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PABLO ZIEGLER &
METROPOLE ORKEST

AMSTERDAM MEETS NEW TANGO (Zoho)



Pianist Pablo Ziegler plunges into a kinetic musical cityscape evoking the downtown of his native Buenos Aires at the start of

this ebullient disc, recorded in 2009 in Amsterdam with some of his longtime associates and the Metropole Orkest. This is music both subtle and zesty, an expansion of the New Tango Ziegler has been fashioning since the 1980s. With guitarist Quique Sinesi, *bandoneon* virtuoso Walter Castro and *cajón* master Quintino Cinalli beating precise tattoos, Ziegler has transformed small-group arrangements into exuberant big-band works. This album sparkles.

It is wonderfully urbane and smart, traversing the joyous "Milonga Para Hermeto" (a nod to Hermeto Pascoal), the sultry "Blues Porteño," the spiky "Desperate Dance" and two Buenos Aires tunes—"Buenos Aires Report" and the longer, more complicated "Buenos Aires Dark"—that belie the project's symphonic ambitions.

Amsterdam Meets New Tango is a concert recording, but it feels more ambitious and purposeful than that. Not only do the soloists have plenty of room to tell their stories (check out the dialogue between Sinesi and Castro on "Blues Porteño"), Ziegler's compositions are cinematic, conjuring pictures of the countryside ("Milonga"), a city's dynamism (the itchy Buenos Aires tracks), an urban stroll at dusk (the sparkling "Places") and romance (Ziegler and Sinesi's "conversation," set against the Orkest's swooning strings on "Pájaro Ángel" is creamy, almost classical).

Varying textures and voicings keep the surprises coming; so do shifting styles, spanning the dance rhythms of "Murga del Amanecer" (the Orkest strings beautifully bed Ziegler's sprightly solo), the commanding yet unsettling "Desperate Dance" (marked by Orkest trombones at odds with Castro's *bandoneon*) and "Que Lo Pario," the modernist, jagged finale, with some of Sinesi's most adventurous guitar and an urgent, unfortunately uncredited trombone solo.

Ziegler's liner notes speak to the cultural origins of each track. Listeners may be unfamiliar with this background, but they'll have no problem engaging with Ziegler's memorable compositions.

CARLO WOLFF