

SONGLINES

JUNE 2010

Fernando Otero Vital

World Village 468094

Mid Price (36 mins)



Tango with brains and brilliance



Tango is one of those realms where *Songlines'* already wide-open world music remit frequently brushes dandruff-speckled shoulders with the classical idiom. Fernando Otero's vivacious *Vital* album is just such a case, being the product of an Argentinian pianist and composer who chose to explore his native Buenos Aires' urban folk music only after training as



a conservatory musician. He brings to tango a learned, considered virtuosity as well as huge amounts of creative flair and raw energy. Like Piazzolla, an obvious influence, Otero is a wanderer, spending time in London and Madrid before finally re-rooting in New York (where, of course, Piazzolla first discovered tango and where, in many ways, his brilliance was, years later, discovered for the world). Otero's work is also influenced by jazz as well as the fractured modern classical excursions of Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg and Brazilian composer and Nadia Boulanger-acolyte Egberto Gismondi. The three opening tracks deconstruct tango with chaotic, dramatic strings-led experiments. Then 'Siderata' takes us on a night stalk to a jazz-tango club. Otero is at home dazzling us with balletic piano work or indulging unashamedly in melancholy. Tango does not lead his style but, rather, wanders discreetly through the background of what is often somewhat grandiose and theatrical but always intelligent music.

Chris Moss