

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Piazzolla Caldera* (1997)

(Company Premiere 2015)

Choreography: Paul Taylor

Restaged by: Richard Chen See

Music: Astor Piazzolla and Jerzy Peterburshsky

Set, Décor, and Costumes: Santo Loquasto

Lighting: Jennifer Tipton

Created in 1997, Paul Taylor's *Piazzolla Caldera* is a sensual exposé of tango as reinterpreted and reimagined with modern dance. Taylor honors the tradition of tango, preserving the essence of the form in his choreography. The music, composed by Astor Piazzolla and Jerzy Peterburshsky, shapes the work into four distinct sections, a complex and electric landscape where dancers can sway and swivel through the arts of both tango and modern dance. In a dimly lit club, working class men and women confront each other in sizzling sexual duets and trios: men with women, men with men, and women with women. Two men too drunk for conquests perform a loopy dance as lamplights sway dizzily overhead. A woman, who has searched desperately for a partner but failed to find one, collapses – as if mortally wounded by a night without passion. Men and women engage in a series of fiery encounters, in turns playful and predatory, in this passionate homage to tango's Argentinian working class roots.



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Paul Taylor's  
*Piazzolla Caldera*. Photo by Paul Kolnik

“‘Piazzolla Caldera’... is a work whose complexities suggest why Mr. Taylor remains such a fresh and important artist after more than four decades. ... The dancing itself seems to occur outside of time, furling and unfurling kaleidoscopically. ... Mr. Taylor’s choreographic invention is quietly dazzling.” –*The New York Times*

“Stunning. Taylor looks at the attitudes implicit of the tango—as sexual game, as social identity—and reshapes them. Seethes and flares with sexuality and develops a huge erotic charge. One of Taylor’s most astonishing (even for him) creations.” –*Financial Times of London*

“The construction of ‘Piazzolla Caldera’ (which always wins a warm ovation from the audience) is impressive.”  
–*The New York Times*

### **Paul Taylor**

Dancemaker Paul Taylor, one of the seminal artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, continues to shape the homegrown American art of modern dance that he has helped define since he became a professional dancer and pioneering choreographer in 1954. After 60 years as Artistic Director of the Paul Taylor Dance Company, he blazed a new trail in 2014 by establishing an institutional home for the art form: Paul Taylor’s American Modern Dance.

Mr. Taylor continues to win public and critical acclaim for the vibrancy, relevance, and power of his dances. He offers cogent observations on life’s complexities while tackling some of society’s thorniest issues. Mr. Taylor has made 142 dances since 1954, many of which have attained iconic status. He has worked closely with such outstanding artists as James F. Ingalls, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Ellsworth Kelly, William Ivey Long, Santo Loquasto, Gene Moore, Tharon Musser, Robert



Rauschenberg, John Rawlings, Thomas Skelton, and Jennifer Tipton. Mr. Taylor has received nearly every important honor given to artists in the United States, including the Kennedy Center Honors, an Emmy Award, the National Medal of Arts, and the MacArthur “Genius” award, to name a few. Paul Taylor remains among the most sought-after choreographers working today, with his dances being performed by companies throughout the world including the Royal Danish Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Miami City Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

### **Astor Piazzolla**

Born in Argentina in 1921, Astor Piazzolla was a tango composer, bandoneon player, and arranger. He began playing the bandoneon – a type of concertina, similar to an accordion – at only eight years old, and composed his first tango at eleven. After having performed as part of some of the great tango orchestras in Argentina at the time, Mr. Piazzolla created his own tango orchestra, experimenting with his own approach to the orchestration and musical content of tango. He was very much influenced by his classical music studies on the piano and his own enjoyment of jazz; in this blending of multiple genres, his oeuvre revolutionized the traditional tango into a new style termed *Nuevo tango*. He would go on to regularly perform his own compositions with a variety of ensembles, from quintets to nonets, and would collaborate with orchestras, poets, singers, and beyond. He worked with celebrated artists such as famous Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and won multiple awards for his compositions which were played around the world in countries such as Argentina, Canada, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Mr. Piazzolla passed away in Buenos Aires on July 4, 1992.

### **Jerzy Peterburshsky**

Born in 1895, Jerzy Peterburshsky was a Polish pianist who found success composing popular music. His compositions were loved in theaters, cabarets, and on the radio. Though he also composed waltzes, foxtrots, operettas, and multiple movie scores, he is best known for his tangos. His “Tango Milonga” (translated to “Oh, Donna Clara” in English) was sung by many international artists, including Al Jolson and Edith Piaf. He traveled and worked around the world, leading orchestras, playing piano, and composing for a variety of mediums, including for ‘Radio El Mondo’ in Buenos Aires where he composed another hit song and famous radio jingle, “All Roads Lead to Buenos Aires.” Mr. Petersburshski passed away on October 7, 1979 in Warsaw.

## ***Piazzolla Caldera*** Music Credit Information

### **Song: *El sol sueno***

Composed by: Jerzy Peterburshsky

Performed by Gideon Kramer

Published by: Downtown Music

### **Song: *Concierto para quintet***

Composed by: Astor Piazzolla

Performed by: Gideon Kremer featuring Astor Piazzolla

### **Song: *Celos***

Composed by: Astor Piazzolla

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### **Song: *Escualo***

Composed by: Astor Piazzolla

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