

Payadora BIO

#1 Album on the World Music Charts Europe March 2023 Payadora Tango Ensemble Tops the World Music Charts Europe in March 2023

Payadora is an award-winning chamber music ensemble that performs its own arrangements of a core repertoire drawing from Argentinian/Uruguayan Tango and Folk music, as well as their own original compositions. Made up of a group of players who are each musical powerhouses in their own right, this “superstar group” has combined their deep knowledge of tango with their classical, jazz and world music backgrounds to create something entirely new. Their performances convey joy, virtuosity, humour and their intense passion for the music that they play.

They are currently touring three different projects: Their tango quintet program, [Tango in the Dark](#)-performances with PointeTango Dance Company (fusion ballet/tango duo) and their latest CD, released by Six Degrees Records, the critically acclaimed [“Silent Tears: The Last Yiddish Tango”](#) for which they composed and arranged music based on testimonies of women who survived the Holocaust. It has received rave reviews and press coverage around the globe, including reports on the BBC, CTV, CBC television and radio, the Bangkok Post, NPR, and RTE Irish Public Radio who called it “one of the best Jewish recordings-ever.”

Payadora’s lineup features some of the most respected chamber musicians, in Canada: Rebekah Wolkstein (violin, vocals), Drew Jurecka (bandoneon, violin, mandolin), Joseph Phillips (double bass, guitar) Robert Horvath (piano) and Elbio Fernandez (vocals).

Founded in 2013, Payadora’s broad scope in tango draws from the height of Buenos Aires’ Tango tradition, including compositions by De Caro, Pugliese, Troilo, and Salgan, to the masterful, contemporary sounds of Astor Piazzolla and beyond. They compose and arrange their own repertoire. They created and recorded the score for a one hour film with PointeTango Dance Company with whom they are performing upcoming shows at Toronto Summer Music Festival and various festivals. They have received creation and recording grants from Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council. They received a generous grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to create a multi-arts digital presentation telling an Argentine folk tale through music, dance, illustration and words This project will be free to the public and online in June 2023. Their newest album is currently #17 on the [Transglobal World Music Chart](#).

Performance Highlights:

Highlights from Payadora’s past performances include sold-out shows at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa Chamberfest, Indian River Music Festival in PEI, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Harbourfront Centre, Stafford Summer Music, Toronto Music Festival, the TD Toronto Jazz Festival, and for the Canadian Opera Company's World Music Series at the Four Seasons

Centre. Payadora has been featured with the London Symphonia, Cathedral Bluffs Symphony and the Hannaford Street Silver Band, Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound, World Accordion and Tango Festival in Victoria, BC, Leith Festival in Owen Sound, Music in the Morning in Vancouver and Vancouver Island Music Festival. They also perform with and are recording the upcoming album for the Grammy award-winning “Yiddish Glory.”

Rebekah Wolkstein, violin, vocals

Celebrated for her stunning virtuosity, nuance and broad musical versatility, Wisconsin-born violinist, Rebekah Wolkstein has established a strong presence on the Toronto music scene. Rebekah has worked as an orchestral musician since winning an audition at the age of 16. She has performed and toured extensively with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The National Ballet of Canada, The Canadian Opera Company.

An active studio musician, Rebekah is also at home playing in the styles of Folk, Klezmer, Pop, Latin, and Jazz and can be heard on numerous recordings including new releases by Donovan Woods, Laila Biali, Royal Wood and Justin Gray.

Rebekah is the first violinist of the Venuti String Quartet venutistringquartet.com. She has performed as a violin soloist with Esmerelda Enrique Spanish Dance Company, Kaeja Dance and live to air with Simon Spiro on classical 96.3 FM and with Russell Braun.

Aside from her active performing career, Rebekah holds a Doctorate in Violin Performance from the University of Toronto as well as degrees in violin from the Cleveland Institute of Music. A dedicated educator, Rebekah teaches private lessons and ensembles out of her own studio and at Humber College.

Drew Jurecka, bandoneon, violin

Drew Jurecka began his relationship with Payadora as record producer for both of their albums. He is an accomplished jazz and session violinist but also as an arranger, producer, composer and multi-instrumentalist. Trained classically, he studied with Lorand Fenyves and has a degree from the prestigious Cleveland Institute of Music. Drew has spent the last twelve years playing jazz, pop, rock and other contemporary styles in Toronto. Though violin is his primary instrument, he also works frequently as a performer and recording sideman on viola, saxophone, clarinet and mandolin. For five years, Drew played with Jeff Healey as part of his Jazz Wizards band, which toured extensively across Canada. Drew can be heard on three of Jeff Healey's CDs, including the Juno Nominated "Last Call". Drew has also toured nationally and internationally

with The Polyjesters, Jesse Cook, Stuart McLean and the Vinyl Cafe, Alex Pangman, the Bebop Cowboys and Jill Barber.

Drew's arrangements have been used on countless records for artists across Canada, the United States and Europe. Drew has written original scores for eight stage plays, including seven for Vancouver-based 'Monster Theatre' and one for Tracey Erin Smith's play "the Burning Bush", which has been performed extensively in Toronto and New York City. He has also written and produced music for film, including the award winning documentary "Cuba Libre" and the recent shorts "An Insignificant Man" and "Sidestep Goosestep".

Drew currently teaches violin at Humber College, where he has helped to create the only specialized jazz strings post-secondary program in Canada. In seven years, the program has quadrupled in size and now includes ensembles, technique and master classes in addition to private lessons. His students have gone on to win international jazz awards and to perform and record in Canada, the US and France. From 2002 - 2011, Drew was the director of the Jazz series at the Northern Lights Music Festival in Guadalajara, Mexico. During that time he sold out nearly every show, performing with renowned Canadian artists such as Richard Underhill, Daniel Barnes, Terra Hazelton, Sophia Perlman and Jill Barber. He is also a member of the Venuti String Quartet, venutistringquartet.com a crossover quartet with violinist Rebekah Wolkstein.

More about Drew at his website: www.drewjurecka.com

Joseph Phillips, double bass/ guitar

Born and raised in Toronto close to the rolling green hills of Christie Pits, Joe Phillips started studying classical guitar at age 9, at the University Settlement House Music School. He attended Oakwood Collegiate, and after some time playing the clarinet, he discovered the double bass. Time spent playing in various blues bars, Irish pubs and booze cans and four years studying with renowned classical virtuoso Joel Quarrington have led to a busy and diverse career. When not playing principal bass in Orchestra London Canada, Joe can be found making music with artists as varied as The Art of Time Ensemble, Via Salzburg Chamber Orchestra, Group of 27 Chamber Orchestra, cabaret siren Patricia O'Callaghan, songwriters Jenny Whiteley, Sarah Slean, Ruth Moody, the Wailin' Jennys, Corin Raymond and Rita Chiarelli, jazz bassist/cellist/composer Andrew Downing, banjoist Jayme Stone, Canadian fiddlers Pierre Schryer and Shane Cook and Irish flute and whistle virtuoso Nuala Kennedy. Joe has performed with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, I Musici de Montréal, Tafelmusik and the Festival of the Sound and is an annual participant in the Sweetwater Music weekend in Owen Sound, Ontario. He lives in London, Ontario with his partner and their two children.

Robert Horvath, piano

Robert Horvath is a versatile pianist, gaining wide recognition in the province of Ontario. He has performed regularly with the CBSO since 2008 performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor and Bach's single, double, triple, and quadruple keyboard concerti in one evening. In 2008, he performed Gerald Finzi's Eclogue for Piano and Strings with the York Chamber Ensemble, and in 2003, was part of the Royal Ontario Museum's grand re-opening. Robert, who has been praised as "...a fine pianist with musical imagination and sensitivity" by McMaster Artist-in-Residence and internationally acclaimed pianist Valerie Tryon, will be featured soloist in recital for The Caskey School of Music concert series with a program entitled "Chopin and Friends". Speaking of his recording of Bach's F minor Piano Concerto, renowned vocal coach Elaine Overholt said, "His nuances are exquisite. His incredible technique allows Robert so much range with the dynamics, and his heart leads you to the magic." An important priority for Robert Horvath is music education. He founded the Horvath School of Music in 2002, and he has been an assistant teacher for Elaine Overholt at the Big Voice Studio in Toronto where he teaches classical piano, jazz (harmony), song writing and improvisation. Robert was a recipient of a Canada Council grant in 2008. He earned his Masters Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Bela Bartok Conservatory of Music in his native Hungary; his musical ancestry can be traced back to Franz Liszt.