

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING AND CINEMATIC ARTS  
**Boyer College of Music and Dance**

**Faculty Lecture Recital**  
**Alessandra Tiraterra, piano**

*2022 Keyboard Department Festival*

**January 31, 2022**  
**Presented Virtually**

**Monday**  
**7:30 pm**

*Astor Piazzolla's Heritage - The Magic of the Tango*  
*in the Piano Music of Saul Cosentino*

**ABSTRACT**

Argentinian composer and pianist Saul Cosentino (b. 1935) was a close friend of Astor Piazzolla. For Piazzolla, who gave tango musical dignity by innovating and transforming it from a dance genre to one for concert use, Cosentino was “the composer who had more possibilities than all the others” to further his legacy. According to Piazzolla’s judgment, Cosentino felt Buenos Aires the way he did. Like Piazzolla’s nuevo tango, Cosentino’s music differs from the traditional tango in the employment of extended harmonies, the embodiment of jazz components, the adoption of counterpoint, and the use of dissonance. In his piano music, he synthesized Piazzolla’s tango with a spectrum of Western musical aspects, transcending them and defining a new style: the avant-garde tango for piano. Cosentino’s piano music is eloquent, vivid, and joyous at times; other times, it is sad, intimate, and melancholic. In his solo pieces (e.g., *Milonga Tristonga*, *Poema*, *Para Elisa*), the expressive profundity and the variety of moods, typical of Romantic composers like Chopin, transpire; whereas in four-hand works (e.g., *Pandemonium*, *Nuestra Esperanza*, *Callao y Santa Fe*), the drive and intensity of the dances of Brahms and Dvorak emerge. His piano selections represent excellent pedagogical material in any educational setting, besides being wonderful contemporary recital repertoire: they present a wide range of stylistic elements and the challenges of substantial piano works. This presentation discusses Cosentino’s musical career milestones, analyzes his piano music with special focus on the influence of Piazzolla’s tango, and offers a performance of selected Cosentino’s piano works together with selections of composers who inspired and influenced him.

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## Program

Nocturne in D-flat major, Op. 27, No. 2

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118, No. 2

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Para Elisa

Saul Cosentino (b. 1935)

Poema

Vals de Cristal

Plegaria

Oblivion

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)  
arr. Saul Cosentino & Juan Carlos Zunini

Milonga Tristonga

Saul Cosentino & Juan Carlos Zunini (1945-2010)

## Program Notes

Alessandra Tiraterra became acquainted with Saul Cosentino at the end of 2017 when she discovered, thanks to Ukrainian-Lebanese pianist Tatiana Primak-Khoury (artist-in-residence at Balamand University in Lebanon) the concert version for piano of Piazzolla's *Oblivion* arranged by Saul Cosentino and Uruguayan pianist Juan Carlos Zunini. Since then, Alessandra Tiraterra and Saul Cosentino have been in touch regularly. They met for the first time in Belgium in July 2019 on the occasion of Tiraterra's lecture-recital on Cosentino's piano music at the Miry Concertzaal of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Ghent, which the composer attended. *Astor Piazzolla's Heritage and the Magic of the Tango in the Piano Music of Saul Cosentino* is the work that Alessandra Tiraterra has dedicated to the piano music of Cosentino, who welcomed and warmly supported her study. For Tiraterra, Cosentino loves to explore melody like Chopin, but his music also presents, in high points in particular, an orchestral texture that reminds one of Brahms, and it features harmonic choices found already in post-romantic composers. Therefore, the closest to get to define Cosentino's music for piano is to talk about "sounds without words" in a tradition that goes back to Chopin's short pieces (*Nocturnes* in particular) and Mendelssohn's *Lieder Ohne Worte*, with sections featuring orchestral texture influenced by Brahms' *Klavierstücke* and with harmonic choices influenced by Faure', Debussy, and Ravel.

Cosentino's texture explores a gorgeous lyrical sonic system that helps students fix two features necessary to the correct piano playing: 1) the balance between the two hands and 2) the awareness of the sound capabilities of the modern piano as well as the approach to the huge dynamic range of the instrument. Tiraterra considers Cosentino's piano music an artistic journey for her and for her students. Her focus, while working on a Cosentino's piece, is on the main aspects of a strong musical interpretation: the attention to phrasing (how it shapes a piece and what it adds to the dynamic discourse in the piece), the clarity, the purity, the power, the nuances, and the quality of sound in any dynamic level, the understanding of the musical structure of a piece to be fully aware of how to express its musical content, and the importance of concepts like balance, control of the pedalization (damper and soft pedals), and rubato.

The end of the twentieth century saw the emergence of many fascinating styles and trends including "new romanticism," which features extensive gestures, intimate song-like melodies, and mystical qualities. Saul Cosentino's works belong to this stream of contemporary music. Cosentino has been active in the music field for more than sixty years and has been capable of synthesizing the classical tradition with the innovations introduced by the music of Astor Piazzolla, looking at the future without denying the past. As a multifaceted musician, he has performed his works and has recorded his music. As a pianist, he never forgets his instrument, which has always a central role in his output. For these reasons, Cosentino is one of the contemporary composers who best offers captivating challenges in the piano performance and pedagogy fields.

## About the Artist

Born and raised in Rome, Italy, **ALESSANDRA TIRATERRA** has drawn the attention of the musical world when she started concertizing at the age of fourteen. She has performed hundreds of recitals in the US and in Europe (Carnegie Hall Weill Recital Hall in NYC, Rialto Center in Atlanta, Wiener Saal in Salzburg, Salle Cortot in Paris, Teatro Ghione and Teatro Marcello in Rome, etc.). She is currently on the piano faculty of Temple University in Philadelphia as an adjunct instructor of applied piano and maintains an independent piano studio in the Princeton area, New Jersey, in the US. Students from her studio are regular prize-winners of piano and music competitions. She is an active member of MTNA (Music Teachers National Association), CMS (College Music Society), EPTA (European Piano Teachers Association), and MAMTG (Mid-Atlantic Music Teachers Guild). She often gives masterclasses and is invited as a jury member of piano competitions. She has presented her research works for several conferences and institutions in the US and in Europe. A recent lecture-recitalist of the 2021 EPTA International Conference, the 2020 MTNA National Conference, and the 2019 CMS International Conference, she has published with Dante University of America Press. Winner of many national and international piano competitions and prizes, she studied at the “A. Casella” Conservatory of Music in Italy (integrated Bachelor and Master of Music), the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris “A. Cortot,” France (Brevet d’Execution), Georgia State University (Master of Music), Mozarteum Universität in Salzburg, Austria (Post-graduate Studies), and Temple University (Doctor of Musical Arts). She owes her formation to renowned concert pianists and pedagogues (Sergio Perticaroli, Marcella Crudeli, Geoffrey Haydon, Joaquin Soriano, Sergei Dorensky, and Charles Abramovic). Alessandra Tiraterra has recently received by the MTNA two grants to support her activity as an artist-teacher in the US. She has been invited by the American Beethoven Society to participate in the initiatives for the 250th Beethoven birth anniversary with a contribution from her 2017 doctoral dissertation *Early Nineteenth German Idealism and Historical Perspectives in Beethoven’s Eroica Variations, Op. 35*, an interdisciplinary work of music, performance, history, philosophy, and hermeneutics.