, separates this music from run-of-the-mill nuevo tango. The album-opening "Buenos Aires Report," which sounds like an imagined collaboration between Ziegler, Piazzolla, Igor Stravinsky, Bernard Herrmann, and [Leonard Bernstein](#), is the perfect example of this bold new brew.

Other numbers, like the primal-cum-elegant circus of a closer, "Que Lo Pario," also break new ground, but Ziegler also walks on well-trod terra firma. He takes cues from the blues ("Blues Porteno"), plays things light and airy ("Pajaro Angel"), and tips his cap to the great

composer/multi-instrumentalist [Hermeto Pascoal](#) by marrying Argentine sensibilities with Brazilian ideals ("Milonga Para Hermeto").

The Metropole Orkest is responsible for the most striking and soothing of sounds here, but the heart of the album is Ziegler and his crew-of-three. The leader brings a sense of passion and surprise to every one of his solos; guitarist Quique Sinesi conjures the night with every strum; bandoneon wielder Walter Castro proves seductive at every turn; and percussionist [Quintino Cinalli](#) works around the edges to provide rhythmic support. This is, indeed, "new nuevo tango" stuff.



Julio Botti
Tango Nostalgias
[Zoho Music](#)
2013

Ziegler wouldn't be where he is today if not for the lessons learned from Piazzolla, so it's only right and natural that he should, in turn, pay it forward to the next generation; enter [Julio Botti](#), a young (soprano) saxophonist ensnared by the charms of nuevo tango.

In his formative years, Botti bounced around, spending time in New York, Havana, and Madrid, among other places, and found much to love and learn in the worlds of jazz and classical music. While in New York, in 2008, Botti connected with Ziegler, who took him under his wing. The elder figure's advice and leadership put Botti on the right path, and Botti's admiration for his erstwhile employer led to this collaboration; it's true that the album is under Botti's name alone, but this is a shared effort.

Botti brings his tenor saxophone to bear in a few places here, but the soprano is his chief artistic tool. As a soprano player, he distinguishes himself in somewhat paradoxical fashion; most soprano players tend to stand apart and above the fray, jumping, swooping, diving and flying at a sonic distance from the rest of the pack, but Botti stands apart by blending in. His tone is the antithesis of the tart-and-pinched aesthetic attached to the instrument, and his mellower sound perfectly suits this music.

The sounds themselves aren't nearly as unique as those found on *Amsterdam Meets New Tango*, but that's alright; the emotion sells this stuff. Peppy productions ("Sandunga"), charming waltz-time music ("El Vals Del Duende"), and emotional gravitas ("Elegia Sobre Adiosas Nonino") are all part of the program. A small group, made up of Ziegler's aforementioned companions and bassist Horacio Hurtado, join in on the majority of these tracks, but a few numbers feature strings and give pause to admire the marriage of Ziegler's piano and Botti's saxophone; "Nostalgias," for example, capitalizes on the intimacy of this setting, while "Milonga Del Adios" moves from a noir-ish and sentimental place to a firm-and-forward tango.

Pablo Ziegler puts it all out there on these two releases and it's safe to say, based on *Tango Nostalgias*, that Botti has learned his lessons well; that's no surprise considering the teacher.