

ABSTRACT

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA'S TANGO: A HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF CONCERTO *ACONCAGUA* FOR BANDONEON, STRING ORCHESTRA, AND PERCUSSION

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The primary purpose of this document is to aid and enlighten those preparing to conduct an orchestral work of Argentinean composer Astor Piazzolla. Chapter One explores the origins of tango, the source of Piazzolla's inspiration. A secondary purpose is to investigate musical influences on the composer, and how these shaped his compositional output; therefore, Chapter Two presents an abridged biography that focuses primarily on his early childhood and subsequent musical development. The third chapter is an analysis of his three-movement Concerto for Bandoneon, String Orchestra, and Percussion, entitled *Aconcagua*.

Composed in 1979, this work represents Piazzolla at the pinnacle of his career. Musical form, his harmonic language, his idiosyncrasies, and most importantly, the musical elements that relate to the tango style, are examined. Much of the research was conducted through interviews with friends and family, who also granted access to several original manuscripts, including that of *Overtura Dramatica op. 5* (1944), *Suite for Oboe and String Quintet op. 18* (1950), *Tango Ballet* for the Buenos Aires Octet (1956), *Serie de Tangos para Orquesta* (1968), *Tangazo* (1969), *Suite Punta del Este* for Solo Bandoneon, Strings, and Woodwind Quartet (1980). A bibliography is included.

Director: Dr. Samuel Douglas