

## From E.B. White's *Here is New York*, 1949

Another hot night I stop off at the band concert in the Mall in Central Park. The people seated on the benches fanned out in front of the band shell are attentive, appreciative. In the trees the night wind sings, bringing leaves to life, endowing them with speech; the electric lights illuminate the green branches from the under side, translating them into a new language. On a bench directly in front of me, a boy sits with his arm around his girl; they are proud of each other and are swathed in music. The cornetist steps forward for a solo, begins, "Drink to me only with thine eyes. . ." In the wide, warm night the horn is startlingly pure and magical. Then from the North River another horn solo begins—the

"Queen Mary" announcing her intentions. She is not on key; she is a half tone off. The trumpeter in the bandstand never flinches. The horns quarrel savagely, but no one minds having the intimation of travel injected into the pledge of love. "I leave," sobs Mary. "And I will pledge with mine," sighs the trumpeter. Along the asphalt paths strollers pass to and fro; they behave considerately, respecting the musical atmosphere. Popsicles are moving well. In the warm grass beyond the fence, forms wriggle in the shadows, and the skirts of girls approaching on the Mall are ballooned by the breeze, and their bare shoulders catch the lamplight. "Drink to me only with thine eyes." It is a magical occasion, and it's all free.

Have you ever been to a free concert at The Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park? If you haven't, you should plan to go before the summer is over. It's one of most unique experiences New York has to offer.

The Naumburg Bandshell is one of New York City's great cultural icons. It has entertained generations of New Yorkers with an incredible variety of performances. Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin and The Grateful Dead have all performed on the stage. Martin Luther King once stood there and John Lennon was eulogized from that very spot.

The bandshell was donated by philanthropist--and classical music lover extraordinaire - Elkan Naumburg. In 1905, Mr. Naumburg had begun a series of free, classical concerts in Central Park known as the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts. When it was completed in 1923, the bandshell became the series' new home. Thanks to the generosity, dedication and hard work of Elkan Naumburg's descendants, all of whom have also been unbelievably committed to classical music, the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts series is celebrating its 105th anniversary this year. And, yes, the performances take place in the bandshell. Though the bandshell continues to feature other kinds of performances, the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts are the centerpiece of the season.

As has been the case with many of New York's iconic structures--Carnegie Hall and Grand Central Station to name two--there was a time when the bandshell was facing the wrecking ball. Fortunately, the tide turned and the bandshell was saved. But, concern continues about its future.

*-from a piece by Midge Woolsey written in 2010. Originally published along with her interview of Christopher London on WQXR.org*

<http://www.wqxr.org/articles/wqxr-features/2010/jul/16/naumburg-bandshell-new-york-icon/>

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Anonymous, 1930's gouache drawing of Naumburg Orchestral Concert

**NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS**

PRESENTS

**PABLO ZIEGLER & LARA ST. JOHN**

With

**Andrew Roitstein, Claudio Ragazzi & Héctor Del Curto**

**7:30 PM TUESDAY AUGUST 7, 2012**

The Historic Naumburg Bandshell on the Concert Ground of Central Park  
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The oldest continuous free outdoor concert series in the United States

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## **MIDGE WOOLSEY**

Tonight's Concert Celebrates the 25th anniversary of  
Astor Piazzolla's 1987 Concert at the Naumburg Bandshell

**Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)  
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**Astor Piazzolla  
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FUGA Y MISTERIO**

**Pablo Ziegler (1944- )  
MILONGA DEL ADIOS**

**Astor Piazzolla  
ESCUALO**

**Astor Piazzolla  
ADIOS NONINO\***

**Astor Piazzolla  
LUNFARDO\***

**Pablo Ziegler  
MUCHACHA DE BOEDO**

**Astor Piazzolla  
LIBERTANGO**

\* Indicates work performed at the 1987 concert

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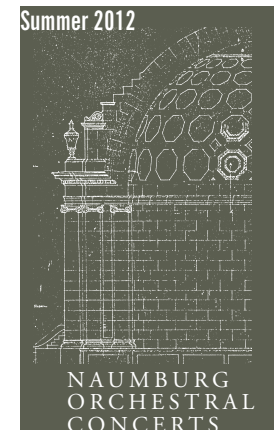
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# The Mall, Central Park

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1874

The double rows of American Elms, planted fourteen years earlier, create a green tunnel. Sunlight filters through the canopy of new leaves and throws dappled patterns of light and shade on the gravel walk. It is a beautiful day, the Mall is crowded: ladies in voluminous skirts and colorful hats; Irish nurses in bonnets and white aprons, pushing baby carriages; gentlemen in frock coats and top hats; a few young clerks in stylish broadcloth suits; the children in a variety of dress, miniature versions of their parents. It is a decorous crowd; tomorrow—Sunday—is when working people have a holiday and attendance will be even larger.

At the north end of the Mall, on the west side, is the bandstand. Mould has pulled out all the stops for this design. The raised platform is covered by a Moorish-style cupola, dark blue and covered with gilt stars. It is topped by a sculpture of a lyre. The roof is supported by crimson cast-iron columns. The bandstand is unoccupied—the Saturday—afternoon concerts start next month. The annual summer series is so popular—**up to forty-five thousand people attend**—that the park board has provided extra seating and has taken the unprecedented step of allowing listeners to sit on the grass. Not everyone admires these free concerts. “The barriers and hedges of society for the time being are let down,” sniffs the *Times*, “unfortunately also a few of its decencies are forgotten.”

The barriers of society are not altogether absent. Across the Mall from the bandstand is a broad concourse where the wealthy park their carriages and, separated from the lower orders by a long wisteria arbor, listen to the music in comfortable isolation. Beside the concourse stands a large one-story building with a swooping tiled roof and deep overhanging eaves. Originally the Ladies Refreshment Stand, it has recently been converted into a restaurant called the Casino.

{ An excerpt from Witold Rybczynski—*A Clearing in the Distance*, pp.317-18 in which a letter of Frederick Law Olmsted—a principal designer of Central Park is quoted. }

## The Future of the Bandshell and its Concerts

A 1993 court decision guaranteed that the bandshell would remain. What it did not do was insure the maintenance and improvement of the facility. The Parks Department completed repairing the roof of the Naumburg Bandshell in 2005. No other restoration of the building is planned at present.

The structure lacks two graceful pairs of decorative urns at either side of the half-domed structure and a suspended cast bronze light within its ceiling. It also needs the paint removed from the coffered ceiling, its stonework repaired, the losses replaced, the doors restored, the gilded donor inscription returned and the backstage renovated and fitted with working bathrooms once again. Naumburg Orchestral Concerts hopes the Central Park Conservancy and the Parks Department will restore the Naumburg Bandshell and with it the Concert Ground's role, dating to the 19th century, as a place of great beauty and tranquility in which to enjoy musical concerts in Central Park.

But given the many demands on funds in NYC it may be too much to hope for. And there is little doubt that it could benefit from lighting, sound, and electrical improvements. To that end we are considering a large capital campaign to repair the Bandshell and enlarge the endowment of Naumburg Orchestral Concerts so we can improve and expand our concert schedule. We would like your opinions, help, contributions, and suggestions. Please see one of us at a concert or write Naumburg Orchestral Concerts, c/o C. W. London, 300 Central Park West, 18H, New York, NY 10024-1513

## Musical Notes

In 1954, Astor Piazzolla, like many brilliant young musicians of our century, had migrated to Paris to study with the world-famous Nadia Boulanger. His tangos having been rejected as “too radical” and “too serious” by Argentine colleagues, he was attempting to find another outlet for his creative energies in writing European-style art music – only to encounter more frustration. “‘Throw it away. This is no good. I can’t find Piazzolla in this classical concert music.’ She wanted to know what I really did in life for a living. I was very much ashamed to tell her that I played tango and above all I wouldn’t dare say to Nadia, ‘I play the bandoneón’ . . . [but] she wanted to know about my tangos, and she took my two hands together and she said, “This is Astor Piazzolla. Don’t ever leave it.” (Schnabel, Tom: *Stolen Moments*, pp. 120-121, Acrobat Books, IA, CA.)

Piazzolla took Boulanger's wise counsel to heart, and ended up making musical history with his nuevo tango, an intriguing synthesis of the diverse musical styles he had grown up with. The records of traditional tango which his father had wept over. The Bach fugues and Gershwin tunes he had learned to play on his infernally difficult, accordion-like instrument, bought as a birthday present in a Brooklyn pawnshop. The Bartók and Stravinsky scores he had pored over in the bandrooms of Buenos Aires cabarets. All thoroughly assimilated, firing his imagination and giving him the determination to persist until his music had captured the hearts of music lovers of all kinds, in his native argentina and around the world. (Taken directly from Steve Sacks cover notes to the CD *Astor Piazzolla, The Central Park Concert*)

## WQXR Production Staff

**Host:** Midge Woolsey  
**Technical Director:** Edward Haber  
**Recording engineers:** George Wellington, Bill Moss, Chase Culpson  
**Producers:** Martha Bonta, Eileen Delahunty, Aaron Dalton  
**Stage Manager:** Will Jameson

Midge Woolsey has proudly served the tristate community as a broadcaster for over 30 years. Since joining WQXR in 1993, she has been the Weekend Music host and more recently the Weekday Evening host. As a host on public television's flagship station Thirteen/WNET she has introduced such specials as Andrea Bocelli's Emmy nominated Statue of Liberty Concert, The Three Tenors with James Levine live from Paris, and the landmark twenty-four hour event, PBS Millennium 2000. She has also hosted numerous fundraising events, including Josh Groban in Concert and Pavarotti in Central Park.

Behind the scenes, Woolsey worked with Jac Venza on Great Performances, the award-winning PBS series of international music, dance and drama programs. She also served as production executive for award-winning producer David Grubin, working with him on several acclaimed historical documentaries for the PBS series American Experience and on the poetry series The Language of Life with Bill Moyers. Woolsey has degrees in theater and music, and has served as a director, performer and choreographer in more than 100 productions with various regional opera and musical theater companies.



## Artists

**Pablo Ziegler, piano**, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A Latin GRAMMY winning pianist, Ziegler artfully blends classic tango rhythms with jazz improvisations, adding a new voice to the tango lexicon. Howard Reich of The Chicago Times writes, “There’s no question that Ziegler takes the tango to levels of sophistication and refinement probably undreamed of by Piazzolla”, and Eric Salzman of Stereo Review, writing of Ziegler's CD, *Tango Romance*, affirms that the CD “solidifies his [Ziegler's] claim to be the outstanding representative of the nuevo tango in his generation.” In addition to this critical acclaim, Ziegler's 2005 release *Bajo Cero* won the 2005 Latin Grammy Award for Best Tango album of the year.

In 1978, Mr. Ziegler was invited to join Astor Piazzolla's New Tango Quintet, and for over the next ten years, he performed with this group throughout Europe, Japan and North America.

Ziegler formed his own Quartet for New Tango in 1990 and has been touring extensively throughout the world with his trio, quartet and quintet. In 1996 he recorded *Los Tangueros*, his two piano arrangements of the music of Piazzolla, with Emanuel Ax, produced by Ettore Stratta for Sony. Performances in recent seasons have included Carnegie Hall as part of the JVC Jazz Festival with guest artists Paquito D'Rivera, Joe Lovano and Gary Burton; and the Miami International Piano Festival for which he created the evening *Beyond Tango*. For 11 years Ziegler's quartet performed annually at the Jazz Standard in NYC in the *Tango Meets Jazz* series produced by Pat Philips and Ettore Strata, with guest artists including Regina Carter, Stefan Harris, Branford Marsalis, Nestor Torres and others. This summer was their second season at Birdland. In November, 2011 Pablo Ziegler and Paquito D'Rivera celebrated The Music of Astor Piazzolla at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Music of the Masters series. In the upcoming season Pablo Ziegler will be the featured artist at the La Jolla Music Festival and the Laguna Beach Music Festival.

## Music Pavilion

**Lara St. John, violin**, has been described as “something of a phenomenon” by *The Strad* and a “high-powered soloist” by *The New York Times*. Canadian born, she has performed as soloist with the orchestras of Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Minnesota, Seattle, Brooklyn, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and with the Boston Pops, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, NDR Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Bournemouth Symphony, Ulster Orchestra, the Belgrade Symphony, the Amsterdam Symphony, and the Akbank Chamber Orchestra in Turkey, among many others.

*The Los Angeles Times* wrote “Lara St. John happens to be a volcanic violinist with a huge, fabulous tone that pours out of her like molten lava. She has technique to burn and plays at a constant high heat.”

A prolific recording artist, her recording Mozart featuring the *Sinfonia Concertante* and *Concerti Nos. 1 & 3*, with her brother Scott St. John & The Knights, won the 2011 Juno Classical Album of the Year for Soloist with Large Ensemble. Of Lara St. John’s recording with the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and conductor Eduardo Marturet Vivaldi – *The Four Seasons and Piazzolla – The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* said, “Lara St. John is as captivating in the seductive scenes of the Piazzolla as she is crisp, caressing and colorful in Vivaldi’s atmospheric paeans to nature”

Lara began playing the violin when she was two years old. She made her first appearance as soloist with orchestra at age four, and her European debut with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon when she was 10. She toured Spain, France, Portugal and Hungary at ages 12 and 13, entered the Curtis Institute at 13, and spent her first summer at Marlboro three years later. Her teachers have included Felix Galimir and Joey Corpus.

**Héctor Del Curto, bandoneón**, is praised by *The New York Times* as a “splendid player”. Argentinean born, he has captivated the audiences around the world as a soloist and chamber musician, sharing the stage with the world-renowned tango legends Astor Piazzolla and Osvaldo Pugliese, pianist Pablo Ziegler, clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera, and numerous Symphony Orchestras among many others.

At the age of 17 Del Curto won the title of “Best Bandoneón Player under 25” and joined the legendary orchestra of Osvaldo Pugliese, becoming the youngest player in the history of that orchestra. As conductor, he directed the spectacular show “Forever Tango” on Broadway and founded the “Eternal Tango Orchestra” a ten-piece ensemble. Héctor Del Curto released a critically acclaimed album, *Eternal Tango* and is soon to release his new record *Eternal Piazzolla*. Del Curto has participated throughout his career in more than 50 recordings which include performances with Osvaldo Pugliese, Astor Piazzolla, Pablo Ziegler, Paquito D’Rivera, for labels such as BMG, Sony, Nonesuch and many others.

**Claudio Ragazzi, guitar**, both performs and composes award winning music for film and television, scoring hundreds of projects and performing with some of today’s most respected musicians at renowned concert halls in the world. Claudio attended Berklee College of Music where he graduated Magna Cum Laude, a winner of the prestigious Duke Ellington Master’s Award and the Boston Music Awards. Claudio went on to compose music for feature films, documentaries and television commercials as well as undertaking commissioned works for plays and ballets. Claudio currently teaches Film Composition at Berklee.

Claudio has scored hundreds of TV productions for the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, National Geographic, Telemundo, Univision and PBS, including American Experience, NOVA and the children series Sesame Street, Arthur, and Postcards from Buster. Claudio’s live performances include those at Carnegie Hall, The Hollywood Bowl, The Blue Note Jazz Club, and The Lincoln Center and in theatres around the world. He has performed with some of today’s most influential and respected musicians, including Gary Burton, Yo-Yo Ma, Randy Brecker, Danilo Perez, saxophone legends Joe Lovano, Branford Marsalis, Kenny Garrett and Paquito D’Rivera.

**Andrew Roitstein, bass**, is a native of Valencia, California. He has been featured in chamber music concerts in New York’s Zankel Hall and Washington DC’s Kennedy Center, and has performed with the New York Philharmonic and Hong Kong Philharmonic. He is a founding member of the award-winning Toomai String Quintet, an ensemble that appeared in chamber music series at Carnegie Hall and the 92nd St. Y, among others. Roitstein has recorded for artists such as Joanna Newsom (Drag City) and Jessica Pavone (Tzadik Records). In 2007, he won second prize in Juilliard’s Double Bass Concerto Competition and was a semifinalist in the 2011 International Society of Bassists Solo Competition. He has participated in the Lucerne, International Ensemble Moderne Academy, Aspen, and Sarasota music festivals. A Cuban-American, Roitstein also concentrates in Latin-American music, performing with Toomai String Quintet and Argentinian Tango greats Hector Del Curto and Pablo Ziegler.

A dedicated educator, he serves as faculty of the New York Philharmonic’s School Partnership Program and Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute. As an arranger, his works have been performed by the Toomai String Quintet and by members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Roitstein received his Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees at the Juilliard School, where he was a student of Eugene Levinson.

**We hope you enjoy tonight’s musical performance presented by Naumburg Orchestral Concerts. We need your support in order to help fund these concerts. Please either stop at the desk or visit our website [www.naumburgconcerts.org](http://www.naumburgconcerts.org) to learn how you can donate to help.**



From a Tiffany & Co. card © 1995

In 1859 Jacob Wrey Mould, an amateur musician and the architect who designed many of the original structures in Central Park, persuaded his wealthy friends to pay for free band concerts at a temporary bandstand in the Ramble, and he arranged their musical programs. The first concert, on July 13, included the Festival March from *Tannhäuser*, Mendelssohn’s song, “I would that my Love,” selections from *La Traviata* and Strauss’s *Sorgenbrecher Waltz*. In the summer of 1860 concerts were transferred to the Mall, and *The New York Herald* reported that the September 22 concert attracted “at least five thousand persons gathered around the performers, while outside of these were stationed an immense number of carriages... filled with the beauty and fashion of New York.” The overwhelming popularity of the concerts prompted Central Park’s board to finance them and to build a permanent Music Pavilion on the west side of the Mall near the Terrace. Mould designed the elaborately painted and brightly gilded Moorish-style wooden and cast-iron structure, completed in 1862. The Parks Department razed the Music Pavilion in 1923.

The Naumburg Bandshell, a gift of Elkan Naumburg to ‘the City of New York and its Music Lovers’, replaced in purpose the former structure. Though the Naumburg Bandshell opened on September 29th 1923, the Art Commission of New York had approved of the change in 1912 and the design of the Bandshell in 1916. ‘On the Mall’, composed by Edwin F. Goldman in 1923, to honor Elkan Naumburg, was premiered that September afternoon, conducted by Franz Kaltenborn. Astonishingly, during that summer, 959 concerts were presented on the Concert Ground, over 400 of which were underwritten by the Parks Department. It was a popular place, providing a well-liked activity.

The Naumburg Bandshell design has historic precedents for its shape in the Pantheon of Rome, or even more closely, in the Imperial Russian pleasure park’s pavilion at Gatchina Palace by Vincenzo Brenna—his ‘Eagle Pavilion’ of the 1790’s, and also in the later work of the architect F.G.P. Poccianti, particularly his ‘Cisternone’ at Livorno of 1829-42. It has historic precedents for its function in the outdoor theatres and pavilions of Versailles, for example, or the temples and ‘eye-catchers’ found in the park-like gardens of British country houses such as Stourhead and Stowe. The use of European park architecture as a model for what to insert in Central Park was in keeping with Olmsted’s design sources and methods of nearly 60 years earlier. The Naumburg Bandshell was set into the Manhattan schist hillside, which nestles it, to prevent views being blocked across the Mall and Concert Ground which caused an earlier proposal of Carrère & Hastings to be found wanting by city and park officials. Thoughtfully, the design also stands centered between the two projecting pergola viewing points and it admirably reflects the architect William G. Tachau’s own Ecole des Beaux-Arts classicist and historicist training. The result was Central Park’s only Neo-Classical building.