

## **New tango blends passion with musical improv**

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When tango meets jazz, impassioned sounds can emerge, as demonstrated Friday night by The Pablo Ziegler Quartet at Orleans Hall.

For the Savannah Music Festival, the quartet's three separate performances marked an introduction for many to "new tango" - a relatively new genre many credit Ziegler's mentor, composer Astor Piazzolla, for creating.

Music that begins with the frenzied rhythms of tango slowly devolves into jazz improvisations. But it's jazz with a bandoneón, an accordion-like instrument expertly played by Hector del Curto, who helps keep the music true to its Argentine roots.

Double bassist Pablo Aslan laid the music's foundation as Ziegler on Piano and Claudio Ragazzi on guitar took turns with solo inventions.

Together, the four created music that was lighthearted and optimistic during some arrangements, and brooding and melancholy in others. It was music that seemed to span the spectrum of human emotion.

Later in the performance, guest artist Dave Samuels stepped in on the vibraphone, playing a punctuated accompaniment and standout solos that gave this new tango a new ring.

At one point, Ziegler and Samuels answered each other's solos in true jazz tradition - one pounding away at piano, the other answering the call with a climatic build-up on mallets.

During its slower songs, the quartet seemed let the music set its own pace. Each song was dissected. And as each musician deconstructed the arrangement, each helped put it all back together again to rousing applause.

Some of the songs Ziegler's group played Friday night were from "Bajo Cero," awarded best tango album at last year's Latin Grammy Awards.

If you've never experienced tango, this new jazz-tinged tango may be for you. Ziegler's music carries all the weighty seriousness of life, complete with all the carefree, improvised trappings of hope.

*by Sean Harder*