

Payadora Ensemble

Rebekah Wolkstein, violin/vocals
Drew Jurecka, bandoneon/violin/vocals
Joseph Phillips, bass
Clark Schaufele, piano

Payadora is an award-winning ensemble that performs its own arrangements of a core repertoire drawing from Argentinian/Uruguayan traditions (tangos, milongas, waltzes, and folk music such as the Zamba and chacarera), as well as original songs inspired by that tradition. Comprised of musicians who are each musical powerhouses in their own right, this “superstar group” has combined their profound love of tango with their classical, jazz and world music backgrounds to create something entirely new. Payadora is officially endorsed by the Argentinian Consulate in Toronto for its adherence to the spirit of tango, and audiences flock to performances that convey joy, virtuosity, humour and intense passion.

Since 2013, Payadora has presented concerts and sold-out shows at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa Chamberfest, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Toronto’s Harbourfront Centre, Stratford Summer Music, Toronto Summer Music, Festival of the Sound, Vancouver Island MusicFest, Toronto Jazzfest, the COC’s World Music Series at the Four Seasons Centre and the World Accordion & Tango Festival in Victoria. Payadora has also collaborated with the London Symphonia, the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony and the Hannaford Street Silver Band, as well as with PointeTango Dance Company, which explores the intersection between classical dance and earthy tango.

In the spring of 2023, Payadora’s third and latest CD, the critically acclaimed “Silent Tears: The Last Yiddish Tango”, reached #1 on the World Music Charts in Europe, accompanied by rave reviews, airtime, and press coverage around the globe, including the BBC, CTV, CBC television and radio, the Bangkok Post, NPR, and RTE Irish Public Radio. “...The most memorable release I have ever had the privilege to listen to and review” (WholeNote Magazine). “Silent Tears” is currently #17 on the Transglobal World Music Chart.

Payadora’s November 2023 tour of South America was a huge success which included winning “Best New Piece” at the 2023 Yiddish Music Awards in São Paulo. They have received creation and recording grants from Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council, as well as a generous grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to create a multi-arts digital presentation of an Argentine folk tale told through music, dance, illustration and words. They look forward to more international touring and recording their 4th CD in 2024.