

*"They say that nostalgia is a form of homesickness, a general longing for the old days, for lost happiness, for home, for the good old days ...".
(from the performance Nostalgia)*

DUO LA LUNA

When Helena Rüegg is studying bandoneon at the Rotterdam Conservatoire, one day her phone rings: "Do you want to play in my tango quintet? "I would love to", says Helena, "but unfortunately I can't really play yet! "That doesn't matter", is the answer, "the most important thing is that you are there"!

That's how Helena Rüegg met the guitarist and leader of the Quinteto Bailongo Rob Bangert in 1996 and the two became good friends. Over the past 25 years they have invented and shared many musical adventures together. Since 2018 Helena and Rob mainly play together as a duo. Because the moon with its suggestive appearance often inspires them for their various projects they call themselves "Duo La Luna".

Helena and Rob want to offer their audience more than a standard concert programme. That's why they combine their play with other art forms such as poetry, stories, films, theatre and dance.

Their most recent concert programme Nostalgia, which premiered in the South of France in August 2020, is also an interplay of text and music. The central theme is the story of a mysterious Hungarian immigrant who discovered the world of "milongueros" and "tangueros" (tango dancers and tango lovers) in Buenos Aires at the beginning of the 20th century. Embedded in this frame story are traditional tangos, own newly composed pieces and two compositions by famous Argentine guitarists written especially for the Duo La Luna.

Helena Rüegg (1959) - Bandoneon

Helena Rüegg was born in Zurich. She started her professional career as an actress in the Münchner Residenztheater, the Schauspielhaus Bochum and as a singer in the jazz ensemble Collage 11.

In 1992 Helena discovered the bandoneon and takes lessons in Buenos Aires with the Maestros Julio Pane and Rodolfo Mederos and with Juan José Mosalini in Paris. In 1998 she completed her music studies at the tango department of the Rotterdam Conservatory. Helena also worked as an author and journalist, for the WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne) and other German-language radio stations. In 1999 her standard work on the history of tango "Tango, Geschichte und Geschichten" was published by DTV Premium. In 2018 and 2019, Helena is participating in a project financed by the European Union. Together with Italian, French, Portuguese and Croatian partners she developed the musical theatre play "Butterflies on flowers". This multimedia show was based on diary entries, stories, documentaries and emblematic music about the youth uprisings in the 1968s. Helena has recorded many CDs, including with Quique Sinesi, Michel Godard and Mischa Pfeiffer. Currently she presents the successful podcast series "Los Maestros de la Música cuentan", in which Helena makes her many interviews with famous tango musicians available to a wide audience.

Rob Bangert (1963) - guitar

Rob Bangert was born in the Netherlands. From 1984 to 1990 he studied musicology at the University of Amsterdam and classical and electric guitar at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam. In 1996/1997 he studied at the Escuela de la Música Popular in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He further perfected his playing with today's most important guitarists, such as Manuel Barrueco and David Russell.

After his music studies, Rob tours the world and performs with various ensembles. In the early nineties he founded the Quinteto Bailongo and recorded several CDs with it. In collaboration with Scottish guitarist Tony McManus, Rob has published several compositions and transcriptions at "Acoustic Music Records" and "Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop". On his long list of cooperation partners is also the name of the French top guitarist Pierre Bensusan.

"My grandmother believed in dreams. She said to me: 'You must always take your dreams seriously, even if it seems impossible and everyone declares you crazy ...'.
(from the performance Nostalgia)

Máximo Diego Pujol (1957) - Siglo XXI

It all starts when Máximo, as a little boy, discovers a guitar in some closet in his parents' house in a quiet suburb of Buenos Aires called Villa Pueyrredon. At the age of nine, Maximo gives his first concert in the nearby Villa Martelli. During his studies at the conservatory Juan José Castro in Buenos Aires, Máximo also takes private lessons in harmony and composition with Leonidas Arnedo. Since then Pujol has tried to combine his classical music knowledge with traditional Argentine tango.

Nowadays the compositions of Máximo Diego Pujol are played all over the world and recorded on CD.

Máximo is a friend of Helena and Rob and has composed "SIGLO XXI" especially for the duo in 2019.

Helena Rüegg (1959) - SUITE LES FORTUNES

Helena has been composing music for radio plays, lectures, theatre and dance for about twenty years. In 2017 she is commissioned by the Swiss cultural foundation "Pro Helvetia" to compose new Swiss folk music. She chooses a quartet line-up of santur, an Iranian form of the zither, saxophone, cello and bandoneon. The premiere of this work took place in August 2017 during the "Alpentöne" festival in Altdorf and will be broadcasted by Italian and German Swiss radio and television.

From 8 March to 15 June 2020, the world was hit by a global lockdown as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. All countries are closing their borders. Helena spends these seemingly endless weeks in a small village in Haute Provence called Sigonce. To occasionally get some fresh air and find inner peace, Helena regularly drives to the Bergerie "Les Fortunes" of her old friend Herman Vinck, a Belgian/Dutch actor and director. In the garden of this Bergerie Herman had once built a workshop for Helena. At Rob's suggestion Helena writes several compositions in the form of a suite, as a tribute to Herman Vinck who died in October 2019.

El Abuelito, Hermanito, Milonga de la suerte and **Pinzón** are the four original parts of this suite "Les Fortunes". The fifth composition is a piece that Helena wrote in the same period for a radio play project of the Artiance arts centre in Alkmaar. The piece fits very well with

the other parts of the suite and is entitled **Diosa del Camino**, a reference to Hermann's old Citroën DS.

The compositions **Amavita**, **Ascona Dreams**, **Florcita**, **Alejandra** and **Nostalghia** were written by Helena for earlier projects. For this CD they have been specially arranged for bandoneon and guitar. Florcita is a solo piece for bandoneon. Amavita was inspired by Penthesilea's declaration of love to Achill, whom she had just killed in her duel (from Heinrich von Kleist's play). Ascona Dreams is composed for the project Building Bridges, which takes place every autumn in Ascona in Switzerland.

Florcita and Alejandra are a tribute to the Jewish Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik. The composition Nostalghia was written in 2017 for the Swiss festival "Alpentöne". In it Helena quotes a German national anthem, a song her father used to sing when she was little. The title expresses her admiration for the work of Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky.

The composition **Ara Gesora** is about the freedom and joy that Helena feels in the tropical vegetation of the canton of Ticino in the south of Switzerland. This wild and partly unexplored nature is for her an inexhaustible source of inspiration. It is here, in this beautiful region where she grew up, that Helena finds the peace and energy to invent all those beautiful melodies that characterise her compositions.

Thanks to the CD Nostalghia, a broad audience can become acquainted with Helena's compositions for the first time.

Quique Sinesi (1960) - Juegos de Luna

Quique Sinesi was born in 1960 in Buenos Aires. Thanks to his great virtuosity and his unmistakable style, he is considered one of the most important guitarists in Argentina. He has played with, among others, Charlie Mariano, Dino Saluzzi and Pablo Ziegler. His music is based on free improvisation and combines style elements from the tango and folklore of the "Rio de la Plata".

Quique and Helena have been friends for 23 years and have given many concerts together. In 2012 they recorded the CD "Días de Felicidad" together with the famous jazz musician Michel Godard (Enja 2012, Munich). In 2019 Quique composed the piece "Juegos de Luna". This tribute to the Duo la Luna is a composition full of groove, changes in harmony and arpeggios, a style that is characteristic of his work and which he himself loves very much.