

TANGO ROYAL

Carel Kraayenhof



Sexteto Canyengue
Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra
Netherlands Chamber Choir
Ed Spanjaard



1	Clavel rojo	Carel Kraayenhof	3. 42	Carel Kraayenhof	bandoneón
2	Milonga del ángel	Astor Piazzolla	6. 43	Sexteto Caryengue	Martijn van der Linden, violin (1, 2, 4, 5, 10)
3	Balada para un loco Lyrics: Horacio Ferrer	Music: Astor Piazzolla	5. 09		Willem van Baarsen, violin (1, 4, 10) Sebastiaan van Delft, piano (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11)
4	Máxima	Carel Kraayenhof	6. 17		Eva Wolff, 2nd bandoneón (1, 3, 4, 5, 10)
5	Milonga para Thirza	Music & Lyrics: Carel Kraayenhof	6. 07		Daniël Lehmann, bass (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10)
	"Aconcagua" Concerto for bandoneón, string instruments and percussion	Astor Piazzolla		Vesko Eschkenazy	violin (3)
6	- Allegro marcato		7. 04	Heleen Koele	soprano (5)
7	- Moderato		7. 43		
8	- Presto		6. 24	Netherlands Chamber Choir	(3, 5, 9, 11)
9	Oblivion	Astor Piazzolla	3. 53	Artistic director: Ivar Munk	
10	Maypa	Roberto D. Alvarez	3. 12	Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra	Concert master: Johan Kracht
11	Adiós Nonino	Astor Piazzolla	4. 43	Ed Spanjaard: Conductor	
				Roberto D. Alvarez	Sextet arrangements (1, 10)
				Carel Kraayenhof	Sextet arrangements (4, 5)
				Bob Zimmerman	Orchestral and choir arrangements (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11)
				Producer:	Job Maarse
				Balance engineer:	Erdo Groot
				Recording engineers:	Roger de Schot Mario Nozza Matthijs Ruijter
				Editing:	Carl Schuurbiers
				Language coach:	Gaby Kusminsky

Recorded at MCO Hilversum, The Netherlands April 2002
Total playingtime : 61. 04

Ambassador of the Argentinian Tango

Characteristic for Argentinian tango music is the sound of the bandoneon. Thanks to its melancholy, muffled, yet also striking and clear sound, this extended accordion symbolises the emigration of Europeans from countries such as Germany, Italy and Spain to the South-American continent. Apart from the German origin of this instrument, there are many other European influences to be found in tango music: varying from the canzoneta napolitana and tango andaluz, to both folk and classical music from France and Germany. Thus there has always been a close tie between the European continent and the Argentinian tango.

Therefore, the fact that a bandoneon-player from the Netherlands is now known as one of the most important international ambassadors of this Argentinian music is less strange than it might seem at first. Carel Kraayenhof (born on August 15, 1958) is highly fascinated by the idiom of the tango, which is at odds with his own culture and the flat country of his birth. His aim is to demonstrate the contrasts in tempo and dynamics, the capriciousness and poignancy of this music.

The self-taught Kraayenhof soon became a prominent bandoneon-player, and together with fellow bandoneon-player Leo Vervelde, he founded the Sexteto Caryengue. In the meantime, he always kept in close contact with his great – now dead – examples, Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla; pianist, composer and bandleader, and bandoneon-player/composer respectively. After years of artistic success in the most prominent tango circles in Argentina, he finally gained massive public recognition in his own country during the royal wedding of Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Máxima in February 2002. Kraayenhof's performance of Piazzolla's best-known composition 'Adiós Nonino' during the service in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam moved the Argentinian princess Máxima, as well as many television viewers, to tears. The whole of the Netherlands immediately fell for both the tango and the bandoneon.

During the royal wedding in the Nieuwe Kerk, Kraayenhof performed with the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra and the Netherlands Chamber Choir, under conductor Ed Spanjaard. Thus the idea came about to record this CD together in this unique, large-scale format, this time with the Sexteto Caryengue.

The programme of 'Tango Royal' includes 'Aconcagua', Astor Piazzolla's concerto for bandoneon, strings, piano, harp and percussion, dating from 1979. Here Piazzolla attempted to write a concerto in the classical manner, keeping to the three-movement form. The first movement, Allegro marcato, is a highly syncopated, rhythmic piece of music. It is followed by a slow and melancholy Moderato introduced by the bandoneon, and the final Presto is fast and rhythmic. "Piazzolla dreamed of finding a format in which one could play tango music with any classical orchestra in the world. And I think he really succeeded in doing this in 'Aconcagua'," Kraayenhof stated. "Classical musicians find it hard to follow the timing of tango musicians, so to counter this problem, Piazzolla allows the bandoneon freedom in its phrasing – although the orchestra continues to keep time steadily – in order to preserve the character of the tango."

Piazzolla also made a version of 'Milonga del ángel' for bandoneon

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and strings. The original composition dates from the 'sixties, long after Piazzolla decided to leave Aníbal Troilo's orchestra, which was in those days the most famous orchestra in Buenos Aires. Although Piazzolla held an extremely important position as instrumentalist, arranger and composer in this orchestra, he was more interested in going his own way than in earning money or becoming famous. He began playing his music for audiences of 25 people in jazz clubs, and carried on doing it for decades. "For Piazzolla, his music always came first, he wasn't interested in making a quick hit," Kraayenhof adds respectfully. "In fact, he was never able to reach the public at large, as we managed to do during the royal wedding. Thanks to satellite television, that was broadcast world-wide to 50 million viewers. Buenos Aires is also delighted with this sudden success; they see it as a true triumph for the Argentinian tango."

Piazzolla wrote 'Balada para un loco' together with lyricist Horacio Ferrer. The composition is an ode to the madness of Buenos Aires. A choir was added to his 'Oblivion'. The last piece by Piazzolla, which is also the final piece on the CD, is 'Adiós Nonino'. "A piece one can't play too often, although I do my best to make sure it doesn't become a tear-jerker," Kraayenhof remarks. "Actually, one could never turn the tango into a mega-phenomenon, as this music is always linked to the grief, homesickness and hope of a people; the Argentinian people. Try comparing this, for instance, to the Buena Vista Social Club: that music is only beautiful when the musicians are allowed to do what they do, and to remain the people that they are."

'Maypa' is a composition by Roberto Daniel Alvarez, who was the lead bandoneon-player in Pugliese's orchestra during its final ten years. He dedicated the piece to his parents, as is apparent in his choice of title: it actually reads 'Ma y Pa' (Ma and Pa). The remaining three pieces on the CD are by Kraayenhof himself.

'Clavel rojo' is dedicated to Pugliese. "The title means 'Red carnation', as Pugliese always wore this flower," Kraayenhof explains. "The piece symbolises this man, who was regularly imprisoned under Perón's reign for being a communist. The people used to spray-paint the walls: 'The tango is in prison'. His orchestra would then continue to perform, albeit without its leader, and as a means of protest and respect, a red carnation would be placed on the keys of the piano. That is why there is a quiet piano solo in the middle of this piece, symbolising the maestro."

There are characteristic tango influences in 'Máxima', but the piece also has much in common with the music of Chet Baker and Gershwin. It combines a reflection of the period the Argentinian Princess Máxima lived in New York with her present situation, now the young, modern Argentinian is to fulfil a traditional role in her own particular way: tradition versus modern, and tango versus jazz.

Kraayenhof wrote 'Milonga para Thirza' for his wife, who is also his manager. "Thirza studied choreography and dance, but was forced to stop because of an injury. Her artistic dream could not be fulfilled. The music is melancholy and the text I added for the soprano mirrors this unfulfilled dream."

Text: Rob Becker / Translation: Fiona J. Gale

Carel Kraayenhof

More than anyone, Carel Kraayenhof (born in Aalst-Waalre, on August 15, 1958) has earned the title of Ambassador of the Argentinian tango in the Netherlands. The bandoneon-player from the Dutch polder landscape of Middenbeemster has been extremely popular in the top tango circles in Argentina now for years. He was a personal friend to legendary – now dead and gone – tango figure heads such as Osvaldo Pugliese, probably the world's greatest tango pianist and bandleader, and Astor Piazzolla, who personified the Tango Nuevo both as bandoneon-player and composer. Furthermore, Kraayenhof is still in contact with Pugliese's widow and daughter and Piazzolla's children, as well as with Oscar Lopez Ruiz, who was Piazzolla's guitar-player for 25 years. Kraayenhof is also doing his best to keep the moribund tango music school in Buenos Aires operational by giving benefit concerts organised by his wife and manager, Thirza Lourens.

In the Netherlands, Carel Kraayenhof is best known as a founder-member of the Sexteto Canyengue, a tango orchestra which has acquired increasing international success since 1988. Together with directors Leendert Pot and Rolf Lambert, he has also made documentaries about his visit to Maestro Osvaldo Pugliese in Argentina ('Em-



braced by the tango' 1991) and about the bandoneon ('Bandoneón' 1998) respectively.

Kraayenhof has played with various major orchestras and celebrated musicians (among others, Yo-Yo Ma and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra). In order to pass on his knowledge of and passion for the bandoneon and for tango music in general, he set up the Argentinian Tango department in 1993 at the Rotterdam Conservatoire, together with fellow bandoneon-player Leo Vervelde, under the artistic directorship of Maestro Pugliese. To this day, this is the only school in the world where tango lessons are taught at conservatoire level.

The autodidact Kraayenhof already earned major artistic recognition in 1987 after playing for three months, at the invitation of the maestro himself, in one of Piazzolla's quintets as bandoneon soloist in the musical 'Tango Passionado' on Broadway (New York). The foundation for this role had been laid shortly beforehand when he first met the Maestro in the Netherlands. Kraayenhof had been drummed up to lend his instrument to Piazzolla for a concert, as the maestro's bandoneon had broken down. Finally, Piazzolla's instrument was repaired in time for the concert, but by then Kraayenhof had already demonstrated his own instrument. This enabled the maestro to hear that the Dutchman had been to Buenos Aires and could really play this extremely difficult instrument; and that he understood the musical

language of the tango. At the invitation of Pugliese and his orchestra, Kraayenhof also performed with his Sexteto Canyengue in Buenos Aires (1990) and in the Carré theatre in Amsterdam (1992).

Public recognition finally arrived in February this year, when Kraayenhof was invited to play at the wedding of Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Máxima. His performance of 'Adiós Nonino' during the service in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam moved the Argentinian princess, as well as many television viewers, to tears. The performance in the church quickly became a major hit and in no time it was also 'available' on the Internet. This most famous of Piazzolla's compositions was also included in the official wedding CD, which immediately went to platinum upon release.

After the royal wedding, the whole of Holland immediately fell for the tango and the bandoneon. Neither had the performance gone unnoticed in Argentina. Congratulations poured into the Kraayenhof home: Daniel Piazzolla, the son of the maestro, wrote that his father would have been proud of Kraayenhof; Oscar Lopez Ruiz praised the Dutchman for playing both in the style and with the emotion of Piazzolla; and Osvaldo Pugliese's widow wrote that she had enjoyed Kraayenhof's playing, and had been deeply moved by the manner in which the Argentinian tango had been honoured during the wedding ceremony. "Following the wedding, we performed

with the Sexteto three times to a sold-out Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and a fully packed Doelen in Rotterdam,” said Kraayenhof. “Before then, that would have been unthinkable!”

During the royal wedding in the Nieuwe Kerk, Kraayenhof performed with the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra and the Dutch Chamber Choir under conductor Ed Spanjaard. Thus the idea came about for Kraayenhof and his Sexteto to record a new CD together with Ed Spanjaard, Bob Zimmermann, the choir and the orchestra. This CD, ‘Tango Royal’, contains performances by Kraayenhof with members of the Sexteto Canyengue, the Dutch Chamber Choir, the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra and the soloists Vesko Eschkenazy (violin) and Heleen Koele (soprano), under conductor Ed Spanjaard. The repertoire includes ‘Aconcagua’ – a concerto for bandoneon, strings, piano, harp and percussion – and four other pieces by Astor Piazzolla; ‘Maypa’ by Roberto Daniel Alvarez; and three compositions by Kraayenhof himself. Naturally, it also includes ‘Adiós Nonino’.

Text: Rob Becker / Translation: Fiona J. Gale

Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra

The Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra (Concertgebouw Kamerorkest) was founded in 1987 and consists of members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. Before that time it was called the Amsterdam Chamber Orchestra (Amsterdams Kamerorkest). The ensemble made numerous recordings between 1957 and 1987, conducted by the likes of André Rieu and Anton van der Horst, and it took part in significant national events such as the coronation of Queen Beatrix on 30 April 1980 and the state visit of US President George Bush in 1989. The Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra also made a name for itself internationally: recent performances include concerts in Belgium, Italy, Spain, Germany, Finland, Portugal and Japan. In addition CD recordings are made regularly for several labels. The recording released in 1999 of Mahler’s arrangements of string quartets by Schubert (“Death and the Maiden”) and Beethoven (Op. 95) earned BBC Music Magazine’s highest accolade (five stars) for artistic direction and recording quality. Among the soloists to have performed with the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra are Maria João Pires, Friedrich Gulda, Eliane Rodrigues, Lynn Harrel, Jaap van Zweden, Isabelle van Keulen, Janine Jansen, Rudolf Koelman, Quirine Viersen, Jacob Slagter and Vesko Eschkenazy. Since 1995 the ensemble’s permanent conductor has been the Italian Marco Boni.

The Netherlands Chamber Choir

The Netherlands Chamber Choir’s repertoire consists primarily of works for a cappella choir, from early medieval to contemporary music. The conductor Stephen Layton, a native of Great Britain, was appointed chief conductor of the Netherlands Chamber Choir beginning 2002. The Belgian early music specialist

Paul Van Nevel is the principal guest conductor. Other conductors making regular guest appearances include the doyen of choral music, the Swedish conductor Eric Ericson, the former chief conductor Tonu Kaljuste, the German conductor Uwe Gronostay, the Dutch conductor Ed Spanjaard and the Dane Bo Holten.

Each season the Netherlands Chamber Choir offers its own a cappella concert series in ten cities across the Netherlands. In addition the choir frequently appears in other venues, both in the Netherlands and abroad. In recent years the ensemble has performed in Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Palestine, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States. The Netherlands Chamber Choir also regularly joins forces with a variety of instrumental ensembles, such as the Schoenberg Ensemble under conductor Reinbert de Leeuw (with a recent performance in New York’s Carnegie Hall and Vienna’s Musikverein) and the Orchestra of the 18th Century under Frans Brüggen. Bach’s St. John Passion was recently performed together with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, under the direction of Ton Koopman, for live television broadcast both in the Netherlands and abroad. In the summer of 1998 the Netherlands Chamber Choir and the Budapest Festival Orchestra made their debut performance at the Salzburger Festspiele under conductor Ivan Fischer.

While most symphony orchestras are autonomous organizations, this is generally not the case with professional choirs, which are usually linked to an opera house or a radio broadcasting company. The Netherlands Chamber Choir is unique in this regard, being an autonomous and full-time vocal ensemble enjoying full financial support of the Dutch government. Founded in 1937, the choir consists of 26 singers, who, in addition to being accomplished soloists, give particular priority to ensemble singing and the performance of a cappella repertoire.

Ed Spanjaard

Conductor Ed Spanjaard was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, and studied both in Amsterdam and London. He then worked as an assistant to Bernard Haitink, Georg Solti and Herbert von Karajan and for

a while he was a member of staff of the Glyndebourne Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

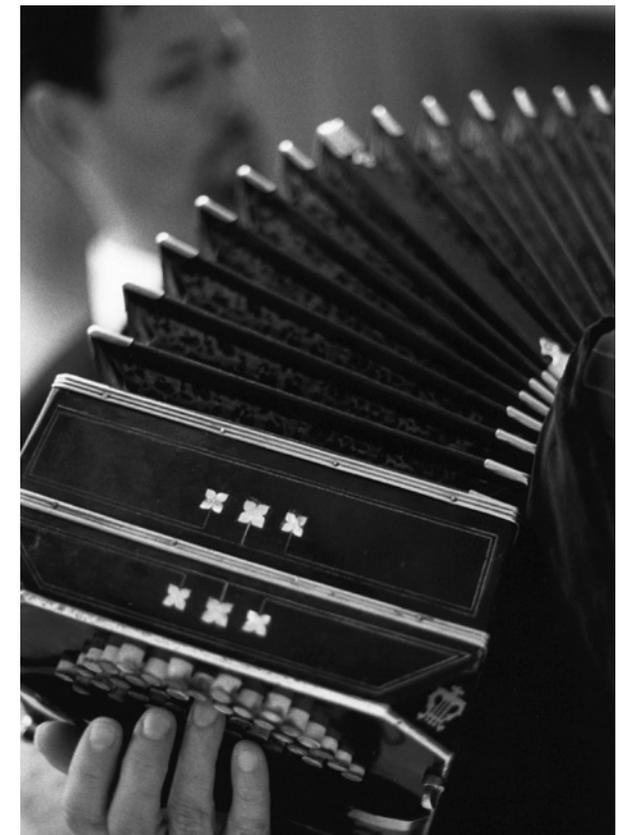
He has conducted many interesting premières with ensembles such as the Ensemble Intercontemporain Paris and the Klangforum Wien. Since 1982 he has been the Chief Conductor of the Nieuw Ensemble, with which he has given concerts in cities such as Paris, New York, Edinburgh, Berlin and Prague, as well as performances at many prestigious festivals.

In March 2001, Ed Spanjaard conducted the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, after which he was reinvented to conduct this world-renowned orchestra during the 2002-2003 season.

He has twice been awarded an Edison for CD’s he has recorded with the Dutch Chamber Choir.

In June 2002, Ed Spanjaard will conduct the première of a major opera by Guo Wenjing in a Vara Matinee. He recently conducted *Il trovatore* in the Ahoy hall in Rotterdam, where he had earlier given a marvellous performance of *La traviata* in 2000. Since September 2001, Ed Spanjaard has been Chief Conductor of the Limburg Symphony Orchestra.

Translation: Fiona J. Gale



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