



**IT TAKES  
ONE TO TANGO**

WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY AND  
*RECOVERED VOICES* COMPOSERS

**JEANNE  
GOLAN**, piano



STEINWAY & SONS

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As the expression goes, "It takes two to tango"! At some point, tango became synonymous with the way two people relate to each other, whether in love or hate, anger or romance.

When I first started dancing the tango four years ago, the music's exuberance and sophistication became personified through the swivel of an ocho, the snap of a boleó or the sensuousness of a partner's limb while unwinding a leg wrap. Initially this solo album title, *It Takes One to Tango*, was a play on words; now it feels especially resonant in these days of Covid-19 and our isolation from one another. Yet, as I think of the Steinway as my lifelong companion, it does indeed take the two of us to tango!

This collection features tango-inspired gems that are largely unknown. The works are by "recovered voices" and living composers, two arenas that have long captured my fancy, centered on a dance I've come to embrace. The album itself mixes these composers and their time periods, whose music speaks to one another in unexpected ways. However, the works are discussed below within their respective composer cohorts; this will let us more fully explore the contexts in which these different impressions of tango emerged.

## RECOVERED VOICES

"Recovered voices" refers to composers who were persecuted and often murdered as a consequence of the Nazi Regime. This association can box them into being considered writers of "serious" music. But they just as seriously absorbed the newly popular jazz and cabaret scenes popping up in Paris and Berlin. Wilhelm Grosz and Erwin Schulhoff each wrote stylish, innovative and appealing suites based on dances that were all the rage in the 1920's. Born a generation earlier, Wanda Landowska also turned to a current dance for her inspiration.

Wilhelm Grosz (1894-1939) studied and worked in Vienna and Berlin as pianist, conductor, and manager of an early recording label. He was also a composer for opera, film, and the stage. Forced to flee Austria in 1933, he eventually landed in New York City before his life was cut short by his compromised health. Grosz's *Tanzsuite No. 2* includes the *Boston* – a speakeasy dance during Prohibition that was expressly designed to allow same-sex couples to hold each other close in a social setting. The surprising *Quasi-Fivestep* finale is a fantasy built on a primitivistic ostinato and multiple meters between the pianist's hands, putting Grosz's appreciation of African-American culture on full display.

Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) spent much of his life in Prague, where he was mentored first by Dvorak, and in later travels by Debussy and Reger. Equally drawn to Dadaism and the Avant-garde, he arranged concert series and toured as a performer. His integration of jazz into his piano pieces has distinctly French overtones and a nimbleness not to be matched. (*Kitten on the Keys* indeed!) Each movement is dedicated to a jazzier of the time, with *Chanson* referring to a popular nightclub. His music's ability to charm in an off-the-cuff manner belies the strong Communist and anti-Nazi stances he took. Even though his asylum to the Soviet Union was approved, he was arrested in 1941 and died in the Würtzburg Concentration Camp in Germany a year later.



Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) is best known as a harpsichordist, but also composed in her early life. Originally from Poland, she concertized worldwide on both piano and harpsichord. It is only a fluke that she and her husband escaped the advancing Nazi army and made it to the United States. Believing the move would be temporary, she only packed two suitcases, leaving her worldly possessions and most of her scores behind. It is our good fortune that Landowska's mazurka-based tone poem, *Reverie of Autumn*, survived. As the mazurka is a forerunner of the tango, this world premiere recording has a special place in this collection.

## **LIVING COMPOSERS AND WORLD PREMIERES**

It is a fascinating experience to discuss a creation with its creator. It reminds us that what is on the page only goes so far. The first "one to tango" is actually the composer writing in the studio. When the written page is passed on to the performer, a partnership forms whereby the music is then brought to life through the player's choreography at the keyboard, much like the dance itself.

For the contemporary tangos, I've had the luxury of corresponding with each of their composers, working alongside them to record many of these works for the first time. What follows are a mix of their thoughts and mine.

Eric Moe's *Laminar Flow in Upsidedown Creek* is dedicated to Pablo Ortiz. "Laminar flow" is a term used to describe a fluid moving smoothly and suavely without eddies or turbulence. Upsidedown Creek is a short steep stream that dives off the Lake Plateau in the Beartooth Mountains of Montana into the Boulder River. *Laminar Flow in Upsidedown Creek* wends its quietly syncopated and mostly unruffled course through a scenic landscape, continually re-examining the opening musical idea. The language of the piece is influenced by Pablo's music, in particular by his elegant tango-inspired compositions.

Pablo Ortiz's *Three Pieces* is in part dedicated to Eric Moe, which beautifully typifies their friendship, musical and otherwise. One can hear each in the other's composition. Pablo was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His mother was a professional pianist, so it is only natural that Pablo would eventually come to write pianistic tangos. This set, *bianco, piglia (catches)*, and *The Shady Side*, ranges from rhapsodic and dreamy to playful and driving – all aspects of the dance itself.

Chester Biscardi's *Incitation to Desire* gets its title from H.C. Colles' "Tango" entry of the 1944 Grove's Dictionary of Music: "The movements of the dance are less presentable to a polite audience than those of the Habanera, and as now performed in the cafés chantants of Madrid and other cities of Spain, the Tango has become nothing but an incitation to desire." Chet's piece begins with a brief, flashy introduction. The tango itself is labeled "In the style of a tango-canción" (originally a vocal form with instrumental accompaniment and strong sentimental character) with abstracted habanera rhythmic patterns and sensual melody. It ends with a short, driving coda.

Theodore Wiprud is often inspired by music of other cultures, but *Pacita's Lunch* came about from a non-musical experience. Ted writes, "I was invited to lunch by a Filipina hostess, along with her women-friends on what proved to be the day of Ferdinand Marcos' death. The conversation was uproarious, and the hostess responded with belly-laugh punctuated by slapping the table in her apartment adorned with primitivist art. The dizzying impressions of the day became a virtuosic piano fantasy that serves up all parts of the piano - from smacking the frame and fallboard to grabbing big chords low and high, with a percussiveness that draws from the mid-century dancehall." In its unique way, the story of *Pacita* fits with the birth of tango in the early 20th century. Tango emerged out of lower class neighborhoods in repressive societies as an expression of individuality and protest. As *Pacita* shares musical language with Tango, a music of resistance, it is imbued with an affirmation of living large and in freedom.

Toby Twining's *An American in Buenos Aires* is subtitled *A Blues Tango*. Written for toy piano and piano to be played simultaneously, this loping piece with bravura toy piano moments was



conceived as a parody of the romantic concerto. Toby was raised in Texas with family roots in country-swing and gospel, and his music incorporates this life experience, which is rich in rock, jazz and experimental music. The toy piano heard here is a Schoenhut Spinnet Red, which I found two years ago orphaned on a trash heap in front of my building. I promptly adopted it and went on to arrange Toby's Tango for its slender 18-note range.

— Jeanne Golan

## **JEANNE COLAN**

The *New York Times* describes pianist Jeanne Golan as "technically polished and superbly expressive," and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as having the "gift and ability to clarify the core of music." Her programming reflects her active involvement in the fostering of works by new composers and discovering relatively unknown musical treasures.

With an impressive collection of pieces written for her and that she has premiered and recorded, her solo and collaborative albums appear under the Steinway & Sons, Albany, Capstone, Arsis Audio and Newport Classic labels.

Ms. Golan has been featured at such venues as Carnegie and Merkin Halls in NYC. Her range of experience includes work with the Philip Glass Ensemble, members of the Boston Symphony and Metropolitan Opera Orchestras, with singers as in *Innocence Lost: The Berg-Debussy Project* and *Songs of Henry Cowell* as well as appearances with the American Symphony Orchestra and Greenwich Symphony. Her collaborations with the Grammy-winning Attacca Quartet resulted in the Steinway & Sons release of *WEINBERG*, an acclaimed album of a doubly persecuted composer.

Ms. Golan is bringing "Recovered Voices" repertoire to concert and educational venues across the country for specially designed programs that balance performance and discussion, as well

as in recording. Such appearances have taken place at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the Spertus Institute around Chicago, USC in Los Angeles, and, WFMT and WQXR Radio Stations. Her Ravinia debut was hosted by James Conlon, where she performed piano works of Viktor Ullmann whose complete sonatas she has recorded for Steinway & Sons. Her blog, *Ullmann at Hand: A pianist's journey*, is located at [jeannegolan.com](http://jeannegolan.com).

Ms. Golan holds a DMA from the Eastman School of Music and a BA with Distinction from Yale University. She is a professor at SUNY/Nassau, where she has received the SUNY Chancellor's Award on multiple occasions. Jeanne Golan is a Steinway Artist.

## **CREDITS**

Recorded July 1 and 2, 2020 at Oktaven Audio, Mt Vernon, NY.

Pacita's Lunch recorded August 18, 2009 at Peter Karl Studio; Peter Karl, engineer.

Producers: Christopher Oldfather and Jeanne Golan

Engineer, Editing, Mixing and Mastering: Ryan Streber

Piano Technician: Dan Jessie

Piano: Steinway Model D (New York) rebuilt by Ludwig Tommescu

Executive Producers: Eric Feidner, Jon Feidner

Production Assistant: Renée Oakford

Cover Art: Terciopelo Negro II by Fabian Perez

Art Direction: Jackie Fugere

Designer: Anilda Carrasquillo, Cover to Cover Design

Photos of Jeanne Golan: Heidi Gutman







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**JEANNE  
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Playing Time: 70:43

\*Recovered voices composers

\*\*World premiere recording

**PABLO ORTIZ** (B. 1956)

Three Pieces

- 1 I. Bianco\*\* 1:46
- 2 II. Piglia 2:56
- 3 III. The shady side 3:47  
(dedicated to Eric Moe)\*\*

**WANDA LANDOWSKA**\* (1879-1959)

**ERIC MOE** (B. 1954)

4 Reverie D'Automne, Op. 6\*\* 3:55

- 5 Laminar Flow in  
Upsidedown Creek\*\* 5:33  
(dedicated to Pablo Ortiz)

**WILHELM GROSZ**\* (1894-1939)

Tanzsuite II, Op. 20 (1926)\*\*

- 6 I. Foxtrot 3:18
- 7 II. Boston 5:25
- 8 III. Tango 3:53
- 9 IV. Shimmy 3:40
- 10 V. Quasi Fivestep  
(Tanzphantasie) 3:44

**CHESTER BISCARDI** (B. 1948)

**THEODORE WIPRUD** (B. 1958)

**ERWIN SCHULHOFF**\* (1894-1942)

11 Incitation to Desire 3:24

12 Pacita's Lunch\*\* 10:45

Etudes de Jazz (1927)

13 Charleston 1:30

14 Blues 3:27

15 Chanson 2:43

16 Tango 2:04

17 Toccata sur le Shimmy

"Kitten on the Keys"

de Zez Comfrey 3:21

**TOBY TWINING** Arr. Golan (B. 1958)

18 An American in Buenos Aires  
for toy piano and piano\*\* 5:19



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