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Constructing the authentic : approaching the '6 Tango-Etudes pour Flute Seule' by Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) for interpretation and performance

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CONSTRUCTING THE AUTHENTIC: APPROACHING THE '6 TANGO-ETUDES  
POUR FLÛTE SEULE' BY ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992) FOR INTERPRETATION  
AND PERFORMANCE

JESSICA QUIÑONES

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

September 2013

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CONSTRUCTING THE AUTHENTIC: APPROACHING THE '6 TANGO-ETUDES POUR FLÛTE SEULE' BY  
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992) FOR INTERPRETATION AND PERFORMANCE

BY

JESSICA QUIÑONES

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## Abstract

Since Astor Piazzolla's death in 1992, his *6 Tango-Etudes pour flûte seule* (1987) have quickly entered the flute oeuvre to become standard Western 'classical' concert repertoire, despite their association with tango as the core of their musical style. Though Piazzolla's music has much musical appeal abroad, performative differences exist between 'foreign' and Argentinean musical interpretations of the tango – and by extension to the performance of this score – due to various misappropriations of both the notation and the cultural background, which have often been used to suggest an 'authentic' reading. As a way to bridge the gap between the two styles, the current tango performance literature largely focuses on didactic, imitative approaches to the genre, with only limited discussion of how various essential cultural references might pragmatically influence an interpretation of Piazzolla's published repertoire.

This thesis addresses ways in which the 'authentic' has been constructed in the tango genre in a variety of contexts both in Argentina and abroad, and how this understanding can suggest a new reading of the score of Piazzolla's *6 Etudes*. Current discussions from the field of (ethno)musicology as well as other disciplines within the social sciences are incorporated. The quantitative approaches used draw upon a wide range of performance analyses for understanding Piazzolla's own performances, and those from tango and western players. The author's field work in Buenos Aires and experience as a conservatoire-trained flautist is combined with various qualitative discourse analyses. Initial concepts of what constitutes a pure cultural setting of Piazzolla's scores are challenged, and then expanded from current viewpoints to include various vital cultural practices inseparable from the notation. New approaches to the interpretational processes that are currently found to exist among western flautists when performing this work are pragmatically demonstrated so as to encourage fresh renditions of not only the *6 Etudes*, but also Piazzolla's other compositions from the same period.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In February 1998, I attended an undergraduate performance class at a traditional American conservatoire, where a chance encounter became the initial spark – the conception – for this thesis. Two students had formed a duo consisting of a flute and a guitar and had just introduced the first movement of a work that they were about to perform for the class. No-one there seemed to be familiar with an Argentinean tango composer called Astor Piazzolla, including me. The impression was that this piece (which later I learnt was *Bordel 1900* from the *Histoire du tango*) was distinct from any other sound I had encountered in the flute repertoire. As the duo played through the movement, a combination of zesty runs, frilly melodies, instrumental drumming, and unusual rhythmic patterns held my younger ears captive.

If discovering Piazzolla's flute music as an undergraduate was the conception point, the birth of this project was a result of a fifteen-year fascination and struggle as a musician studying, playing, performing, and then teaching these particular etudes. As these works have gained popularity amongst flautists, I had the sensation that western musicians<sup>1</sup> (such as myself) did not play Piazzolla's tango scores in the manner that 'native' Argentine tango players would. Particularly there seemed to be a divergence in the way that Piazzolla's own performances sounded when compared to his scores, which seemed to contain a number of features missing from, or at least different to his notation.

I always hoped to capture the tango style I heard in the composer's own performances – the first I had ever owned, 'The Central Park Concert' of 1987 – which for me remains wildly stimulating, vibrant, sensuous, free, energetic, spontaneous, and electric. Yet to translate any of these perceptions to the etudes seemed tricky without dismissing the notation altogether, which felt 'restrained'. It seemed something was 'missing', and a straight rendering meant I rarely felt like I was *really* playing my notion of tango (or teaching it, for that matter), but rather a boxed-in, stiff-lipped version that did not have the same vitality and sounds I heard in the composer's performance style. I sought western flute recordings (the only ones I could find) for inspiration, and though they were technically precise and tonally brilliant they seemed unhelpful for my endeavour. I emulated some of the sound effects that I

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<sup>1</sup> The use of various terms throughout the thesis such as 'western musician', 'western conservatoire-trained musician', 'western flautist', and 'western composer' refers not to one's geographical location or birthplace, but to an artist trained within western notated traditions and current conservatoire 'mainstream' pedagogies. Crucially it also refers to musicians without a specific access to an understanding of tango as a contextualised genre, and/or aspects of its associated performance practice traditions.

heard both Piazzolla and his ensemble flautists<sup>2</sup> bring to their performance, yet this mere reproduction felt ridiculous, inauthentic and artistically false – neither did I understand the context in which to add these ‘extras’. Equally problematic was the fact that I was encouraged to only play the scores ‘as written’ by my flute teachers in order to pass juried exam recitals to satisfy the conservatoire requirement to obtain my undergraduate and master’s degrees. Additionally tricky were questions about tango interpretation from pupils who were preparing Piazzolla’s music for their own exams and recitals.

As another entry point into the genre, I attended tango dance classes for a wider picture, but found a similar dissatisfaction. Although I learnt to walk in a tango style, and understand the complexity of basic *cortes* and *quebradas*, this did not necessarily mean that I could easily equate any of these dance gestures to understanding the notation more fully.

In short, there were many versions of the tango in my life: the exotic locales and flaming passion the genre evoked (helped by Hollywood films, like *Evita*), the dance classes I attended, the performances of Piazzolla and his numerous ensembles, and then Piazzolla’s tango scores for flute themselves – it seemed they did not easily fit together, and neither was I aware how they might be collaboratively utilised for a more fulfilling experience as an artist.

Upon further exploration, it would not seem that my initial experiences were overly paranoid or even unfounded as an ‘outsider’ to the tango world. Differences in playing styles prevail between tango interpretation from that of a classical player and someone versed within tango style. This can be demonstrated through an oft-repeated story in the biographies of Astor Piazzolla. The tale goes that in New York in the 1930s a young Piazzolla played his bandoneón for the renowned Argentinean tango singer Carlos Gardel for the first time. Though Piazzolla had only minimal experience both in studying the tango and a basic technical facility on the instrument (Gorin, 2001, p. 96), it was said that

Gardel liked [Piazzolla’s] versions of classical pieces but was unimpressed by his tangos. He put it to him in impeccable *lunfardo*, the street Spanish favoured by *porteños*, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires. ‘*Mirá, pibe, el fueye lo tocás fenómeno, pero el tango lo tocás como un gallego*’ (Look, lad, you’re top-notch at playing the squeezebox, but you play tango like a gringo!) (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 16; also see similar story in Gorin, 2001, p. 96 and Delgado, 2006, p. 20).

In a modern setting, a stylistic divide between schools of playing can also be demonstrated through Analia Trillo, a porteño flautist, who earned her music degree in ‘classical’ flute

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<sup>2</sup> The flute and saxophone players Arturo Schneider (in the ensembles of the María de Buenos Aires Operetta/Octeto Electrónico) and Luis Alberto ‘Chachi’ Ferreyra, (who replaced Schneider in the Octeto Electrónico from 1976–77) (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 105, 184, 195; Gorin, 2001, p. 215; Martino, 2008).

studies within a traditional western conservatory in Buenos Aires. She is now a tango flautist in *Chifladas*, a highly regarded female tango wind quintet within the capital.<sup>3</sup> In an interview, she expressed that:

For me, the most difficult thing in playing tango on the flute was to relate the classical technique of playing tango with the instrument; it took some time to understand that what I learned in my flute classes I could apply to the tango ... I felt immersed in two worlds that could not be joined. To play tango is not very well-regarded by the teachers of the conservatory ... for a long time I felt like I had to have two different ways of playing (Trillo, personal communication via email, 7 February, 2012).<sup>4</sup>

As a means to address this stylistic divide between tango and ‘non tango’ techniques, and perhaps as a response to the rise in popularity of Piazzolla’s music among classical players, a small collection of tango guides have been published in the last fifteen years which have aimed to explain tango musical practices to outsiders of the genre. These manuals, written by both Argentine and ‘western’ musicians, thematically focus on recreating tango musical techniques through score-based examples. Additionally, such methods predominantly focus on instruments found within a traditional tango ensemble, such as flute (Fain, 2010),<sup>5</sup> violin (Gallo, 2011), and piano (Granados, 2001). Conversely, the tango saxophone method by Monk (2009) reflects an emerging trend of non-traditional tango instruments being used within modern tango ensembles. Salgán, Monk, Fain, and Gallo are all professional tango musicians and pedagogues in Buenos Aires; their manuals usefully offer an audio CD of musical demonstrations for auto-didactic learning. Beyond single instrumental methods, also useful is Salgán’s *Tango Course* (2001) as well as Paralta’s *La Orquesta Típica: Mecánica y aplicación de los fundamentos técnicos del Tango* (2008). Both offer explanations of interpreting wider tango style, including structure, melody, accompaniment, counterpoint, harmony, and orchestration.

Approaches to the specific performance practice of Piazzolla’s scores are few. These include a short magazine article by Mauriño (1998) that focuses on interpretation of Piazzolla’s two flute works, though arranged for saxophone. A chapter within Granados’s thesis on piano practices of the Argentine tango (2001) focuses specifically on the performance of two piano arrangements – *Fuga y misterio* from the opera *María de Buenos*

<sup>3</sup> For more, see [www.chifladastango.com.ar](http://www.chifladastango.com.ar) (accessed 14 June 2013).

<sup>4</sup> All translations in this thesis are the author’s except where otherwise noted. Original text reads: ‘Para mí, lo más difícil de tocar tango en la flauta fue relacionar la técnica clásica de ejecución del instrumento con el tango; tardé un tiempo en entender que todo lo que aprendía en mis clases de flauta podía aplicarlo al tango ... me sentía inmersa en dos mundos que no se podían unir. Tocar tango no es muy bien visto por los profesores del conservatorio así que durante mucho tiempo sentía que tenía que tener como dos formas de tocar diferentes’.

<sup>5</sup> See a detailed review of Fain’s manual in Quiñones, 2011.



*Aires*, and *Coral* from the *Suite Punta del Este*. Drago (2008) offers a performance analysis for the interpretation of Piazzolla's many published symphonic works, and Link (2009) identifies specific performing practices of the musicians within the Second Quinteto as a means to inform future score readings.

While helpful to 'decode' tango techniques that could bridge the stylistic divide in order to better understand Piazzolla's *6 Etudes*, the current tango performance manuals have focused on interpretation through an imitative and didactic approach. However, wider research into how tango authenticity has been shaped reveals that tango interpretation is not always shaped according to the simplicity of 'mimic this tango technique' and 'play this rhythm' and one will instantly become a *tanguero* with a 'correct' playing style that is deemed 'genuine'; it would seem that playing an 'acceptable' tango is not as simple as learning a few token musical techniques.

When taking into account the sociological aspects from current research about the genre, it would seem that some *tangueros* might equally feel sceptical about my renderings of the tango – whether that is through dance or musical performance. An 'outsider' who attempts a tango is often missing something that cannot be explained – a sentiment, an expression, an appreciation of its complexity. For Argentineans, it has been said that the sacrosanct tango is 'deadly serious' (Taylor, 1987, p. 482), a 'stunningly complex and all-consuming focus for emotional life' (Goertzen and Azzi, 1999, p. 67). The tango world has many codes, rules, and behaviours, and a religious and cult-like practice has been maintained by those that participate in the genre (Savigliano, 1998, p. 104; Gorin, 2001, p. 48). Argentinean writer and tango scholar José Gobello describes the ethos of tango in mystical terms:

That which makes a thing a tango and not something else; that which, if it were missing, would no longer make tango a tango a tango; in sum the essence of tango'<sup>6</sup> (Cara, 2009, p. 443, citing Gobello, 1980, p. 1).

Therefore, unsurprisingly, the story of the 'outsider' portrayed as one who might misunderstand this sacred context when dancing the tango is echoed by an Argentinean dancer who noted that:

Only a gringo<sup>7</sup> would make a clown of himself by taking advantage of a tango for chat or amusement' (Taylor, 1987, p. 485).

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<sup>6</sup> Original text reads: 'Eso que hace que algo sea tango y no otra cosa; eso que si le faltara al tango, el tango ya no sería tango; la esencia del tango, en fin.'

Similar sentiments of a ‘foreign’ rendering of a tango also extend to musical performance. It is said that tango music is something that cannot be taught anywhere, it is a feeling that is ‘in the blood’ and in one’s ‘soul’ (Granados, 2001, citing personal interview with Susana Salgán, 2000, p. 90). The Argentinean philosopher and poet Jorge Luis Borges wrote:

[I]f a foreign composer simply follows a tango formula and ‘urde correctamente un ‘tango’’ (hatches a correctly rendered ‘tango’) he will discover, not without ‘estupor’ (astonishment), that he has formulated ‘algo que nuestros oídos no reconocen, que nuestra memoria no hospeda y que nuestro cuerpo rechaza’ (something that our [Argentinean] ears don’t recognize, that our memory doesn’t welcome, and that our body rejects) (Cara, 2009, p. 443, citing Borges, 1974, p. 165).

Piazzolla describes how tango’s musical ‘tricks’ go beyond a technical skill, but become part of an internal, intuitive essence resistant to concrete description:

When I joined Troilo I tried to imitate many of his things ... I learned the tricks of the tangueros, those intuitive tricks that helped me later on. I couldn’t define them technically; they are forms of playing, forms of feeling; it’s something that comes from inside, spontaneously (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 31).

A similar sentiment exists towards western flautists who perform Piazzolla’s scores. The tango flute historian Alejandro Martino describes the *6 Etudes* and *Histoire du tango*:

These works provide us with an exciting opportunity: to compare the phrasing and the manner of the interpretation between Argentine and European flutists. There is something of Piazzolla among Argentines not found in the foreign discourse. This tiny strip of regional characteristic has been exploited by the Astor performer-composer-director to even more subtle details. And it is in this tiny strip – impossible to notate – wherein lies the most personal gesture of the art of tango. So much so that it becomes, sometimes, an unbridgeable gap even for the highest foreign virtuosity (Martino, 2008, p. 96).<sup>8</sup>

Piazzolla also demonstrates a sense of frustration with this stylistic divide when classical players have performed his music but have not rendered it in the manner in which he might have imagined. In 1970, Piazzolla’s ‘classical’ score *Tangazo: Variaciones sobre Buenos Aires* was premiered by the Ensamble Musical de Buenos Aires in America. This work is described as Piazzolla’s ‘best attempts to translate the tango into symphonic music’ (Azzi and

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to an immigrant that arrived from Galicia, Spain into Argentina, but also has come to be slang for a ‘foreigner.’

<sup>8</sup>The original text reads: ‘Estas obras nos brindan una interesantísima oportunidad: poder comparar el fraseo y el modo de hacer de la interpretación entre los flautistas argentinos y los europeos. Hay algo de Piazzolla entre los argentinos que no encontramos en el discurso extranjero. Esta pequeñísima franja de rasgo regional ha sido explotada por el Astor intérprete-compositor-director hasta más sutiles detalles. Y es en esta pequeñísima franja-imposible de graficar- en donde reside el gesto más personal del arte del tango. Tanto que se convierte, a veces, en una brecha infranqueable hasta para el más alto virtuosismo extranjero.’

Collier, 2000, p. 118); one of Piazzolla's more 'serious' compositional works (ibid., p. 211). In a later interview with Piazzolla in 1990, he gave his opinion of this specific premiere:

The Ensemble Musical de Buenos Aires did a good version. Perhaps it lacks some spice. Classical musicians are like that. They are from Buenos Aires, Argentines, and yet it seems they are embarrassed about the tango. It's an old feud between the classical and the popular music worlds. The musicians that play at Teatro Colón<sup>9</sup> look down on tango musicians as if they were garbage. And it shouldn't be this way. It's a big lie. Some musicians from Teatro Colón deserve to play in the worst nightclub in Buenos Aires. I had to deal with some of those places; I know them firsthand (Gorin, 2001, p. 86).

In 1989, when Piazzolla decided to dismantle his Sexteto in order to solely focus on his career as a bandoneón soloist with orchestras and chamber groups, the guitarist Horacio Malvicino tried to persuade him by saying

Look Astor, to get rid of a group with this terrific quality and play with a symphony orchestra is the same as getting rid of a marvellous girl and fucking an inflatable doll (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 271).

Though one can only guess the meaning of Malvicino's rather colourful metaphor here, the general theme prevails that listening to a classical player whose performances lack 'spice', is not much different to *performing* with a classical musician – which might also be a 'lifeless' experience with minimal gain for a tango player. Although these instances will not claim to capture every *tanguero's* opinion about 'outsiders' interpretations of the tango (i.e. those by foreigners and/or musicians from a western classical tradition), a general premise could read that 1) an outsider to the genre might not understand the complex social and musical elements needed in order to recreate the tango in any context, and 2) if one is Argentinean, it is not necessarily a pleasurable experience to listen to, or participate in a performance by an outsider. Questions then emerge in reference to the etudes that will be explored in this thesis: How does one navigate the complicated ties to tango authenticity and the culture with which it is associated if one *is* an 'outsider' when playing these scores? Can differences in playing styles between classical flautists and Piazzolla's own performances and those of tango players be measured quantitatively? How might a classical flautist approach the score to convincingly incorporate performance traits that are evident from Piazzolla and his ensemble musicians? How can these findings then be pragmatically applied to the etudes for performance and teaching?

The aim of this thesis is to encourage new performing traditions to emerge within a

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<sup>9</sup> The historic opera house of Buenos Aires.

reading of Piazzolla's etudes, and to suggest new contexts within which to approach the tension between the score and the composer/performer relationship. The aim of the research is not to try to find the 'authoritative' or 'correct' way to interpret Piazzolla's *6 Etudes*; there is no need for a definitive guide. To limit interpretation would confine the creative process and the possibilities for the inclusion of the many influences in Piazzolla's music. Instead, this study aims to draw upon a multiplicity of sources to further the understanding of Piazzolla's *6 Etudes* for a direct application to performance and interpretation. This will include current discussions from the field of musicology (and ethnomusicology) but will also use a cross-disciplinary approach with resources drawn from other areas within the social sciences, such as gender and sexuality studies, anthropology, and sociology. Performance traditions of both tango and western traditions will be explored through pedagogical manuals related to each respective style. To explore Piazzolla's music and the art form of the tango, historical accounts, qualitative analysis through interviews, field work in Buenos Aires, magazine and newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and film, will all be used to create both a macro- and micro-level understanding of the genre. Quantitative analytical methods will be employed, including numerous recording investigations, score reduction, aural transcription, and an ornamentation and gestural analyses.

### **Thesis Structure**

This thesis has been divided into three parts: **Section One** (Chapters 2 and 3) discusses how musical authenticity has been shaped through various elements of cultural contexts, and how these can be useful for performance. This section aims to provide a cultural platform in which to approach performing the Etudes in the next two sections of the thesis.

In Chapter 2 initial experiences of field work in Buenos Aires, as well as a survey of current tango research from other academic disciplines, are used to question the currently available tango performance manuals that point to a generalised and fixed notion of tango culture to implicate performance techniques. Focusing on national identity and sexuality – two areas where tango musical authenticity is often based – a new viewpoint is offered in which to create an authentic reading of the tango that moves away from a collective and staid cultural platform. A wider view of the available research into the genre indicates that these areas remain complicated due to ever-shifting notions of cultural authenticity.

In Chapter 3, the concept of '*la mugre*' is presented as a valued part of the creation of tango, and often how an 'authentic' tango is perceived. Instead of trying to pinpoint an exact definition of the term, this chapter explores how mugre has been shaped through descriptions

of imagery, physicality, intangibility, and musicality, all which overlap and are interrelated. How *mugre* is perceived through these numerous and complex contexts becomes another useful cultural platform from which to explore musical concepts within the etudes in future chapters.

**Section Two** (Chapters 4 and 5) explores the problematic notation found in the etudes and explores Piazzolla's advice to the performer on the front page of the published score that one 'should well exaggerate the accents and respirations, therefore inspiring the way of which tangos are played on the bandoneon' (Piazzolla, 1987).

Chapter 4 specifically explores the problematic notation of the accent symbol using *Etude 6* to explore stylistic differences between traditions of both classical and tango accentuation. A recording analysis of western flute players playing this movement is made using Sonic Visualiser software. Differences in accentuation style will be noted in comparison to Piazzolla's own accentuation techniques on his bandoneón, as well as those by myself, and tango players Fain and Gallo. In a move away from fixed 'either/or' dichotomies to indicate a correct way of performing the accents in *Etude 6*, the 'and/and' model is introduced to explore how tango notation feeds into wider concepts of the *acento largo* and 'tango swing', which function on macro- and micro-levels for understanding the numerous creative possibilities for future performances.

Chapter 5 explores the problematic breath mark in *Etude 1*. Piazzolla's use of a rhythmic ostinato provides the means to explore how this breath mark is part of a wider phrasing structure and is also reflective of tango notational practices. An analysis of recordings of the etude by western flautists, as well as a recording of Piazzolla playing the same rhythmic cell will be used in a quantitative study. To help understand phrasing practices, a gestural analysis will be employed from a live performance of Piazzolla playing. It will be proposed that the breath mark helps to facilitate tango phrasing on a wider scale, and provides numerous opportunities in which to interpret the breath notation.

**Section Three** (Chapters 6 and 7) focuses on improvisation, through the expressive melody and the rhythmic melody, both of which have different functions within the tango score. This section introduces a new way of viewing the etudes through the use of a tripartite sequence and offers a framework of how Piazzolla employed improvisation in his own works.

Chapter 6 focuses on Piazzolla's scores as part of a 'composed-in' compositional tradition that is contextualised with other western composers who are said to have had similar a 'spontaneous' notational style. The tripartite score system *Etude 4* is suggested as an

alternative way to view the notation of *Etude 4*, which is drawn from the application of the tripartite reduction-arrangement-rearrangement process found within tango contexts. A melodic reduction, an ornamental analysis, a recording analysis of western flute players, and a transcription of Piazzolla's own performance all point to ways in which the expressive melody could be manipulated through use of a framework for melodic improvisation.

Using the tripartite sequence presented in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 focuses on 'composed-in' rhythmic ornamentation and percussive effects within *Etude 5*. Rhythmic improvisation and the use of such effects when manipulating the notation became a means by which to mark time and tango swing, all explored through an ornamentation analysis.

In the concluding Chapter 8, the findings of Chapters 2–7 are summarised and drawn together in order to demonstrate the wider research implications, an application of *Etude 3* as a pragmatic simplification for both performance and pedagogy, and possible future research directions.

As a foreground to the work presented over this thesis, this chapter presents a general understanding of Piazzolla's career that not only gives a wider context to the etudes, but also refers to different works, his ensemble musicians, various key recordings, and specific concerts that will be discussed over the following chapters. Instead of focusing on *tango nuevo* and the latter part of Piazzolla's career (in which the *6 Etudes* were written) a wider scope will be used. This will highlight thematic areas that will feed into further discussions of how the etudes might be understood, including the composer's musical influences, his reception in Argentina and abroad, how he reinvented his style in the numerous ensembles he formed, and the tensions between the classical and tango worlds. A considerable amount has been published on the life and musical reception of Piazzolla and has been used to assemble this abridged musical biography. This will be followed by a contextualisation of the *6 Etudes* that explores their historical background and their critical reception.

## **A Brief Musical Biography of Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)**

### ***The Early Years***

Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla, an Argentinean composer, bandoneón<sup>10</sup> player and bandleader has been hailed as 'the saviour of tango' (Eisen, 2010), 'the modern master of tango music' (Azzi

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<sup>10</sup> The bandoneon (which from here, will be referred to with its Spanish spelling, bandoneón) is a relative to the accordion that was invented to replace the harmonium in churches as a less expensive substitute. It is speculated that it made its way from Germany to Buenos Aires in the late 1800s by immigrating sailors arriving in the port city (for more, see Zucchi, 1998; Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 8; Corrado, 2003).

and Collier, 2000, p. 282), and a ‘global superstar’ for the genre who ‘redefined the essence of the music’ (Moss, 2011, p. 53). Born of Italian immigrants in 1921 in the small fishing community of Mar del Plata, Argentina, from 1924 Piazzolla spent much of his formative years in New York City to where his family emigrated in the hope of better prospects (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 5). Piazzolla’s arrival into a 1920s New York full of new modern technologies, vast city streets, skyscrapers, museums, galleries, and a dense population would forever characterise the spirit of his music (Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, pp. 23–24). Piazzolla’s early musical encounters in the city were the early Argentinean musicians his father played on the gramophone and radio, such as Carlos Gardel, Pedro Maffia, and the De Caro brothers, as well as the jazz music seeping from the clubs onto the streets of Harlem – that of the Cotton Club’s Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Fletcher Henderson (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 8, 12, 14; Rafael, 2005, pp. 50–51; Amirkhanian, 2013, 1:02:40). In addition, he encountered Jewish klezmer melodies from the mixed ethnic community of where he lived in lower Manhattan’s Greenwich Village (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 6; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 26). Piazzolla was gifted a second-hand bandoneón by his father at the age of eight to specifically encourage the playing of tango music, he recalls the instrument being a ‘rarity in New York’ (Gorin, 2001, p. 126); ironically it was also his father’s dream to see his son one day become a famous tango musician (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 8). In 1930, a lack of financial stability from the Great Depression saw the family return to Mar del Plata for a short nine-month period, where he had the opportunity to study tango with the notable *bandoneonistas*<sup>11</sup> (and brothers) Homero and Líbero Pauloni, who are said to have been ‘vital in his musical development’ due to their competency on the instrument (ibid., p. 10).

Upon his return again to New York at the age of eleven, Piazzolla was touted in New York City’s Latin American community as the ‘Argentine Wonder Boy of the Bandoneon’ and played tango at various cabarets, recorded for radio, and played in a tango trio – all of which helped him develop a passion for life in the spotlight (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 10–14; Gorin, 2001, p. 126; Rafael, 2005, p. 53; Delgado, 2006, p. 19). In his own description, by the age of thirteen Piazzolla ‘fell in love with Bach, I went crazy’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 13) after hearing his next-door neighbour Béla Wilda, a Hungarian pianist and student of Rachmaninoff, frequently practise for recitals (Gorin, 2001, p. 125; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 85; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 34). Lessons with Wilda not only introduced Piazzolla to

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<sup>11</sup> Spanish for a bandoneón player(s).

appreciate classical music, but taught him to read music and ‘clinched [his] desire to be a musician’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 14). Also around this time he was influenced by the famous tango vocalist Carlos Gardel, who was visiting the city to film a new production. Thanks to a chance meeting, Piazzolla was then offered a minor role to appear in Gardel’s *El día que me quieras* as a newspaper boy; once the singer learnt Piazzolla played the bandoneón, he asked him to accompany various public appearances (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 15–17; Gorin, 2001, p. 95; Piazzolla, 2005, pp. 88–95; Delgado, 2006, pp. 20–23).

In 1937, at the age of sixteen, Piazzolla returned with his family to Mar del Plata. A ‘real revelation’ came in 1938 in the form of a recording of the Elvino Vardaro Sextet. Upon hearing it, he was ‘so mesmerized’ at the sound of this ensemble that he realised in the past he had been little more than a ‘musical robot’; this encounter ‘reawakened’ his musical ambitions for the tango (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 20). As a result he eventually formed the short-lived group, Cuarteto Azul, which played arrangements that mostly mimicked Vardaro’s style (ibid.; Rafael, 2005, p. 23).

#### *Troilo and Buenos Aires*

In 1939, and by the age of eighteen, Piazzolla decided to move to Buenos Aires to play tango (Gorin, 2001, p. 128). He was uninspired by traditionalists of the genre such as Juan D’Arienzo (whom he claimed was ‘terrible, barbaric, anti-musical’; Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 20) and preferred the musical style by those who were innovating harmony and counterpoints in their arrangements, including Pedro Laurenz, Pedro Maffia, Ciriaco Ortiz, Aníbal Troilo, Miguel Caló, Horacio Salgán, and Héctor Stamponi (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 20; Gorin, 2001, p. 43; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, pp. 49–54). After only piecemeal work with various tango orchestras (*orquestas típicas*) in cabarets, dancehalls, and nightclubs, through a chance encounter he managed to be hired as a second-rank bandoneonist in Troilo’s group (Gorin, 2001, p. 61). Piazzolla later described ‘I had five beautiful years in that orchestra ... it was another tango baptism’ (ibid.), yet ‘it did not seem the ultimate goal’ (ibid., p. 62). Piazzolla’s musical ideas caused tension with other band members by his tendency of ‘adding notes’ and being too experimental in the arrangements that Troilo reluctantly allowed him to do; Piazzolla later commented ‘I would write down two hundred notes and he would erase half of them’ (ibid., p. 63), and ‘to make him mad I sometimes used complicated chords’ (ibid., p. 65). Feeling dissatisfied Piazzolla left the orchestra in 1944 to do his own arranging without pressure from the ensemble to conform to



traditional tango styles (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 30–35; Gorin, 2001, pp. 39–45; Piazzolla, 2005, pp. 140–42; Rafael, 2005, p. 22).

### *The '1946 Band'*

In 1946, Piazzolla decided to start his own orchestra to experiment compositionally with new tango forms and innovative harmonies (Gorin, 2001, p. 129; Staveacre, 2005, 13:13; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, pp. 69–76), which he named Orquesta Típica de Astor Piazzolla (often referred to as the '1946 band') (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 37). This group saw little professional work, but in a later interview he recalled that it was received well by classical players: 'musicians of the stature of Aaron Copland and Igor Markevitch passed through Buenos Aires ... both came to tell me that my orchestra played a tango at a high musical level' (Gorin, 2001, p. 130). Piazzolla was developing a blossoming interest in studying the scores of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Bartók (Gorin, 2001, p. 129; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 140–42). During this period he had also been studying composition with Alberto Ginastera; Piazzolla was quoted that in their six years together, 'he showed me his scores, made me analyze Stravinsky. I entered the world of 'The Rite of Spring' (Saavedra, 1990); 'I was developing the notion of writing erudite music' (Gorin, 2001, p. 129), a term Piazzolla would often couple with his later compositional period and scholarly output at the end of his career. To advance his classical studies he also took piano lessons with Argentinean player Raúl Spivak, and conducting classes with Hermann Scherchen, the director of the National Symphony Orchestra (Gorin, 2001, pp. 129–30). Between 1950 and 1952 he wrote several tangos that are said to contain the stamp of his budding new tango style, including *Para Lucirse*, *Prepárense*, *Fugitiva*, *Triunfal*, and *Contratiempo* (also known as *Lo que vendrá*) (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 47; Gorin, 2001, p. 47; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 147).

### *Paris with Nadia Boulanger*

In 1953 Piazzolla's classically inspired work *Buenos Aires Symphony* led him to win the Fabien Sevitzy Prize for composition (Piazzolla, 2005, p. 145). This prize, funded by the French government, allowed him a one-year scholarship to study in Paris from 1954 to 1955 with Nadia Boulanger, who he later claimed was his only other 'great teacher' after Ginastera and the city of Buenos Aires itself<sup>12</sup> (Gorin, 2001, p. 25). Boulanger eventually prompted him to focus on composing only tango music; it was said after Piazzolla played eight bars of

<sup>12</sup> Of which he said 'That [the] third teacher is called Buenos Aires: it taught me the secrets of tango', that 'I found in a cold room in a boarding house, in the cabarets in the 1940's, in the cafés with balconies and orchestras, in the people of yesterday and today, in the sound of the streets' (Gorin, 2001, p. 25).

*Triunfal* for her on the piano, she took his hands and said to him, ‘*this* is Piazzolla, don’t ever leave it’<sup>13</sup> (Saaavedra 1990; Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 51; Gorin, 2001, p. 71; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 153; Kuri, 2008, p. 87).

## ***Tango Nuevo***

### *The Octeto*

After his studies with Boulanger ended in 1955, and inspired by Gerry Mulligan’s jazz octet (whom he had first encountered in Paris), Piazzolla’s return to Buenos Aires marked a decision to start a new movement called *Tango Nuevo* (Azzi and Collier, p. 55; Kuri, 2008, pp. 104–11) in order to create a new breed of tango music ‘that appealed to the ear rather than the feet (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 33). In a later interview, Piazzolla reflected: ‘the old traditional tango was very boring. There had been no changes to that music for at least forty or fifty years, until I come in’ (Staveacre, 2005, 0:08). This new style of tango saw much controversy from *tangueros*;<sup>14</sup> more specifically Piazzolla ‘enraged the tango traditionalists’ (Gorin, 2001, p. 16). Thus, Piazzolla’s *Tango Nuevo* became a personal ‘revolution’ (ibid., p. 39) to establish non-traditional tango rhythms, complex harmonies, non-traditional counterpoint, and eventually the use of electronic instrumentation, all whilst still keeping elements of the tango style intact. What followed was a formation of the Octeto Buenos Aires, which aimed to convey all that Piazzolla had learnt in his composition classes. He described his music from this time as ‘above all Stravinsky, Bartók, Ravel and Prokofiev, more canyengue, more aggressive and short than a milonga from Pugliese’, a ‘refinement of one from Troilo and of Alfredo Gobbi, ‘for me, a more interesting tango’ (Delgado, 2006, p. 62). In 1957 the Octeto was eventually abandoned when Piazzolla decided to move his young family to New York City in search of better musical prospects in the place where he had spent many of his formative years (Azzi and Collier, 2001, p. 64).

### *A Professional Move to New York*

The move to New York in 1958 resulted in few professional opportunities, though it was during this time that Piazzolla wrote one of his most recognised compositions, *Adiós Nonino*, after the unexpected death of his father in 1959. Later in his career he claimed this work to be his ‘number one piece’ of his ‘better body of work’, and he rearranged it more than twenty

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<sup>13</sup> Different versions of this story exist, though always with the same theme: that Boulanger encouraged Piazzolla to find his authentic musical voice, which she thought existed within a tango style.

<sup>14</sup> Anyone who affiliates themselves within the tango genre, i.e., a tango aficionado.

times for different performances (Gorin, 2001, p. 81); according to his daughter Diana, it was one of his few works he composed on the bandoneón instead of the piano (Staveacre, 2005, 'Biography', 44:28). Piazzolla eventually returned back to Buenos Aires with his family in 1960 in order to return 'back to his roots', 'to start all over again' with a firmer grounding in tango (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 76).

#### *The First Quintet*

In 1960, upon his return to Buenos Aires, Piazzolla formed the Quinteto Nuevo Tango (also referred to as his 'First Quintet'), consisting of himself as leader on the bandoneón with a violinist, pianist, guitarist, and bassist. The ensemble gained acclaim and rose in popularity due to its regular slots at the city's nightclubs 'Jamaica', and '676', as well as television and radio appearances which also promoted Piazzolla's presence within the city (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 84). His music still fuelled much controversy from tango traditionalists, which only threw him into the public eye as his fame rose over the split between *piazzollistas* and anti-*piazzollistas* (ibid., p. 79). Piazzolla recounted the story that at a concert with the Quinteto one evening, after the group was done playing a man stood up and said 'maestro, now that the concert is over, why don't you play a tango?'; after 'all hell broke loose', this phrase, he said, followed him 'like a curse' (Gorin, 2001, p. 39). Despite controversy over his tango style, recognition started to follow when in 1965 the Argentinean government invited the Quinteto to represent 'the flag of Argentine culture' with a tour in the United States, which then led to further bookings for tours abroad (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 89–91). With favourable press reviews of these foreign performances abroad and to capitalise on the public's interest in his work, later that year he released an album that contained only his original compositions performed by the Quinteto entitled *Piazzolla el Philharmonic Hall de New York*, after his debut there.

#### *Piazzolla-Ferrer-Conjunto*

In 1968 Piazzolla premiered a new project, his operetta *María de Buenos Aires*, with collaboration for the libretto from the Uruguayan poet Horacio Ferrer. Notable is the use of flute in its scoring within the ensemble. Piazzolla later claimed that the opera was a great 'artistic success accompanied by an economic disaster' (Gorin, 2001, p. 137). In 1971, with a new musical vision and financial subsidy from the Municipality of Buenos Aires, Piazzolla reformed the Quinteto, expanding it to a nonet called the Conjunto 9, with an added violinist, violist, cellist, and percussionist (ibid., p. 122; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 321). This

period saw Piazzolla's 'creativity at a peak', and he premiered *Concierto de Nacar* (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 126) as well as *Tristezas de un Doble A*, *Vadarito*, and *Oda para un hippie* (ibid, p. 122; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 322). In 1972, the group disbanded when the Buenos Aires Municipality could not underwrite the Conjunto for another year (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 127).

### *Pagani and Rome*

After suffering from both financial hardship and a near-fatal heart attack, Piazzolla armed himself with an Italian agent, Aldo Pagani (Gorin, 2001, p. 134), and in 1974 decided to change course and move to Rome in the hope of promoting his career abroad (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 167). Pagani was described as the man who had the role of 'the crowning of Piazzolla's music' for a global audience (Gorin, 2001, p. 159); later Piazzolla would recall that this relationship 'was the key to international fame' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 167). That same year, with international airplay on the radio in mind as a means for financial gain, Pagani asked Piazzolla to compose pieces no longer than three minutes, one result of which was *Libertango*, 'a sort of song to liberty' (ibid.) and also the title of his first 'commercial' album (Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 331). That same year he recorded *Summit* (also known as *Reunión cumbre*) with baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan (who had inspired his original octet); Piazzolla described this collaboration as one 'of the nicest things of my life' (Gorin, 2001, p. 108). In 1975, upon learning about the death of his former colleague and bandleader Aníbal Troilo, Piazzolla composed *Suite Troilena* as a tribute, which as Fischerman and Gilbert (2009, pp. 339–41) suggest was a form of musical 'response' to Troilo's frequent criticism of that he did not fully 'understand', or classify Piazzolla's music as tango. Later that year he met the French actress and director Jean Moreau (Gorin, 2001, pp. 104–6), which led to him writing a *Suite* of four movements for her film *Lumière*, described as 'his most striking achievements in film music' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 179).

### *The Electric Octet*

In 1976 with stints living between Buenos Aires and Paris, and missing a permanent musical group of his own for regular performance work, Piazzolla's 'experimental mood' inspired the Octeto Electrónico ('Electric Octet') – partly out of a fascination with Chick Corea's own 'electric band' (ibid., pp. 180–81). The Octeto (which had two phases of personnel) lacked a

string section, and consisted of bandoneón, organ, piano, synthesiser, electric guitar, percussion, flute/saxophone, and electronic bass, and was mostly improvisatory, using a ‘letter code’ instead of scores (ibid., pp. 181, 197–98). The group, which attracted many new rock fans, was met with hostility from previous *piazzollistas* who were said to feel ‘betrayed’ by the use of electric bass and drums from works like the *500 motivaciones* (which consisted of 500 bars of ‘jazz-rock’ fusion) (ibid., pp. 182, 196; Gorin, pp. 83, 147).

That same year Piazzolla made a Carnegie Hall debut with the Octeto considered ‘lamentable’ due to unfavourable reviews in the press and only a half-full audience (Butler Cannata, 1998, p. 66). In later interviews he claimed that even though he might have been nostalgic about certain concerts with the Conjunto (such as the 1977 Paris ‘Olympia’ sessions) he recalled that the period ‘does not bring up the best memories for me’ (Gorin, 2001, p. 81), and ‘I failed totally’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 198).

### ***The Final Years***

#### *The Second Quintet*

In 1978, Argentina was in the throes of the *Guerra Sucia*,<sup>15</sup> when Piazzolla returned to Buenos Aires to start the ‘Second Quintet’ (also called the The New Tango Quintet), formed from a desire to a ‘return to strings’ with this new ensemble – he had told his friend Mario Antelo ‘I want a bit of *sonic peace*’ (ibid., pp. 203–4, emphasis original). The compositions that emerged in the Quinteto’s set repertoire included *Biyuya*, *Escualo*, and *Chin Chin* (ibid., p. 209; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 363), which was then followed by orchestral premieres of *Concerto para bandoneón* and *Suite Punta del Este*, becoming what he called ‘a compositional ‘two-track Piazzolla’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 210–11; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 363). He characterised this new period of work as a ‘new Piazzolla’, with music of ‘great tenderness, romantic and different’, ‘more elaborate and more simplified’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 211–2); he later described ‘I finally had the feeling I winning the war’ (Gorin, 2001, p. 138).

By 1980 Piazzolla had moved back to Paris as a means to base himself in Europe again and to increase international audiences by promoting the Second Quinteto in Europe, marking the start of a decade’s international touring (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 212–13). 1985 was ‘the key year in his international takeoff’, thanks to his collaboration with Italian popular singer Maria Ilva Biolcati (‘Milva’) (ibid., 235), the prize for the best foreign record

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<sup>15</sup> The Dirty War (1976-1983), characterised by the rule of a military dictatorship within Argentina.

by the Académie Française du Disque, and the 1986 French César Award, both of which prizes were for his film music *El exilio de Gardel* (ibid., p. 241) At the 1985 Liège festival he premiered *Histoire du tango*, described as ‘one of Piazzolla’s most entrancing ‘serious’ compositions’ (ibid., p. 239). By the same year he had already written *Tres tangos para bandoneón y orquesta*, *Pedro y Pedro*, *Le grand tango* (for cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, *Oblivion* (for the film *Enrico IV*), *Tango suite para dos guitarras* (for the Brazilian guitarists the Assad brothers), *Concerto para bandoneón, guitarra, y cuerdas*, and *Cinco piezas para guitarra*. He had also reached his goal; by this time he was delivering numerous international tours, giving over 150 concerts a year with the Quinteto across the globe to audiences of up to 200,000 (ibid., p. 236). In Buenos Aires his acceptance and recognition was sealed when he was invited to play at the Teatro Colón (1983), the ‘gold prize’ for an Argentinean musician (Gorin, 2001, p. 155).

In 1986, the Quinteto recorded the album *Tango: Zero Hour* (also called *Hora cero*) produced by Kip Hanrahan in New York; *Rolling Stones Magazine* in a later review of this album favourably wrote ‘Piazzolla’s music contains everything worthwhile life has to offer’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 259). That same year jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton joined the group for an international tour, including the Montreal and Montreux Jazz Festivals, performing pieces written specifically for him, such as *Vibrafonisimo* (part of a larger *Suite for Vibraphone and New Tango Quintet*) (ibid., p. 246; Gorin, 2001, pp. 202–6). Piazzolla later commented on the collaboration: ‘with Gary I began a new phase; I discovered a Piazzolla I didn’t even know’. The Quinteto guitarist Horacio Malvicino recalled, ‘Piazzolla’s bandoneón playing detected something different, very modern, a new sonority’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 247). His pianist Pablo Ziegler remarked, ‘it was the boom, the big boom of Astor in the world’; Piazzolla began to be ‘deluged by requests for new works’, of which he would joke, ‘I am like a music supermarket’ (ibid.); ‘I get asked for scores from the strangest places, places I would have never dreamed of for Piazzolla’s tango’ (Gorin, 2001, pp. 152–53). Following this monumental year, Piazzolla ‘reinforced his decision to spread his music in the United States’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 248).

In 1987, he performed his ‘Central Park Concert’ (Butler Cannata, 1998, pp. 71–72; Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 253), wrote *Four for Tango* (for the Kronos Quartet) (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 254), and revised his operetta *María de Buenos Aires*, which then re-opened for a French audience (ibid., p. 255). Though rarely, if at all, mentioned in his biographies, this was also the year that he published the *6 Etudes*.

By 1988 Piazzolla and his Quinteto performed in a joint concert of his *Concerto para bandoneón* with Lalo Schifrin and the St. Luke's Orchestra. Piazzolla recalls that the recognition was welcome and described 'the [orchestral] musicians stood up to applaud us' (Gorin, 2001, p. 140); indeed it was the Second Quintet that won the majority of the accolades in *New York Times* music review of the concert (Butler Cannata, 1998, pp. 73–74). Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 259) suggested that at that point in his career 'America's adulation of Piazzolla was beginning to rival Europe's'. Later that year he went on to record *La Camorra*, which he later classified as 'the best recording in Piazzolla history' (Gorin, 2001, p. 82). It was also the last studio recording with the Quintet. By summer, and after another hectic schedule that involved another round of international touring with the Quinteto, he underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 261–2). Piazzolla in an interview in 1990 would reflect on this period: 'the years 1978–1988 were the best ten years of Piazzolla. I can't say my work is as popular as Sting's, but my music did spread all over the world and at the same time I could develop my erudite music' (Gorin, 2001, p. 140); 'in the past ten years in terms of composing, I have aimed for erudite music, as it is now called. I think that classical is the right term, even if avant gardists might get annoyed' (ibid., pp. 153–54).

#### *The New Tango Sextet*

By early 1989, and feeling stronger from his operation, Piazzolla was ready to return to his music; he recalled 'I was in a search for something new'; 'I wanted to test myself' (Gorin, 2001, p. 91). As a result he created the *Sexteto Tango Nuevo* ('New Tango Sextet'), consisting of two bandoneons, cello, guitar, double bass, and piano (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 263; Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 365). Touring internationally again, Piazzolla wrote *Luna*, *Sex-tet*, and *Preludio y Fuga* for this group (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 264), which later that year made its world debut in New York's Alice Tully Hall, receiving 'guarded' reviews by critics unable to fully place his style within other musical genres (Butler Cannata, 1998, p. 72). In later interviews Piazzolla said of the Sextet that the sound 'was too dark; the violin was missing'; 'it was a mistake' (Gorin, 2001, p. 92). Much to the dismay of his band members, the strain of touring eventually saw Piazzolla disband the Sextet, as he decided that his future was in performing with chamber groups and symphony orchestras – in his words, 'a new life' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 271–72): 'I am going just by myself' (Gorin, 2001, p. 152).

*Towards the End*

Later in 1989, Piazzolla performed the *Five Tango Sensations* (written for the Kronos quartet, with a solo bandoneón) at New York's Lincoln Center. He went on to record the piece with the quartet on their own album the following year (Butler Cannata, 1998, p. 73; Azzi and Collier, 2001, pp. 271–72). In his new phase of concerts as a soloist he toured Europe with mainly freelance musicians in string quartets, and guested symphony orchestras (both from abroad and in Argentina), performing mostly the same set list of *Adiós Nonino*, *Suite Punta del Este*, *Concerto para bandoneón*, *Tres tangos para bandoneón y Orquesta*, *Four for Tango*, and *Five Tango Sensations* (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 274–76; Gorin, 2001, p. 154). By 1990 Piazzolla was planning an opera about the life of Carlos Gardel, looking towards future collaborations with players he admired, such as Chick Corea and the Assad Brothers; had been commissioned to write another work for Rostropovich and the Kronos quartet; and was working on various scores of film music (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 277). It all remained unfinished. It was described that Piazzolla performed his last concert in Athens 'in the shadow of the acropolis' (ibid., p. 275) before suffering a cerebral haemorrhage in August that year while in Paris. He passed away in Buenos Aires in 1992, at the age of 71 (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 278–81). Over the course of his career he is said to have composed more than 3,000 different works<sup>16</sup> (ibid., p.149).

**Contextualising the 6 *Tango-Etudes pour flûte seule***

It has been more than twenty years since Astor Piazzolla's death in 1992. The tango as an art form has resurged as an important commodity for worldwide culture; in 2009 the genre, including its music, lyrics, and dance were inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List as an 'Intangible Culture to the Heritage of Humanity' (UNESCO, 2009). Piazzolla's published repertoire has entered concert halls as 'high art music' and has frequently been performed and recorded by western classical players worldwide<sup>17</sup> (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 282–83; Gorin, 2001, p. 17). Jon Pareles, a senior music critic of the New York Times wrote in 1997:

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<sup>16</sup> As Azzi and Collier mention (2000, p. 149), Piazzolla is recognised by the French Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de la Musique (SACEM) for being an unusually prolific composer due to the amount of this compositional output. In his memoirs with Natalio Gorin, he reflected upon his honour to be a part of this society: 'In France I am placed at the same level as Ravel, Debussy, Michel Legrand, Michel Colombier, and all the great composers; an Argentine is among those names' (Gorin, 2001, p. 152).

<sup>17</sup> For example, recent recordings of his work by high profile classical musicians include, Julian Lloyd Webber, Yo-Yo Ma, Gidon Kremer, Daniel Barenboim, Patrick Gallois, Richard Galliano, Mstislav Rostropovich, Joshua Bell, Joanna MaGregor, the Assad Brothers, and the Kronos Quartet (see also discussions in Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 282-83; Gorin, 2001, p. 17).



Five years after Astor Piazzolla's death, his music is becoming an international staple. He was Argentina's equivalent of Gershwin or Ellington. His compositions carry the tango to the concert stage, using the sultry melodies and insinuating pulse of tango as a basis for fantasias and fugues laced with 20th-century dissonances ... tonal, melodic, easy to follow, and suffused with tango's elegant sensuality, Piazzolla's compositions are ideal for classical performers trying to reach broader audiences without pandering (Pareles, 1997).

Written in what the composer classified as his 'best years of Piazzolla', his 'erudite period', the editions of *L'Histoire du Tango* (1986) and the *6 Tango-Etudes pour flûte seule*<sup>18</sup> (1987) published by Henry Lemoine have rapidly entered the flute oeuvre and become standard western 'classical' repertoire despite their associations with tango as the core of their musical style.<sup>19</sup> They are included in competition repertoire, performance syllabuses, and often-used catalogues of flute literature.

Specifically of Piazzolla's two works for flute, the *6 Etudes* are attractive for performers; since their publication flautists have released 21 commercial recordings of the etudes.<sup>20</sup> Their appeal is heightened by the fact that they are written without accompaniment, and can be played by musicians of varying levels, as the set covers a variety of techniques, tempo markings, and tango styles.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Background of the 6 Etudes***

The available literature written about Piazzolla's musical career and his personal biography do not give much mention to the *6 Etudes*, if any at all. The most useful biography of Piazzolla, written by Azzi and Collier (2000), does not mention the etudes whatsoever in its intricate 326-page description of his life. Nor are they mentioned in other similar historical sketches, such as those by Piazzolla (2005) or Fischerman and Gilbert (2009). Kuri (2008) devotes one sentence to them when he describes Piazzolla's powerful affect on many classical players. He notes how the French flautist Alain Marion would have had to 'search for a Piazzolla way of breathing' ('una respiración piazzolleana') in his performances of the *6*

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<sup>18</sup> From here on these will be referred to as the *6 Etudes*, or even just 'etudes' for brevity.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, these both listed as 'Modern Era' works in Nancy Toff's *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers* (1996, p. 417). This repertoire catalogue compiles the 'finest compositions for flute', including 'professional quality literature, that is, suitable for public performance' (ibid., p. 285).

<sup>20</sup> Listed in Appendix B of this thesis.

<sup>21</sup> For example, parts of the etudes are now listed as one of the choices on the Trinity College London flute syllabus for 2013–2014, as well as on the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) syllabus for 2014–2017. They have also been included in the USA National Flute Association (NFA) competition repertoire requirements for the Young Artist competition in 2009 and 2012.

*Etudes* (p. 240).<sup>22</sup> The tango flute historian Alejandro Martino (2008) also briefly mentions them (p. 96) in his *Aportes de Astor Piazzolla a la historia de la flauta en el tango*, though he primarily focuses on the development of tango flute playing since 1870 and Piazzolla's ensemble flautists, rather than focusing on description of the composer's flute scores.

Given the lack of information available, in September 2010 I travelled to Piazzolla's official score archive, 'La Fundación Papel Nonos, Biblioteca de Música Astor Piazzolla', at the composer's birthplace (Mar del Plata, Argentina). I was hoping to learn more about the background of these works, and to find an original manuscript that I could use for further research. However no information about the pieces was found in the archive – all the head archivist, Jorge Strada, could find were records of the published Lemoine edition that is already in circulation. He suggested that the lack of information or even the lack of a manuscript within the archive's current records could be due to the habit that Piazzolla had of burning his old manuscripts (interview with Jorge Strada, Mar del Plata, September, 2010). Strada's theory was not as completely bizarre as it might initially sound. Azzi and Collier (2000) write in their biography regarding Piazzolla's scores that:

No complete catalogue is yet available, nor will one be easy to complete. Piazzolla sometimes gave away scores or simply forgot about them. At one of his barbeques at Punta Del Este in the 1980's, journalist Bernardo Neustadt and cellist José Bragato observed him burning old scores. When Bragato tried to rescue them, Piazzolla simply said 'Don't worry Pepe, that stuff's no use' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 149).

My search for the original manuscript continued for two more years. In 2012 I read the following in the liner notes of the first commercial recording of the etudes by American flautist Stephanie Jutt, from 1990:

In a note to Gunther Schuller Piazzolla wrote some observations on the etudes. 'I composed these Tango Studies as a kind of dictionary of New Tango accentuations, melodies, feelings, all related to New Tango ... I am sure – thank God – I have a strong influence of J.S. Bach, but I am also sure that the most important (sic) for a creator-composer is the word style; and I always try not to lose my feeling of Tango in all of my music.' (Dyer, 1990)

I made contact with Jutt, now the Professor of Flute and Woodwinds Area Chair at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, USA, who explained that she had been working with the American jazz player and composer Gunther Schuller at his recording company (GM

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<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned that, at the time of writing, and perhaps to complicate things further, no commercially released album by Marion playing the etudes seemed to be in existence (or could be found).

recordings) back in the early 1990s. It was Schuller who gave her a manuscript sent to him by Piazzolla. After learning the pieces, Jutt then recorded the etudes under Schuller's supervision (Jutt, personal communication with author via email, 12 March 2012).

In the hope of uncovering Piazzolla's original letter about the etudes, Jutt also helpfully put me in contact with Schuller's personal assistant. After a series of many more cross-Atlantic emails and phone calls, it was confirmed that although Piazzolla might have sent the letter almost twenty years ago, it could simply not be found amongst Schuller's personal archives. Or perhaps it was not even in existence anymore. Schuller (at this point 86 years old) was not able to clearly recall much about the letter sent so long ago. In the meantime Jutt had been searching her own files and had found the original manuscript that she used in her 1990 recording, hiding away in old stacks of music. She scanned this into electronic form and sent it to me via email; this is now included in Appendix C of this thesis. Future scholars will also note that as of 2013 I sent the manuscripts to the official Piazzolla archives in Mar del Plata, where they are available to view through Jorge Strada.<sup>23</sup>

While in Buenos Aires I met with Piazzolla specialist Marcelo Costas, who offered me his account of the etudes' background. He recalled that he once heard Piazzolla refer to the etudes in an Argentinean television interview, where the composer said he was writing the pieces so that he could 'carry on his legacy of tango to other instruments'.<sup>24</sup> Costas suggests that Piazzolla knew his health was failing, so he chose the flute as one of the instruments to feature his music, as it is a popular instrument played by many people worldwide (Costas, Interview at Café La Paz, Buenos Aires, September 2010).

Another theory relating to the etudes' compositional context, perhaps related to that of Costas, is proposed by the Argentinean classical flautist Claudio Barile, from a live broadcast in Buenos Aires on Argentina's National Radio (25 September 2009), in which he was performing the etudes. Barile offered a spoken introduction to the works he would perform that evening, and he told the audience that they were written 'on commission for a music conservatory in Belgium' (Barile, 2013, 0:0:05). It is possible that this is a reference to Marc Grauwels in Brussels, who is not only a Belgian flautist and professor of flute at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, but had also premiered *Histoire du tango* in 1985 at the 5th International Guitar Festival in Liège. I have been unsuccessful in securing a meeting with

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<sup>23</sup> One should note that Piazzolla's 'original' scores, such as these manuscripts, are usually in Bragato's handwriting, as he was the cellist in many of Piazzolla's ensembles, as well as the official copyist for Piazzolla (See Strada, 2006, p. 34-36)

<sup>24</sup> Though unfortunately he could not recall any more details about which programme or year.

Grauwels, who might be able to shed light on Barile's story, and this theory cannot be confirmed at this time.

Perhaps the most concrete information regarding the background of the works, including Piazzolla's process on publishing them, came through the editor of the published edition, Pierre-André Valade (PAV). Formerly a flautist in the 1980s, he is now an orchestral conductor, and was giving a concert with the Philharmonia in London when I met with him in March 2012 for an interview. He was asked by Lemoine to edit the works following his recording of the *Histoire du tango*,<sup>25</sup> which he had recorded with the Argentinean guitarist Roberto Aussel. It was through the connection with Aussel that he became involved.<sup>26</sup> This interview took place before I had found the manuscripts from Jutt, and what follows is a transcript of our conversation:

**PAV:** The meeting was arranged with Lemoine, and we were in contact a little bit, and then it was suggested that we meet with [Piazzolla] when he was in Paris at his apartment, which is where I met him for a couple of hours and had lunch with him. When we would send him the etudes for proofreading, he sent them back without any corrections. He was not very ... he was a kind of an immediate musician ... and that is why he was amazing. But he was not so much interested in really putting his writing into deep detail. He was writing music on paper because it was necessary, but he was not interested so much in going deep into the actual publishing of it.

**JQ:** So when you were editing the score, were you working from a manuscript from Piazzolla?

**PAV:** Yes.

**JQ:** And all those details, like the tempo markings, accents, staccatos, holds, breath marks, and dynamics – were they in that manuscript or did you add them in yourself?

**PAV:** They were definitely in that manuscript. What you see is pretty much Piazzolla's writing as far as I can remember ... you will have to forgive me as it was twenty years ago. But I wouldn't have changed or added them. Because of the tango, he used the accents; they are just part of the writing ... and he was also himself an interpreter of his own music, so he knew the musical gesture, it was something that he was very familiar with. He himself was writing all these accents, dynamics, also the details. But he was less interested in the publishing process. It is very rare that you send a copy of the score to the composer and it is returned untouched with a note, 'this is absolutely fine'.

**JQ:** So was it really one draft and then that was it?

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<sup>25</sup> Valade-Aussel, *Las músicas de Astor Piazzolla: The Spirit of Buenos Aires* (Mandala, re-released in 1997)

<sup>26</sup> In 1980 Aussel had premiered part of what would later become Piazzolla's *Cinco piezas para guitarra*, and in 1985 performed with Piazzolla for his *Concierto para bandoneón y guitarra* in various recitals given in France (Azzi and Collier, p. 216, 238-9, 241).

**PAV:** Yes, as far as I can remember, yes .... my experience with him when we had this contact was that he was really talking in the instant, or so. You couldn't really feel it was a framed talk, or something. His music talks to me as if he was playing ... it is the same idea. Instead, when he was writing music it was taking too much of his time – instead, let's play' – *that* was his idea. He was 'in the tango' in the music, not really 'in the time of the writing'. And that is the greatest difference between jazz and classical musicians. Jazz players are in the instant, and classical musicians are more in the long-term work of the piece. We have the Bible (the score), and we try to make it as pure as possible, as beautiful as possible, but while working very hard on it. Jazz is something else, really. It is more instant music. And I strongly believe that he had this spirit very clear-cut between these two worlds ... Yes, it is called 'etude' – but with tango ideas. This could have been an ideal title. I am sure he would have taken it actually, instead of 'tango etudes' ... it is scholastic somehow.

**JQ:** Did he come up with the title do you think, or was it Editions Lemoine?

**PAV:** It might have been the publisher. Maybe it gives something that was not the idea he had. But who cares? Because if he had that freedom, then there is that freedom to take it for more than it was made for. So if people can find their way with these etudes and take things out of it, then it is absolutely fine. We got the point, and it was a very good thing to do it (Valade, interview in London, 13 March 2012).

### ***Reception of the 6 Etudes***

Perhaps it is not surprising that the use of the rather scholarly 'Etudes' in the title, coupled with Piazzolla's own observations about these serving as a 'kind of dictionary', and with a musical influence of J.S. Bach (both of which can be garnered from his letter to Schuller), performers and reviews of the pieces have contextualised them with other western solo literature. This can be demonstrated from their reception by both critics and flautists.

The first known performance review of the pieces – and as a direct result of Jutt's album – appeared in *Musician* magazine in 1991, written by Josef Woodard. Jutt also included Jolivet's *Chant de Linos* (1944), Griffes's *Poem* (1918), and Mc Kinley's *Three Romances* (1984) on her recording, and the critique read:

The album's centrepiece, though, is Jutt's muscular solo flute reading of '6 Etudes Tangoistiques' written by 'nuevo tango' king Astor Piazzolla; 25 minutes of passionate, inventive studies, as the influence of Bach meets the tango (Woodard, 1991).

In 1992, John Duarte of *Gramophone* magazine reviewed the second commercial recording of the etudes by Finnish flautist Mikael Helasvuo (1992). Little was said about the work itself, Helasvuo's performance, or even Piazzolla's tango style. Instead Duarte focused on

how the works would fit into modern flute repertoire, as well as future advice for musicians in future concert programming:

Flautists in search of twentieth-century solo music that would speak alluringly to an audience could do worse than investigate the six Etudes tanguistiques, selecting from them rather than venturing their 23-minute entirety (Duarte, 1992).

Yet flautists today might equally place the work within the classical canon, as part of the other highly-regarded unaccompanied repertoire that they often use in performance. In an interview about the etudes, Wissam Boustany, lecturer of flute at the Royal Northern Academy of Music, and the former chairman of the British Flute Society asked questions about the work: ‘How do you classify these pieces? Are they just etudes? They are performed as solo works which shows they are much more than that’. He compared the *6 Etudes* to having similar qualities to J.S. Bach’s unaccompanied *Partita in A minor* (BWV 1013). He explained that each of the partita’s four movements (Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, and Bourrée Angloise) were written in the style of various dances, but are not necessarily pieces one would physically use for the actual purpose of dancing. He suggests that Piazzolla uses a similar platform to study a certain tango style in each of the six contrasting movements (Boustany, Interview, Fulham Grove, London, 13 October 2009).

It is also equally important to study pragmatically how the ‘mainstream’ flautist that purchases the scores and then plays (or teaches) them might perceive them. One example can be demonstrated by a musician with the username ‘Gilles Cardoen’ from Guayaquil (Ecuador), on the large international online retailer Sheet Music Plus ([sheetmusicplus.com](http://sheetmusicplus.com)). This site is useful in that it offers informal responses to the works, helpful for gauging a range of reactions from players around the world. What is interesting is while ‘Gilles Cardoen’ gave the etudes a ‘5 Stars’ (out of five) rating, it would seem that the perception of their worth was based on how they fit nicely, or favourably compare with other solo flute literature of the western repertoire:

**Pearls of tango music.** An absolute MUST for the solo flute repertoire. All the essence of modern tango, with even some dodecafonic [*sic*] parts in the first "étude" (Piazzolla joking around). Tangos 1,3,5 and 6 are very agressiv [*sic*] but equilibrated [*sic*] by a typical nostalgic melody in the middle. Contrasting with the slow tangos of "étude" 2 and 4.

Very demanding music both emocionaly [*sic*] and technically. Solo flute music of the 20th to have amongst Syrinx of Debussy, 8 Stücke of Hindemith, 5 Incantations of Jolivet, Sonata Appassionata of Karg-Elert, for example (Sheet Music Plus, 2013).

Equally, another flautist appreciates their ability to not be ‘overdone’ in the tango style, as well as serving as a practical learning tool for students. ‘JP’, a teacher from Vermont, USA writes:

**Nice solo pieces.** These etudes are performance-worthy. They're dramatic and passionate without the cliches. Good for my students: low register, articulation and tango rhythm are challenging yet playable (Sheet Music Plus, 2013).

Further reception of the *6 Etudes* as part of a classical context can be formally observed through the descriptions of them in reviews in newspapers. Most of the reviews available came from performances by Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer, who arranged them for violin and frequently presented them to European audiences through his album *Tracing Astor* (2001). His album presents all of the *6 Etudes* in their entirety from a recording he had done in Paris in 1996; subsequently many of his recitals following used the etudes in his programming choices in the late 1990s.

Upon Kremer’s concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1997, Noel Goodwin, a critic from *The Times* (UK) wrote ‘one of the two Tango Etudes for violin alone was reminiscent of Paganini or Sarasate’ (Goodwin, 1997). Then, when Kremer toured in the UK as part of the ‘Contemporary Music Network’ in 1999, Andrew Clements (1999) from the *Guardian* (UK) described them as ‘music that sounds as if JS Bach had been hanging out in a Buenos Aires hot spot’. Both of these reviews highlight how the etudes have further been compared to the output of western composers.

Yet in a later review for the *Guardian* two years later, Clements (2001) gave *Tracing Astor* only three out of five stars by describing that

The playing is marvellously alive and vivid, but after a few tracks the sound world begins to seem too pallid for this highly coloured music. Piazzolla’s own recordings with his group show how important instruments like the bandoneon and the piano were to its peculiar power (Clements, 2001)

This particular review brings up another interesting viewpoint; the reception of the etudes have also cumulated scepticism from those imagining (or expecting) the same musical result as they might have heard in Piazzolla’s own bandoneón playing with his former ensembles. For example, another concert given by Kremer at the Barbican in London in 1997 reviewed in the *Guardian* by Adam Sweeting resulted in the conclusion that

Kremer scrutinised the tango form in miniature in the shape of two Piazzolla etudes for violin. Shorn of bass, piano and bandoneon, Piazzolla sounds stark and eerie (Sweeting, 1997)

Similarly, some flautists are disenchanted with what the ‘erudite’ title implies compared to his other output. The Sheet Music Plus user ‘George U’ from New York, USA only gave the scores ‘two stars’ and wrote:

**Surprise, surprise.** Given that Piazzolla is one of the premier composers of Argentine Tango, I find these pieces suited more for the musicologist than the Tango lover. They're aptly named Etudes. Never thought I'd give Piazzolla a two star rating (Sheet Music Plus, 2013).

Perhaps this reaction is to be expected given the use of the word ‘tango’ in the title of the pieces. Additionally, expectations might arise when the cover of the Lemoine score offers a note to performers that reference elements of tango style specifically:

It is advisable that the performer should well exaggerate the accents and respiration, therefore inspiring the way of which tangos are played on the bandoneon.

Yet despite any assumed links with the tango style, it would be incorrect to assume that these works are popular repertoire among tango flute players in Argentina. To demonstrate a limited reception of them within the tango world, one cannot ignore the fact that at the time of writing no commercial recordings of the *6 Etudes* have been released by performers that identify themselves as tango music specialists. Additionally, it was only by doing field work in Argentina that I realised that they remain virtually unrecognised by *tangueros* (or at least ignored) as standard repertoire for tango concerts. When I asked a tango flautist why this might be the case, her response was roughly along the lines of ‘why would we play these when we have so much other great tango music to perform?’. Of course this is not to say that all tango flautists might completely disregard them. It should be mentioned that at the time of writing Paulina Fain offers regular tango flute classes in Buenos Aires where the etudes do make up a small percentage of the repertoire she uses with students.

One example of the pieces’ general obscurity among tango musicians can be demonstrated after I performed in a tango music class with the highly-regarded bandoneón player Nestor Marconi. When he asked why I was studying tango in Buenos Aires, I showed him the published Lemoine score of the etudes and explained that I wanted to better understand Piazzolla’s flute music. He puzzled his eyebrows, took the score from my hand, randomly opened the pages to land on *Etude 2* and tried a few bars on his bandoneón. Yet after a few seconds, he closed the score, handed it back to me and simply said ‘¡*Qué extraño!*’ (How strange!); he had never seen the work before, nor did he seem particularly interested in it either. This theme would permeate my time in Argentina when I presented



these works to tango players. In spite of only minimal information about their background, and a mixed reception from both critics and performers, the *6 Etudes* are ripe for exploration.

## Chapter 2: Tango Musical Authenticity and Cultural Frameworks

Along the *barrio* La Boca in Buenos Aires, which claims to be one of the birth places of the tango, reminders of the tango's historical roots are flaunted to the willing foreigner, and always greeted my arrival at the *Caminito*.<sup>27</sup> Despite *castellano* being the language of the *porteños*, notices for tango demonstrations were handwritten on green chalkboards in English – 'FREE TANGO SHOW TODAY!' – aiming to beckon the traveller into one of the dozens of cafes to experience the 'real' tango for only the price of a coffee. In truth, however, I did not have to pay anything to see tango on display; it was a frequent income tool of buskers in the city. In the *barrios* of La Boca, Recoleta, and San Telmo, dancers performed in threadworn Lycra, fishnets, suit jackets, and fedoras; old tango standards were transmitted through archaic sound-systems. Afterwards, the dancing couple passed a fedora to collect donations – any currency was welcome. For small change, I could buy the right to pose for a picture taken in the arms of an 'authentic' *porteño* tango dancer to post to social networking sites to prove that I was *really* experiencing the tango in Buenos Aires.

Equally, tango that was specifically aimed at the foreigner transcended the casual encounters and informal performances found on the street and in cafes. Glitzy tango 'dinner-shows' by 'authentic *porteño*' dancers were performed nightly in choreographed spectacles that changed from one evening to the next.<sup>28</sup> They also offered 'real tango', similar to what was also on offer elsewhere in the city, but for a very elite price.<sup>29</sup> Aimed at the international tourist market, entry tickets cost more than the average *porteño* might have earned in a week.<sup>30</sup> The tango performances that were sold in each of these scenarios suggest that commercial interests (foreign and Argentinean) of artists and capitalists thrive on selling the 'authentic' for tourists and the west.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Calle Magallanes is known as the 'Caminito' ('little street') in La Boca. Today it is an architectural representation of the old port that was originally designed by Benito Quinquela Martín, where approximately 6 million of immigrants poured into the country from 1880 to 1930.

<sup>28</sup> There are many nightly dinner shows on offer in Buenos Aires, including the El Teatro Piazzolla (see [www.piazzollatangoshow.com](http://www.piazzollatangoshow.com)), and El Querandí Tanguería (see [www.elquerandi.com.ar](http://www.elquerandi.com.ar)).

<sup>29</sup> For other perspectives and further discussion on this concept, both Tobin (1998, p. 79) and Cara (2009, p. 445) describe similar tango encounters in the city.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in 2010, the usual ticket price for these dinner shows averaged 470 Argentine pesos per ticket (approximately £71), almost a quarter of an average Argentine's monthly earnings of 1,740 pesos per month (approximately £265) (Heyn and La Rocca, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this concept more fully, recent work by Barrionuevo Anzaldi (2012) discusses more fully how tango culture has been transformed into a touristic 'experience economy' of 'high-mobile aficionados'. Tango functions differently from other Argentinean music used for cultural consumption, for example, the *Cumbia Villera* (which Anzaldi argues serves the urban poor). Beyond tango, see Waterman's account of how the summer time 'Blum Festival' in Upper Galilee was used as a tool 'to enhance local economies and sell place' (1998, p. 256).

The tango scene currently diverges from a strongly marketed and highly profitable product that is based on ‘authenticity’, to another tango that is not necessarily for sale. For example, in order to ‘learn’, ‘perform’, or even ‘experience’ the ‘authentic’ tango in any of its forms, knowledge has to be obtained from the ‘correct’ source for inclusive knowledge to be shared. Aspects of a hidden, more interior version tango were not always willingly discussed, which I discovered when I attempted to understand *los trucos del tango*.<sup>32</sup> While being granted access to interviews, performances, festivals, lectures, private lessons, and weekly group classes, actually *performing* with other tango players, such as in a bar or café, proved to be socially tricky. Perhaps because I was considered still new to the tradition, or perhaps seen as an over-eager, inquisitive foreigner, my offers to play informally with other tango instrumentalists in an ensemble setting were politely declined.

Additionally, although tango techniques might often be internally debated within tango communities,<sup>33</sup> what was striking was the judgement of what was considered an ‘authentic’ recreation by tangueros. An illustration of inclusion/exclusion occurred when a tango musician casually dismissed the musical views of another *colega* – colleague – and would suggest that this other person (even if *porteño*, *argentino* or having a regularly performing tango ensemble) was ‘not a real tango player’. Or, I came across the accusation that ‘X lacks true tango style, you shouldn’t bother to study with them – they don’t play very authentically.’ Similarly, views on ‘authentic’ became part of the dialogue with teachers in dance lessons when my partner and I would frequent the wide variety of classes held throughout the capital. Despite paying for lessons in ‘reputable’ teaching studios, we were told we had been ‘taught only steps, not the dance’. Another instructor would tell us that we had been trained ‘badly’ while another would claim that they could turn us into ‘true dancers’ – but only if we committed to their dancing pedagogies without outside influence from other teaching styles. As a non-Argentinean learner, it became increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that the search for an authentic tango style produced few answers, yet much judgement came from those who were part of the internal, complex tango stratum.

Another encounter revealed that an ‘authentic’ setting for tango creation simply did not exist, as the genre was performed in many contexts. At some times it was produced in concert halls on a Sunday afternoon, and at others in intimate bars while seated at cafe tables

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Tricks of the tango’: in my experience this phrase was often used in discussions of tango performance concerning the ‘secrets’ of style by tango players.

<sup>33</sup> Differences in dance techniques, for example, are outlined in Tobin (1998, p. 95).

late into the night.<sup>34</sup> It took place in parks, from the woman who sung tango lyrics while selling coffee from a flask, to bandoneón players in the *subte*.<sup>35</sup> It blasted from the D.J.'s speakers at the *milonga*,<sup>36</sup> and was taught at the city's music *conservatorios*. The experiences transferred between parallel westernised concert hall venues, where performances are negotiated through spaces for the 'elite' in formal settings,<sup>37</sup> to platforms where tango was mixed with idioms of *Rock Nacional*<sup>38</sup> targeted mainly at youthful audiences.<sup>39</sup> There was no clear arena for tango production and it was performed in as many arenas as one could possibly imagine.

What do these vignettes suggest, and why do I mention them as a starting point for seeking cultural frameworks for an authentic musical style? The vague cultural landscapes I encountered during my time in Buenos Aires hinted at my growing notion of wavering and inconsistent notions of what constitutes the authentic in this genre. The ambiguities of tango authenticity I found stemmed from not only the difficulty I had in pinpointing specific musical ideas, but also what *tangueros* meant when they described 'authentic' in a cultural context. Moreover, all of these experiences of my time in Buenos Aires reveal polemical divisions within the tango and diverse beliefs about authentic recreation. When I attempted to deepen my understanding of the vast landscape of tango culture, many questions arose that plagued my initial field work and research goals: How does one navigate the formation of authentic tango music performance when it is based on strong, yet complicated ties to Argentinean nationalism, politics, people and location? Can vast unfixed cultural contexts of gender and sexuality indicate 'meaning' for a musical reading when the reference points are notions of any sense of collective practice are changing?

Although easy 'one-to-one' correlations between cultural associations and musicality can be problematic due to the highly complex and diverse interactions in how sociality is constructed (see, for example, discussions in Born, 2010), new musical thought can be a

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<sup>34</sup> Such as various venues that host such performances like Cafe Vinilo and Torquato Tasso. These concerts are aimed at middle-class consumers; in 2010 tickets were more moderately priced at approximately 25–100 Argentine pesos per ticket (£3–£15).

<sup>35</sup> Subterráneo de Buenos Aires is the underground transport system in Buenos Aires.

<sup>36</sup> In this context, a space where the tango is danced.

<sup>37</sup> These include government sponsored concerts of the 'Orquesta del Tango de Buenos Aires'. In these concerts, audiences sit as quietly as one might expect in a western concert-hall setting.

<sup>38</sup> This genre, more than half a century old, is believed to contain just as much cultural significance as Argentine tango and folkloric traditions. For more, see Semán, Pablo and Pablo Vila (2002), 'Rock Chobon: The Contemporary National Rock of Argentina', in Walter Aaron Clark (ed.), *From Tango to Tejano* (New York: Routledge), 70–96.

<sup>39</sup> Specific examples include the groups 34 Puñaladas or the Orquesta Típica Fernandez Fierro. Both of these are extensively discussed as renovating traditional tango soundscapes in Luker (2007).

product of the critical engagement of cultural contexts, which are often drawn from examinations of history, politics, economy, gender studies, sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity. It is a common belief that music is a social act; therefore one should consider numerous cultural contexts in which any given musical genre has been mediated and produced (see for example, McClary, 1991; Shepherd, 1991; Stokes, 1994; Cohen, 1995; Stock, 1997; Bohlman, 2002; Walser, 2003; De Nora, 2004; Born, 2010). In McClary's words, 'music is always dependant on the conferring of social meaning' and 'the study of signification in music cannot be undertaken in isolation from the human contexts that create, transmit and respond to it' (1991, p. 21). Walser (2003, p. 26) describes the situation very succinctly – 'you only have the problem of connecting music and society if you've separated them in the first place'. Deemed to be a powerful tool for negotiating music-making and performance, cultural contexts are at the heart of understanding how tango authenticity has been created, shaped and negotiated by Argentineans and outsiders to the genre.

### **Identifying Authenticity through Cultural Contexts**

The construction of the 'authentic' in music has often been defined through a culture or community that is formed by 'shared interests and issues' and exists as a 'collective practice' (Beard and Gloag, 2005, p. 47). Cook elaborates on this idea further:

The pattern of what is determined by notation and what isn't, what is to be taken as a given and what is a matter of performance interpretation, is one of the things that defines a musical culture; it defines not only how music is transmitted but also how the various individuals whose activities together make up a musical culture relate to one another. It also largely determines how people imagine the music within a given culture ... you could say that is shared patterns of imagination that bind *all* the members of the musical community together (Cook, 1998, p. 63).

Born (2010, p. 232) suggests in a wider relational view of 'music and the social' that music gives life to 'imagined communities' that amount to 'virtual collectivities' and that can be highly useful in an overall representation of how musical practice is manifested in mediating wider social relations.<sup>40</sup> Fornäs (1995) in his study of how the genre of rock music has been perceived, writes that 'an anchoring of a voice (work, style, genre) in a collective community' formulate themes of what he terms 'social authenticity', and is one of the three

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<sup>40</sup> The overall musical experience would thus analyse all dimensions of social processes through Born's proposed 'four orders of social mediation'. She writes that 'music manifests myriad social forms... irreducible to one another; they are articulated in non-linear and contingent ways through conditioning, affordance or causality' (Born, 2010, p. 232–33).

paths by which authenticity in genres is created (p. 116).<sup>41</sup> He further argues that the theme of authenticity ‘can hardly be defended as a pure and natural origin’, and can still be highly useful if it ‘is de-naturalised and demystified, reconstructed as a socio-cultural and mediated construction, rather than as a simple and immediate destiny’ (ibid.).

Macro-level usage of a ‘collective’ cultural and historical reading of the genre by Piazzolla scholars is used for establishing much of the groundwork for an authentic practice in his music. Mauriño (1998; 2001/2008), Granados (2001), Tsai (2005), Drago (2008), and Link (2009) all situate Piazzolla’s compositions against the backdrop of a predominantly similar teleological and linear narrative of both the composer’s ‘story’ and his historical ‘place’ within this framework. Such performance analyses are seriously limited in that they make overarching claims of *a* culture, *its* identity, *its* society, *its* history that is predominantly viewed as fixed.<sup>42</sup> Examples of such sweeping statements include:

The musician in search for a more authentic interpretation and performance based on the Argentinean tango must explore the tango as a historical and cultural phenomenon ... the tango continues to be a contemporary manifestation of Argentinean culture offered to the world by the classical guitarist (Dorsey, 2005, pp. 101–2).

In Argentina, the porteños (Buenos Aires seaport citizens) consider the Tango to be the representation of their own urban character; they feel the essence of the Tango in the joyful weekend gatherings of family and friends where dancing takes place. They also trace in its evolution the history of their society and identity (Tsai, 2005, p. 1).

Studying and performing Piazzolla’s compositions poses a challenge because *nuevo tango* represents a synthesis of his musical and cultural backgrounds ... Theoretically, one should therefore have knowledge of all three musical traditions [‘tango from Buenos Aires, ‘jazz from New York’, and ‘international classical music’] to study and perform his works ... This, however, is not the current practice. Many musicians, especially in the United States, perform and study *nuevo tango* without the prerequisite knowledge of its background, causing the genre to lose its cultural substance ( Link, 2009, p. 3).

[I]f one wants to comprehend Gardel and more broadly the music he created, then one must understand the history of the tango, and this history resides in the culture of Buenos Aires. One could also extend this condition to the understanding of Piazzolla, whose music likewise embodies and signifies the characteristics of the Argentine capital city’s culture (ibid., p. 20)

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<sup>41</sup> These include ‘objective authenticity’ and ‘cultural authenticity’ (see Fornäs, 1995, pp. 116–17).

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, discussions of this concept in Savigliano (1995, p. 163), who highlights various examples of typical historical narratives and discusses what ‘tango specialists’ tend to leave out.

The ultimate goal of this analysis is to provide musicians and scholars with the necessary tools to recover and recreate the performance practices of Piazzolla's second *Quinteto*, in order to perform his music within a culturally meaningful setting (ibid., p. 65).

Casting tango culture vaguely as a means to suggest musical authenticity without further discussion is problematic on many levels. The questions that arise from such generalised statements include: What is the 'cultural substance' to which Link refers? Is it really a fixed thing that a 'genre' can 'lose'? What *is* a 'culturally meaningful setting' and the 'city's culture' that Piazzolla's music is said to embody and signify? To which and whose version of tango 'history' do both Link and Dorsey refer? Is there only one telling? Furthermore, as Tsai describes, does every *porteño* possess the same sense of 'identity' and 'feel the essence of the Tango' in the same manner? (And only through 'joyful weekend gatherings', only if 'dancing takes place'?)

In his discussion of western audiences' fascination with authenticity in world music, Van der Lee (1998) suggests that that 'strong arguments in defence of authenticity may at their worst border on what we could call "racism in reverse"' and are 'not unrelated to romantic ideas, with the "Noble Savage" concept and an interest with the "exotic"' (p. 62). In wider musicological theory there is the argument that the construction of culture to acquire musical 'meaning' can be limiting in itself when regulated to only one 'essential' idea of a social process applicable for all: a projected mirroring exercise of how one situates oneself in relation to that culture (Stock, 1997, pp. 59–62; Van der Lee, 1998; Locke, 1999; Moore, 2002; Fornäs, 2005; Born, 2010, pp. 231–35). Fornäs (1995) labels this viewpoint of observation as 'cultural' or 'meta-authenticity', describing it as 'a meta-honesty that stresses the self-reflexive consciousness of one's place within a symbol-making process' (p. 116). In his study of the different approaches that formulate authenticity within popular music styles, Moore (2002) builds on Fornäs and argues that authenticity within musical sounds is often dependant on *who* rather than *what* is being authenticated, 'a matter of interpretation which is made and fought for within a cultural and thus, historicised position'; 'it is ascribed not inscribed' (p. 210).

My own experiences during field work in Buenos Aires revealed inconsistent cultural contexts for the tango today; correlating a collective of 'what people do' to suggest any notion of performance practices in tango is an unrealistic model by which to create notions of authenticity. A simplified notion of blanket cultural assumptions also dismisses the uniqueness of the various art forms through which it is expressed (dance, lyrical poetry,

music) and would ignore the way that tango (in all its forms) is complicated, tricky, and offers multi-faceted layers of cultural affiliations. Using a ‘cultural totality’ that represents the ‘whole of society’ to inform performance is an outdated method in light of new approaches to musical authenticity (see for example discussions in Steingrass, 1998, p. 152; Van der Lee, 1998; Beard and Gloag, 2005, p. 47). Stokes (1994, p. 25) challenges the common trope of ‘collective’ understanding in music, and writes that it is ‘not the universal language it is sometimes cracked up to be’ as it changes and differs over time. He writes:

Performance does not simply convey cultural messages already ‘known’. On the contrary, it reorganises and manipulates everyday experiences of social reality, blurs, elides, ironises and sometimes subverts commonsense categories and markers (Stokes, 1994b, p. 97).

In another departure from ‘essentialist views’ of popular music and dance, Washabaugh (1998) eloquently describes that ‘no music springs from, and speaks for the soul of a community in any simple way’ (p. 24) and further remarks:

... music and dance are on the move. They are a ship rather than a house. They are route rather than root. They are always hybridized, never not fractalized and constantly become ‘rhizomatized’. They serve social identification systems but they do so as a flux. They are never staid, and therein lies its promise. ‘Flux is what enables one to hope for a way out of the otherwise unresolvable contradictions of contemporary social relations’ (Washabaugh, 1998, p. 24).

Consequently, a shift away from generalised musical interpretational models based on fixed, surface-level assumptions would be a more accurate and pragmatic approach to studying a multi-faceted view of cultural contexts. Dispelling any notion that cultural contexts reveal inflexible portrayals of musical cultures requires an approach to how social constructs influence authentic performance that does *not* treat any of these assumed constructions of tango (‘commonsense markers’) as ‘known’, ‘shared’, or part of a larger ‘collective practice’, but rather as part of a fluctuating social process. Tango is a practice that developed in the Río de la Plata region of both Argentina and Uruguay through multi-cultural influences and exchanges, so is ideally placed to explore wider issues surrounding cultural contexts, enabling unique perspectives on how authenticity is exchanged, adopted, and transformed. An acceptance of the diverse interpretations of relationships between culture and tango, and a move away from valuing the search for the ‘real’, is at the heart of this chapter.

A survey of varied perspectives from micro levels of discourse present multiple doors from which new musical readings may emerge. To mediate the countless levels of discourse



in which have shaped tango cultural practices, Luker (2007, p. 85) suggests the question should not be ‘what is tango?’ but ‘what is done with it?’, and ‘how is it used? He writes:

Tango remains a site of struggle because it continues to represent the contested desires, memories, and histories of Argentines with semiotic flexibility; it is able to articulate various aesthetic, social, and political claims on multiple levels simultaneously. The fact that tango can be engaged in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways speaks both to its tremendous power as a cultural practice and to its efficacy as a means of addressing the challenges confronting Argentines today. A product of particular economic, social, and musical histories, the recent re-emergence of tango in Buenos Aires represents an important example of larger cultural and social processes (Luker, 2007, p. 85).

Instead of seeking ‘what is culturally authentic in the tango?’ this chapter asks ‘what can be made of such varying perspectives?’ and ‘can there be a way to understand Piazzolla’s 6 *Etudes* when the cultural view on tango authenticity is complex and offers many reference points? Using academic texts, interviews, and field work in the city of Buenos Aires, a survey of interwoven dualities and juxtapositions of cultural frameworks will be isolated in two thematic areas where notions of authenticity frequently appear: national identity and sexuality. Although not seemingly obvious, how tango and the ‘authentic’ is unevenly constructed through diverse cultural viewpoints present a platform for understanding musical interpretation and the performance of *Piazzolla’s 6 Etudes* in the following chapters.

## **National Identity**

### ***Locality***

According to Béhague (1979), ‘the single most significant phenomenon in Latin America was the rapid growth of nationalism in the social and political development of the continent’; as a result, ‘music as one aspect of culture did not escape this salient feature of contemporary life’ (p. 124) In a direct example of this relationship to the tango, for citizens of Buenos Aires, it has been said that tango and nationalist sentiments are frequently intertwined (Goertzen and Azzi, 1999, p. 67) – or as Washabaugh (1998, p. 3) observes, tango is ‘distinctly national’. Taylor’s work (1987, 1998) explores how tango remains a part of Argentinean cultural identity, a refuge for *porteños* through the turmoil of politics, violence, and military coups. Frequent expressions from Argentineans might include sentiments like this one from Pablo Ziegler, a tango pianist and colleague of Piazzolla: ‘tango is the music that represents us’ (Azzi, 2002, p. 38). Others acknowledge that despite its uncertain history and mixture of cultures said to create it, ‘tango is the deepest expression of [*porteño*] identity’ (Gonzales, 2001, p. 13). More recently, on the evening of 25 May 2010, one and a half million citizens

attended the Bicentenary celebrations in the capital entitled ‘Tango of my land: Tango is ours’ (Rojas, 2010, p. 11). The perceived success by the organisers of the celebrations resulted in quotations in the Buenos Aires newspapers such as ‘tango shows it is the music that identifies Argentina’ (ibid.).

In a wider scope, popular music – as tango has often been categorised – is not only part of ‘everyday emotions’ and ‘immediate circumstances’ but has strong ties to location (Leyshon, 1995, p. 425). Similarly, tango is not an identity marker of ‘us’ but is also said to be the definitive sound representative of its homeland and birthplace in the Río de la Plata region. The renowned journalist and scholar Alexander Graham-Yooll (1986) observes that Buenos Aires is:

[A] city with a genre of song dedicated to it ... the social anthology of the city, a musical summary of its mores, of its ugliness, and its beauty’ (Graham Yooll, 1986, p. 142).

Similar sentiments occur in relation to Piazzolla’s musical output. Corrado (2002) focuses specifically on the large number of ever-changing factors that have contributed to the growth (and decline) of Piazzolla’s music as a semiotic symbol of the sound of modern Buenos Aires. Stressing that the manner in which various aspects of Piazzolla’s music overlap to reflect the city, Goldenberg (2004) discusses the composer’s use of temporal contraction, harmonic juxtapositions, contrasting sections, changing metres, tonalities, counterpoint and ostinatos – all of which she suggests indicates an unfixed definition of how they reflect the contemporary sound of the city, yet still consist of a collective sense of ‘urban fragmentation’, and a shared, ‘common temporal depth’ (p. 7).

The concept of locality through one’s birthplace has been connected to an ability to be able to interpret Piazzolla’s scores authentically. Fernando Suárez Paz, the violinist of Piazzolla’s Second Quinteto, was asked by the composer to fly from Buenos Aires to San Francisco to coach the Kronos Quartet in interpreting his score of *Four for Tango*. Suárez Paz later reflected on this experience:

What they did not know how to do were the [special] effects, the tango swing, and that is something that nobody knows how to do unless he was born here [in Buenos Aires] (Drago, 2008, p. 127 quoting email by Suárez Paz).

Though this comment reflects that one cannot understand some aspects of Piazzolla’s musical scores (and the un-notated swing) without being born in Buenos Aires, it has also been argued that the affiliation between locality and music is in constant fluctuation, and remains

complicated when conceptual constructions of values and practices ascribed to a genre can transcend geographical boundaries (see for example, Cohen, 1994; Stokes 1994a; Leyshon 1995; Corrado 2002; Beard and Gloag, 2005 pp. 131–32; Hutchinson, 2011).<sup>43</sup> Concepts of place have been said to navigate other cultural areas such as identity, gender, ethnicity, race, and subjectivity, ‘all which have a discursive, reflexive relationship’ with the term’ (Beard and Gloag, 2005).

An example of how a shifting sense of locality shapes authenticity in regards to the tango is demonstrated in the work of Argentinean anthropologist Savigliano (1995). She discusses that tango as a national identity is an ‘obsessive’ dispute among Argentines, and that ‘the nature of dispute changes dramatically when on non-argentino terrain’; tango and nationalism is dealt with differently ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’ (1995, p. 4.) Tango in Buenos Aires is practised by only a small segment of *porteños*, but it is often the Argentinean citizen living abroad who clings to tango as a symbol of Argentina (ibid.). She argues that this duality occurs because tango becomes a symbol of identity when ‘confronted by imperialist manoeuvres’, yet ‘is activated as a national representation as it crosses over lines of identity formation’ (p. 5). She furthers that

Tango as a symbol of nationality has no space of its own but holds an unbalanced, tense position teetering between independence and dependency— in the terms between the colonized and the colonizer. This dispute is played out through tango, claimed by the colonized as ‘authentic’, appropriated by the colonizer as ‘exotic’.... Tango, as a popular culture, is thus the battlefield/dance-floor and weapon/dancestep in and by which Argentinean identity is continuously defined. (Savigliano, 1995, p. 5)

A similarly complex minefield of ways that nationalism is shaped and validated through use of locality at ‘home and ‘abroad’ can be seen in the work of Cara (2009), who explores diverse tango dance traditions and concepts of authenticity. Her discussion of ‘Home Tango’ is one she defines as ‘predominantly local’, ‘esoteric’ ‘intimate’, ‘familiar, inner, insider, secretive, initiated, danced among Argentines themselves’(p. 439). This is in contrast to the ‘exoteric’ exotic, external, outsider, fanciful tango for ‘export’, which she argues is not always easy to pinpoint, yet is not completely culturally incompatible with ‘home tango’ as they have a symbiotic relationship with each other (ibid.). For example, she explains that even tangos danced on Argentinean soil by a fellow *argentino* might be appropriated by

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<sup>43</sup> For example, in Leyshon’s words, (1995, p. 425): ‘To consider the place of music is not to reduce music to its location, to ground it down into some geographical baseline, but to allow a purchase of the rich aesthetic, cultural, economic and political geographies of musical language.’

Argentineans as *not* having qualities of home tango, lacking ‘localised values’ (p. 441). Though it is unclear how and who decides such things, such a tango is perceived to be less ‘*verdadero* (real, true), *auténtico* (authentic), *desde el alma* (from or closer to the soul), *en la sangre* (carried in the blood), and *sentido en el corazón* (felt in the heart)’ (ibid.). Therefore it would seem that only tango dancers that subscribe to a certain set of localised ‘home’ values are a part of the ‘authentic’ tango, even if the boundaries are unclear as to what this entails. The complex value systems of both dance categories of ‘home tango’ and ‘export tango’ challenge notions of locality and nationalism, and indicate that concepts of authenticity within the dance remain unfixed; it would seem that it is Argentineans who appropriate this and decide.

A similar complexity between indeterminate associations to authenticity, locality and nationalism was also present when I encountered the Argentinean composer and conductor López<sup>44</sup> (personal interview, Café La Paz, Buenos Aires, 12 August 2010). Although I had originally sought his views on the process by which he arranges scores from Piazzolla’s recordings, the conversation eventually turned to the ‘rejection’ of his tango compositions and performances within the Buenos Aires musical community. Although López was born in the capital, he left in the 1970’s to study abroad in the Netherlands and remained in exile during the years of the *Guerra Sucia*. He is a highly respected arranger of Piazzolla’s scores, collaborates with prestigious orchestras, and maintains a lucrative recording and conducting career outside of Argentina. In contrast to his success abroad, when returning to Buenos Aires to visit his family, he also tries to perform, and record, yet he has struggled to gain recognition ‘in the musical circle’ or even acceptance as an ‘Argentinean’ musician, despite being born a *porteño*. He has the impression that many musicians felt that he had ‘abandoned’ his homeland to seek European fame, and has difficulty collaborating with and hiring tango musicians to perform his scores, whom he senses are sceptical of his work. Additionally, they have failed to see his arrangements of Piazzolla’s music as ‘authentically’ tango because he no longer lives in the city.<sup>45</sup> The experiences that have been encountered by López can be contextualised with the work of scholar and Argentinean psychoanalyst Carlos Kuri (2000) who describes similar divisions of how tango creations are judged, even if the

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<sup>44</sup> This is a pseudonym as he has asked to remain anonymous.

<sup>45</sup> The findings of Cara (2009) research also found similar rejections of wider tango community in regards to the tango musical output of not only the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, but also Daniel Barenboim (who like López was also born Argentine) (p. 443).

‘ethic requirement’ is not always clearly defined. He writes that through a process of ‘ethic efficacy’

[A] device is put in place to grant admission and refusal as to what is part of, or what has to be excluded from, the condition of tango, a device that has the same strength as the separation between good and evil’ (Carlos Kuri, 2000).

Thus while it might be a common trope by Argentineans that ‘tango is the music that represents us’, the ‘us’ does not include everyone, nor is it an easy task to state clearly whose music is being represented in the complicated tango hierarchical system. Similarly, it would be overarching to assume that an ‘authentic’ tango is solely a product of one sense of nationalistic identity or even one sense of location. Instead authenticity is a perception based on values of judgement of perceived ‘genuineness’ or ‘ethnicness’, and these boundaries are in a constant state of flux.

### ***Tango Mythology***

Further constructions of national identity are embodied in a person or mythical character whose lifestyle and personality symbolise all that is ‘authentically’ *tanguero*. While such archetypal figure might be said to provide the cultural basis to formulate successful tango creations, like other ways that authenticity is formed, there is not one fixed ‘authentic’ tango archetype, yet western scholars have used a variety of these mythological figures to form the cultural and social backdrop to inform Piazzolla’s *Tango Nuevo* (Maurino, 1998, pp. 45–46; Dorsey 2005, pp. 3–9; Tsai 2005, pp. 3–11, 20–21; Drago 2008, p. xiii, 6; Link, 2009, pp. 22, 30–32). Characters from tango stories and lyrics that are celebrated in this manner might include the *gaucho*<sup>46</sup> (see Taylor, 1976; Béhague, 1979, Savigliano, 1995), the *compadrito*<sup>47</sup> (Taylor, 1976, pp. 275–76; Savigliano, 1995, 1995a), the *milonguita*<sup>48</sup> (Taylor 1976, pp. 279–80; Savigliano 1995, 1995a), and the *madre/ querida madrecita*<sup>49</sup> (Taylor, 1976, pp. 278–79; Castro 1998, p. 72). Other accounts consider Juan and Eva (‘Evita’) Perón as another national symbol for tango:

<sup>46</sup> A rural Argentinean *vaquero* (cowboy) associated with *las pampas* (the plains).

<sup>47</sup> A product of the *arrabales* (urban slums on the outskirts of Buenos Aires), a pimp, street ruffian, containing an aggressive character involved in street crime and knife fights, often said to be a displaced *gaucho* due to changes in land ownership in Argentina.

<sup>48</sup> A female dancer at the *milonga*; also a prostitute protected by a *compadrito*.

<sup>49</sup> A beloved ‘saint-like’ mother; the suffering older woman who was left in poverty by her son as he went to explore ‘city life’.

their personalities are tango, their political mission and platforms were tango. The way that Eva died beautiful on the outside and cancerous on the inside could be a Discépoloian tango (Castro, 1998, p. 66).

Though it has been debated to what extent, the most popular personality included in the mythological construction of national identity is Carlos Gardel, known ‘as the archetype of tango’ (Castro, 1998, p. 66), tango’s ‘romantic hero’ (Savigliano, 1995a, p. 97). His ‘skilled showmanship and fine singing linked his name with the genre’ (Goertzen and Azzi, 1999, p. 68), and Taylor (1969, p. 285) describes the legend of Gardel as a symbolic phenomenon ‘possibly the single most important element of tango lore’. He climbed the social classes rising from the slums of Buenos Aires to the Hollywood film studios to New York, and then to Europe to become internationally recognised. Today his tomb in *barrio* Chacarita in Buenos Aires is still adorned by fans that bring flowers and keep a lit cigarette for him carefully placed between the fingers of his life-sized statue (see this pictorial image in Martin, 1995, p. 127). His myth is said to be a product of the Perón era, characterised by social reforms and the Golden Age of tango,<sup>50</sup> ‘when people’s fears and hopes were cared for by the government’ (Taylor, 1976, p. 285). In Castro’s words (1998), ‘Gardel as the epitome of the porteño was, and probably always will be, the symbol of Buenos Aires in human form’ (p. 65), and thus has been ‘defined as the authentic national expression and as an Argentine passion’ (p. 66).

My own experiences in flute lessons were that Piazzolla’s vocal lines and his special use of improvisational melody heard in his recordings were pedagogically used as an example to demonstrate an ideal and innovative version of tango *fraseo* (phrasing).<sup>51</sup> Equally in Fain’s tango flute manual (2010, pp. 25–26) one can see that an arrangement of Gardel’s *El día que me quieras* is used as a teaching tool to explore the multiple possibilities of melodic manipulation. As an archetype, Gardel can be explored further, as he is often appointed to embody and thus display characteristics of common emotional states related to the tango, all of which have further formulated how musical authenticity has been shaped in further discussions.

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<sup>50</sup> Referring to the ‘Golden Era’ of tango when Juan Perón was the president of Argentina, 1946-1952.

<sup>51</sup> Specifically tango *fraseo* as defined by Gallo (2011, p. 164) is ‘the alterations of the durations of the notes of a singable melody for expressive purposes’.

### *A Shared Sense of Isolation*

An isolation that is commonly voiced and shared amongst *tangueros* describes a move away from the tango as solely ‘representative of us’ through national identity, to an isolated, internal act disjointed from communal experiences. Tango themes found in stories and tango lyrics become inseparable from the theme of embodiment, a representation of ‘one’s self’. Song lyrics such as Homero Expósito’s *Yo soy el tango* (‘I am the Tango’) and Cacho Castaña’s *Soy un tango así* (‘I am a Tango in This Way’) reflect that the tango can be personally incarnated, and thus becomes defined and manifested by the personalised internal experience. Such sentiments would not necessarily be shared collectively in the process of creating it as an art form. This can be seen in that such incarnations are not always told from the same perspective. As Taylor (1987) suggests, tango themes, often related to patriotic self-constructions, emphasise ‘ambivalence’ and indecision as to the ‘precise nature of that identity’ (pp. 481–82). Taylor’s later work (2010) equally describes a similar concept that the modern state of the *milonga* evokes ‘dissonance rather than harmony’ (p. 27); a woman and a man, though they might share similar sadness and disillusion, ‘dance together to relive their disillusion *alone*’ (1987, p. 485, emphasis added).

Castro (1998) explores male loneliness, and the alienated practice of tango lyrics; those sung by Carlos Gardel are ‘a social document’ yet ‘not one that calls for revolutionary or proactive social action’. Lyrics such as those that Gardel sings are of isolation and introversion instead of one of ‘a collective altruistic action’ (pp. 63–64). Castro further writes:

it is obvious from an analysis of tango lyrics that the tango as a human expression is ego-orientated. As a result it is not a musical form dedicated to the well-being of others. Very few tangos can be called socially orientated. Instead the music separates and isolates each individual from others within society and adds to a sense of alienation (Castro, 1998, p. 75).

Similarly, Savigliano’s experiences as a dancer demonstrate that

In the milonga scene, everyone is there for themselves. Associations and demonstrated interests are vested interests. The entirely personal interests, moreover, are legitimate and assumed. The environment is cool, not hostile but rather loosely interested in anyone’s particular presence, and the relationships established in the course of any one night carry on rather dimly to the next (Savigliano, 1998, pp. 104–5).

Such descriptions relate to values of an ‘authentic’ rendering of the genre ascribed by Cara’s ‘home tango’ – esoteric, intimate, familiar, inner, insider, and secretive. Part of this described

alienated, introspective, solitary experience of sadness and disillusionment can also be seen to be linked to wider emotional themes.

### *La tristeza/el mufarse*

*Tangueros* often recall a famous quotation by Enrique Santos Discépolo: *el tango es un pensamiento triste que hasta se puede bailar* (the tango is a sad thought that one can even dance), and the genre has long been associated with *la meloncolia*, *la tristeza*<sup>52</sup> and the *lunfardo*<sup>53</sup> use of *el mufarse*,<sup>54</sup> all which have been associated with a disillusioned emotional state present within music and dance creations (Taylor, 1987, p. 482; Farris Thompson 2005, pp. 37–40, 210–11; Link, 2009, pp. 29–33; Tobin, 2011). Described by a western dancer as ‘the melancholic shiver of pleasure one gets from having survived heartbreak’ (Harrington, 2010), and in Buenos Aires as ‘the refinement of sadness’ (Farris Thompson, 2005, p. 37), Taylor (1987, p. 481) coined an entire public Argentinean sentiment upon the introspective experience called *el mufarse*:

Argentines know they are not given to exuberant emotion, much less to its display. Proudly in control, yet sometimes, for precisely this reason, trapped in themselves, Argentines channel their characteristic combination of inhibitions and introspection into a particular form of moping that amounts to a national institution: *el mufarse*. The mood relates closely to the tango. *Mufarse* involves bitter introspection, but beyond this, Argentines have a clear sense of self-indulgence when they give in to a *mufa*. It is a depression, but with a cynicism about the depression itself, an awareness that it can feel good to throw practicalities aside, have one of the demitasse coffees over which many a tango was written, and contemplate one's bad luck and its universal implications. Tango fans in particular pass time constructing complex personal philosophies of life, suffering, and love-philosophies that surprise outsiders who do not expect such elaborate abstractions as common themes of popular culture (Taylor, 1987, p. 481).

Characteristics of *mufarse* have equally been linked to Piazzolla's *Tango Nuevo* style through his own words about his music, as well as by others. In an interview with Saavedra in 1990 for the Chilean paper *El Mercurio* Piazzolla explained ‘my music is sad, because tango is sad’.<sup>55</sup> Piazzolla was equally keen to explain to his foreign audiences that the sound of a bandoneón lent itself to ‘play sad music’, and the fact that it was an introverted instrument,

<sup>52</sup> Roughly translated to mean ‘sadness’, ‘melancholic’, ‘dreariness’, or ‘sorrowful’.

<sup>53</sup> Slang unique to Buenos Aires that is a mixture of Italian and Argentine Spanish, said to originate from the immigrants that arrived from Italy. It is frequently associated with the tango as many of the original tango lyrics used these slang words in the texts.

<sup>54</sup> A *lunfardo* term, roughly translated ‘to mope’, to be ‘irritated’, ‘annoyed’, ‘upset’, or to have ‘bad luck’.

<sup>55</sup> Original text reads: ‘mi música es triste porque el tango es triste’.



unlike the ‘joyful timbre’ of the extroverted accordion to which it was often compared (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 153). Farris Thompson (2005) briefly points out that according to Piazzolla’s daughter Diana Piazzolla, his composition *Adiós nonino* (1959)<sup>56</sup> contains the ultimate phrasing of tango ‘*tristesse*’ (p. 211).

Kutnowski (2002) argues that vocalists such as Gardel and Roberto Goyeneche gave the listener an impression of ‘anxiety’ through ‘losing control of their emotions’ by ignoring the notated score and adding rhythmic and melodic distortion based on their ‘expressive desires’ (p. 107). The act of speeding up the ends of phrases and arriving at the resolution early resulted in ‘highly irregular syncopation’ (ibid.), all of which became part of Piazzolla’s notation that was ‘rooted in, or ‘simply copied’ an ‘authentic’ earlier vocal style (p. 108). Kutnowski notes that this influence can be found in instrumental rubatos from not only the famous *Adiós nonino*, but also *A fuego lento* (1957),<sup>57</sup> *Soledad*, and *Mort* from *Suite Lumière* (1975).

In a more general explanation, Link (2009, p. 32) remarks that Gardel ‘musically portrayed *tristeza*, *mufarse* and nostalgia’ in his vocal delivery as part of core themes relating to the *tango canción* tradition. Link uses this to propose that Gardel’s expressive style of singing can be seen to be incorporated into Piazzolla’s works (p. 47). Specifically she gives the example of compositions like *Mi Buenos Aires querido*, which ‘often [contain] a descending melodic line’ (p. 32). In performance, Gardel’s baritone voice ‘employed a rubato that corresponded to the natural speaking patterns of the poetic phrases, while emphasising the dramatic expression’ (ibid.). Piazzolla ‘derived’ the musical characteristics of his Second Quintet from tango performers like Gardel, including elements of his ‘style, sound, rubato, and yeites’ (p. 60).

While a collective experience of isolation and *la tristeza/el mufarse* might reflect that this is an ‘authentic’ requirement for the modern tango performer to evoke in the dance or their musical performance, there is a shift occurring about the influence of such moods within modern tango settings. Corrado (2002) explores Piazzolla pieces like *Lo que vendrá* (‘What is to come’) (1957) and *Preludios para el año 3001* (‘Preludes for the year 3001’) (1969),<sup>58</sup> finding that they are used to signify sonically a modern Buenos Aires, an ‘abstract’ and ‘futuristic’ vision of the city that shakes off ideals of the old ‘nostalgic’ ‘bohemian’ view of

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<sup>56</sup> Considered ‘his single most famous piece’ and written after his father died; he remarked in 1980 this was ‘the finest tune I have ever written’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 76).

<sup>57</sup> Originally written by Horacio Salgán.

<sup>58</sup> Based on Piazzolla’s collaboration with tango lyricist Horacio Ferrer.

tango (p. 57). The violinist in Piazzolla's second Quinteto, Fernando Suárez Paz, comments on how *Preludios para el año 3001* 'give optimism to Buenos Aires ... [the Preludes] are a song of faith, a song of optimism, anti-mufa and anti-Discépolo'<sup>59</sup> (Corrado, 2002, p. 57 citing Suárez Paz, 1996). Likewise Taylor, in an interview about the *mufarse* she coined almost 30 years ago, suggested that during this period of dancing in the modern milongas throughout Buenos Aires, she sensed that *la tristeza/ el mufarse* was slowly disappearing through the use of tourism and the influence of foreign dancers (personal interview with Julie Taylor, Casa de Catalunya de Buenos Aires, 8 September 2010). In her latest research, Taylor discusses perplexing tango social codes that are slowly lifting in modern times, changing the dancer's experience of tango (2010, p. 9). Her work suggests that even the self-indulgent, melancholy, and isolated branding of tango is undergoing a renovation which has resulted in a new breed of a tango hybridised from external influences.

This section set out to formulate a link between the many elements that formulate authenticity through the examining of national identity through locality, tango mythology, isolation, and *el mufarse/ la tristeza*. The results indicate that there are many ways that authenticity is shaped and transformed in these areas and suggests that the diverse ways in which national identity is used cannot point to one way in which a tango can be authentically 'Argentinean'. It is simply not enough to say that tango music is an expression of a fixed notion of a locality, nationality, individual embodiment, or emotional state of *Argentinidad*,<sup>60</sup> when the factors that shape national identity are multifaceted and ever-changing.

## Sexuality

### *A Catalyst*

Tango is and has been a symbol for passion and sexual tension, and has an exotic quality that fascinates the global audience (Goertzen and Azzi, 1999). Tango's origins are regularly affiliated (in Buenos Aires and abroad) with images of bordellos containing 'wild dolls' and 'tango-dancing pimps' (Tobin, 1998, p. 97); the perception of tango is often one of scandalous and passionate re-enactments between heterosexual couplings. Furthermore, the act of performing tango is not exclusively a product of a fanciful flamboyant exotic culture

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<sup>59</sup> His reference to being 'anti-Discépolo' refers to the lyricist and composer Enrique Santos Discépolo, a contemporary of Gardel whose tangos have become standards of today. Yet on a deeper level he could mean a shift in the style of tangos that Discépolo wrote, which are known for being pessimistically philosophical, tragic, and also ripe with political undertones – hence some of his tangos being banned by various political parties in the past within Argentina. Original text reads: 'Dar optimismo a Buenos Aires ... [los Preludios] son un canto de fe, un canto de optimismo, la anti-mufa, el anti-Discépolo.'

<sup>60</sup> Containing qualities of 'Argentinean-ness'.

with the famous archetypical ‘Latin Lover’,<sup>61</sup> but has also been portrayed to serve as a precursor to sexual encounters, oozing with tension and restrained desire. In North America (and, it can be argued, inside and outside of Argentina generally) it is ‘sexual disobedience’ that dominates the tango scene, becoming almost synonymous with extramarital sex and scandalous affairs (Tobin, 1998, p. 97).

Such musical stereotypes have not died as tango has provided the backdrop for scandalous sexual trysts and even infidelity to occur. Tobin (1998, p. 97) refers to the 1990 Woody Allen film *Alice*, in which the main character Alice Tate (Mia Farrow) contemplates an extramarital affair to the tune of *La Cumparsita*. It has been more than twenty years since Allen’s release, and similar use of musical soundtracking still exists today. A more recent example can be seen in the 2008 film *Easy Virtue*, based on Noël Coward’s play of the same name (1924).

Set in 1920s England, Major Whittaker (Colin Firth) dances a steamy tango to negotiate the start of his sexual affair with his new American daughter-in-law, Larita Whittaker (Jessica Biel), while his family (including Mrs. Whittaker, played by Kristin Scott Thomas) view the sexually suggestive dancing with astonishment. A newly composed tango with a quite stereotypical classic habanera rhythm (written by British violinist, songwriter, and composer Sophie Solomon and played by the ‘Easy Virtue Orchestra’) is performed in the background and provides the backdrop for an illicit sexual encounter. The message of the film is clear – the tango is the catalyst for the Major and Larita to enact their passion and then run away together to start their new, socially unacceptable and immoral life together.

Likewise it can be argued that tango as an apparatus for seduction is not a new idea in music constructions that are concerned with the ‘arousing and channelling of desire’ (McClary, 1991, pp. 8–9). The phenomenon of ‘sexy’ music as a means to ravish, be ravished by someone else, or by the music itself is explained by Cook (1998, p. 108): ‘we treat music as kind of a sexual partner – and an active one at that, (you don’t ravish music, it ravishes you)’. With the widespread enthusiasm for coupling eroticism with the tango, it is no revelation to find an article written by a western author in *Playboy* that speaks of Piazzolla’s 1974 album *Libertango* in ‘ravishing’ terms, as a means for seduction and a vehicle for arousal:

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<sup>61</sup> Ramírez Berg (2002) identifies the common male stereotype of the Latin Lover as a Latino character in films who is said to embody ‘eroticism, exoticism, tenderness tinged with violence and danger, all adding up to the romantic promise that, sexually, things could get out of control’ (p. 76).

Would-be abductors of society girls should note that an album of the dirtiest tango music has just been released. It's called *Libertango* (Chrysalis): and it may come in handy when you're waiting for that big telephone call from her parents. Astor Piazzolla, a bandoneon (it's like an accordion) player from South America, has composed and or arranged eight magnificent tangos<sup>62</sup> to tell a girl what's on your mind: seductive French and Italian songs lying athwart bristling German harmonies, all brought to consummation via the insinuating rhythms of the tango. The girl's parents may not come through with the ransom, but we guarantee that before side two of the record is over, she'll be flat on her back, kicking a hole in the ceiling (Anon., 1976, p. 32).

A similar fascination with creating sexual meaning with Piazzolla's tango music appears in the liner notes for the album *Astor Piazzolla* (1997) recorded by Loïc Poulain (flute), Dominique Lumet (piano), and Pierre Champagne (cello). The notes describe the compositions *Le grand tango* (1982), *Trois préludes pour piano* (1987), and the *6 Etudes*:

The lively, even vigorous rhythms, the razor sharp accents and the somewhat barbaric element in the melodic line and harmonic fabric are a clear throwback to the macho fights of old, all-pervasive bestial sexuality and the dramatic and bloody atmosphere of the first days of existence (Poulain, et. al, 1997).

While the reference to 'bestial sexuality' ties in with an overall theme of Tobin's observation of tango as 'sexual disobedience', what is fascinating is that it is said to appear in these works via the composer's use of notation.

Yet a similar premise is used to provide meaning for performance practices that go *beyond* the written notation. Link (2009) equates the background noises found in Piazzolla's album *Tango: Zero Hour* (1986a) to be a 'conception' of a bordello (2009, p. 67), and thus makes further suggestions for performing from this backdrop. She writes:

[Piazzolla] musically establishes the representation of a whorehouse with the group's chanting at the beginning of 'Tanguedia III' (*Tango: Zero Hour*). He also explicitly depicts a sexual act with a male grunt in 'La camorra I.' Therefore, in a concert performance, it would be appropriate to include aural characteristics associated with *bordellos*, such as loud shouting or whistling during a piece (Link, 2009, pp. 67–8).

Beyond Piazzolla's own compositions, sexual motifs can be seen in contemporary works that are said to be inspired by him, too. Such an example can be seen with British composer, Stephen Goss (2002), who writes that he 'pays homage' to Astor Piazzolla following his death in his flute and guitar work *First Milonga, Last Tango*. What is fascinating is that the

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<sup>62</sup>These were *Libertango*, *Meditango*, *Undertango*, *Adiós nonino*, *Violentango*, *Novitango*, *Amelitango*, and *Tristango* – all from 1973 except for *Adiós nonino* (1959).

overall succession of musical directives he chose to use in the last movement (*Last Tango*) have a flavour of sexual seediness to them: ‘Dirty’ (bar 1), ‘Fast, but sexy’ (bar 7), ‘Sleazy, like warm butter’ (bar 54), ‘Groove’ (bar 27), ‘Gradually building up’ (bar 64), and lastly, ‘Ecstatic’ (bar 75). Given that this was written as a tribute, it would appear that Goss’s choice of wording hints that he understood there to be a sexual undercurrent in association to Piazzolla’s music. Moreover, it would equally seem that he was clear that he wanted the performer to recognise not just any erotic association, but one that was somewhat insalubrious, even if the overall musical result of such directives within the score might seem ambiguous.

Although Gonzalez (1998) noted that Piazzolla’s ‘tongue-in cheek’ formula for New Tango was said to equal ‘Tango + Tragedy + Comedy + Kilombo’,<sup>63</sup> determining musical meaning for performance can be problematic if one considers the composer’s reactions to equating his music solely with sexual contexts. He commented on *Playboy*’s review of the album *Libertango*:

I was also surprised by the phenomenon in the United States ... Playboy magazine had a feature on me which ended by saying that before making love, you have to hear my music. It seems to be exciting for them it puts them in the mood. It never occurred to me my music had such sensual appeal. I tired myself explaining why, but they still didn’t want to hear of it. That’s why recordings in the United Stated point in that direction, as in *Tango Apasionado*.<sup>64</sup> What’s important is that as they go past that sensuality, they start to learn about the work I did in Europe, *Libertango*, the album with Mulligan, with Gary Burton, and all the rest (Gorin, 2001, p. 153).

In another interview he contrasted his musical intentions with common perceptions of the dance, and how his music does not fit into this stereotype:

Tango is a vertical rape [narrator: ‘said Piazzolla, quoting the Argentinean writer, Borges’] ... when they [the dancers in *Tango Pasión*] dance the tango, the couple gets so together that it looks like a rape. But it’s not my purpose of writing passionate, sexual or sensual music. It’s not my idea ... (Staveacre, 2005, Biography, 1:34:00).

The audible noises of grunts and chanting in Piazzolla’s own performances should attract some kind of examination of performance practice given the composer’s own comments

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<sup>63</sup> Rioplatense slang for a ‘whorehouse’, but also signifies ‘disorderly’, ‘disaster’, or a ‘mess’.

<sup>64</sup> Here Piazzolla is referring to the music he provided for this stage show in 1987, based on two of Borges’ short stories. The dancing of this production was described by the New York’s *Village Voice*: ‘The tangos and knives never stopped, and neither did the tit-ass-crotch grabs, the women slinking down to fellatio attitude, the men strutting and stripping to the waist’ ... ‘to set all those killers and sluts loose in front of [Borges] on a stage, to make them dance for him, it doesn’t seem right’ (Butler Cannata, 1998, p. 75).

about how others have thematically appropriated his music. But would adding in whistling and shouting to evoke the backdrop of ‘a bordello’ be the only way to perform Piazzolla’s scores? Or, on a wider scale, does appropriating sexual meaning when performing make one’s tango music performance ‘authentic’? For example, can the grunts Piazzolla is said to have made in his recording *have* to represent ‘a sexual act’? Can they also represent the frustration of other everyday struggles of humanity? A serious weakness with a simple one-to-one correlative type of analysis, as Cook (1998) suggests, is that the vocabulary used to describe music can be interpreted in a multitude of ways, of which sexuality is just one (p. 119). Within a wider context of musical misunderstanding, McClary (1991) explores the way that erotic depictions in music cannot be held to solely one ‘representation of desire’ (p. 9). The way that sexual experiences are constructed in music is a representation of what society has chosen to see, and thus are only ‘fabrications of sexuality’ (ibid., p. 8, citing Heath, 1982, p. 3).

Whilst tangos, like other ‘passionate’ dance genres, can be loaded with real or perceived aspects of sexuality in the west, it is not necessarily the case that the tango performances are always used as a platform for a sexual experience that is waiting to blossom. Savigliano (1998) suggests that this misunderstanding of what westerners see as a sexual portrayal is actually the cultivation of ‘passion, passionately’ and is ‘the state sought in and through the dance’ (pp. 103–4). The typical male at the milongas of Buenos Aires whom Savigliano describes might be a departure from the westernised Latin Lover, whom she depicts as ‘old, old-fashioned and slick in an un-fashionable way’ (1998, p. 107), and she quotes an old *milonguero* who said at a dance, while chuckling:

The Milonga is definitely about dancing tango, ‘but if you can top the night by taking someone to bed, it won’t hurt’ (Savigliano, 1998, p. 108).

In other words, tango would not necessarily be used as a *primary* means of seduction as it is portrayed in western perceptions (at least not in the way that Hollywood film studios or *Playboy* would have one believe), and Savigliano’s descriptions of the milonga could be seen as a large departure from a location where sexual encounters are ripe for the plucking. Returning to the quote by a male dancer that foreigners misunderstand the sacred context of the milonga (where ‘only a gringo would make a clown of himself by taking advantage of a tango for chat or amusement’) Taylor explains in more detail why sexual encounters might be problematic due to deep-rooted and complex social codes:

Dancers arrive alone, and they leave alone. In fact meetings do occur through more or less surreptitious exchanges of telephone numbers or arrangements involving a new encounter at a café some blocks from the milonga. Or perhaps one of the two dancers will return in a car or taxi to pick up the other at an arranged distance from the club. Dancers nevertheless are cautious, because if the relationship is suspected and especially if it lasts, it can inhibit invitations to dance from others. Or, if an encounter has a difficult denouement in the short or the long term, milongueros have run the risk of losing one of ‘their’ dancers and having to face him or her for a lifetime of *milongas* (Taylor, 2010, p. 10).

Thus, while there is no doubt that sex and the tango will continually be partnered to evoke a sexualised musical meaning, to suggest that this performance practice evokes the authentic landscape of Piazzolla’s intentions, without having an understanding of its wider scope, is a limited approach to the myriad ways that sexual meaning appears in tango discourse today. It also assumes a fixed notion of gender, focusing on the ‘traditional’ ‘authentic’ heteronormative relationship between unfixed roles of male and female.

### ***Gender Roles***

Gender has been understood to be an ‘ideological concept’, an arena for the ‘social constructedness of what male and female mean in a given culture’, and a product of a ‘socio-historic context, rather than actual biological sense of sex and sexuality’ (Beard and Gloag, 2005, p. 68). In McClary’s words (1991, p. 8) music ‘serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organisation (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested and negotiated...codes change over time’. Music and dance, according to Stokes (1994a), ‘provides the arena for understanding boundaries and exploring the border zones that separate male from female’ (p. 22), and tango is an ideal platform from which to explore further the context of how musical authenticity in relation to sexual meaning has been shaped out of a one-dimensional notion of gender within the genre.

As the proverb goes, tango ‘is a vertical expression of a horizontal desire’ – but recent scholarship in the areas of gender roles and the understanding of *how* each gender is exploited through the dance suggest that exactly *who* is doing the expressing and *for what reason* remains complicated. It has been 90 years since Rudolph Valentino’s 1921 film *the Four Horsemen and the Apocalypse* was released. Taylor (1998) describes how in one famous scene from the film a man and woman are on the dance floor, engulfed in passion: ‘Valentino or counterpart, dressed dashing in bolero, frilled shirt, and cummerbund, flings a partner backward over the ruffled train of her flamenco costume’ and ‘one or the other holds

a rose' (p. 1). These common constructs seem to have moved little from the ages of homogenous romanticised views of Latin America engineered by Hollywood film studios (Clark, 2002). The heteronormative assumptions of the tango are still in circulation today and one example occurs in a recent quote from the *Irish Times* promoting the arrival of the aforementioned *Tango Pasión* stage show that has used Piazzolla's music for dancing:

Strictly Come Dancing might have spawned millions of armchair experts on the intricacies of the rumba or foxtrot, but ask anyone to describe the tango and chances are they'll fall back on the stereotype: a striding couple, cheek-to-cheek, straight-armed, heads thrown back, clenching a rose in their teeth ... (Seaver, 2010)

Nor is the westernised stereotype of the heterosexual man and woman only employed outside of Argentina or in Hollywood films; it is also happily realised for tourists in Buenos Aires as a successful selling point. These images are found on tango merchandise such as posters, coffee mugs; they are re-enacted live in spectacles and dinner-shows, and function as a commodity for local economies.<sup>65</sup>

To move toward a more inclusive telling of gendered roles in tango, one cannot dismiss scholarship that points towards homoerotic and homosexual connotations within the dance to challenge 'traditional' gender roles within the genre. Savigliano (1995a) notes that tango characters have 'complex gender identities' that 'are troublesome when seen under the scrutiny of the bourgeois patriarchal eyes' (p. 87). An example of such complexity is seen by Tobin (1998), who elaborates on a controversial theory that the primary relationship in tango is not between heterosexual dance partners, 'but is between the man who dances with a woman and the other men who watch' (p. 83). He suggests that homosocial desire between men is not expressed through the *exchange* of women, but through the *display* of women (p. 90). He argues for a different view of the traditional heterosexual history that pervades tango stories and sets out an argument that the original tango was a 'predominantly homoerotic, male-male dance', when one takes into consideration that female prostitutes could have been 'men in drag'<sup>66</sup> (ibid.). He comes to the conclusion that 'contemporary tango-dance continues to be marked by forbidden homosocial desire' and this 'continues to be its dangerous and forbidden passion' (p. 84). He also calls further for the reassessment of Gardel (discussed above as one of the most prevalent figures of tango mythology) as the heterosexual symbol of

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<sup>65</sup> For a more in-depth and comprehensive discussion of how advertisers capitalise on sexual connotations in the tango, see Guillén, Marissa (2008), 'The Performance of Tango: Gender, Power and Role Playing', Master's Degree of Arts (Ohio University).

<sup>66</sup> Tobin observes that it has been argued that this was because there was a shortage of woman, although he argues that if even there were women, 'dancing tango itself makes any woman seem masculine, since the tango is composed of two masculine subjects' (see p. 83).



Buenos Aires; he suggests that Gardel might have been homosexual, or perhaps asexual due to signs that he was a *'marica'*,<sup>67</sup> including an off-colour comment by an Argentinean tango dancer that his sexuality could most definitely be pinpointed because of his castrato-like 'ability to hit high notes' and physical appearance of 'chubbiness' (p. 86). A homosocial viewpoint of tango history is, of course, a departure from the usual mythological scandal of the seedy heterosexual setting of a whorehouse that has often pervaded Piazzolla's musical meaning, and would call for a re-framing of Gardel as the heterosexual 'Romantic Hero' of Argentinean identity.

In a modern dance setting, organisations such as 'Tango Queer' challenge tango as a 'chauvinist' symbol within Buenos Aires and promote power-sharing that departs from the traditional roles of 'leading and following' and therefore promotes an all-inclusive sense of tango community.<sup>68</sup> Orlando Farías notes that women are starting to 'lead' because they are 'bored with not having good leaders', and tired of dancing the traditional roles (Rébora, 2010, pp. 6–8). The 'Festival Internacional de Tango Queer' holds yearly conferences in Buenos Aires and abroad and now holds academic discourses about gender in the tango in the city, examining and studying roles within the changing function of a gendered tango. There are a growing number of 'gender alternative' milongas in Buenos Aires, such as 'La Marshall'. These are usually advertised as 'gay milongas', although in fact they are really better described as 'gay friendly' or 'gender alternative' because not all people who attend would consider themselves to be homosexual; in these milongas, gender roles and sexual affiliations are flexible.

Within current academic scholarship, a recent discussion among tango dancers at the 2011 International Tango Colloquium in Paris considered the acceptance and adoption of the terms 'Proposer/Listener' as a more appropriate way of thinking and teaching movement rather than the traditional 'Leader/Follower'.<sup>69</sup> However, this is not to say that there is a suggestion of a complete 'asexual tango', or 'desexualised' tango, or to dismiss descriptions of either viewpoint. In my experiences as a dancer, the 'original' archetypical roles of female and masculine are still embraced by traditionalists as 'authentic', are taught in lessons today, and are equally described as such by academics (see, for example Wendland, 2001, p. 6).

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<sup>67</sup> Tobin defines this as a 'fag' (p. 86), but it should be mentioned that this is also used as a highly disparaging slang term for a homosexual man.

<sup>68</sup> For more on the 'Tango Queer' philosophy see [www.tangoqueer.com](http://www.tangoqueer.com).

<sup>69</sup> In a wider spectrum, adoption of gender neutral terms is also occurring outside of the tango, for example such as in dance pedagogies of the Swedish Polska in Kaminsky, David (2011), 'Gender and Sexuality in the Polska: Swedish Couple Dancing and the Challenge of Egalitarian Flirtation', *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 20 (2), 123–52.

The appropriation of a heterosexual tango by westerners abroad in direct contrast with the renovation of gender and sexuality in Buenos Aires itself illuminates the way that the cultural reference points are shifting: it is no longer accurate to make gender assumptions about the ‘sexy passionate tango’ between man and woman (or between male ‘pimps’ and female ‘wild-dolls’, for that matter, either) as an authentic backdrop to indicate techniques for a musical performance. Deriving performance authenticity from sexual constructs and gender is challenging, as the foundations that suggest a masculine and feminine role to inform performance are always changing, and never stagnant.

### **Conclusions**

By avoiding the sorts of generalised cultural assumptions that have often been used as a basis for musical analysis, this chapter has provided various accounts of numerous juxtapositions of national identity and sexuality with which to explore how musical authenticity has been used to mark a performance of Piazzolla’s music. This chapter set out to explore a means to understand Piazzolla’s *6 Etudes* within a cultural view of tango authenticity that is complex and that offers many reference points. One of the most significant findings is that tango authenticity functions in a way that is not necessarily ‘collective’ or similarly ‘shared’, and interpreting Piazzolla’s scores based on assumed constructions is not always a helpful model from which to base interpretations. Whilst this chapter did not set out to construct a ‘true’ cultural framework in the areas of national identity and sexuality, current discourse surrounding these areas reinforce the fact that cultural juxtapositions function more effectively as a model for challenging blanket stereotypes than as an embodiment of a purely authentic musical reading. Limitations in this study of cultural discourse within the tango will always lie in the hands of the observer, and will always be self-reflexive at best. Although scholars have noted that authenticity has been shaped by those who situate themselves in relation to the genre, these findings will always be limited to the reality that I am an ‘outsider’ to the genre, with a ‘western gaze’ – more specifically, an American female flautist with Latina roots, yet trained in the western classical conservatory tradition. Though in a step away from viewing self-reflected experiences as problematic or limited, this only indicates the numerous possibilities for further studies that could be done for wider exploration. A scholar with a completely divergent cultural background – for instance, an Argentinean tango musician based within Buenos Aires – would undoubtedly invoke a completely different reading on national identity and sexuality. Further investigation could equally be done in other cultural areas that formulate relationships with tango music authenticity that were not

discussed, especially in the areas of race, class, and politics.

In conclusion, the discussions presented in this chapter assist musical understanding for the 'outsider' who is approaching these etudes for performance by challenging perceived stereotypes, and by pointing to the lack of a single version of cultural authenticity. If the platform of cultural context from which to make a truly 'authentic' musical interpretation is currently seen as unfixed, always changing, and a product of myriad manifestations, there is also no seemingly 'authentic way' in which to draw upon 'culture' as a means for one sense of 'correct' use of tango performance. Moreover, this creates an opportunity for the new contexts and interpretations of the *6 Etudes* that will be proposed in the following chapters.

### Chapter 3: La Mugre

The term *la mugre* was introduced to me in Buenos Aires, in a flute lesson with one of my teachers, a *porteña flautista*.<sup>70</sup> Suggested to me as a desirable element to obtain for ‘credibility’ as a tango player, I attempted to understand the concept of mugre more fully. The term’s Spanish synonym, *suciedad* (Pelinski, 2008, p. 50) can be translated as English, ‘filth’ (Azzi, 2002, p. 38), ‘muck’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 162), or ‘dirt’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 165). The presence of mugre has often been used as an important marker for an ideal model of tango. It is a part of the complex blueprint of how tango authenticity is constructed, regardless of the historical context and the tango style where its essence is said to occur. This is demonstrated by the common *tanguero* expression that ‘*el tango tiene mugre; o mejor dicho, que el buen tango “tiene” que tener mugre*’ (‘the tango has mugre, or rather, that the good tango “must” have mugre’) (Gonzalez, 2010, p. 36). María José Demare, a tango singer and actress from a family of famous *porteño* artists (including the tango composer Lucio Demare), explains in an interview that the modern tango she sings ‘has to have’ an unequivocal (even if small) amount of mugre, even in a contemporary setting:

For me, tango must have a little of a dirty thing; it cannot be prim and proper. Before it was of the arrabal, and today goes on other ways, but always with a little bit of *mugre* (Micheletto, 2004).<sup>71</sup>

The underlying foundation of mugre and Piazzolla’s music is described by the former pianist of his Second Quintet, Pablo Ziegler, who commented:

Piazzolla wrote very sophisticated compositions, and at the same time, they are *mugrosas*.<sup>72</sup> Such *mugre* can be felt in spite of the intricacy with which those tangos were written or whether the language was contemporary, impressionist or expressionist (Azzi, 2002, p. 38).

Yet upon a deeper exploration, although mugre might be present in a variety of tango styles, the definitions and lore surrounding it are vast, and attempting to understand it is not straightforward. Cara (2009, pp. 438–40) writes that words used to describe aspects of tango vocabulary can be ‘resistant to verbal formulation’, ‘entangled’, ‘interdependent’, and ‘multivalent’ with other concepts of the genre; mugre is no exception. To demonstrate this,

<sup>70</sup> A flute player from Buenos Aires.

<sup>71</sup> Original text reads: ‘Para mí el tango tiene que tener un poquito de cosa sucia, no puede ser prolijito. Antes fue del arrabal y hoy va por otro lado, pero siempre con un poquito de mugre.’

<sup>72</sup> *Mugrosa(s)* is simply an adjective to describe something that has the characteristics of mugre.

mugre is often a co-partner with other metaphorical themes that are equally said to be authentically *tanguedad*.<sup>73</sup> Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 162) write that the ‘authentic tango spirit must always express the noble qualities of mugre’ as part of a wider spectrum of other desired qualities – including *la roña*<sup>74</sup> and *la camorra*.<sup>75</sup> Pelinski (2008, p. 50) observes that ‘alien to the academic discourse’, mugre – which he suggests is also called *roña* – is a significant and vital part of the ‘implementation strategies’ of tango music added particularly in more *canyengue*<sup>76</sup> moments. Ziegler equally described that tango is

[H]umour, dance, play, *canyengue* (‘street language’), equivalent to swing plus slang. Defiant and exhibitionist, the authentic tango expresses *mugre* (filth) and *roña* (fight). It is provocation, sensuality, ease and a quarrelsome temper’ (Azzi, 2002, p. 38).

On a wider outlook, parallels to mugre can be drawn from other genres with musical sentiments which also remain complicated to define musically, such as the spirit of *el duende* in the flamenco genre; ‘groove’, ‘swing’, and ‘soul’ in jazz, R&B, and blues; or the joint interpretational processes of *jeitinho* and *malandragem*<sup>77</sup> within Brazilian Samba. Similar to the intangible musical qualities essential to other musical styles, it would seem that mugre is not naturally present in all performances; instead it is something that is added by the performer. In the introduction to this thesis it was noted that Piazzolla thought that classical musicians from the ‘Ensamble Musical de Buenos Aires’ lacked ‘spice’ when playing his music. His observation is not so far removed from descriptions of mugre as a ‘spice’ that is added by a *tanguero* to the music: *un sabor particular* (‘a particular flavour’), *el condimento* (‘the seasoning’) to give the music *el color local* (‘local colour’) (Bevilacqua, 2005, p. 21); the crucial ‘tango essence’ for a good performance (Asaba 2011, p. 3). Similarly Gonzalez writes that

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<sup>73</sup> *Tanguedad* is the essence of all that is said to be tango; a ‘tanguicity’ (see discussion in Cara 2009, p. 438).

<sup>74</sup> Literally translated as a ‘scab’, ‘crust’, ‘filth’, or ‘grime’, but in *Lunfardo*, a ‘quarrel’, referring to a ‘dirty’ action.

<sup>75</sup> A ‘quarrel’, ‘brawl’, ‘a loud and violent confrontation’.

<sup>76</sup> The *Lunfardo* word *canyengue* is associated with *tango criollo* (‘native tango’), i.e., ‘dancing tango with a local flair’ (Savigliano, 1995, p. 239), but also someone or something from the *arrabales*. In the dance it is characterised by simple, unstructured sequences closely connected to rhythmic variations in the music, a mix of ‘slow’ and ‘quick’ steps, and an intense movement of the hips danced ‘bent forward and crouching’ (Farris Thompson, 2005, p. 152).

<sup>77</sup> The samba ethos of *jeitinho* and *malandragem* is a creative wit’, ‘rule bending’, ‘fast living’, and ‘street smarts’ that is said to be an important musical element derived from the backdrop of one cultural aspect of Brazilian life (Hess, 2012).

To name this *mugre*, I mean something very valuable, deep, rich, but very difficult to explain, this is like if talking of a seasoning, the essence or the soul of tango... (Gonzalez, 2010a, pp. 37, 39).<sup>78</sup>

The tango musicians Ramiro Gigliotti, a guitarist, and Analía Goldberg, the former pianist of the ‘Orquesta Color Tango’ describe its aesthetics further, and how the use of *mugre* (or not) contributes to a large interpretational divide between musicians:

It's like the difference between a drawing done with a ruler and another made free-hand. The second is imperfect, but is more alive. These are details that make a big difference between interpretations of an Argentine and a European, for example (Bevilacqua, 2005, p. 21).<sup>79</sup>

Given its importance in the wider consciousness of numerous *tangueros*, perhaps it is no surprise that what is often described reverently as ‘*la mugre sagrada*’ (the sacred *mugre*) is an integral process in acquiring musical fluency within the genre at tango music schools within Buenos Aires (Micheletto, 2001). Yuiko Asaba (2011), a Japanese violinist, recounts her experiences at the Tango Orchestra School Emilio Balcarce (where she trained as a tango musician) and suggests that one’s overall ‘competence’ in tango performance is heavily interlinked with one’s ability to ‘deliver *mugre*’ (p. 2). She explains that in her experience demonstrating a *mugrosa* musical reading in a successful manner requires the use of an autodidactic, imitative learning style as a core pedagogical tool (pp. 3–5).

Although *mugre* may be learnt through elements of aural transmission, Gonzalez describes how one would acquire this seemingly clandestine effect beyond any formal methods in which to learn it:

[*Mugre*] is something so indefinite that varies in duration and character depending on the performer, and one has to be a tango musician to understand it, it is not enough to just study; one cannot learn this from books or written methods, one must see it and play it a lot with other musicians, ‘messing’ with the genre, feeling it, playing it by ear, trying to learn from those who know and if they are too arrogant to show you, or do not know how to transmit it, spying and copying it like one who steals a valuable secret (Gonzalez, 2010, p. 38).<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Original text reads: ‘...al nombrar esta *mugre*, hablo de algo muy valioso, profundo, rico, pero muy difícil a explicar; esto es como si se hablara del condimento, la esencia o el alma del tango.’

<sup>79</sup> Original text reads: ‘Es como la diferencia entre un dibujo hecho con regla y otro hecho a mano alzada. El segundo es imperfecto, pero está más vivo... Son detalles que hacen mucha diferencia entre las interpretaciones de un argentino y las de un europeo, por ejemplo.’

<sup>80</sup> Original text reads: ‘[*Mugre*] es algo tan indefinido que varía en duración y carácter según su ejecutante, que hay que ser músico de tango para comprenderlo, y para aprenderlas no alcanza con solo estudiar; no se puede aprender esto de los libros ni métodos escritos, hay que verlo y tocarlo mucho con otros músicos, ‘enunciarse’ con el género, vivirlo, parillearlo, tratar de aprenderlo de los que saben y si estos no se dignan a enseñarlo o no saben transmitirlo, espiarlo y copiarlo como quien roba un secreto valioso.’

Similarly, the tango bassist and composer Pablo Aslán explains it is also a product of ‘feel’, through an unplanned and spontaneous creation. He gives advice to aspiring tango players that in addition to the activities of needing to listen to many recordings, playing an instrument proficiently, having a desire to be creative, and developing aural skills they must have ‘the *intuition* to know when and how to play *mugre*’ (Granados, 2001, p. 104, emphasis added). Though it might remain an obscure concept developed from feel, one’s ability to judiciously (and skilfully) add *mugre* is said to be an important technique to acquire. For example, one wouldn’t just add this ‘spice’ to every tango reading in the same way; an important skill is to know when, where, and how much. Gallo (2011, p. 144) describes how ‘less’ of it would be used depending on the tango being performed; he demonstrates that a tango *vals* (waltz) would require a ‘softer’ *mugre* style than a *milonga ciudadana*.

While many accounts of *mugre* detail the importance of acquiring it for a musical reading by feel and/or imitation, questions emerge: ‘what constitutes a *mugrosa* musical reading?’, ‘how does one know if it is present?’, ‘how might it be interlinked to a wider picture of various tango philosophies?’ In a move away from pinpointing what might constitute an authentic definition of *mugre*, it will be argued that this valued quality is not simply a product of one musical technique, or even appears in one guise. Its various musical qualities will be discussed, yet it will also be suggested that *mugre* is used as a metaphor for wider cultural affiliations, demonstrated through the themes of Locality and Physicality. The use of academic texts, popular weekly tango circulars, interviews with *tangueros*, tango lyrics, and recently filmed tango documentaries offer a broad range of accounts from which to explore *mugre*. Far from essentialist in nature, this chapter does not try to address all attitudes surrounding how *mugre* might be constructed; many accounts use a combination of these themes in their descriptions. This approach demonstrates another way to contextualise the tango score, using a fluid and flexible notion of tango culture as its backdrop. The explorations of *mugre* here will provide further ways to interpret and perform the *6 Etudes* that are covered in the following chapters.

## **Mugre and Musical Techniques**

### ***Yeites***

Accounts of what constitutes *mugre* in a musical sense often begin with a compilation of spontaneously added musical effects and techniques that *tangueros* use in performance called

‘*yeites*’ (the special effects specific to tango style).<sup>81</sup> These includes intentional ‘noises’, ‘clusters’, and ‘percussions’ that are added to make the sounds ‘dirty’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 165), which are not always written in the score. Gonzalez writes:

Mugre is defined in the musical sense as a set of certain intentional defects, that are ‘effects’ of different techniques that varying tango musicians utilise according to their instrument, to give a sensation of a ‘muddy’ sound. All these effects collaborate to build ‘la mugre’; some accents, attacks, and other percussive effects are directly baptized as *la chicharra* [‘the buzzer’], *la guitarrita* [‘the little guitar’], ‘the canyengue effect’,<sup>82</sup> *el látigo* [‘the whip’], *el tambor* [‘the snare drum’], etc. (Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 37).<sup>83</sup>

In order to further explore musical descriptions of mugre, a greater understanding of some of these *yeites* can be drawn from various tango texts. These helpfully describe many of these more fully, even if one’s technique to achieve them might vary depending on the instrument being used:

- *La chicharra* (‘the little buzzer’)<sup>84</sup> is also referred to as *la lija* (‘sandpaper’). This effect is made when the instrumentalist creates a ‘scratching-like sound’ similar to the sound quality its name evokes (Link, 2009, pp. 38, 78). Gallo (2011, p. 119) writes that it has a ‘chirping’ quality similar to the cicadas heard in the summertime in Buenos Aires.
- *El látigo* (‘the whip’) is known as a fast ascending glissando and ends its sound with an accent. Its counterpart is *el perro* (‘the dog’), which is the same technique, except uses a descending glissando instead. Both use an indeterminate pitch upon their ‘landing’ (ibid., pp. 79–80). Gallo (2011, pp. 123–24) writes that the ascending *látigo* stimulates a ‘whistle’, though when descending (as in *el perro*) it sounds like the ‘crack of a whip’.
- *El tambor* (‘the drum’) ‘is the sound of an indefinite pitch that closely resembles the striking of a snare drum’ (ibid., p. 121).

Though not specifically mentioned in the description given previously by Gonzalez, other percussive effects commonly used could include:

- *El golpe* (‘the knock’) (sometimes called the *golpe de caja*) is an alternative to the *tambor*, but has a ‘softer, less incisive sound’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 122). It is literally a

<sup>81</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the etymology of ‘*yeites*’, see Drago, 2008, p. 125.

<sup>82</sup> See footnote no. 7 for a simple definition of this effect.

<sup>83</sup> Original text reads: Mugre se define en el sentido musical como el conjunto de ciertos defectos intencionales, que son ‘efectos’ de diferentes técnicas que utilizan los músicos tangueros variando según su instrumento, para dar una sensación de sonido ‘embarrado’. Todos efectos colaboran con armar la mugre; algunos acentos, ataques, y efectos percutidos otros directamente están bautizados como ‘la chicharra’, ‘la guitarrita’, ‘el efecto canyengue’, ‘el látigo’, ‘el tambor’, etc.’

<sup>84</sup> Also translated as ‘the Cicada’ and further described in Gallo, 2011, p. 119.



‘box slap’, a ‘knocking’ or ‘hitting’ effect on the instrument (ibid.). One can see that in many of Piazzolla’s live performances, the composer makes this effect with his rings knocking on the bandoneón, but it also can involve hitting or tapping one’s instrument in various forms.

- *El cepillo* (‘the brush’) Gallo (2011, p. 127) describes as having a similar effect as *la chicharra*, ‘but much deeper and a little softer’, like a ‘rasping noise’.
- *Arrastres* (‘drags’), are musically defined by Fain (2010, p. 101) as ‘sharp sounds’ that occur before a beat hits. Gallo (2011, p. 103) describes them as a ‘sharp attack’; if one were to hear one, it would sound like a cymbal being played backwards. Farris Thompson (2005, p. 183) suggests that *arrastres* sounds vocally like a ‘*zep, zoom, zum, zhoom*’ when they occur.

In the classical tradition, not only would many of these non-score based noise ‘effects’ be considered ‘defects’, that is, ‘wrong’ or ‘undesirable’ within a western performance setting; one might also be unclear how to emulate them on an instrument without prior experience. Perhaps that is why Piazzolla often tries to transcribe them in his arrangements through rather detailed notation, for example as a series of *látigos*, as Link (2009, p. 79) demonstrates in the manuscript of *La Camorra*. Yet, in other cases, Piazzolla simply indicates a certain effect above the notation (for example ‘golpe’), or sometimes with simply a note to the performer that reads ‘produce different sounds of percussion’ combined with indeterminate ‘cross’ note heads, or in some cases, just empty bars.<sup>85</sup> An example of the frustration a classical player might have in the re-creation of such effects, which are important in the creation of *mugre*, is demonstrated in Staveacre’s 2005 documentary *Astor Piazzolla in Portrait*. David Harrington, a violinist in the Kronos Quartet, and Fernando Suárez Paz, Piazzolla’s violinist from the Second Quintet, each give their perspective on the terminology notated in the score:

[Narrator] Piazzolla wrote two of his compositions for the Kronos Quartet. [Cuts to Harrington] I think that the first time we met him he had already sent us the score to *Four for Tango*. And he and Fernando Suárez Paz came over to our rehearsal. The group felt very nervous that day that these two legendary musicians were coming over. [Cuts to Suárez Paz]: Piazzolla rang me from San Francisco and said ‘Come here, these people don’t know how to play’. It was The Kronos Quartet, one of the best in the world; ‘they don’t know how to play!’ The problem was that he wrote the way you see it here [he points to a tango score that he has propped on a nearby piano] He’d write ‘*lija*’, ‘*figuración*’, ‘*tambor*’. But how would anyone know that *lija* sounds like this? [Plays the *lija* on his violin] They are percussion effects. For example, *tambor*. [Plays the *tambor* effect on his violin] They’re percussive effects not written conventionally. That is what is written, but in the manner of Piazzolla. [Cuts to

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<sup>85</sup> Which will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Harrington] Suárez Paz said, ‘You just do it!’ I said, ‘Fernando, not all of us just do it. We need to learn how!’ [Harrington then softly chuckles about the anecdote] (Staveacre, 2005, ‘Biography’, 01:36:00]

Drago (2008, p. 127) suggests that these effects, which often cause confusion amongst classical musicians, are an important element of Piazzolla’s ‘aesthetics’ and ‘musical language’. Subsequently, he notes that ‘it is no accident’ that after this infamous rehearsal, for the first time, Piazzolla included an explanation of some of these techniques in the published score of *Four for Tango* (Piazzolla, 1989), which was released shortly thereafter by Editions Henri Lemoine (ibid.. p. 128, fn 117).

### ***Tango Swing***

In addition to the *yeites*, Gonzalez expresses how a sense of rhythmic flow that is equivalent to ‘groove’ and ‘swing’ in other musical genres brings a similar quality of timing that indicates *mugre*:

In jazz there is a similar concept called ‘Swing’, and in Soul and Funk, called ‘Groove’. And we, the Argentines, as it couldn’t be otherwise we call it ‘Mugre’ (Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 37).<sup>86</sup>

Further definitions of *mugre* focus on temporal manners of interpretation which also resonate with a specific rhythmic style. According to Micheletto (2001, p. 27) *mugre* is defined musically by ‘manners of expression, accents, *apoggiaturas*, nuances, and forms of marking time that can never be confined on paper’.<sup>87</sup> Equally, Asaba (2011, p. 7) explains that *mugre* includes at least one of the following three elements ‘to form the core elements of tango performance’:

1) details such as how to change the rhythm of consecutive quavers or crotchets, 2) how to execute *arrastre* (a type of glissando) or, 3) where and how to change the tempo of a specific phrase (Asaba, 2011, p. 7).

Specifically, however, these descriptions of *apoggiaturas*, nuances, *arrastrés*, the execution of the accents, and the marking of time within a phrase are all qualities that contribute to

<sup>86</sup> Original text reads: ‘En el Jazz hay un concepto similar en llamado “Swing”, y en el Soul y Funk llamado “Groove”. Y nosotros, los argentinos, como no podía ser de otra manera lo llamamos “Mugre”.’

<sup>87</sup> Original text reads: ‘maneras de expresión, acentos, apoyaturas, matices, yeites, formas de marcar el ritmo que nunca podrán ser encerrados en un papel.’

bringing a sense of tango swing to the performance.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, a sense of swing and its importance in Piazzolla's compositions is demonstrated by Azzi and Collier, who explain:

Probably the most fundamental thing Piazzolla got from jazz was the concept of swing. As he explained to a French jazz magazine in 1974 'Swing is everything; if you don't have swing in music you have nothing. And the tango in itself doesn't have swing. It's a military thing – ran-tan-plan' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 158).

It was also a skill that he was known for displaying in his performances, as briefly demonstrated by the New York jazz critic Arnold Jay Smith, who in a review remarked, 'I'll say this for Astor: he makes the air swing!' (Butler Cannata, 2005, p. 66).

Given the variety of ways in which *mugre* might be created musically, and its importance in Piazzolla's own scores, its essence can be said to occur from multiple musical techniques, all combined to create a unique tango soundscape. Yet beyond initial perceptions that *mugre* might be simply an intentional effect by which to 'dirty' the sound, it can also be said that *mugre* works within an understood framework of certain performance standards. This can be explored briefly though Gonzalez, who explains how one might misunderstand the concept of creating *mugre*:

There are those who confuse *la mugre* with 'playing badly', and there are others who take advantage by naming it *mugre*, to defend a bad sonority or harshness saying that they play with *mugre*. Not to confuse, to play with *mugre* is to play with the flavour of tango, but not to play badly. Although it is true, when you clean all of the work, the essence of the Tango can be lost, but that is no excuse for playing it 'dirty' (*mugre* and dirtiness are not the same) (Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 38).<sup>89</sup>

A documented example of values that are ascribed to a successful tango performance in a 'live' setting can be found in a scene from the documentary *El último bandoneón* (Saderman, 2009). Centred on an Argentinean female bandoneón player (Marina Gayotto), the film documents this young woman's trials in purchasing an affordable bandoneón so that she can leave a difficult life busking on the streets of Buenos Aires to pursue her dream of joining a new tango ensemble ran by the famous bandoneón player, Rodolfo Maderos. Upon auditioning numerous students, including Gayotto, Maderos makes it clear to his colleagues

<sup>88</sup> Which will be further explored over the following chapters.

<sup>89</sup> Original text reads: 'Hay quienes confunden la mugre con 'tocar mal', y hay quienes se aprovechan nombrando la mugre, para defender una mala sonoridad o estridencia diciendo que ellos tocan con mugre. No confundir, tocar con mugre es tocar con el gusto del tango, pero no tocar mal. Si bien es cierto, que cuando se limpia del todo una obra, puede perderse esencia del Tango no por eso las ejecuciones deben ser 'sucias' (mugre y suciedad no es lo mismo).'

(also on the audition panel), that he was only searching for young musicians with refined musical skills that are not so far removed from the values instilled within a western pedagogical setting. These include a clean playing technique, a strong sense of intonation, confident sight-reading ability, elegant musical phrasing, and an internal rhythmic pulse – yet all with the essence of specific ways to mark time and perform a wider tango style (ibid., 00:06:58).

### **Mugre and Physicality**

The previous chapter explored the notion that tango is often seen as a symbol for one's identity, an embodied representation of 'one's self'. At other times the authentic tango might be personified in another, such as a national tango 'hero' or a character from tango lore (i.e. Gardel, the *madrecita* or the *compadrito*). In a similar sense, *mugre* is equally said to be personally embodied, or visibly present through evidence of another's physicality in a variety of different manifestations. For example, Gonzalez relays the corporeal sensation of sexuality, heat, and physical exhilaration after a night's dancing at the milonga as a metaphor for *mugre*:

[Mugre] boils when we undress dancing in a tight and intimate embrace and we both finish with the eyes closed and the heart at a gallop ... (Gonzalez, 2010, p. 39).<sup>90</sup>

In another metaphor of *mugre* as a physical embodiment, Pelinski (2008, p. 50) writes that the characteristic that particularly demonstrates a *mugrosa* performance is the presence of one's 'sweat'. He explains that this helps to 'emphasize the intensity of the physical effort required, particularly by the bandoneón, in the interpretation of the tango' (ibid.). Sweat is believed by many *tangueros*, including the famous *bandoneonista* José Libertella, to be a symbol of a 'well-executed delivery' (ibid., fn 28). Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 154) furthers Pelinski's image by noting that Piazzolla often returned from his bandoneón performances dehydrated and exhausted: 'his shirts were invariably soaked in perspiration'. and this is perhaps unsurprising given that the instrument can weigh up to 9 kilograms. The visible presence of physicality in his performances was often said to be not only a trademark of his style, but also integral to his own brand of musical expression, and often surprised those who witnessed it. Gerry Mulligan said, 'he plays with such force that the air from that thing [his

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<sup>90</sup> Original text reads: '[Mugre] hierve cuando nos desnudamos bailando en un abrazo apretado e íntimo y terminamos ambos con los ojos cerrados y el corazón al galope...'

bandoneón] once blew my bass player's music off the stand' (Butler Cannata, 2005, p. 66); Azzi and Collier write:

The way he feels the music was expressed in a very physical way of playing the music. The percussionist 'Pocho' Lapouble, observing him in an ephemeral sextet of 1968, gives a memorable description: 'He was standing in front of me, with his back to me, of course, and you saw him contort his body, and when I realised this, I couldn't take my eyes off him, because he was not a dancer, exactly, but something flowing that played in front of you. It was impressive to see his waist, his back, impressive to see him moving; it was his music' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 153).

It would seem that the physicality of Piazzolla's live performances might also surprise a classical performer, especially when his gestures and the notation within his scores might not be obviously linked. This can be demonstrated by Yo-Yo Ma when speaking about the making of his album *Soul of the Tango: The Music of Astor Piazzolla* (Ma, 1997):

00:26:21 [Narrator] Yo-Yo Ma's 1997 CD was an earlier, very successful collaboration with some of the people who'd played with Piazzolla. [Camera cuts to Yo-Yo Ma] I went to Buenos Aires and met some of the musicians that worked with him. And that was when I completely fell in love with the music ... [00:27:44] ... One of the pieces that I played was a construction of some outtakes of Piazzolla's music that Jorge Calandrelli had written a piece around. You know, it's kind of strange, but I got to play with him through the technological means. But playing with him meant actually feeling his breathing and his pulse, and so there was physicality to that part of the recording that was rather remarkable (Staveacre, 2005, 'Biography', 00:26:21).

In other words, though Ma might have hired some of Piazzolla's former ensemble musicians (i.e. Fernando Suárez Paz, Horacio Malvicino, and Gerardo Gandini), as well as other prominent players (such as Antonio Agri and Néstor and Leonardo D. Marconi) to appear on some of his tracks, it would seem that it was through actually 'playing' with Piazzolla that he started to understand fully the physicality that was such a huge part of the composer's interpretational process. Furthermore, it was this 'remarkable' physicality that influenced his own musical interpretation of the Calandrelli arrangement.

Piazzolla's physical manner of musical expression can be further contextualised through Pelinski's work on musical embodiment and the tango (2005). He suggests that one of the ways in which *tangueros* conceptualise corporeal associations to the genre can be directly related to the presence of certain musical characteristics; he uses Keil and Field's *Music Grooves* (1994) to provide a wider musicological vocabulary with which to describe them:

There are also corporeal associations with the tango style, at least for those tango players that find that "it allows you more freedom, sensuality and colourfulness in its performance." In general, the stylistic features which seduce musicians are those inscribed directly in the experience of sound. These are

- the discontinuity and contrasts in rhythms, dynamics, agogics, texture, timbre, etc.,
- the irrational phrasing of the rubato, be it as 'individual discrepancy', or as 'collective discrepancy' (Keil and Feld 1994 pp. 119–21) in relation to a steady pulse;
- finally, the particular pulsation or 'groove', which gives tango its specific mood. Some musicians define it as 'the heart beat which gives life to tango'. Acoustically present or implied, this fluid pulsation may underlie most of the duration of a piece, and is perceived as a slightly 'laid back' rhythmic realization. It acts as the metric reference point on which the melodic instruments create the rubati tensions (Keil and Feld 1994, pp. 59–72) (Pelinski, 2005, sec. 8.).

Many of these musical characteristics, which are said to be a catalyst for a heightened sense of embodiment, have also been ascribed to the creation of *mugre*. For example, Pelinski's detailed description of temporal aspects within the sound is also how tango swing might be described.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, these temporal concepts, which allow a performer more corporeal 'freedom', can be further understood when extended to Piazzolla's music. The Argentine psychoanalyst and Piazzolla scholar Carlos Kuri (2000) writes that Piazzolla's 'inexorable union' between interpretation and composition can be located in the physical intensity required in performance:

The intensity Piazzolla wants for interpretation pierces the score itself: one has to reach a physical palpitation of the written note. The bandoneón, his trademark as interpreter, his idea of phrasing, the unexpected treatment of tempo, the visceral explosions interrupting the calm, all go beyond mere excellence as an interpreter, they actually affect the way the score itself needs to be treated (Kuri, 2000).

Parallels to the characteristics of Piazzolla's style – his phrasing, the 'unexpected treatment of tempo', the intuitive 'explosions' – can be linked with musical techniques that have been specially ascribed to create *mugre*. Equal sentiments are found in a dance setting. The renowned Argentine dancer Pablo Verón described in an interview how Piazzolla's musical expression requires a certain type of physical manifestation in interpretation that is specifically derived from his musical style. In answer to the question 'when you dance a tango by Piazzolla what comes to your mind?' he replied:

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<sup>91</sup> Which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

A tango by Piazzolla is regularly very intense. It awakens different types of feelings and moods in the interpreter. It goes directly to the emotions. The dance becomes abstract and more choreographic ... I strive for patterns or sequences that could go with the music. I also like to improvise and create. That is the way I come up with the most interesting steps. Piazzolla likes to be very dramatic with his music. Therefore we have to make sure that we reflect the intensity in the dance. In essence, the tangos by Piazzolla have what all tangos need to have: the *accelerando*, the suspensions, the dynamic changes, the sudden stops, and so forth, all done in his special way (Granados, 2001, p. 81, citing Verón via a personal interview, 2000).

This is not to say that Piazzolla's music necessarily requires 'more' physicality in a performance (whether that be of dance or music) different than any other musical style. Yet one reading of how physicality and *mugre* are intertwined is that physical gestures which indicate a sense of 'intensity' – a racing heart, sweat, pulse, or a certain breathing style – are integral to expressing the elements imbedded in the musical sound that capture the spirit of *mugre*. Moreover, the physical presence of 'intense' corporality within a performance ensures that the music is intuitively *felt*, and thus might be perceived as – to use Cara's descriptions of a 'Home Tango' (2009, p. 141) – more *verdadero* (real, true), *auténtico* (authentic), *desde el alma* (from or closer to the soul), *en la sangre* (carried in the blood), and *sentido en el corazón* (felt in the heart).

### **Mugre and Locality**

The previous chapter noted that tango music is often said to be the 'definitive sound' of its homeland, and specifically its birthplace in the Río de la Plata region. An example of this was given by Suárez Paz, who suggested one of the problems the Kronos quartet had in reading Piazzolla's score:

What they did not know how to do were the [special] effects, the tango swing, and that is something that nobody knows how to do unless he was born here [in Buenos Aires] (Drago, 2008, p. 127, quoting Suárez Paz by email).

This comment warrants further discussion: the effects that the Kronos Quartet were trying to produce are not only linked to how *mugre* is produced in a musical sense, but their successful production is dependent on one's ties to a certain landscape (in this case, Buenos Aires). Suárez Paz's dubious advice to the quartet that 'you just do it' no longer seems so strange if *mugre* has often been tied to a shared sense of landscape that surrounds the tango experience. Various examples from *tangueros* use *mugre* as a metaphor for descriptions of the milonga, the surrounding *calles del barrio* ('neighbourhood streets') and the people who are

encountered, i.e., the destitute on the street, one's dance partner, or a lover. In an interview, the tango singer Rita Cortese describes that

Tango is the closest thing to rock and must have landscape and *mugre*. What is *mugre*? Everything that relates to the vile.<sup>92</sup> The tango is the urban and popular music par excellence. It's not easy to sing a chamamé if you're not *correntino* [from the Corrientes province] or *misionero* [from the Misiones province]: you have to have that landscape. So it is with the tango, it should have the *barrio* and the *barro* [the neighbourhood and its mud] to interpret it well, as it also happens with rock (Rivas, 2010).<sup>93</sup>

Gonzalez describes *mugre* through the experience of the end of a night's dancing at the local milonga:

I think that this *mugre* is in the air and in the shadows of the milonga ... sometimes we can see or feel it [mugre] in different situations of the night: When in a milonga at 4 or 5am on a weekday, no one seems to want to stop dancing, singing or drinking, even if we are kicked out of the place. [Mugre] appears while watching the drunk who sleeps sitting in a corner; or when the 'nice crazy man' who watches the cars with his bottle under the arm greets us with a smile in his face ... it is in the whisper of the old *milonguero* that leaning on the bar looks at you and gives you a wise neighbourhood tip and a good bump ... [Mugre] is what we feel strange at the beginning and it seems something is not totally fine, but after a while we see it with tenderness, delight and enormous pleasure.' Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 39).<sup>94</sup>

Other descriptions of *mugre* are formulated in poetry, as in the lyrics of the song *Tango y Mugre* by the award-winning Argentine poet Raimundo Rosales (b. 1954):

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<sup>92</sup> Additionally, 'vile' (*canallesco*) is usually something or someone associated with social 'riff-raff', of a 'lower class'.

<sup>93</sup> Original text reads: 'El tango es lo más parecido al rock y tiene que tener paisaje y mugre. ¿Qué es mugre? Todo lo relacionado con lo canallesco. El tango es la música ciudadana y popular por excelencia. No es fácil cantar un chamamé si no sos correntino o misionero: tenés que tener ese paisaje. Así pasa también con el tango, hay que tener barrio y barro para interpretarlo bien, como también pasa con el rock.'

<sup>94</sup> Original text reads: 'Creo que esta mugre está en el aire y las sombras de la milonga... a veces se puede ver o se la siente en diferentes situaciones de la noche: Cuando en alguna milonga a las 4 o 5 de la mañana de un día de semana, nadie parece querer dejar de bailar, cantar o tomar, aunque nos echen a patadas del lugar. Aparece mientras vemos al borracho que se duerme sentado en un rincón; o cuando con una sonrisa, nos saluda El loco lindo que cuida los autos con su botella debajo del brazo. ...está en el susurro del viejo milonguero que acodado en la barra te mira y te tira un consejo de barrio sabio y bien atorrante... [Mugre] es la que al principio sentimos rara y nos pareciera no estar de todo bien, pero al cabo de un tiempo la vemos con ternura gusto u enorme placer.'



## Tango y Mugre

I want a tango that tells our story  
without the stupid mask of consolation,  
without misery under the carpet  
nor that voice in the shadow of the ritual lament.

I want a tango with a different poetry  
that penetrates into the fragile defeats  
that talks to me about hells and abysses,  
poetry without lyricism, relentless and fatal.

A tango that explodes getting into the *mugre*,  
that speaks of the hunger of a time that rots.  
Of homeless people that sleep on the sidewalk,  
of dreams that migrate and dreams that remain.  
Of rage in the squares, remembrance in the wounds,  
of history that calls and meddles into your life.

A tango of intrusive speech,  
a storm in the smile to come.  
How to make new tangos at the time  
in which we all lost innocence  
how to find this proper melody,  
this unruly poetry that etches on the skin.

I want a lewd and infatuated tango  
with words that look into the eyes,  
one hundred questions and not one reply  
and pain that is left as the cruellest verse.

Quiero un tango que cuente nuestra historia  
sin la máscara idiota del consuelo,  
sin miserias debajo de la alfombra  
ni esa voz en la sombra de lamento ritual.

Quiero un tango con otra poesía  
que se meta en las frágiles derrotas  
que me hable de infiernos y de abismos,  
poesía sin lirismo, despiadada y fatal.

Un tango que explote metiéndose en la mugre,  
que me hable del hambre de un tiempo que se pudre.  
De gente sin nada que duerme en la vereda,  
de sueños que emigran y sueños que se quedan.  
De bronca en las plazas, memoria en las heridas,  
de historia que llama y se mete en la vida.

Un tango de palabra entrometida,  
tormenta en la sonrisa por venir.  
Cómo hacer nuevos tangos en la hora  
en que todos perdimos la inocencia  
cómo hallar esa justa melodía,  
esa indócil poesía que se grabe en la piel.

Quiero un tango procaz y enamorado  
con palabras que miren a los ojos,  
cien preguntas y ninguna respuesta  
y el dolor que nos resta como verso más cruel.

What is interesting is that the landscapes used by Cortese, Gonzalez and Rosales describe *mugre* through localised aspects of *Argentinidad* that make up a shared, collective experience. Additionally, these metaphors of *mugre* can also be tied to wider tango themes explored in recent literature by the dance anthropologists Taylor and Savigliano. Taylor (1987, p. 485) explains that tango singers share their personal experiences with audiences through stories that are ‘common to them all’ through the medium of lyrics. She suggests that a tango performer does not need the ‘bold pronouncement or flamboyant gesture. His audience knows what he means and his feelings are familiar ones’ (ibid.); lyrics often are platforms for ‘manifestations in everyday life’ (Taylor, 1976, p. 288). Subsequently, though Cortese’s simple description of *mugre* (‘everything that relates to the vile’) might initially seem rather vague, from her perspective it hardly needs more words if what is ‘vile’ is known collectively through a shared sense of *Argentinidad*. Rosales’s accounts about what *mugre* symbolically represents are equally as vile, and yet are a much more descriptive way ‘to tell our story’. He wants to portray a version of *mugre* ‘without the stupid mask of consolation/without misery under the carpet/nor that voice in the shadow of ritual lament’, and calls for a version of tango that shies from a telling that is aesthetically pleasing or overly beautiful (‘without lyricism’). He wants a tango that deals with the harsh reality (‘that talks to me about hells and abysses’/‘relentless and fatal’) of daily life. The *mugre* he describes will not remain quietly told (‘a tango of intrusive speech’), or overly optimistic (‘a storm in the smile to come’), and is visibly imprinted for all to see as it ‘etches on the skin’.

A grim life for those living on the streets of Buenos Aires is portrayed through a constant, rotting hunger, ‘homeless people that sleep on the sidewalk’ – not so far removed from Gonzalez’s account of the ‘drunk who sleeps sitting in a corner’ ones sees after the milonga. Both resonate with the destitution, hunger, and disillusion which have been said to shape themes of early tango lore. For example, Taylor (1976) describes the overarching themes that occur as including ‘immigrants living in poverty at the city’s edge’ (in *arrabales*) (p. 274) and the ‘dream of social mobility’ (p. 280).

In the last stanza, Rosales’s metaphor for *mugre* revolves around the relationship of a ‘lover’, a seemingly pleasurable thought. However, when ‘one

hundred questions' about the injustices of *mugre* are asked, the 'lover', is unable to produce any reply, leaving only pain 'as the cruellest verse'. The appearance of a lover within a tango text would not initially seem surprising given how often references to love and heartbreak appear in tango themes. Yet Savigliano (1995a) suggests that the relationship between a man and a woman can be seen as a symbol of 'eroticized social tension' and as the pathway by which to tell stories of the social tensions of politics, and struggles of race and class often intertwined with tango stories. She argues that sexual encounters between genders became a more recognised theme for Argentines to embrace as 'gender conflicts were interpreted as given, universal, unavoidable dilemmas' (ibid. p. 84). Taylor (1998, p. 10) similarly explains that 'the contrast between two statements of relations between the sexes aptly mirrors the insecurities of life and identity.' In her experience of living in Buenos Aires after the *Guerra Sucia* (Dirty War),<sup>95</sup> 'the tango's meanings shifted not only to include a unique Argentine identity, but also to express as well the particular forms of disorientation, loss and uncertainty of the nation's fate inculcated by years of terror' (p. 19).

Rosales's use of 'dreams that migrate and dreams that remain' and Gonzalez's view that '[Mugre] is that rare principle we feel and it seems to us that it is not all going to be ok, but after a while we see it with tenderness, flavour, and enormous pleasure', are both intertwined with sentiments of *la tristeza/ el mufarse*. As discussed in the previous chapter, disillusioned and bittersweet emotional states are at times present within music and dance creations of the genre and are part of how the authentic tango experience is conceptualised.

Although complicated and perplexing to the outsider, each *tanguero* – from the ties to the *barrio* and *barro* by Cortese, to Gonzalez's familiar encounters after the *milonga*, to Rosales's vivid poetry depicting scenes of destitution and sorrow – references the locality surrounding the tango experience and are familiar with it firsthand. Furthermore, it can be said that that the dialogue surrounding *mugre* acts as a metaphor for the expression of cultural unity and shared experiences – and as similarly discussed in the previous chapter, what remains authentically Argentinean or is collectively shared to represent *mugre* is never the result of one reading. This wider perspective indicates that *mugre* in any form (whether musical or embodied by a

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<sup>95</sup> 'The Dirty War' (1976–1983), was characterised by the rule of a military dictatorship within Argentina.

performer) cannot be separated from the cultural landscapes it is said to reference, and equally lends a wider net with which to explore how the use of *mugre* is multivalent and wide-ranging within the genre.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter has argued that beyond the current tango performance literature, which predominantly addresses it as a series of musical techniques to ‘dirty’ the sound, *mugre* is also a metaphor for wider cultural themes often associated with the tango. Returning to the initial questions given at the start of this chapter, it is now possible to have a clearer understanding of how to address ‘what constitutes a *mugrosa* musical reading?’, ‘how does one know if it is present?’, and ‘how might it be interlinked to a wider picture of various tango philosophies?’

As a means to address how *mugre* and a musical reading relate, this chapter has demonstrated that within a musical setting, *mugre* is often created through improvisatory effects that are not usually written in the score, such as *yeites* and swing. These effects contribute to a ‘spontaneous’ and ‘more free’ musical experience for both the listener and performer. Though confusing, or even undesirable for a western performer, such techniques are often a part of Piazzolla’s said musical aesthetics and are trademarks of his performance style. Yet it was argued that beyond a perception that *mugre* is to play in a ‘dirty’ manner, i.e. ‘sloppy’ or ‘without intention’, the creation of the essence of *mugre* requires musical skills and values that are not dissimilar to those of a western player, which helps to bridge perceived gaps of ‘us/them’ dichotomies in a musical reading.

To explore how *mugre* might be ‘known’ in a performance, it is often said to be present through one’s physicality – either embodied in one’s self or visibly apparent in another. It was suggested that ‘intense’ physicality allowed the performance to be perceived as intuitively ‘felt’, but was also a means to express various qualities of tango style embedded in the sound not always obvious from the tango score. Moreover, and often connected to wider philosophies within tango, is the fact that ‘authentic’ performances are a product of ‘feel’ and intuition’. A visible sense of physicality ensures that any given performance – whether in the dance or in a musical setting – is fully embodied by the artist.

In order to explore how *mugre* is part of a wider cultural context within the genre, it was argued that beyond any musical techniques, or visible corporality,

metaphors for *mugre* are shaped by the landscape of the tango experience, and are used to tell stories of everyday *porteño* life in a collective and shared manner. The images portrayed in various descriptions of *mugre* were contextualised through wider tango themes, such as destitution, social marginalisation, class-struggles, the lover, disillusionment, and *mufarse*.

This is not to say that *mugre* should be limited to these interpretations or that it should be confined to being understood through solely these themes. There is more work that could be done to further understand its usage, its importance, and how it is disseminated in a variety of other contexts. Given the few academic sources available which discuss *mugre* beyond a few sentences, further studies might take into account how other intangible elements are perceived in other musical styles (for example, the spirit of *el duende* from flamenco), which would bring a wider perspective how *mugre* might also be further explored.

The findings from this chapter suggest that *mugre* cannot be seen as the product of a defined set of musical techniques, or that it can necessarily be understood as confined to a musical reading. Instead *mugre* is embedded into a symbiotic relationship with wider cultural themes, which are used to shape how authenticity is created within the genre. Moreover, these initial concepts of *mugre* will provide a backdrop for future discussions in direct relation to the score of the *6 Etudes*.

## Chapter 4: Accentuation

### Initial Readings of the Accent Notation

On the first page of the *6 Etudes*, Piazzolla advises that a performer ‘should well exaggerate the accents’ when playing these tangos, and that this should be done in the manner in which accents would similarly be played on the bandoneón. Despite the fact that one might never fully identify Piazzolla’s precise intentions, this comment hints that the highly detailed accent notation found in the etudes (such as those seen in Figures 4.1 to 4.8) might not have been adequate to express convincingly the performance approach he envisaged. Yet one can’t ignore that for a western player, it would seem that the composer’s comments might appear redundant – after all, isn’t an accent an act of ‘exaggeration’ regardless of which instrument it is played upon? This initial perception will be perceived through a brief exploration of prescriptive notation, temporal frameworks, and performance boundaries.

### *Prescriptive Notation*

In Charles Seeger’s terminology of a general ‘prescriptive’ notational reading (1958), each symbol informs the performer of a *method* of producing a related sound (Kanno, 2007, p. 232). In this instance, the accent symbols found within the etudes correlate to what has been defined as ‘normal’ (Stone, 1980, p. 5) and ‘standard’ (Gould, 2011, p. 115) notational properties, which would entail a ‘dynamic stress’ (Kolinski, 1973, p. 495); an extra intensity on the attack of a pitch-event’ (Lerdhal and Jackendoff, 1983, p.78); a change in volume, a lengthening, and in some cases a change of pitch of the accented note being executed (Mathias, 2010). Flute readings similarly describe this symbol to demand a ‘hard attack’ (Putnik, 1973, p. 40), ‘a sudden application of extra force at the moment of the production of a note in any part of the bar’ (Rockstro, 1967, p. 499), and a ‘punctual concentration of musical energy that highlights or stresses the tension of a movement’ (Debost, 2002, p. 123).

This symbol would not necessarily be seen as a ‘fixed’ – the accent serves as ‘a stimulus which is marked for consciousness’ that includes many responses in relation to a ‘sound event’ (Meyer and Cooper, 1960, p. 8). Most performers would be flexible regarding this notation using the basic structural elements of time pitch, loudness, and timbre to make distinctions about the *amount* of volume adjusted, the

pitch, and the note length, within flexible boundaries and depending on the repertoire and context.

Décidé (Crotchet = 138)  
(Marcato)  
(Bar 42)



**Figure 4.1** *Etude 1*, bars 42–43.

Décidé (Crotchet = 138)  
(Marcato)  
(Bar 86)



**Figure 4.2** *Etude 1*, bars 86–87

Molto Marcato e energico (Crotchet = 138)  
(Bar 1)



**Figure 4.3** *Etude 3*, bars 1–7.

Molto Marcato e energico (Crotchet = 138)  
(Bar 13)



**Figure 4.4** *Etude 3*, bars 13–14.

(Crotchet = 120)  
(Bar 1)



**Figure 4.5** *Etude 5*, bars 1–3.

(Crotchet = 120)  
(Bar 51)



**Figure 4.6** *Etude 5*, bars 51–52.

Avec anxiété (Crotchet = 132)  
(Bar 1)



**Figure 4.7** *Etude 6*, bars 1–2.

Avec anxiété (Crotchet = 132)  
(Bar 52)



**Figure 4.8** *Etude 6*, bars 52–53.



### ***Temporal Frameworks***

Even though Piazzolla's comments about the accents of the *6 Etudes* might seem extraneous when viewed through prescriptive connotations, a wider interpretive possibility emerges when they are coupled with established performing traditions of temporal aspects of the score. Accentuation has often been defined by scholars according to how (and if) it is perceived to interact with varying implied and conceptual temporal frameworks of musical systems (Kolinski, 1973; Lerdhal and Jackendoff, 1983; Cook, 1987; Parncutt, 2003; Jones 2009). Whether marked in the score (or even perceived by the performer/listener), one such process of temporal perception occurs when accents can be thought to influence wider metrical structure; using the words of Lerdhal and Jackendoff (1983, p. 17) 'moments of musical stress in the raw signal serve as "cues" from which the listener attempts to extrapolate a regular pattern of metrical accents'.

Accents seen as 'irrelevant' and seemingly unnecessary in the *6 Etudes* due to metric associations might also seem problematic when interpreting the syncopation that created by the 3+3+2 pattern. Such interpretation could be demonstrated in the context of the *6 Etudes*, as flautist Wissam Boustany commented in an interview:

I find the accents a bit overdone. A performer would know that you should accent 3+3+2 ... thus the need for the accents are a bit irrelevant. Piazzolla could have used changes of metre like 3/8, 2/8, 4/8 as Stravinsky did for better phrasing and even have eliminated the accents altogether (Boustany, Interview, Fulham Grove, London, 13 October 2009).

Boustany's viewpoint can be supported by *The Simple Flute: from A–Z* (Debost, 2002), in which Marcel Moysé's straightforward philosophy is quoted as a learning tool for interpretation: 'the accent in syncopation is not my rule, it is the rule of life' (p. 127). This quotation provides a foundation for a theory that accented patterns would be assumed, and would correspond to those seen in the etudes. Michel Debost writes that syncopations 'shift the accent from a strong part of the beat to a weak one'; they 'need not be indicated because they have their own natural tension' (ibid., p. 126).

### ***Performance Boundaries***

While Piazzolla might have advised the performer to 'exaggerate' the accents, he would be suggesting this in opposition to what might be thought of as standard

performance practice in interpreting such notation. For example, various flute manuals only suggest *minimal* acts of accent exaggeration – if any at all – to indicate that limitations are in place as to what indicates a desirable interpretation. Thomas Kincaid's teachings would advise one to play rather modestly in a similarly notated area: 'anticipate and stress all syncopated notes slightly', and when performing couplets following triplets (or vice versa) 'subtly exaggerate the rhythms so as to maintain the identity of each' (Krell, 1973, p. 52). In a more extreme view, and regardless of whether there is syncopation or not, Debost illustrates stronger analogies by warning the player that

Accentuation is like the features of a beautiful face. Underlining them enhances beauty, but exaggerated make-up deforms it. Venus becomes a clown. An accent must be understood, constructed, felt, reached, and released (Debost, 2002, p. 128).

Using Debost's performing advice to interpret the accents in the *6 Etudes* can be complicated. Although it is advised that an accent be 'understood', 'constructed', and 'felt', this would need to be done within certain performance boundaries, or risk a sense of musical deformation. This theory, combined with Piazzolla's advice to the performer, would indicate that to exaggerate the accents in the etudes would have little more function than to cause amusement in the listener given Debost's analogy of a heavily made-up clown.

In a wider perspective, ideas of what are considered 'normative' performance models regarding notation interpretation can be linked to a wider philosophy that performers make and judge expression in performance through perceived limits to how much they can deviate from the score. For José Bowen (1999, p. 427), each sequence of sounds in a musical work become 'stores in the collective memory' that he calls 'tradition', 'which defines a set of normative assumptions or essential qualities of the work which can change over time'. As outlined by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2009, 2.1, P30), musicians 'tend to work well within the performing traditions for the piece in their time'; those who do not are a rarity.

Yet perhaps ironically, it is such performative 'traditions' that have also been said to shape one's 'individual', 'unique', and 'intuitive' musicality. This is not something that is said to be innate in the performer who has not had prior training in these traditions. For example, according to John Rink (1990, p. 322), an 'innate' or 'acquired' musicality, called 'Informed Intuition', relies on one's pre-existing study

of musical imitation and ‘considerable knowledge and experience’. In later writings Rink explains that this style of intuition ‘need not come out of the blue, and need not be merely capricious’ (Rink, 2002, p. 36).

Yet this is not to say that any given ‘tradition’ has been regarded as a fixed entity in itself, or even that the collective tradition would dictate every aspect of the performance. Stan Godlovitch (1998, p. 32) argues that performers shape their perception of the piece not only through their own personal agendas, but also within these work-centred ‘external’ constraints, which he dubs the ‘Constraint Model’ (C-Model). Though he believes the C-Model is how all performances are judged, it is always changing, flexible, and is expressed in conventions adopted by performers that make the idea of a ‘fixed musical essence increasingly less viable’ (ibid.).

An example of how one references aspects of a given musical tradition can be demonstrated by returning to reflect again on Boustany’s brief commentary. He naturally contextualises the 6 *Etudes* based on how he situates them in relation to familiar frameworks. Boustany made temporal connections between the notation of Stravinsky and Piazzolla, which seems to be an externally informed, obvious, and relevant performance choice when one considers the strong associations that have been made between the two composers (which will be briefly touched upon later in this chapter). More significant, however, is that Boustany’s comment suggests that Piazzolla’s accent notation ought to have been done within the *same* tradition as the accents in one of Stravinsky’s works, and in doing so might have enhanced the phrasing. In other words, he contextualised interpretation within western performative norms, and within certain boundaries related to how he perceives the identity of the work, despite the works’ title describing them as ‘tango-etudes’.

Yet it would seem that numerous individual interpretations, such as those expressed by Boustany, and the use of ‘collected tradition’, ‘Informed Intuition’, ‘or C-Models’, might be misguided when it comes to playing tango accentuation. Personal experience through participant observation within tango musical settings demonstrates performative differences in the ideology of accent notation. Over the decade I have been performing them, Piazzolla’s accents have never seemed to warrant too many interpretational dilemmas – that is, until I attended my first tango music workshop taught by *porteño* musicians, *The Musical Language of the Tango*.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Held at the Hochschule für Musik, Wuppertal, Germany, November 2009.

Though I had interpreted the notation in an innate style that seemed fluid and natural to my ears, immediately beyond any other musical issue, once I played my rendition of *Etude 6* the first advice I was given was that my accent interpretation needed ‘fixing’ so that it would resonate with a ‘more tango’ approach.

Moreover, returning again to Debost’s accent analogy, his same warnings could have been applied in reverse in the setting in which I found myself: Venus was equally transformed into a clown by the fact that I was *not* exaggerating the accents adequately – and additionally my interpretation of the accent might have caused equivalent clown-like amusement for a tango musician. The analogy that Bowen (1999, p. 438) proposes would correlate this comedic situation with the well-intentioned but misplaced Cockney accent of American actor Dick van Dyke in the classic film *Mary Poppins*. A similar parallel could be drawn here: me, the *gringa*, trained in classical traditions, was attempting to imitate tango accentuation from another musical language with misplaced intentions and no ‘inside’ perspective of cultural context. Overall it was concluded from this experience that the tango instructor’s version of performance contexts seemed to entail different musical qualities to my own.

Yet this is not so different from a wider musicological theory that the interpretation of music is a product of how one conceptualises and then mediates it sonically; it is all in one’s personal perception of the work. For example, it has often been discussed how the performer/composer/arranger imagines the music to be part of their own culture and musical background (see Seeger, 1958; Cook, 1998; Godlovitch 1998; Bowen 1999; Rink 1990, 2002; Nettle 2005; Leech-Wilkinson, 2009, 2.1). For Bowen (1999, p. 427), ‘how we play the work determines what we think the work is, as well as the other way around’. He states further that:

Each performance, like every speech-act, is an attempt to mediate between the identity of the work (as remembered by tradition) and the innovation of the performer; musical performers are engaged in both communication of the work and the individual expression. Each performance (and each score) attempts to include the qualities which the performer (composer/editor) considers essential to retain the identity of the musical work, along with the additional interpretive or accidental qualities which are necessary to realise a work in sound (Bowen, 1999, p. 425).

Yet although a western player may intend to bring out the work’s ‘identity’ and its ‘essential’ qualities, the tango performance literature warns that performative

traditions of accent notation might be based upon diverse associations with the musical notation:

Piazzolla used classical music elements when he composed his works. Some parts of his work have reminiscences of Bach, Stravinsky, or Bartok; but Piazzolla's music should not sound like theirs. It is different from classical music in that its distinctive shape is the tango phrase, that is, the special accentuation of phrases in tango. This form is not exclusive to Piazzolla, but is found in the rest of tango music (Mauriño, 1998, p. 53). The accentuation must be strong and marked. If this swing is not being respected, tango is not being played (ibid., p. 54).

One plays [Piazzolla's] music on the borderline between tango and chamber music. This is perceived through the accents and the manner in which it is played (Azzi and Collier, 2002, p.38, citing Ziegler).

... in *allegro tempi*, on strong beats and/or accented notes, the attack in all tango instruments tends to be harder and more edgy than would be considered standard for classical playing on the same instruments' (Drago, 2008, p. 60). The resulting mass of accents that ends up hovering over the notes of the score as an ominous cloud can be very misleading ... (Drago, 2008, p.67) ... the mastery of tango articulation is a necessary step toward rendering an authentic performance of Piazzolla's orchestral works. Proper tango articulation is a key element in developing the 'Piazzollean swing' (ibid., p. 70).

In terms of contemporary performance practices, it is necessary for the modern performer to accentuate the signature rhythmic patterns of the genre in addition to the *arrastres* (Link, 2009, p. 81).

The accented sounds take on great importance, more exaggerated than they usually are in classical music ... (Fain, 2010, p. 15)

[I]f we do not do specific technical work to bring out this difference between the accented note and 'what follows on' we will sound technically correct but without the characteristic swing of tango (ibid., p. 37).

Piazzolla himself even mentioned this divergence of accent interpretation between different musical styles. According to Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 172) tensions were said to arise in the studio when Piazzolla recorded his 1974 album *Summit* (Piazzolla and Mulligan, 2003) with saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, and he explained the cause:

[Gerry] had some trouble following the scores. He hadn't been reading a lot of music recently, and my rhythmic accents are not easy to play on the sax (Gorin, 2001, p. 110).

Despite the fact that Piazzolla chose to use a rather normative form of accent notation within the model of the 'etude', the language surrounding tango performance seems to indicate that there is a 'correct' way to interpret the accent (and the 'swing' it is often partnered with) that is not naturally implied in the score – that is, unless one has 'insider' knowledge about the genre. In other words, when contextualised within a tango approach Piazzolla's accent notation would need no further instruction if one were familiar with the performative frameworks of this genre. Bruno Nettl (2005, pp. 78–79) observed that the performer reads notation with aural information already in place; notation does not describe style because 'the writer of a prescriptive notation only includes what is needed by a native' who knows this information; 'ordinarily it is the "cultural insiders" (however defined) who write music to be performed'. Yet on the other hand, to put a definitive label on an exact tango style that would be considered part of an 'insider' tradition like Nettl describes is vastly complex – as the previous chapters on cultural contexts and *mugre* have suggested, authenticity in tango performance is an intricate system based upon moveable boundaries. Notational authenticity is similarly multifaceted. Wider musicological theory has it that notation cannot simply be seen as a predetermined, unfixable object within a wider ontological framework (see, for example, Seeger, 1958; Dart, 1967; Winkler 1997; Godlovitch, 1998; Rastall, 1998; Bohlman, 1999; Boorman, 1999; Bowen, 1999; Cook, 1999; Nettl, 2005; Leech Wilkinson, 2009). Accordingly, the methodology used in this thesis will not try to define prescriptive 'authentic' notational approaches in the 6 *Etudes*.

However this is not to dismiss what might be considered an authentic interpretation by any individual or any wider performance discourse – as Seeger (1958, p. 187) suggested with regard to navigating musical notation, 'the important thing for study is to know objectively when they differ and resemble, regardless of their being written one way or the other'. Following this guidance, an important part of this investigation will be to analyse the macro- and micro-processes of how Piazzolla's accent notation might be interpreted not only by individual performers, but also through wider traditions that might dictate any such method. For this reason, much importance will be placed on expanding horizons of musical understanding by not rejecting the fact that there are contextual dissimilarities within accent styles, yet also not shying away from consensual approaches within wider collectivism at the

same time. One idea from the field of psychoanalytical thought resonates with this theoretical premise. The poet, academic, and Jungian psychoanalyst Clarissa Pinkola Estés writes:

As regards external destruction of new endeavours and ideas, more creative enquiries are brought to a halt and called inconclusive by manipulating the ‘either/or’ model ... Which came first? The chicken or the egg? This question more often puts an end to peering at a thing and determining its many values. It puts a close to seeing how a thing is constructed and what its uses might be. It is often more useful to use the cooperative and comparative ‘and/and’ model. A thing is this *and* this *and* this. It can be used/not used this way, *and* this way, *and* this way. (Pinkola Estés, 2008, 495–96, fn 2)

The ‘and/and’ model is useful in that musical traditions are fluid, always changing, and cannot be reduced to fit neatly within fixed ‘either/or’ dichotomies. In short, not two unmoveable ‘either/or’ musical solutions, but a series of moveable contexts that can be drawn upon for wider creative pursuits. A broad net will be cast that embraces the fact that accents can be shaped this way *and* this way *and* that way in a performance.

The following questions will be explored: How might Piazzolla shape his own accents in a performance? How might, if at all, this be linked to wider tango frameworks? How might this compare to individual performances by western players? How might this information contribute to a practice that is seen as ‘misunderstood’ by western players, as suggested in current tango readings? How might this information be applied overall to the *6 Etudes*? Data will be drawn from both tango pedagogical methods, recording analysis of western recordings, and recordings by Piazzolla, Fain, Gallo, and me through a form of participant observation.

Despite the fact that many accentuation patterns and both accent styles might be found in Piazzolla’s musical scores, it is particularly 3+3+2 rhythmic cells (and their variations) that help to formulate one of the many elements that characterise Piazzolla’s musical sound. Because of its importance this specific rhythmic pattern will be studied exclusively in this chapter, and be the subject of further analysis in relation to application to wider use in the *6 Etudes*. Yet this method of exploration could equally be applied to other scores by the composer, serving as a model to approach not only other tango works, but any other work that similarly uses

westernised notation to represent musical styles that have traditionally been aurally and orally disseminated.<sup>97</sup>

### **Piazzolla's 3+3+2 Accentuation Pattern**

It has been noted that 'repetitive, patterned accentuation of a specific rhythm within music can, and often does, define a specific style', as one type of 'signalling device' within applications and interpretation of popular music styles (Strain, 2003, p. 616). Similarly, the use of the accent notation within the printed score (or as performed) become a 'signalling device' to *tangueros* familiar with widespread and commonly used patterns within the rhythmic tango melodies and their accompaniments, such as the *Marcato*, *Marcato en dos*, *Marcato en cuatro*, *Marcato en dos invertido*, *Síncopa anticipada*, *Síncopa doble*, *Síncopa a tierra*, *Umpa-umpa*, *La yumba*, and specifically relevant in this case, the '3+3+2' (Gallo, 2011, pp. 86–101).

The 3+3+2 accentuation is said to appear first in Piazzolla's compositions in the 1940s, when the composer decided to leave Troilo's orchestra to start his own ensemble (Drago, 2008, p. 93, cited García Brunelli, 1992, pp. 171–72; López, 2008, p. 139, fn 32). García Brunelli writes that Piazzolla 'didn't start this practice but systemised' the 3+3+2 accentuation and 'made it a trait of his style' (Drago, 2008, p. 93 cited García Brunelli, 1992, pp. 171–72). Pelinski remarks that the composer 'spread' the use of the 3+3+2 pattern (Drago, 2008, p. 93 cited Pelinski, 2003, p. 44), and Azzi and Collier claim that 'he made it peculiarly his own' (2000, p. 159). Yet as Drago remarks, to think that Piazzolla created or introduced this 3+3+2 rhythm to tango would be inaccurate, even if – in his own words – the composer's 'grandiloquent generalizations' and 'dishonest attacks' throughout his career declared it to be true (Drago, 2008, p. 93).

Furthering the idea that this rhythmic pattern is part of a rhythmic tradition beyond Piazzolla's own compositional use, 3+3+2 cells have deep historical

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<sup>97</sup> Other scores that are frequently performed in the western flute repertoire (beyond published music that deal with tango idioms) could also benefit from this manner of investigative enquiry include, and are not limited to Bartók: *Suite Paysanne Hongroise*; Roussel: *Krishna*, from *Joueurs de Flûte*; Machado: *Musiques populaires brésiliennes* and *Sambamar*; Beaser: *Mountain Songs*; Hoover: *Kokopelli* and *Canyon Echoes*; Shankar: *L'Aube Enchantée*; Dahl: *Variations on a Swedish Folktune*; Harty: *In Ireland*; Mower: *Sonata Latino*; Wilson: *Celtic Partita* and Colquhoun: *Charanga*.



resonance with the nineteenth-century 2/4 habanera rhythm<sup>98</sup> and then later, early *milonga urbana* styles (see discussions in Mauriño, 1998, p. 54 and 2001/2008, p. 242; Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 159; Drago, 2008, p. 23; Fisherman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 13). Yet even before the creation of the tango, the habanera roots that eventually paved way to the 3+3+2 pattern scholars have suggested lie in diasporas of (but not limited to) an early English ‘country dance’, a French *contredanse*, the Spanish *zarzuela*, the Cuban *contradanza*, the *tango andaluz*, Mexican dances of colonial period, and the Puerto Rican *danza* (Béhague, 1979, pp. 100–18; Collier, 1995, pp. 40–54; Salgan 2001, pp. 19–20; Farris Thompson, 2005, pp. 111–20).

In addition, the orchestral writing of popular tango composers Gobbi, Goñi, Troilo, Canaro, Pugliese, Vardaro, and De Caro are also said to have provided much inspiration for Piazzolla’s style, including the use of 3+3+2 rhythmic accentuation within melodies, even if Piazzolla had proposed to revolutionise what he regarded as the ‘old’, ‘primitive’ tango (see discussions in Ferrer, 1999, p. 85; Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 162–63; Mauriño, 2008; Salgan, 2001, p. 45; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 186; Kuri, 2008, pp. 154, 157; Pelinski, 2008, p. 43; Fain, 2010, p. 35; Gallo, 2011, p. 41). It is the De Caro brothers’ tangos, which formed the basis of an entire tango generation called the ‘Decarian Era’, that Mauriño specifically identifies as an influence on Piazzolla’s accentuation. Piazzolla is quoted as saying:

Of the Decarean epic, I have rescued for me what was more important: the rhythm, the flavour. Above all, its rhythm, the percussion, the accentuation – that for me it is more important to the interpretation of the tango, it is what gives it the swing’ (Mauriño, 2008, p. 19).

Not all Piazzolla scholars would agree that the 3+3+2 pattern within his music stems from anything other than purely tango roots,<sup>99</sup> though not to acknowledge and to dismiss further musical influences would overlook potential insights into Piazzolla’s compositional process. Other interviews from the composer regarding his rhythmic accentuation draw upon his New York City upbringing and the surrounding environment that made its way sonically into his compositions. One such example is American Jewish Klezmer music:

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<sup>99</sup> See, for example, the brief discussion by Link, 2009, p. 49, fn 99.

We lived on Eighth Street, which at the time was not the best place in Manhattan. Today, it's a bohemian neighbourhood where many painters, musicians, and artists live. In those days Greenwich Village was a cursed place. Next door to our house was a synagogue where one Saturday, in the middle of a wedding party, fourteen or fifteen Jews were murdered. They killed the whole family.

In that neighbourhood the clash was between gangster gangs and they came from every kind: Italians, Jews, and Irish. I grew up in the violent climate. That's why I became a fighter. Perhaps that also marked my music. That kind of stuff gets under your skin. My rhythmic accents – three plus three plus two – are similar to those of the popular Jewish music I heard at their weddings (Gorin, 2001, p. 30).

Further links to Piazzolla's use of rhythmic accentuation have also been drawn from his love of studying scores with polymetric patterns by composers he admired. Upon meeting Stravinsky in New York in 1958, he told the composer 'Maestro I've been your student from a distance' (Gorin 2001, p. 115; Kuri 2008, p. 148). With a copy of *The Rite of Spring* kept by his bedside table (Gorin, 2001, p. 115), Piazzolla was inspired by elements of its rhythmic style in his own musical writing, including his works *Tres Minutos con Realidad* (1957) (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 63) and *Tocata Rea para Bandoneón* (1968) (Fischerman and Gilbert, 2009, p. 271).<sup>100</sup>

Piazzolla was said to also be a 'fan' of Bartók (Gorin, 2001, p. 129); this composer was a firm 'favorite' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 63, 151; Piazzolla, 2005, p. 135) and his idol (Farris-Thompson, 2005, p. 209), and he studied *Mikrokosmos* intently (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 151–52). Scholar Fernando Gonzalez suggests that the 'brutish' accents Piazzolla so commonly uses are 'echoes' of Bartók (Gorin, 2001, p. 16) and Farris-Thompson colourfully describes the connection between the composer and the 3+3+2 as 'synthesised Middle European metrics *à la Bartók* with that old rhythmic warhorse habanera' (Farris-Thompson, 2005, p. 213).

As previous scholars outlined various influences that may have fed into the use of 3+3+2 rhythmic patterns within Piazzolla's compositions, in keeping with the 'and/and' methodology that this chapter proposes is to acknowledge that the rhythmic accents that Piazzolla might have envisioned in the score of the *6 Etudes* cannot be

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<sup>100</sup> Though to say that Piazzolla was the only tango composer to have been inspired by Stravinsky's compositional style would be incorrect. For example, Ferris-Thompson (2005, p. 202–3) also makes connections between the tango composition of *Negracha* (1948) by Osvaldo Pugliese (1905–1995) and the *Rite of Spring* (1912). Additionally, it should be noted that Piazzolla was a compositional student of Pugliese, which should not be discounted a potential mediator in such ties between Stravinsky and Piazzolla.

seen exclusively as idiomatically and purely *his own* notation, or even one of purely tango roots; they are a product of multiple conduits. This provides a fitting starting point from which to ask the first questions of this chapter: How might Piazzolla shape his own accents?', and how might, if at all, his performance of them be linked to further tango musical frameworks?

### ***A Recording Analysis of Piazzolla's 3+3+2 Accentuation***

In considering that widely used aural/oral transmissions are commonplace learning strategies within tango dissemination it would be more pragmatic, instead of seeking to understand that only the score would implicate a performance, to ask 'how might a performance also implicate the score?' Nettl (2005, p. 74) observes the idea so prevalent in among western musicians that 'I can't say a thing until I've seen the score' and suggests one ought to be saying 'I can't say a thing until I've heard it'. Stock equally suggests that musicologists draw from the field of ethnomusicology by drawing on such methods for western notated forms:

The musicologist who analyses what musicians and others actually do in particular musical instances, and how those individuals explain what they do, is likely to gain perspectives on the sounds that emerge on these occasions (Stock, 1997, p. 62).

Working from the aural information of any given particular performance by the composer himself towards its notational representation could illuminate deeper insights into the accent style Piazzolla might have envisioned in the rhythmic melodies of the *6 Etudes*, especially since the bandoneón was highlighted as a reference point for inspiration.

To date there has been no quantitative recording analysis on tango accentuation or for that matter Piazzolla's use of it, yet the idea that his recordings would be 'the ultimate' form of understanding his notation is not new (see for example, Drago, 2008, p. 55). Yet beyond a limited discussion by Piazzolla scholars of how the recordings are intertwined with the notation offered, empirical data would point to a more objective description; what Seeger described as a 'bridge between musics' between the varying perspectives of contextualisation that inform any given style (Seeger, 1958, p. 195). The overall goal of this analysis was to draw connections between the aural information from the live recording and the score – specifically, what could be deduced from one model of Piazzolla's performance that is not

necessarily obvious when notated?

A live performance, taken from the 1983 ‘Vienna Concert’ (Piazzolla, 1992), was chosen for the opening four bars of a 3+3+2 accented pattern in the composition *Fracanapa* (Piazzolla, 1963) (Figure 4.9). The benefits of this audio sample (See enclosed CD, track 1) were that although the piece was said to be from 1963 (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 86), this recording was made roughly four years before the 6 *Etudes* were published, placing it in a similar timeframe to what the composer labelled his ‘erudite’, ‘classical’ music written between 1978 and 1988. Secondly, the ‘live’ performance lent itself to a spontaneous, and unedited ‘telling’ of Piazzolla’s accent style. Thirdly, the four bars of solo performance by the composer meant that the results in the analysis were not be obscured by other aural information from the other instrumentalists in his second quintet with whom he played this specific recording. Lastly, the passage chosen from *Fracanapa* highly resembles the same accentuation found in the opening bars of *Etude 6* (See Figure 4.7 for comparison), which is helpful in this instance for wider contextualisation.



**Figure 4.9** *Fracanapa*, bars 1–4.

### *Methodology*

Using the software programme Sonic Visualiser<sup>101</sup> to open Piazzolla’s sound file, representation through a ‘plain’ spectrogram was chosen as the initial backdrop for analysis. Like a waveform pane, the frequencies are displayed on a ‘y’ axis while the ‘x’ axis marks the time, yet a spectrogram is a time frequency portrait of acoustical signals that plots intensity with degrees of amplitude by displaying varying shades of black and white pixels. The spectrogram was set to the scale at ‘dbv’ (the scale

<sup>101</sup> Sonic Visualiser is free software package developed at the Centre for Digital Music at Queen Mary, University of London. For more, see <http://www.sonicvisualiser.org/>

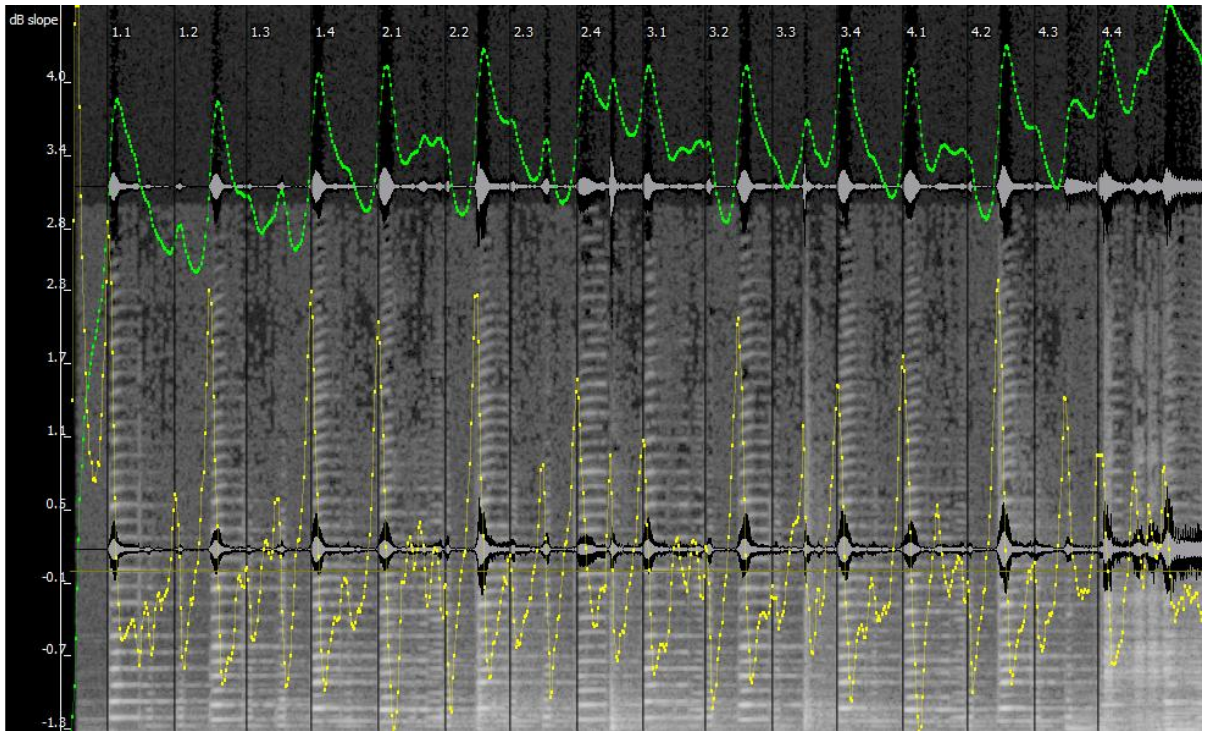
displacement is proportional to the log of the absolute voltage) and the window was set at 1024 at 93.75%. The ‘Normalize Visible Area’ (for both the spectrogram and waveform pane) and ‘Normalize Visible Columns’ (for spectrogram) switch was pressed for each of the panes to adjust the display gain continuously so as to ensure full scale displacement for the largest value of frequency in the visible section of the spectrogram.

The ‘Time Layer Instants’ counter in each of the waveform panes was manually configured using keyboard clicks to indicate where the main four beats of the bar occurred (these are the black lines marked with bar: beat numbers) in relation to the frequencies shown. Once these time markers were in place, one could visually check whether the assigned beats were correct and use the simple ‘Edit’ tool to edit any misplaced beats that occurred.

A comprehensive way to measure decibels in the aural information came from the Power Curve transformation tool ‘Smoothed Power Slope’ (shown in yellow).<sup>102</sup> This tool allowed for the loudest frequencies in the passage to be displayed through ‘peaks’ in the slope which indicated note onsets and sudden increase in loudness (such as note attacks). This was particularly useful as it allowed for any note to be shown in decibels (dB); combined with the ‘Time Layer Instants’ tool, measurements could be made in any given place in the score. The ‘Smoothed Power Curve’ (shown in green) was used as this allowed for note decays to be visually compared across all four bars from ‘steep’ to ‘gradual’ decay rates.

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<sup>102</sup>For more, see a detailed explanation at <http://sv.mazurka.org.uk/MzPowerCurve/>



**Figure 4.10** A spectrogram of Piazzolla performing *Fracanapa*, bars 1–4.

### *Results and Discussion*

#### *Decibel (dB) levels on accented notes*

I heard Piazzolla’s note attacks on accented notes in the recording as ‘punchy’, ‘energetic’, and ‘explosive’; each accent was perceived to be performed in an ‘unrelenting’ similar style throughout the entire four-bar sample. This aural impression is supported by data found in the spectrogram (Figure 4.10). In the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow), the highest peaks found in the power curve indicate the highest decibel (dB) measurement, which corresponds to all the accented notes. For example, in the first bar this can be seen in the tall peaks that represent the accented quaver notes on the downbeats of 1.1 and 1.4, and on the ‘offbeat’ quaver accent between 1.2 and 1.3. Equally, though not as visually obvious, simultaneous results are found in the general black and white spectrogram, where the intensity of colour at the beginning of each accented note is ‘brighter’ than other locations, indicating higher levels in these specific areas. This information reveals that all accented notes by Piazzolla were played with a ‘strong’ use of bandoneón amplitude.

Furthermore, even though the four bar passage contained diatonic movement through the accented pitches B4, A4, G4, and F4, the Smoothed Power Slope tool

(yellow) demonstrates that each accented note maintained a steady line of elevated ‘peaks’ across the four-bar passage, even if each peak varied slightly in dB level. In other words, though the accented note might have varied diatonically, there was a normative trend that each accentuation maintained an ‘unrelenting’ homogenous shape throughout the excerpt.

#### *Length of Accented notes*

Besides emphasis made through dB levels, accented notes were heard as ‘driving forward’, containing more emphasis in length, an audible ‘leaning on’ technique that created an ‘elongated’, ‘gliding’ effect to connect the pitches of accented and unaccented notes. The notation of the four bars of *Fracanapa* calls for each accented note to be slurred to a following quaver, and one can see that the accented note is connected to the slurred note, almost seamlessly with minimal disruptions of the dB level in the Smoothed Power Curve (green). One can see this almost ‘portamento-like’ motion of slurring by the lack of ‘bump’ where this occurs in the power curve from the accented note to the quaver that follows. It is specifically prominent at locations 1.1, 1.4, 3.2, and 3.4.

The analysis also revealed that the ‘driving forward’ effect in accentuation I heard might have been helped by the fact that Piazzolla used a ‘straight’ tone, meaning no vibrato on any of the longer notes was present in this particular accent interpretation. This is revealed in the flat, unchanging horizontal white lines in the ‘plain spectrogram’ information that start and stop with each articulation.

Perhaps rather predictably, the information that Piazzolla would have produced strong and/or elongated notes as a means of accentuation would not seem to be that insightful given that a ‘prescriptive’ use of the notation might call for similar interpretational means to be used. In general, accent symbols are a prominent event within the musical work; they convey wider musical structure and meaning to the listener in music by emphasising that one sound has more relative importance over another (Parncutt, 2003, p. 164). Widespread theory supports the idea that accents cannot be measured in isolation: it is through their relation to other instances that they gain meaning; they appear in ‘serial contexts’ and must be defined in relation to their surroundings. It is only when the serial change occurs that the accent becomes a more ‘salient event’ (Jones, 2011, pp. 88–89). Accordingly, the accents in the passage

originally heard as ‘punchy’, ‘energetic’, ‘explosive’, and ‘driving’ can only be pragmatically contextualised with those quavers that are non-accented.

#### *Non-accented notes*

Like their accented counterparts, the non-accented quavers were also revealed in the data to be played with no vibrato, yet each note employed less amplitude and a ‘softer’ intensity than those that were accented. While the notes still had the effect of ‘driving forward’, they did so at a quieter intensity. This divergence can be demonstrated by the fact that when compared to the data shown on the accented notes, there is a smaller height difference in the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow), and in the spectrogram layer a fainter, ‘less intense’ brightness of white. In general, there are large contrasts in the volume between the two notes, which are evident in the dissimilar height of the peak shapes. An example of these large contrasts can be seen for example in location 1.4, where the difference in the two quavers of the accented G4 and the non-accented B3 is represented by two peaks of very divergent sizes.

In difference to all accented notes being seen as ‘elongated’, the data from the Smoothed Power Curve (green) supports the fact that Piazzolla’s note decays in non-accented areas were steep, demonstrated by the sharp rate at which the curve dips downwards once the note was played. Combined with previous data that Piazzolla would ‘elongate’ the accented slurred quaver into the non-accented note, the analysis shows that once the non-accented note was hit, the sound of it would quickly taper off. If the non-accented note was not part of a slurred figure, it would similarly decay, as evident by the steep slope. Furthermore, the decay rates of the all unaccented note(s) in the four-bar passage contained similar shaped slopes, even if the dB level of the decay of each was not uniform. In summary, across the passage there was a uniform performance trend in all notes following the accents to ‘disappear’ rapidly.

#### *Problems with a direct notational application of analysis results to the ‘6 Etudes’*

Applying the findings of the recording analysis to a comparable notated passage of a 3+3+2 pattern in the *6 Etudes* would seemingly indicate an accent style that the composer envisioned. In theory, a simple transcription could help to correlate how the accents could be played similarly by a western flautist for future emulation, and clear up the ‘misunderstandings’ often referred to in tango texts. In this theory, the



descriptive notation shown in Figure 4.11 loosely depicts various elements from the aural information of *Fracanapa* when formulated to a similarly notated 3+3+2 pattern found in *Etude 6*, bar 1 (see Figure 4.7 for original published notation).



**Figure 4.11** A transcription of *Etude 6*, bar 1, reflecting Piazzolla’s accentuation results from *Fracanapa*.

Upon an initial observation, given that accents have been said to mark specific rhythmic patterns in which wider roots to the genre are based, the important visual element of the original 3+3+2 pattern is skewed by the overly-complex notation. It could also be noted that constructing a transcription of Piazzolla’s accentuation as the ultimate fixed idea for reproduction is in itself a limited form of analysis. Within wider ethnomusicological theory it is recognised that frequent western attempts to seek ‘equivalent identities to the western view of ontologies usually impede the discovery of deeper meanings’ (Bohlman, 2002, p.7). Boorman (1999, p. 411) similarly argues that an ‘allusive view of notation is of much greater value’ because

the notation may well contain prescriptive elements: but behind them is another, more subtle world, present in the way these elements are spaced, in the other imprecise indications on the page, in the tradition which breed notation itself (Boorman, 1999, p. 411).

A transcription in this case would not take into account essential elements central to popular music’s ‘expressive capacities’ that notation could not easily represent, such as melodic nuances, non-conventional pitch inflections, instrumental tone colours, ‘feel’, and rhythmic groove (Hawkins and Shepherd, 2003, pp. 254–57) – or even the essence of *mugre* that is said to capture many of these elements within the tango. Consequently the net is cast further to place the results of Piazzolla’s accentuation analysis into wider frameworks of tango ‘swing’, the *acento largo*, and ‘inter-idiomatic’ borrowing. And in doing so, the notated accents found in the *6 Etudes* are open to wider possibilities for the performer.

### Accents and the Tango ‘Swing’

Readings on the presence of tango accentuation in musical scores have indicated a significant symbiotic relationship between it and a type of musical ‘swing’ unique to tango which is – as explored in previous discussions – often described as an imperative part of this essential quality of *mugre*. Yet despite the concepts of tango accentuation and swing both feeding into wider notions of musical authenticity, to date there has been little discussion about how this partnership creates this expressive aspect of ‘feel’ or ‘groove’ in the music.

The notation as originally printed, such as the 3+3+2 pattern in *Fracanapa* or *Etude 6*, has been suggested by *tangueros* to provide the blueprint from which the swing occurs, even if exact details of how to evoke it musically remain elusive. Temporal structuring through rhythmic timing is used to describe one quality of tango swing; an unwritten *tactus*<sup>103</sup> is said to occur in four-bar groupings: ‘always imagine the walking of the four quarter notes as a basis for the effect to have the appropriate swing’ (Fain, 2010, p. 52). This is said to set the foundation for its relationship to the upbeat that could be said to create the rhythmic tension that is required for tango swing to occur. For instance, Piazzolla’s ‘unique’ swing style was branded by bassist Pablo Aslan as ‘a four beat swing anchored by the bass-hand left hand piano unit, offset by various off-beat figures, many which he created’ (Azzi, 2000, p. 58).

Similar characteristics of this process emerged when attempting to conceive tango swing through personal encounters in tango music lessons. When performing the opening 3+3+2 bars of *Etude 6*, though I might have aimed for a rhythmically persuasive accuracy in my interpretation, I was advised that my rendition lacked a sense of ‘swing’. To understand the concept, I needed to tap a four crotchet beat pulse with my foot while repeating a string of 3+3+2 quaver patterns on my flute. This exercise was suggested because it would allow me to ‘feel’ how the 4<sup>th</sup> quaver (the 2<sup>nd</sup> accented note in the bar) ‘hung’ in the air, which was said to be the key to the unstable but important tango swing.

In a wider perspective, it could be said that descriptions of this process have not necessarily differed from further outcomes of research, as swing in popular music is widely said to be made in quadruple meter accompaniments within which their

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<sup>103</sup> Such a concept is defined by Ledenhal and Jackendoff (1983, p. 71) as the ‘prominent level of metrical structure’, in which a person moves their body, taps their foot and coordinates dance steps.

underpinning is said to be made (Tamlyn, 2003, p. 625). Additionally, Butterfield found that jazz musicians

swing their eighth notes to produce anacrusis on the offbeats, an effect that generates motional energy directed toward the ensuing downbeat as a consequence. By subverting downbeat closure in one way or another, jazz musicians can sustain the sense of forward propulsion characteristic of the rhythmic quality we call swing. (Butterfield, 2011, p. 24)

Though some aspects of swing (tango or otherwise) might resonate in a general collective notion of its process, more interesting is that a core belief about swing could be said to lie in the various aspects it leaves for the individual performer to distinctively create. In relation to the above tango descriptions, it would lie in the idiosyncratic character of Piazzolla's offbeat figures, or the fact that in my lesson I was left to my own devices to understand *how* I was meant to conceptualise the space given to the offbeat notation said to be 'hanging' in the air.

One's distinct creation of swing could be likened to what Keil (1987) suggests are 'little discrepancies' (as he terms PD, 'participatory discrepancies'), such as being 'out of time', or 'out of tune' (p. 275). In his words it is the 'disagreeing', 'not consistent or matching' gestures within a musician's beat that are 'between bass and drums', 'rhythm section and soloists' that create it (p. 277). Furthering Keil, Prögler (1995, p. 49) concluded in his quantitative study of jazz drummers that although an individual's participatory discrepancies can be measured empirically, the concept of swing and how one decides to use it is a highly personal process. Due to the complex nature of empirically formulating concepts such as 'play', 'feel', and groove', swing has likewise been effectively difficult to write down within the syntactical confines of notation (ibid. p. 21) – and in my own experience, a teacher would not necessarily be able to transmit its 'feel' to a pupil due to the element of individualism that lies in creating it. This can be further contextualised with Butterfield's concluding results:

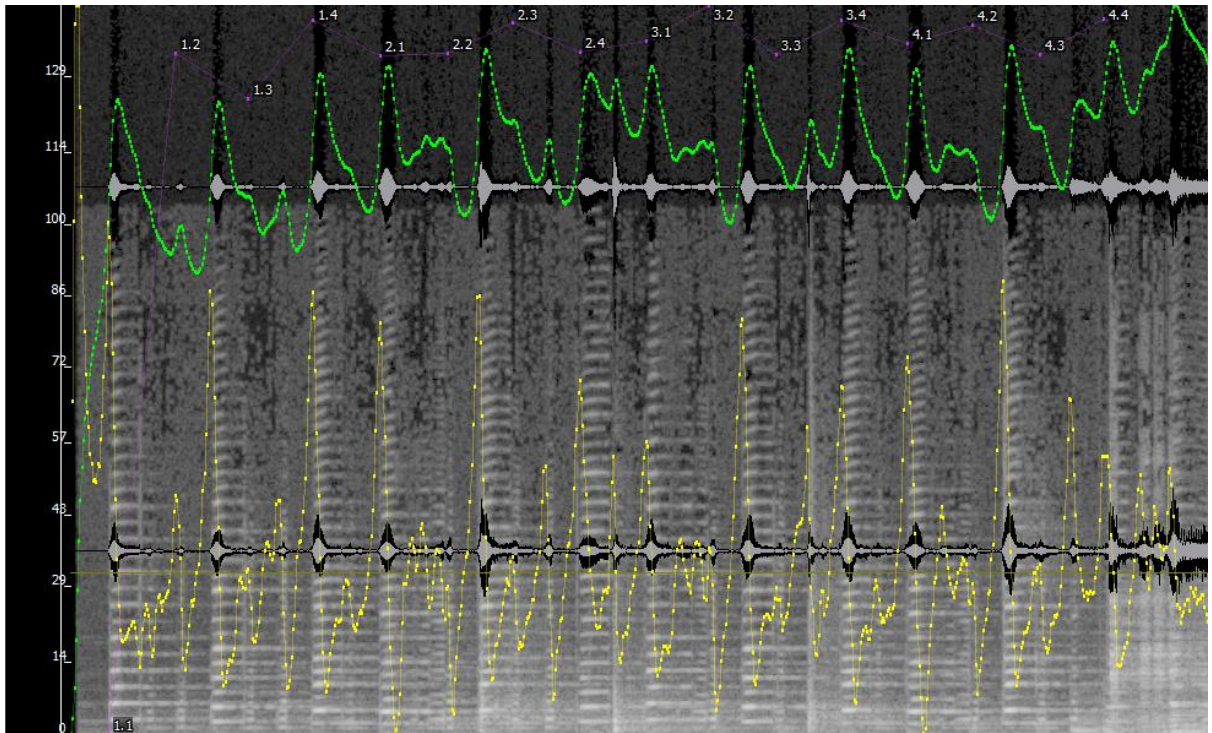
Swing is not a specifiable quantity, of course, nor is it a quality that is precisely quantifiable; it is rather a feeling that emerges from quantifiable processes, both rhythmic and microrhythmic, syntactical and subsyntactical ... We come closer to understanding this feeling when we recognize the plurality of sources and the variety of means for its production. (Butterfield 2011, p. 24)

### *A Recording Analysis of Piazzolla's Use of Tango 'Swing'*

As a means of exploring the concept of swing in relation to Piazzolla's own utilisation of it, a simple analysis was made on the opening bars of *Fracanapa* that focused specifically on timing aspects within wider concepts of swing. The purpose of this analysis was to explore the question: How might the composer's use of accentuation from the data in Figure 4.10 interact with wider discussions of the alluded to 'tango swing'? This is not to say that the process in which the composer might have utilised his creation of swing would have been solely limited to this one dimension for its production (see discussion of this in Keil, 1987, p. 275), though due to language in its core descriptions that centred upon the relationship between the macro-level four-beat *tactus* and accentuation this concept was used as a starting point.

#### *Methodology*

A simple tempo graph (light purple) was added to the information presented in Figure 4.10 (see Figure 4.12) by adding a 'Time Value Layer' to the spectrogram. This was done using the 'tempo (BPM) based on duration since the previous beat' measurement tool. The display settings used were Plot Type: Connected Points and Scale: Auto-Align. The values on the left-hand side of the spectrogram display BPM, with higher peaks corresponding to a faster BPM. The addition of this layer to the previous data allowed for the tempo graph to be shown much more naturally with the aural information, as any changes in the tempo (BPM) could be marked in relation to the sound event and visually compared between all data sets.



**Figure 4.12** A spectrogram of Piazzolla performing *Fracanapa*, bars 1–4 with an added ‘Time Value’ layer.

#### *Results and Discussion*

On the whole it could be said that the tempo graph (light purple) revealed that there was an overriding trend of fluctuating movement of ‘push and pull’, and the subverting of the *tactus* employed across all four bars. However, this process did not necessarily follow a set formulaic pattern across the entire sample. For example, although a predominant trend might seem to have been made toward a ‘push’ (represented through taller peaks of tempo graph in light purple) towards the downbeats of two and four (as seen in particular in areas 1.4, 3.2, 3.4, 4.2, and 4.4), this was not the case in every bar. This can be shown in bar two, which entailed completely opposite results with the peak heights of the tempo graph trending differently in comparison to the other three bars.

Another example of a deviation from any set timing pattern within temporal spacing is that the relationship of the quaver offbeat from beat two (which was previously described in my tango lesson as the ‘hang’) would not have been interpreted in the same manner within the four bars where this occurred. To demonstrate varying tempo directions, there was a slight ‘holding back’ between 1.2 and 1.3 but then a ‘push’ between 2.2 and 2.3.

Again, avoiding any determined notion of patterning, when looking at the previous data from Figure 4.10, it is seen that Piazzolla did not necessarily shape his accents in relation to changes in tempo manipulation. This is shown by the fact that the relationships between the tempo graph and overriding trends in accent style (i.e. the large amount of contrasts between the accented and non-accented notes through varied lengths, and dB levels) did not necessarily correspond with each other in any marked way. For example, the high peaks of dB measurement (again, as shown in yellow), which marked a loud attack on accented notes coincided with a push in tempo beforehand (i.e. 1.4 and 3.1), while a ‘pull’ occurred before other accented notes in the same area (i.e. 2.4 and 2.1). Yet despite the lack of correlation between trends in *tactus* timing and simultaneous accent shaping, the two sets of data from Figures 4.10 and 4.12 still show similar characteristics – both manipulate the flow of timing within wider notated frameworks. In this instance, the framework of the 3+3+2 pattern sets the backdrop in which accent shaping occurs on the micro-level use of ‘tension’ and ‘release’/‘push’ and ‘pull’.

Of course, a more in-depth study of this same excerpt into deeper micro-levels of timing beyond the four crotchet beats would undoubtedly reveal more refined results regarding the placements of the notated quavers and related accents, and more research on this topic is needed over longer passages. Yet despite the simplicity of this study, the data can still be useful in demonstrating that the four-beat crotchet foundation was temporally manipulated, and a simultaneous use of accent shaping added was another way in which swing could be explored in its most basic outline – in this case in a ‘non-uniform’ temporal shape as utilised by Piazzolla.

### *The ‘Acento Largo’*

Musicologist Ingrid Monson rightfully points out (Monson and Waterman, 1995, p. 87) that in the study of analysing notions of swing and groove, one’s individual use of transformation and production of timing to feed into it ought to be contextualised within wider questions of the ‘social and cultural processes’; this process is ‘an active decision that varies according to the ‘larger context of musical events’ (ibid., p. 88). She writes:

The ability to anticipate and participate is much more than a matter of being ahead of or behind the beat: it is also the product of the history of interaction of between players, their cumulative musical knowledge of the repertory and transformative devices, their technical

skill, their recognition of familiar passages and aesthetics in performance, and their ability to actively deploy sound to affect each other's musical behavior' (Monson and Waterman, 1995, p. 88).

Waterman, a jazz bass player, similarly argues for the notion of wider explorations in the contexts for swing – players might play 'apart' in the form of a timing discrepancy, 'but not too far apart' (Monson and Waterman, 1995, p. 93). He describes that how a musician employs their version of groove and swing still entails performative 'norms' that indicate limits as to what would constitute 'enough' discrepancy, which helps to indicate wider musical style (ibid. p. 93).

Similarly, connections between Piazzolla's use of accentuation might resonate in ways that swing can be said to be 'felt'; but on another level, his interpretation is also part of set 'norms' and 'limits' within a wider tango practice regarding this notation. For example, the aural information found in *Fracanapa* is not necessarily completely unique when one considers the highly descriptive language that has generally been used to characterise accentuation in tango readings: 'in the light'/'in the shadow' (Fain, 2010, p. 42), '*a la tierra*'/'bouncing in the air' (Fain, 2010, p. 34; Gallo, 2011, p. 18) and 'inward-outward motion' (Drago, 2008, p. 66).

Additionally, more fascinating, is that the analysis of Piazzolla's performance produced results which corroborate with the descriptions of this specific notational practice, linked to a wider performance tradition of interpreting the *acento largo*, 'long accent' (Fain, 2010, p. 35; Gallo 2011, p. 19) – or, as Drago (2008, p. 66) describes, 'long-short paired notes'.<sup>104</sup> This 'intense' accent interpretation developed gradually over tango history, and was played 'stronger and stronger as a way of highlighting the accented moment' (Gallo, 2011, p. 19).

The essential elements of the *acento largo* can be broadly divided into the interpretation of three specific areas that appear frequently in its discussion: the

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<sup>104</sup> In a tradition that is not always score-based or 'codified', the fact that Drago uses 'long-short paired notes' and not the term *acento largo* (in fact, he doesn't mention it at all by this name in his work) is a good example of how fluid and unfixed ideas about this notation are. Additionally, it should be said that the three authors mentioned here would not necessarily agree on all characteristics of musical techniques in this notational area, either. Yet in many ways, Drago's descriptive language of this accent combination is very similar to that of Fain and Gallo, and it is for this reason these two accent descriptions are paired together. From here onwards the umbrella term *acento largo* will be employed for ease of reference. This is not to pinpoint and necessarily define a set practice but so as to draw together similarities found in the available discourse as a starting point for understanding any wider notions of collectivism in tango performance practice.

accented note, the slur, and the un-notated staccato, and it would seem that there are certain qualities each figure would need in order for a successful reading of it to occur. This can be demonstrated by a brief compilation of the advice given in recent performing manuals:

- The accented note itself is said to have directional earthward ‘inertia’, (*‘a la tierra’*), is ‘longer’, and is to ‘be given far more importance than the other sounds’ (Fain, 2010, pp. 15, 43; Gallo, 2011, p. 18).
- In any 3+3+2 bar, all three accents should have the ‘same intensity’ (Fain, 2010, p.52).
- The slur from the accented note is said not to indicate an articulation necessarily, but the elongated length of the accented note (Gallo, p. 35); ‘one must lean on that note’ (Drago, 2008, p. 67).
- There is an un-notated practice that the non-accented note(s) that follow any accent are ‘less audible in real terms’ (Fain, 2010, p. 43), ‘in the shadow’ (Fain, 2010, p. 42), ‘more piano’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 18, Fain, 2010, p. 34), and need to be hidden so that the accented note can be more prominent (Gallo, 2011, p. 30).
- The unaccented note is not held at full notational value as there is an understood staccato on the second note (Gallo, 2011, p. 20). Drago (2008, p. 66) mentions that staccato does not mean to rearticulate the note which would break the slur, but instead it is shortened, ‘sometimes in a very cutting way’, where the quaver note would sound as a semiquaver.

Additionally, not only did the analysis of Piazzolla’s aural performance produce results akin to this specific notational practice, but the printed score of *Fracanapa* would be seen to carry directives of it, too. Both Fain (2010, p. 15) and Gallo (2011, p. 19) note that the *acento largo* is said to be present when the notation contains an accented note connected to the next beat by a slur. Often seen in 4/4 time signatures, it is commonly found in *marcato en cuatro*, where the time-keeping emphasises four equal beats; though it is said to be used interchangeably in varying *marcato* patterns (Fain, 2010, p. 19; Gallo, 2011, p. 34), and in the 3+3+2. Wider application of this accent style within Piazzolla’s wider output could be said to appear not only in the



analysed example, and in the *6 Etudes*, but also in *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986) (Figure 4.13) and *Four for Tango* (Piazzolla, 1989) (Figure 4.14).<sup>105</sup>



**Figure 4.13** The *acento largo* in *Histoire du tango*, *Concert d'aujourd'hui*, bars 5–8, Flute.



**Figure 4.14** The *acento largo* in *Four for Tango*, bars 35–38, Violin I.

### *A Recording Analysis of Fain and Gallo Demonstrating the 'acento largo'*

Returning again to the theory that aural information could help with understanding any given notation, further analyses of a solo 3+3+2 pattern played on flute by Fain

<sup>105</sup> For wider understanding, the *acento largo* should be briefly contextualised with its 'less intense' counterpart, the *acento breve*, 'short accent', where no slur connects two consecutive notes. It is often found in tangos where timekeeping is in '2', mimicking a 'danceable' style, for example in the music of Di Sarli or Pugliese. Fain and Gallo both describe this *marcato* time-keeping pattern as a 'more separate' event because the first and third beats are emphasised differently to other beats in the bar (Fain, 2010, p. 35; Gallo, 2011, pp. 19, 33). Further examples of this accent style can be found in Piazzolla's published scores, such as *Histoire Du Tango: Bordel 1900*, Flute part, bars 28–29 (Piazzolla, 1986), and *Suite Troileana*, No.1, bars 48–51 (Piazzolla, 1976). Although Fain and Gallo generally characterise these two accent styles through easily defined traits, it should be mentioned that many accents are simply unwritten and left for the performer to decide depending on context and personal preferences. Applying these divisions pragmatically to various tango scores also reveals that it is not always a clear-cut distinction of only one predominant accent style used uniformly in one piece; Gallo helpfully includes studies in his manual that entail both styles in one piece (Gallo, 2011, p. 53).

(2010, CD 1, track 30) (Figure 4.15) and on violin (Figure 4.17) by Gallo (2011, CD 1, track 24, variation 30) could also be a means by which to demonstrate the *acento largo* through two other instances (See enclosed CD, tracks 2-3).

These two short clips were specifically chosen from the pedagogical writings of Fain and Gallo because their recordings enable one to ‘listen to the effect’ on an enclosed recording of the *acento largo* described in their companion texts (Fain, 2010 p. 6; Gallo 2011, p. 6). One would assume that these recorded versions demonstrate ‘proper’ execution of the accent and could thus be seen as a sort of ‘archetypical model’ for this practice from which to draw data for analysis. The question the two analyses asked was: Does the aural information given by Fain and Gallo have similar qualities to their written descriptions of it? After numerous listenings, these two sound clips were heard to have the same punchy energetic style familiar from the previous Piazzolla sample. These accents simply came across as more ‘hard-hitting’ and ‘intentioned’; one cannot deny that there is a very distinct sound to this appropriated category of accent notation.

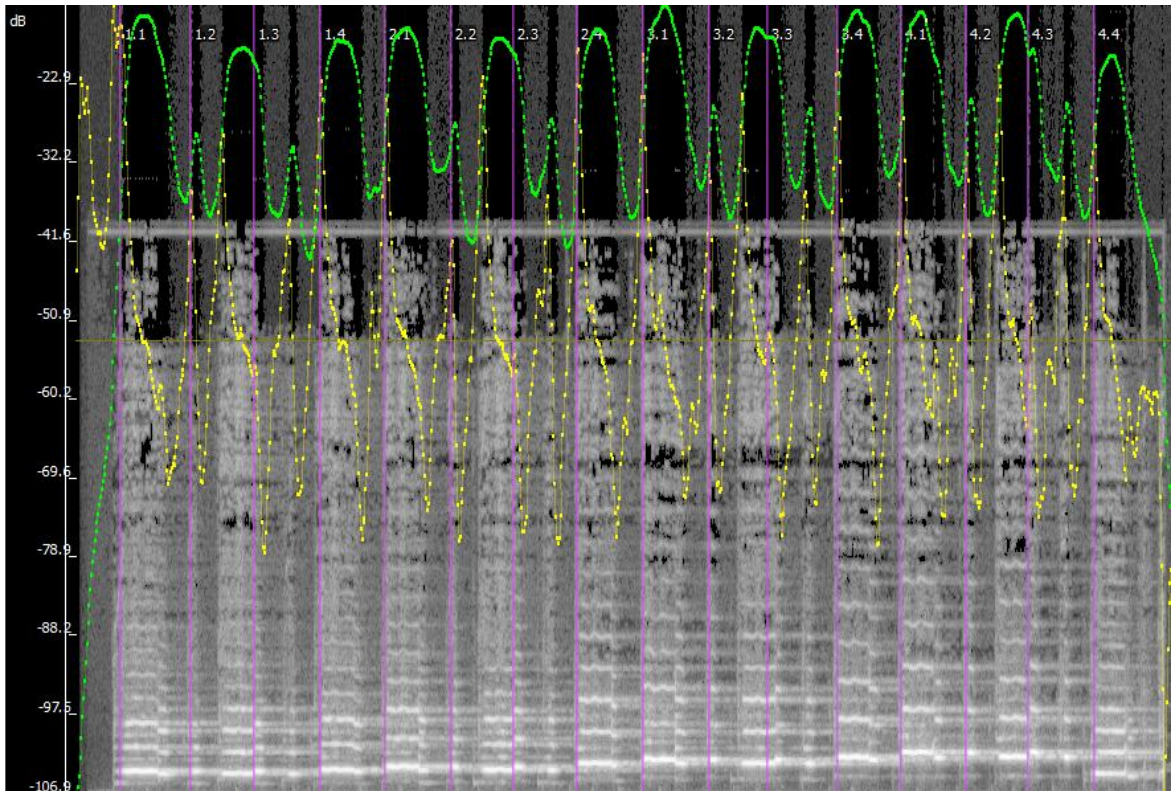
### *Methodology*

An empirical approach might demonstrate this more effectively by asking: Can one find similarities with the empirical results as shown in Piazzolla’s *Fracanapa*? The same software settings and method for examining the aural information was used as from Figure 4.10: Sonic Visualiser with a Time Instants Layer overlaid with a ‘plain’ spectrogram, the Smoothed Power Curve, and the Smoothed Power Slope.



**Figure 4.15** The publication and a transcription of Fain performing a four-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern on flute.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Shown as published (bars 1–2) (Fain, 2010, p. 60) and as further transcribed by the author (bars 3–4).



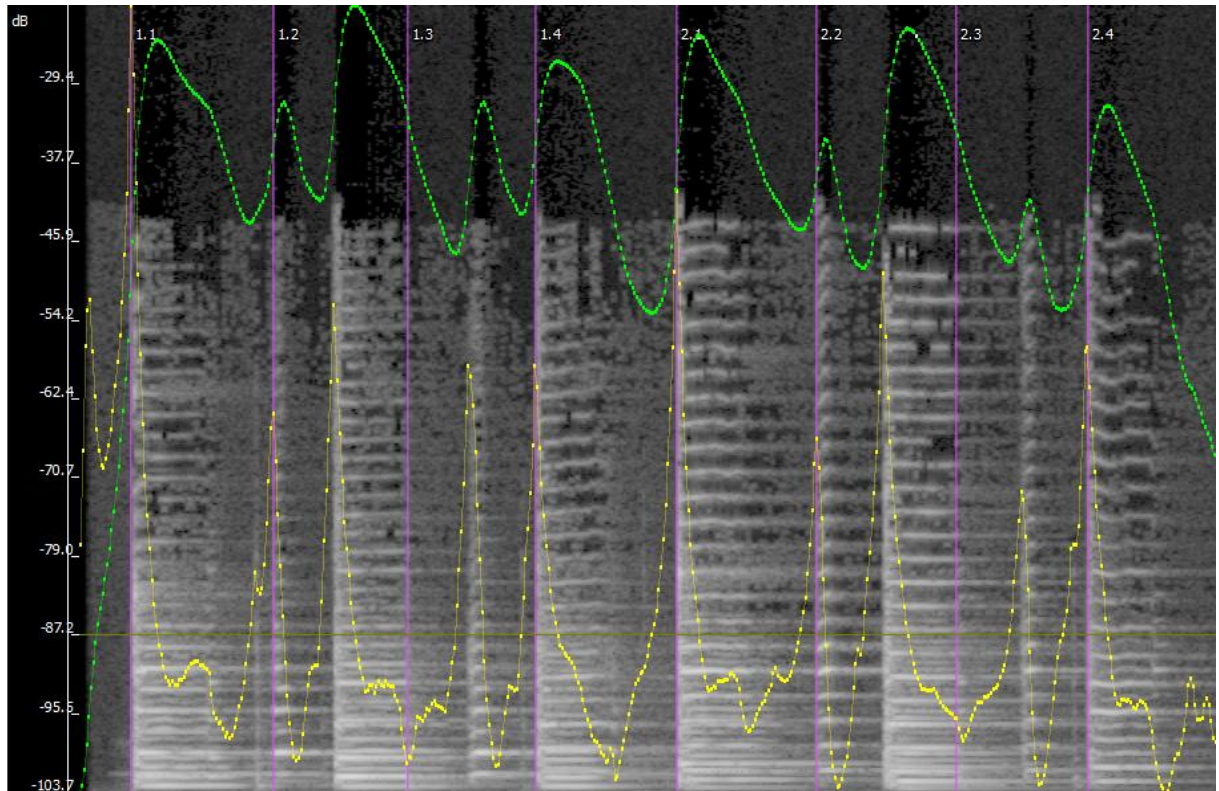
**Figure 4.16** A spectrogram of Fain performing a four-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern on flute.<sup>107</sup>



**Figure 4.17** The publication and a transcription of Gallo performing a two-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern on violin.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> In this instance and in Figure 4.18 the audio waveform layer was omitted because it visually obscured the power curve data when added to the spectrogram.

<sup>108</sup> Shown as published (bar 1) (Gallo, 2011, p. 55), and as further transcribed by the author (bar 2).



**Figure 4.18** A spectrogram of Gallo performing a two-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern on violin.

### *Results and Discussion*

An assessment of the two spectrograms revealed that the traits of an interpretation previously written to describe *acento largo* could be seen to be employed by both Fain and Gallo in their recording excerpts. Furthermore, the analyses of a solo 3+3+2 pattern played by Fain and Gallo (Figure 4.16 and 4.18) bear a resemblance to the techniques of Piazzolla's accent style in *Fracanapa*. Consequently it would seem that in this instance there seems to be a stylistic current that is shared by all three musicians.

For example, by using the same approach and understanding of the spectrogram features to interpret the data discussed in Figure 4.10, the accented notes were played with more amplitude and with longer note lengths than those that were not accented, as shown by the peak shapes in both of the power curves. Additionally, a homogeneous use of heightened amplitude in the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow) was present on all of the accented notes.

The smooth 'elongation' of the slurred accented note to the non-accented note was present with minimal 'bumps' in the Smoothed Power Curve (green).

Consistency of the note length was found in these same areas, as shown by the similar behaviour of the slopes of the Smoothed Power Curve.

As shown by the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow), the non-accented notes were of lesser amplitude in comparison to their counterparts, and as displayed in the Smoothed Power Curve (green) were also shortened by the steep decays that occurred once the note was hit.

Yet this is not to say that there were only similarities; there were also interpretational differences in vibrato uses between the two instrumentalists. For example, slight difference can be seen in the fact that even though Fain might state in her writings that no vibrato should be used in rhythmic melodies, in her sample, she still uses slight vibrations, in what could be described as a shimmery, ‘on the surface’ vibrato style. This is shown by the minimal waves in the spectrogram data. Gallo used no vibrato, as shown by the relatively flat tones in his results.

#### *The ‘acento largo’ and Western Flute Contexts*

In keeping with the and/or model proposed as a method for exploring Piazzolla’s notation, the *acento largo* style demonstrated by Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo is not completely dissimilar to how it might be interpreted if one used western flute teachings for guidance when performing a similar 3+3+2 passage. For instance, in keeping with prescriptive uses of the accent notation, the extension of note length and use of heightened amplitude would be a common practice. Rockstro offers the advice to performers that ‘the accent is marked by increased length; and emphasis made by increased strength’ (Rockstro, 1967, p.500); an accent is ‘sometimes percussive, louder than the note’ (Debost, 2002, p. 123); and ‘the release of an accent is always less loud than the accent’ (ibid., p. 125).

Even where there are similarities in approaches, however, differences in style can also be observed. For example, although prescriptive understanding of an accent demands ‘exaggeration’, the advice from tango performing manuals (specifically referring back to the quotations by Fain, Drago, and Mauriño given at the start of this chapter) have often described tango accents as requiring a ‘harder’ and more ‘edgy’ attack than a non-tango interpretation might entail. Of course, as mentioned earlier, this practice was apparent from my own experience playing in my first tango masterclass; but it is also evident in the recording analysis data above, through the overall use of large dB attacks by Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo that form a practice of



the *acento largo*.

In regards to the treatment of a slur between two notes, flute manuals generally focus on the effect of contrast in volume between two notes: ‘a slur over two notes raises the importance of the first note and diminishes the importance of the second’ (Wye, 1999, p. 89); ‘the note that follows the slur should be played with a decrescendo’ (Wye, 1999, p. 91), and when the accent ‘occurs in two slurred notes ... the second note must have less emphasis than the first’ (Debost, 2002, p. 125).

However, differences in how notes are contrasted when connected with a slur do not necessarily extend to note length, unlike the data found in the recording analyses in these areas. To demonstrate performance boundaries relating to this practice, Wye warns ‘don’t shorten the last note of a slur’ (Wye, 1999, p. 93); similarly, Kincaid advises one to play the second notes of slur ‘broadly to maintain the continuity and line of the sound’ to ‘avoid a scalloped effect of the line’ (Krell, 1973, p.60).

Other differences in interpretation can be noticed with the use of vibrato choices. Although its usage would be a common expressive tool for many flautists, and would serve to highlight and add colour to the rhythmic phrase (Debost, 2002, p. 127), a strong sense of vibrato was not present in the recording samples of Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo.

It could be said that an example of a lack of vibrato use in the analyses or even the slight difference in note length might seem too mundane, tedious, and even extraneous to even warrant being mentioned. Yet it is in these small differences of practice that larger connections can be made; Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo’s performative decisions, which can be seen to veer away from a purely ‘western’ interpretation, strongly resonate within a practice that is linked to bandoneón performance technique.

#### *Inter-idiomatic Borrowing*

As Piazzolla advises the performer to use bandoneón technique as a reference point in his notes on the cover of the *6 Etudes*, it would not be unusual to use the bandoneón as an aural framework in understanding accent notation as – in Drago’s words (2008, p. 60) – the ‘mother source’. The expressivity of the ‘bellows-driven dynamic swells’ has become known for ‘producing the iconic sound of the tango’ (Corrado, 2003, p. 297). A frequent feature in tango performance is the mimicking of

tango technique from other instruments (or even an entire instrumental section), which together form a shared collection of ‘idioms’, ‘special effects’, and ‘manners of performance’ that are part of a larger ‘vocabulary’ (Drago, 2008, p. 59). Specifically this feature of musical emulation is what Drago labels ‘inter-idiomatic borrowing’, where ‘manners of performance and special effects in tango although played on a certain instrument clearly stem from instrumental idioms and gestures of another instrument’ (ibid.).<sup>109</sup>

The Argentinean saxophonist Bernardo Monk describes that one important element on which to base interpretation within the genre is that one knows how the other instruments work; one should not be just a soloist, but be able to function as an accompanist or a soloist as other instruments in the tango ensemble would by being able to change between instrumental styles and roles (Monk, 2009, pp. 53–63; Monk, 2010).<sup>110</sup> Equally, Link’s underlying premise for interpreting Piazzolla’s music is that players try to mimic the aural results of his unique bandoneón gestures in their own tango playing (Link, 2008). In her work as a tango violinist in Buenos Aires, Yuiko Asaba was told by a *bandoneonista* that one of the ways that tango techniques are acquired is by ‘stealing them from the musician performing next to you’ (Asaba, 2011, p. 2 cited Pazo). The same is found in a large part of the flute teaching pedagogies from Fain, which also deal with the issue of how one can successfully mimic traditional tango instruments by performing beside bandoneón and violin players in ensemble playing. Fain also draws inspiration from ‘robbing their technique’ as a basis for interpretation in her work (Fain, 2010, p. 37). In light of this, bandoneon gestures can be related not only to how Piazzolla’s playing style is executed in the recording analysis of *Fracanapa*, but also to how *acento largo* has been described and then interpreted by Fain and Gallo. These connections can offer a deeper understanding of the accent style Piazzolla might have envisaged for the etudes.

Though a bandoneón player might choose from a variety of techniques to

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<sup>109</sup> Though players might refer to this idea informally, to date Drago’s work is the only known reference that has been found that specifically labels and defines this practice more fully, hence this term will be adopted for future reference.

<sup>110</sup> To illuminate the use of interchanging roles, Monk creatively uses the analogy of the *Liberio* ‘free-role’ in football, where the player doesn’t have a defined position in the game. Similarly, instrumentalists should not stick to one technique and style of playing and be able to function in different roles (Monk, 2009, p. 58). He explains that players such as the famed Argentine Diego Maradona (or equally it could be said in the UK, Wayne Rooney) function to complement the defence or offense with the skill that is needed at the time within the team.

produce different forms of articulation (see Corrado, 2003, pp. 296–98; Drago, 2008, pp. 17–18), the rhythmic patterns of tango are played in open (*abriendo*) position. It is important to conceptualise this because this position opens the instrument's bellows. The strong, forceful, and elongated attacks of accented notes are a part of the natural response of the bandoneón as its bellows are pulled outwards. Subsequently the fall of the *fueyes* would naturally create a 'ghosting' effect that would naturally shorten the non-accented subsequent note(s). Fain describes this process in more detail:

On the bandoneón the accented note is pressed out by the hand and at the same time the *fueye* (bellows) is struck against the leg or pulled downward, causing a sharp outrush of air. The *fueye* then falls by force of gravity, playing the subsequent notes or notes with far less importance and pressure until the next accent appears. In this way a big difference in volume is produced between the note with the impact against the musician's leg and the following note or notes, which are effectively detached by the first impulse (Fain, 2010, p. 37).<sup>111</sup>

As advised by Fain (2010, p. 38), the lack of vibrato in Piazzolla and Gallo's recording reflects the tuning style commonly used for bandoneón players playing tango. As a bandoneón contains two reeds per octave, players tune their reeds at a 'perfect' octave to avoid a 'shimmering' vibrato effect when playing.<sup>112</sup> Vibrato may be made in several other ways, for example by vibrating the instrument with movement in one upper arm while playing with the other. In the case of rhythmic melodies, the tempo would not generally allow such vibrato technique to be made on each note as there would simply not be enough time for this gesture to occur.

Inter-idiomatic borrowing can be seen to be deeply intertwined with not only the *acento largo*, but also as a large part of the notational properties of the 3+3+2 accent pattern of *Fracanapa*, and can similarly be expanded to apply to the notation of the *6 Etudes*. This has wider implications in that accentuation extends beyond 'exaggeration' of the demands of a prescriptive notation. Instead, accentuation opens the possibility of exploring other sonic landscapes. Though not covered in this chapter, other possibilities emerge for accentuation to contribute to the tango swing,

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<sup>111</sup> Although this description encompasses a general overall tango style, this is not to say that this is the definitive way that a tango accent could be executed by a *bandoneonista* (see for example a simplified explanation of other techniques as explained by Shalev, 2012); and as Fain and Gallo both point out, duration and emphasis of accent vary from style to style depending on each tango style and/or arranger (Fain, 2010, p. 35; Gallo 2011, p. 19).

<sup>112</sup> This decision would be contrasted with the so called 'wet sound' 'musette style' that is a more common effect in accordion playing in other styles of music, in which one reed is in tune, and the other is tuned a couple of cents sharp.



such as *golpes* and *arrastres* as a means to mark accentuation patterns that can be commonly found in bandoneón tango performances.<sup>113</sup>

### ***A Recording Analysis of the Accentuation of Etude 6 by Western Flautists***

Returning back to the advice given about accent interpretation as outlined in western flute manuals, qualities of the *acento largo* – and by extension a reflection of inter-idiomatic borrowing – can highlight differences in interpretation to the notation. Yet specifically it is the difference in accent attack that has often been used frequently to indicate ways that western players – and in this case specifically western flute players – are ‘misled’, and this theory could be explored in more detail. A specific passage of bars 1–4 from *Etude 6* allowed for a basic unaltered 3+3+2 pattern of ‘long accents’ set across a series of quavers with a broad range of intervals to be examined (Figure 4.19) (See enclosed CD, tracks 4-18). Though there are many ways in which an analysis could measure the impact of ‘contrast’ between accented notes and unaccented ones, due to the current limitations of Sonic Visualiser in measuring other elements found in *acento largo*, such as exact note lengths (decays), it was deemed that the measurement of decibel (dB) would be the most accurate way to compare the use of accent shaping across the fifteen commercially available recordings of *Etude 6* by non-tango players (listed in Figure 4.20).<sup>114</sup>

#### *Methodology*

Because of the lack of audio recordings available of the *6 Etudes* by tango flute players to use as a basis for comparison, I recorded a performance of the passage that resonated with the empirical results of performance practices seen with Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo (See enclosed CD, track 19). Departing from the notion that my recording should be used for any authoritative unfixed model of ‘authenticity’, this simply allowed for measurements to take place in a comparative study as one example of how differences in performing style might be measured. In line with the original

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<sup>113</sup> Which will be further explored in Chapter 7.

<sup>114</sup> All the recordings analysed were available for purchase on the commercial market as of February 2012. Recordings that may have been released after this date were not a part of this study. Recordings were only included if they met certain criteria: 1) recordings are only made by flautists, other instruments used to record this etude (such as the existing recordings of violin or euphonium) were not part of this recording analysis; 2) in keeping with original setting of the *6 Etudes*, the artist recorded ‘solo’ with no other instruments serving as an accompanist or in an ensemble setting; and 3) all of the artists needed to meet a normative professional standard of playing level as deemed suitable by the author.

ethos of this chapter, this was by no means meant to be the ultimate recorded model for a ‘correct’ reading. Instead, the purpose of this exercise was simply to create a possibility of how tango accentuation has been conceived by using collective traits that appeared across the three performances.

When looking at each individual recording in the study, using the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow) together with the Time Instants layer to mark each bar to beat location helped identify the note attacks for each quaver in the passage, meaning that the accented note and the note that followed it could be pinpointed precisely. dB results were individually measured at 24 points across the four-bar excerpt. Since the main goal in this analysis was to measure volume contrast, the relationship between the accented and non-accented notes were measured over twelve pairs of points, i.e. between points 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, etc. (Figure 4.21). The numerical differences between the dB results on accented and non-accented notes were noted. The average of all twelve dB contrasts in each of the fifteen recording excerpts was then calculated, resulting in the final average dB contrast. Lastly, the same process was applied to my recorded version, which was similarly added to the final results, shown in Figure 4.22.



**Figure 4.19** *Etude 6*, bars 1–4

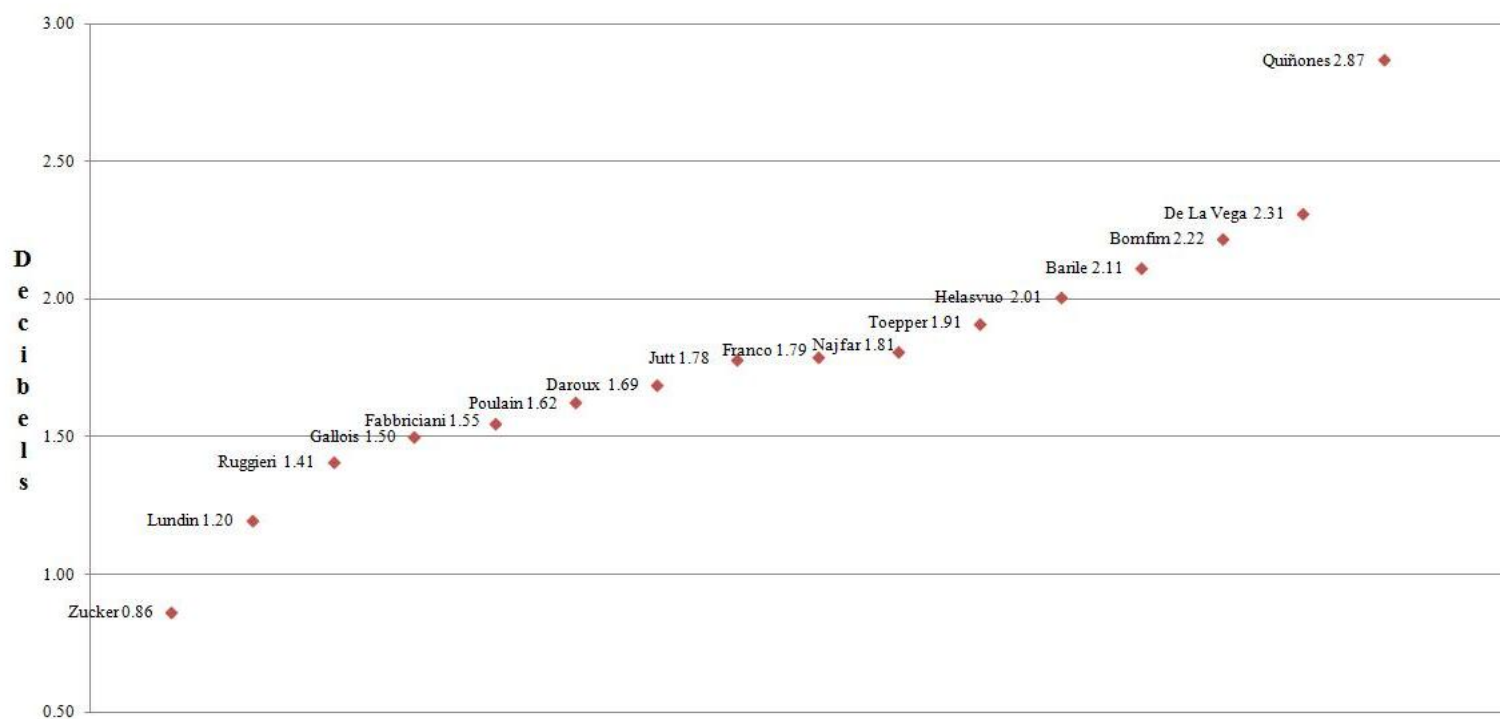
Flautist	Album Title	Label	Released	Nationality
Jutt, Stephanie	Mckinley, Griffes, Piazzolla, Jolivet	GM Recordings	1990	American
Helasvuo, Mikael	Piazzolla: History of the Tango, 5 Piezas & 6 Etudes Tanguistiques	Ondine	1992	Finnish
De LaVega, Jorge	Astor Piazzolla: A Flute and Piano Tribute	Milan/BMG	1995	Argentine
Gallois, Patrick	Piazzolla For Two	Deutche Grammophone	1996	French
Poulain, Loic	Astor Piazzolla	Mandala/ Harmonia Mundi	1997	French
Franco, Fabio	Tango y Nada Mas	Symposion	1998	Italian
Toepper, Imgaard	Piazzolla: Complete Music for Flute and Guitar	Naxos	1998	German
Daroux, Cécile	Astor Piazzolla: Histoire Du Tango	Harmonia Mundi	1999	French
Lundin, Iliia	Astor Piazzolla: Le Grand Tango	Vista Vera	2003	Russian
Najfar, Reza	Tango Appassionato	Novalis	2003	Iranian
Zucker, Laurel	Inflorescence II: Music for Solo Flute	Cantilena Records	2003	American
Ruggieri, Daniele	Latin Music for Flute & Guitar	Resonance/ Sanctuary Classics	2007	Italian
Bomfim, Marcelo	Só Para Flauta/ Just for Flute	Marcelo Bomfim	2009	Brazilian
Fabbriciani, Roberto	Histoire Du Tango	Phoenix Classics	2010	Italian
Barile, Claudio	Historia del Tango, Tango-Etudes, y Otros	Ircó- El Arca de Noé	2011	Argentine

**Figure 4.20** A list of the fifteen commercially available recordings of *Etude 6*.

Avec anxiété (Crotchet = 132)  
(Bar 1)

The image shows a musical score for the first bar of Etude 6. The tempo is marked 'Avec anxiété (Crotchet = 132)'. The time signature is 4/4. The music starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The score consists of a single line of music with 24 numbered locations (1-24) marked with red arrows pointing to specific notes. The notes are eighth notes, and the sequence includes various accidentals (sharps, naturals, flats) and accents. The notes are numbered 1 through 24, with red arrows pointing to each note head.

**Figure 4.21** The 24 locations where dB contrast was measured in *Etude 6*, bars 1–4.



**Figure 4.22** Average accent contrast by performers in dB of *Etude 6*, bars 1–4.

### *Results and Discussion*

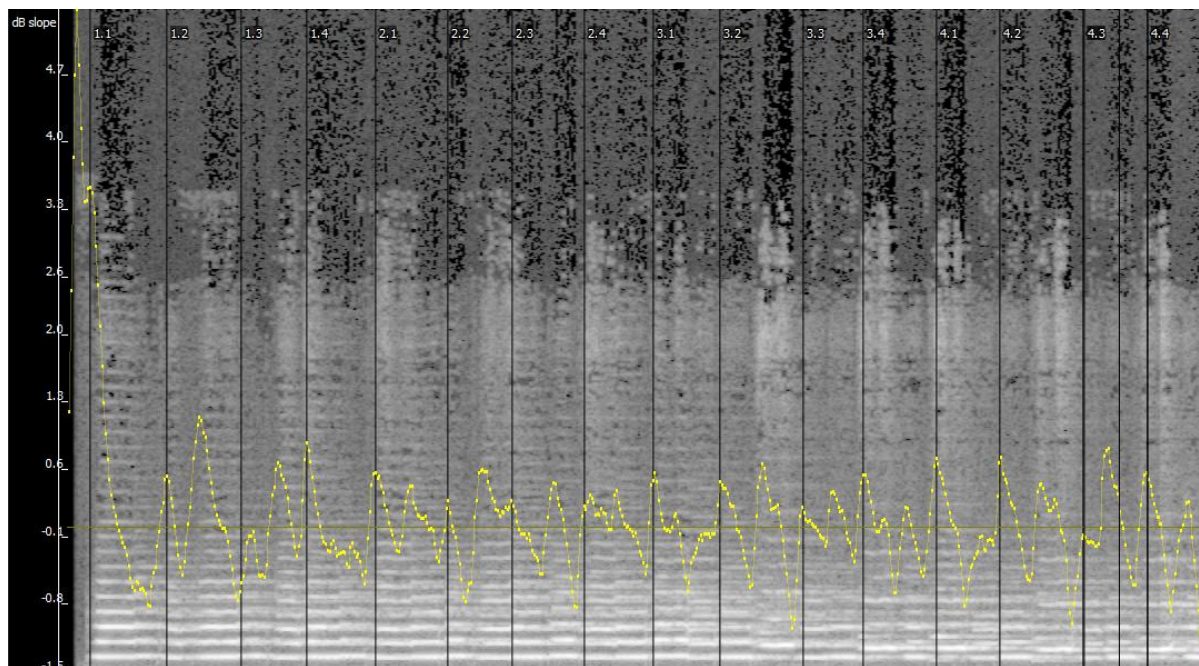
Overall the range of dB contrast between the non-tango players varied between Zucker with the lowest result (.86) and De La Vega with the highest (2.31). The results of Jutt (1.78) reflect the average mean, indicating a general performance 'norm' for this study. A clearer understanding can be seen in the visualisations, which reveal large differences in accent shaping between dB level of the lowest mean and highest dB level (see Figures 4.23 to 4.26). In particular the difference in interpretation based on the size of each peak height between the three samples makes it possible to visualise how contrasts were made in each sample.

One unanticipated finding was that while Jutt's performance was the mean sample in this study, it was also the first recording of these etudes. Could subsequent performers have used her accentuation style as a model for emulation? One might not be able to fully answer this theory, but a sense of uniformity towards the mean value suggests a relationship to innate performance boundaries or even a sense of C-Models, such as explored above with regards to how performers tend to work with set performing traditions.

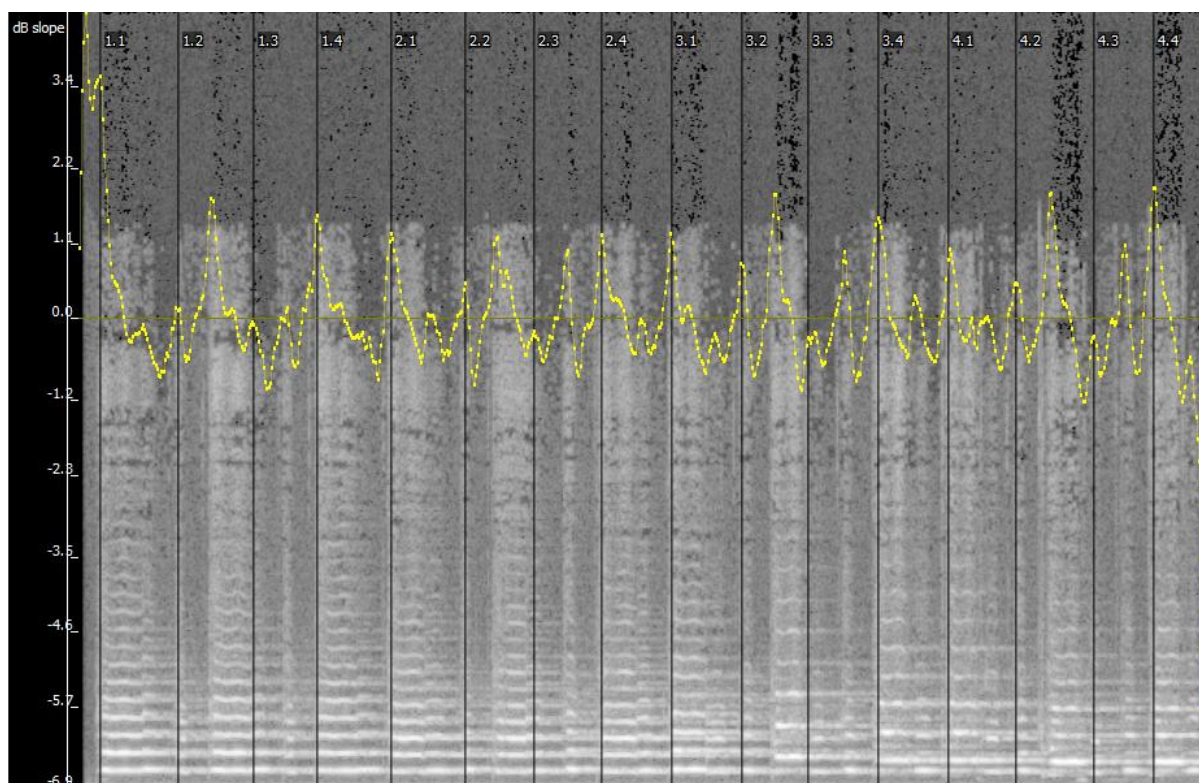
Perhaps unsurprising was that the results showed that the flautists with the highest amount of dB contrast (De La Vega, Bomfim, and Barile) are players from Argentina and Brazil; their playing showed a much greater use of contrast than the mean average. One explanation for this result could have been the better social and cultural access to, and thus understanding of, various tango practices than those players of European origin simply due to global proximity.

Lastly, while my own empirical results (Figure 4.26) were visually similar to the Smoothed Power Slope (yellow) of the analysis from Piazzolla, Fain, and Gallo, the difference in dB contrast diverged greatly in comparison to the other fifteen flute players. This information may feed into the perception that tango accents are shaped with a larger amount of contrast than perhaps the performance norms of western flute players would generally dictate. This small study provides a brief example of how even when initial similarities for accent interpretation might emerge across musical styles, interpretive differences can be based within dissimilar performative contexts. This was only a small study, and future research might take into account other elements that have been explored so far that shape and contribute to accentuation,

such as timing discrepancies (swing), vibrato use, note lengths, and of course, pitch which was left unexplored in this chapter, yet could similarly offer valuable insights.

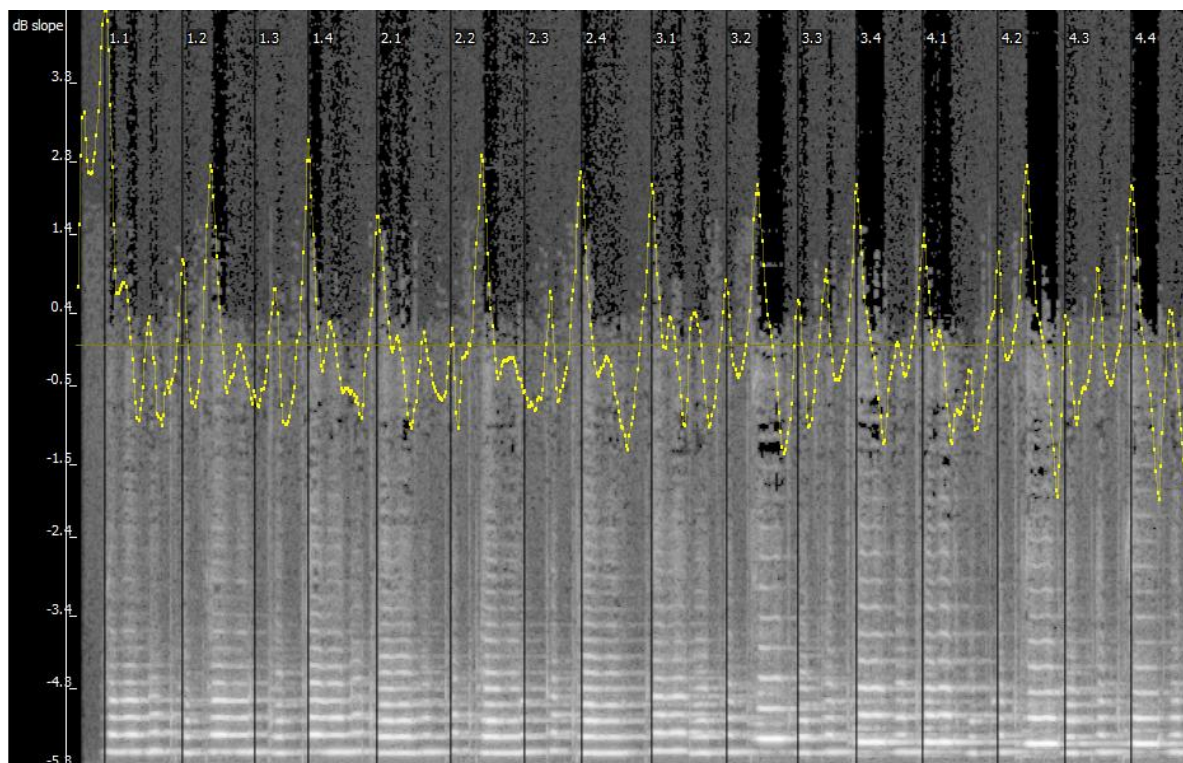


**Figure 4.23** A spectrogram of Zucker performing a 3+3+2 quaver pattern in *Etude 6*, bars 1–4 on flute.



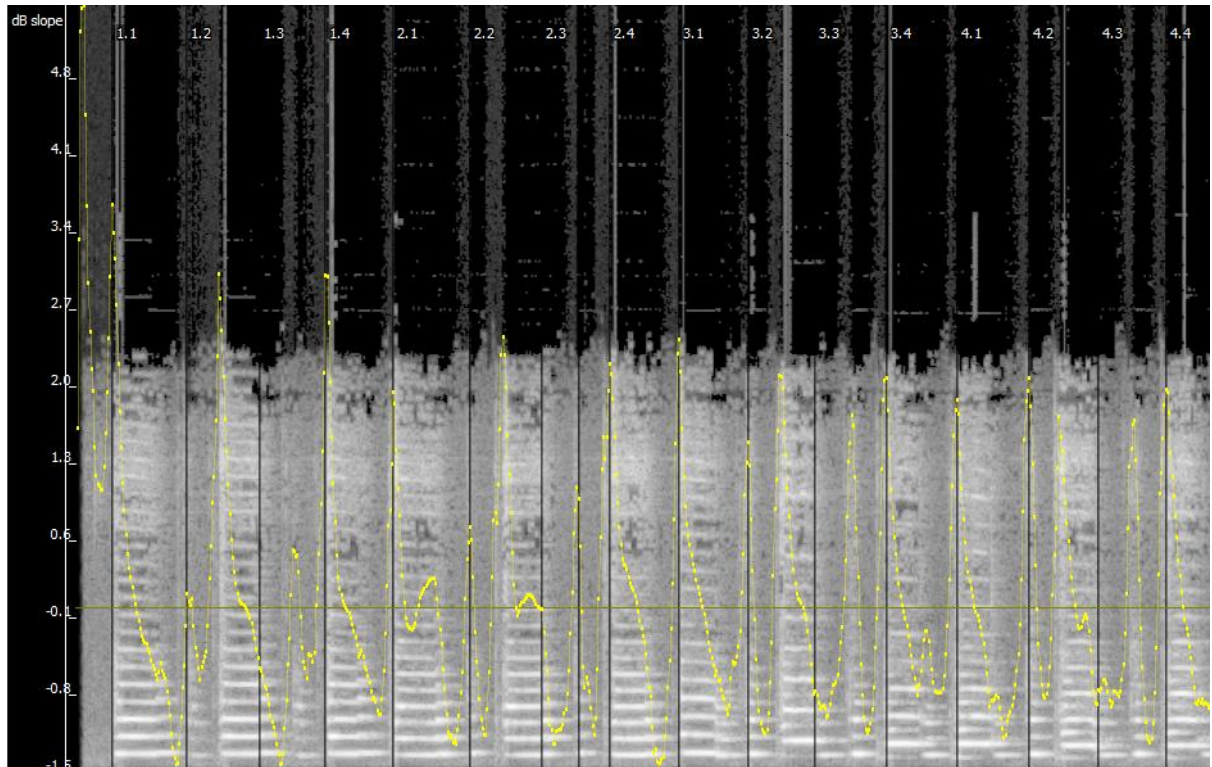
**Figure 4.24** A spectrogram of Jutt performing a 3+3+2 quaver pattern in *Etude 6*, bars 1–4 on flute.





**Figure 4.25** A spectrogram of De La Vega performing a 3+3+2 quaver pattern in *Etude 6*, bars 1–4 on flute.





**Figure 4.26** A spectrogram of Quiñones performing a 3+3+2 quaver pattern in *Etude 6*, bars 1–4 on flute.

## Conclusions

Through the use of Pinkola Estes’s ‘and/and’ model of creative enquiry, this chapter has given an account of numerous conduits that could feed into the accent notation within the etudes, including the *acento largo*, inter-idiomatic borrowing, and macro- and micro-level conceptualisations of swing, each of which feed into the musical perception of *mugre*. A western viewpoint may miss the many ways that this notation can be interpreted across a spectrum of tango practices. This chapter has also revealed quantitative performative differences in interpretation between tango practices and those by western flautists.

Piazzolla’s notes to the performer on the cover of the etudes were used as a platform from which to explore accent notation beyond a prescriptive reading. The accent notation initially seemed in place to mark a wider, and perhaps very obvious 3+3+2 rhythmic pattern, a common feature of Piazzolla’s style. Yet, the first finding was that the visual importance of the accent had deeper significance, serving as a kind of ‘signalling device’ that not only can be seen to mark not only a rhythmic pattern bound within rich historical roots of earlier tango styles and habanera roots, but also is a product of Piazzolla’s childhood impressions from New York City, as well as from

compositions from western musicians he admired.

Secondly, using a recording of Piazzolla's own live performance of *Fracanapa* as way to identify one part of his accentuation style, the use of the slur in the 3+3+2 pattern found within the notation of *Fracanapa*, and *Etude 6*, was connected to a certain accent style of the *acento largo*, which specified unique treatments of the accented note, the slur, and the un-notated staccato. The striking aural characteristics of the *acento largo* within these three elements provided a pathway towards the multivalent meaning of Piazzolla's notation, in which the process of swing is perceived through the nature of manipulation – not only within the overriding 3+3+2 framework but also in conjunction with the four beat *tactus*. Thirdly, expanding the circle wider, and in keeping with the composer's notes to the flautist, these performing contexts of the *acento largo* and swing were used to forge links to the sound qualities and instrumental gestures that the *bandoneonista* would make through the use of inter-idiomatic borrowing.

Fourthly, moveable contexts were drawn upon that could be extended to the 6 *Etudes*; the initial theory that was put forth by tango manuals that non-tango players are 'misled' by the accent notation was put into a practical application. Using the collective results from the analysis of recordings by Piazzolla, Gallo, and Fain, a quantitative study of 'difference' in performing contexts was made of *Etude 6* from western recordings by non-tango players. Since there are no recordings of the etudes by tango flautists as of the time writing this thesis, I recorded an *acento largo* using the notation of *Etude 6* in keeping with my experiences as a player and learner of the style. The results of this recording indicated a noticeable divergence in the 'contrast' of dB levels between the recordings, which demonstrated traits of the *acento largo* made by myself and those made by non-tango players from classical backgrounds. These studies were by no means a complete analysis of the possibilities of accentuation by Piazzolla or any tango performer, and repeated analysis over a wide variety of Piazzolla's recorded output would provide more evidence and more insights into his use of it within his performances and compositions.

Yet overall, these findings substantially demonstrate that although there may be collective notions in interpreting Piazzolla's accent notation, there are also numerous ways in which the realisations can differ, which is to say that to define an exact way that the notation should be played for an 'authentic' tango reading is

dubious – in fact, at times the findings highlighted that interpretations of accents did not follow any set creative notion. Yet, though one might not ever be able to completely understand how the accent notation Piazzolla used would fully suggest the performance style he might have imagined, given the numerous pathways available to the performer beyond a sole use of prescriptive definitions, equally it should not be said that there was only one way that he would have envisioned this notation to be realised.

## Chapter 5: Breath Comma Notation

### Initial Readings of *Etude 1*

The most significant feature of the opening ‘A’ section of *Etude 1* is the polyrhythmic pattern marked by heavy accentuation, which outlines a 3+3+3+3+ 2+2 pattern<sup>115</sup> that occurs over a two-bar cycle (Figure 5.1). This elongated variation of a common 3+3+2 pattern creates a relentless horizontal feel to the melodic phrase which helps to negate the 4/4 given time signature and create rhythmic displacement. Similar two-bar patterns are prominent in this movement and also occur within the closing ‘A<sup>1</sup>’ section of the score to contrast with a middle *marcato* section (the ‘B’ theme).

Each of the smaller fragmented two-bar cycles function according to Richard Middleton’s definition of a ‘riff’, where ‘short, rhythmic melodic or harmonic figures are repeated to form a structural framework’ (1999, p. 43). In particular, these two-bar riffs contribute to a wider *ostinato*. Drago (2008, p. 118) and Pelinski (2002, p. 30) – both citing the work of Middleton (1983) and Tagg (1982) – suggest that this style of *ostinato* can be described as a ‘discursive *ostinato*’ in that the eight-bar groupings encompass a variety of harmonic modulations (Drago, 2008, pp. 117–20; Pelinski, 2008, p. 41–42) and that they function to ‘lead the redundant *ostinato* into new tonal areas’ (Drago, 2008, p. 119). In discursive repetition, ‘the *shape* of the unit is kept but it is repeated at a different pitch’ (Middleton, 1999, p. 146, emphasis in original). It was not uncommon for Piazzolla to deviate from keeping an equal numbered bar structures within the phrase structures in his instrumental works (Kutnowski, 2002, pp. 108–9); and similarly in the case of *Etude 1*, repetition is developed over four to five repeated two-bar riffs which develop tonally to formulate a wider eight- to ten-bar *ostinato* (outlined in red, green and yellow boxes in Figure 5.1).

Pelinski (2002) suggests that this practice was developed in the era of Piazzolla’s compositional training in Paris, under the instruction of Nadia Boulanger, who would ask him to write fifty variations upon a determined theme to be completed under minimal time limits (p. 29). Subsequently these rigorous compositional exercises influenced his tango nuevo style; in Pelinski’s words, they not only ‘support the formal metric and harmonic design, but these *ostinatos* also wander from piece to piece in a sort of intertextual journey’ (ibid.). Similar rhythmic 333322 patterns

<sup>115</sup> For simplicity, the pattern 3+3+3+3+2+2 will be labelled as 333322 when used further in the chapter.

appear frequently in Piazzolla's compositions, as explored by both Pelinski (2008, p. 42) and Mauriño (2008, p. 21), and parallel ostinato styles can be heard in his performances of *Baires Promenade* (Piazzolla, 1978) and *Michelangelo '70* (Piazzolla, 1986a).

What is radically different about this ostinato notation when compared to similar derivations of a 333322 (or even other variations upon a 3+3+2) pattern is that Piazzolla specifically notates commas within each of the two-bar cycles, and specifically between each of the first three dotted crotchets (3'3'3') when this pattern occurs. In addition, the commas are noticeably omitted after the fourth dotted crotchet as the remains of the cycle (3+2+2) is completed in the two bar sequence. A parallel 333322 rhythmic pattern notated with breath commas does not similarly appear in any other sections of the *6 Etudes*, though it can be seen in *Bordello 1900* from *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986), where it appears written in 2/4 time (Figure 5.2).

**TANGO - ÉTUDES**

Flûte (ou violon)

**N°1** Astor Piazzolla

Décidé (♩ = 138)

**A**

(a new melody in the 'A' section is then introduced)

**Figure 5.1** *Etude 1*, bars 1–26.

Molto giocoso ♩ = 180  
 64 *molto accentuato*  
 70 *p*  
 75

**Figure 5.2** *Bordel 1900, Histoire du tango*, bars 64–76, flute.

The following questions will be addressed: ‘why might Piazzolla have inserted these breath commas in the 333322 ostinato when the flute player would not require them after such small phrase durations?’, ‘why are they only written between some dotted crotchets and not others?’, and ‘can they suggest something more about tango performance practice?’ A useful starting point to explore these questions would be to contextualise such curious notation through a variety of contexts that reflect the ‘and/and’ ethos from a variety of sources. This chapter will encompass use of pedagogical flute manuals, readings on western and tango performance practices, and personal observations by the author as a western flautist and teacher. The quantitative tools used to approach these questions will include various recording analyses through Sonic Visualiser software, and a gestural analysis of Piazzolla’s own performance in a live setting. It will be proposed that in a wider perspective, the breath mark helps to facilitate tango phrasing, and provides numerous opportunities for the performer to interpret the breath notation within *Etude 1*.

### ***Interpretations of the Breath Comma in Western Contexts***

A universal observation of the breath comma is generally that the note written just before the breath mark is shortened slightly to allow for a short pause in the phrase, and indicates that the performer literally takes a breath. According to Nancy Toff in *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*, the breath mark in this notational sense serves to represent the action of taking a breath, and is notated

‘by an apostrophe, a check , a downbow, or simply by a rest’ (1996, p. 85). The seminal technique book for flautists worldwide, Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert’s *Méthode Complète de Flûte* (1958), offers no discussion of this symbol other than that the breath comma simply ‘indicates a breath’ (p. 11). Wider notational guides indicate that composers use it to indicate a ‘normal breath’ (Risatti, 1975, p. 158); Gardner Reid (1987, pp. 265–66) cites Richard Bunger’s ‘Musiglyph’ notational scheme (1974, pp. 16–32) as a way to propose a normative meaning of the breath mark in that it would ideally refer to a ‘quick breath without breaking continuity’. The key problem with a simple assumption that breath marks are notated for the instrumentalist’s need for air does not tackle the question of why Piazzolla might have inserted frequent breath commas in the 333322 rhythmic cell. Personal experience as a performer has demonstrated that the awkward breaths found in *Etude 1* can be implemented by a careful coordination of technique and articulation. However, it is noted that this exercise mostly results very audibly in an uncomfortable, ‘panting’ effect; air is simply not needed in such short bursts and the flute player would not require them after such small phrase durations.

Of course, a wider exploration of breath notation reveals that notated commas do not solely exist for the function of inhalation. In *Grove Music Online*, David Fallows (2012) notes that breath marks written as apostrophes (as in the case of *Etude 1*) can also be regarded as a ‘Luftpause’ (air-break), ‘a momentary interruption of the metre by silence, often indicated by a comma or ‘V’ above the staff’. Kurt Stone (1980) writes that the commas indicate ‘short silences’ (p. 128) and instances of this style of breath notation within the flute repertoire can be demonstrated in the score of *Cassandra’s Dream Song* (1975) by Brian Ferneyhough. For instance, according to the composer’s note to the performer, the breath comma is part of a series of ‘pause’ notation and in this case represents a ‘very short’ break (Ferneyhough, 1975, ‘Performing Instructions’).

Yet to use an approach, which simply regards the notation as functioning as a *luftpause* – where one would insert silences between notes – fails to take into account a small instruction from Piazzolla about the interpretation of the breaths at the front of the *6 Etudes*. He advises that the performer ‘should well exaggerate the respirations’ in the manner in which they are played on the bandoneón. Instead, it could be taken that to authentically mimic the tango style that Piazzolla might have imagined for the

performer one would literally not only take a breath when marked, but also do so in an ‘exaggerated’ way.

Yet simply following Piazzolla’s score directives can be equally problematic to one’s interpretational decisions. To make overstated, ‘exaggerated’ breaths is a departure from the classical flute tradition of ‘proper’ performance techniques. Flute pedagogical manuals encompass many tips on soundless breathing in an effort to improve not only diaphragmatic technique, but also to avoid upsetting the musical phrase (Rockstro, 1967, pp. 502–5; Tromlitz, 1991, pp. 275–85; Wye, 1999, p. 158). It is understood that breathing loudly distracts the listener from ‘the music’ and it is a deviation from flute ‘rules’ to make any breaths audible. One’s inhalations should be quiet; Michel Debost (2002) advises that ‘loud breaths are part of ‘bad habits’ to indicate that breathing loudly can indicate poor playing ability (p. 264). Nor should the breaths taken be obvious; Trevor Wye (1999) writes ‘the note before a breath must not diminuendo or be musically terminated as this announces the breath long before it happens’ (p. 158).

Another issue with the breath notation occurs when traditionally a performer’s breath placement is said to work in correlation with signifying the musical phrase (Moore, 2001, p. 225), and playing the written notation with frequent and (or) loud breathing clashes with the phrasing practices that wind players typically adhere to. Flute manuals advise one to plan breaths ahead of time to alleviate the fear of a lack of air in a performance, and to enhance the phrase at the same time (Rockstro 1967, pp. 503–5; Tromlitz, 1991, pp. 275–85). Thus, traditional breathing advice is commonly intertwined with phrasing principles such as ‘breathe in rests when available, but not in every one if the music consists of many small fragments’ (Putnik, 1973, p. 15); ‘always try to breath between whole phrases; overly frequent breaths interrupt the melodic line and are distracting to the listener’ (Toff, 1996, p. 85), and one should learn how ‘a breath can be taken without breaking the correct declamation’ (Boehm, 1964, p. 147). James Galway (1990) warns flautists that to ‘draw-in breath mid phrase you interrupt the music, you silence it, you catch it by the throat and stifle it’ (p. 75). Yet, the traditional practice of defining the breath mark to indicate phrases does not obviously apply to the notation that is marked in *Etude 1*. The uncomfortable synchronisation of the notated recurrent breath intake and rhythmic pulse is difficult to sustain, particularly at the crotchet = 138 tempo marking



published on the score. Although phrasing and breath notation might work as co-partners in musical interpretation, adding in the frequent marked breathing points brings choppy fragments of sound and a sense of stagnation to the musical line, juxtaposing any sense of ‘swing’ and flow.

Yet beyond these issues, as previous discussions have demonstrated, there is evidence that tango music has been equated with a perceived sexual meaning, and certain musical gestures are appropriated to signify this interpretation. An example of this interpretational viewpoint can be demonstrated when the heavy and frequent breathing, ‘panting’, arising from the breath notation of *Etude 1*, is seen to create sexual connotations. To demonstrate that this can be problematic on a pragmatic level, I offer the following example. Andrew Yates, a British flautist, who was nineteen years old at the time, came to me for a lesson on the etudes when he was about to record this movement for a preliminary round competition in the UK. What follows is a transcription of his comments recorded during the session. He was explaining the difficulty he was having with understanding the breath notation in *Etude 1*:

... those fast repeated breath marks in the opening etude are heavy ... a bit sultry, perhaps? ... to me they seem to show the passion in tango ... all that heavy repeated breathing ... like a panting climax. They seem to demonstrate the erotic bit of it all. But when I record it for the competition, I’d be embarrassed to play it like that. I really don’t want to do it ... they’ll think I have sloppy breathing, some bad lung capacity ... dodgy skills. I might not get in ...’ (Yates, Andrew, communication via a recorded flute lesson, York, England, June 18, 2010).

This sexualised reading is not only seen in Yates’s individual perception of the notation, but can be wider contextualised through David Machin’s work on sound and semiotics in popular music performance (2010). He explores how certain breaths, such as ‘panting’, can be linked to ‘contexts’ of circumstances in life, for example, as a form of ‘exertion’, ‘intimacy’, and ‘sensuality’ (p. 124). It can become problematic when the notated breath marks become a catalyst to overstepping one’s personal limits about performance boundaries and personal mores. The fear of crossing the boundaries into incorrect playing has been little explored specifically in tango performance for western performers, though awkward performance gestures that are sometimes perceived as ‘instrumental taboos’ should be mentioned, even if briefly. Although there is much work to be done on tango music and perceived ‘meaning’

beyond sexual contexts, the violinist and conductor Alejandro Drago (2008) mentions a similar occurrence in his experience with non-tango musicians playing Piazzolla's orchestral scores. He suggests that amongst western performers there is a hesitation and violation of the instrument to make 'perceived ugly sounds', and many are reluctant to try tango techniques when interpreting tango music (p. 137). Furthering Drago's observation, to a young flautist such as Yates – who had no previous exposure to Piazzolla's music, and by extension, tango performance techniques – the execution of frequent, exaggerated breathing interpreted as sexualised sounds might be felt as inappropriate. Particularly in a competition setting in which he would most likely be judged by normative playing standards. Equally, to make loud and/or frequent breathing in *Etude 1*, Yates was also afraid of displaying a poor playing ability by those who adhere to the standardised 'flute rules' of breathing, and did not want to risk being labelled with executing 'incorrect' playing techniques at his audition.

### ***Interpretations of the Breath Comma Using Inter-idiomatic Borrowing***

To demonstrate the application of 'inter-idiomatic borrowing' as prescribed by the score's notes to the performer, a flute lesson with Paulina Fain revealed that in her interpretation of *Etude 1*, the many breath marks are there to imitate the 'breath' or 'sound' that the bandoneón makes when it is filling with air (Fain, Paulina, recorded flute lesson, Buenos Aires, 3 September 2010). Consequently, a flautist would need to make an overstated and audible breath at each breath mark in keeping with the corresponding movement of the bandoneón's bellows. Though her explanation is seemingly straightforward – that one would simply need to breathe loudly in notated breath marks to play these etudes like they might sound on the bandoneón – this doesn't completely reveal an easy one-to-one correlation. It is not necessarily a desirable effect of bandoneón performance practice to let the instrument 'breathe' audibly. In a masterclass given by player Juan José Mosalini,<sup>116</sup> he advised his performers that that a loud, rushing noisy breath from the bellows is a sign of unrefined technique, or a problem with improperly functioning bellows. Similarly, Leopold Frederico and Roberto Di Fillipo (2008, p. 207) note that one of the ways to

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<sup>116</sup> Mosalini, Juan Jose (8, September 2010), *Una clase por los bandoneonistas*, (Escuela de Tango Orlando Goñi, Buenos Aires, Argentina).

measure the standard of a *bandoneonista* is how ‘imperceptible’ the ‘gasping’ of the bandoneón sounds when they play.

This is not to say that following Fain’s advice and making loud breaths in the hope that it might sound authentically like a bandoneón performance is incorrect or even grossly inaccurate – after all, Piazzolla does indicate a breath mark in his score, and the performance notes suggests that the performer ‘exaggerate’ the breaths. Nor would this sound effect be a departure from modern compositional techniques advised in performance notes either; other composers such as Holliger, Ligeti, and Berio have advised flautists to use timbre effects that include audible inhaling, and even gasping in performance. Yet is simply employing a loud breathing style the only possibility of using the breath to express the ostinato 333322 phrase?

### ***A Recording Analysis of Breath Placement and ‘Style’ in Etude 1 by Western Flautists***

In order to propose a wider possibility for breath notation in regards to *Etude 1*, it would be useful and informative to explore how other flute players use the breath mark despite the many dilemmas that the notation might present in the score. Quantitative measures such as empirical recording data would usefully supplement how this notation is understood, as the results can at least be suggestive of a much larger picture of individual performance tendencies. A small analytical study was conducted by compiling the complete twelve commercial recordings of *Etude 1* available at the time of writing (Figure 5.3). The opening passage (bars 1–8) (Figure 5. 1) of the etude was specifically chosen for study as it allowed the performer to establish their interpretative style of breathing in one full eight-bar ostinato grouping, which allowed for four different repeats of the same 333322 breath notation to occur (See enclosed CD, tracks 20-31). This gave the performers different opportunities to demonstrate two things in this study: the placement of the breath in relation to the score notation, and a general breathing style.

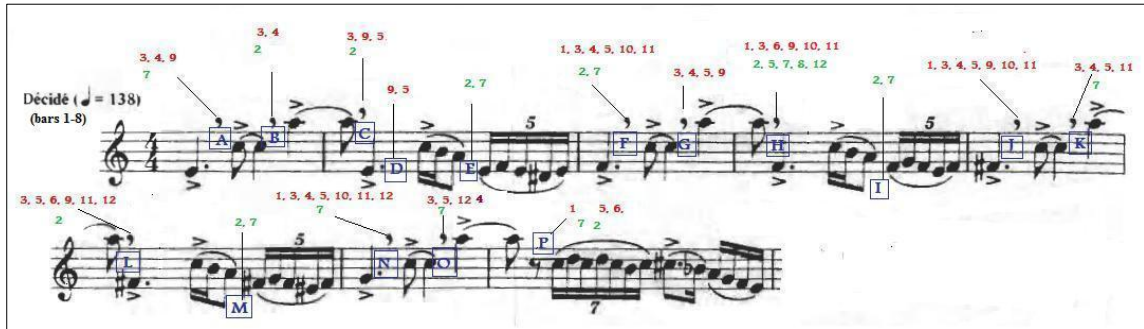
Assigned Number	Flautist	Album Title	Label	Released	Nationality
1	Jutt, Stephanie	Mckinley, Griffes, Piazzolla, Jolivet	GM Recordings	1990	American
2	Helasvuo, Mikael	Piazzolla: History of the Tango, 5 Piezas & 6 Etudes Tanguistiques	Ondine	1992	Finnish
3	Gallois, Patrick	Piazzolla For Two	Deutsche Grammophone	1996	French
4	Poulain, Loïc	Astor Piazzolla	Mandala/ Harmonia Mundi	1997	French
5	Toepper, Irmgaard	Piazzolla: Complete Music for Flute and Guitar	Naxos	1998	German
6	Daroux, Cécile	Astor Piazzolla: Histoire Du Tango	Harmonia Mundi	1999	French
7	Lundin, Ilia	Astor Piazzolla: Le Grand Tango	Vista Vera	2003	Russian
8	Najfar, Reza	Tango Appassionato	Novalis	2003	Iranian
9	Zucker, Laurel	Inflorescence II: Music for Solo Flute	Cantilena Records	2003	American
10	Montserrat, Gascón	Tangos and Habaneros for Flute and Guitar	Prodigital	2005	Spanish
11	Fabbriciani, Roberto	Histoire Du Tango	Phoenix Classics	2010	Italian
12	Barile, Claudio	Historia del Tango, Tango-Etudes, y Otros	Ircó/ El Arca de Noe	2011	Argentinean

**Figure 5.3** A list of the twelve commercially available recordings of *Etude 1*.

### *Methodology*

Each recording was transferred from a CD (or MP3) format into a WAV file, and then the flute excerpt was then opened in ‘Sonic Visualiser’ software. All of the tracks were slowed down as much as was needed using the tool ‘Playback Speedup’. As the tempo of this piece was mostly played at a quicker pace, one of the advantages of using this software tool is that it allows for the audible breathing to be heard at a slower tempo with minimal distortion of the audio file. Using a combination of the author’s critical listening skills, and the ‘Playback Speedup’ dial, the exact location and style of each breath found in each recording was noted as much as was possible in the score. This was important because at times a breath could be heard at a slower speed when the ‘Playback Speedup’ tool was used, but not at the original speed of the track. Next, the exact location in the score at which the flute player breathed was marked with the artist’s assigned identification number written in the colour of the appropriate breathing category (Figure 5.4). Numbers in green indicated that the breath taken was a customary breath within traditional practice as outlined by standard flute ‘rules’, meaning that it was not exaggerated and fell within the normal western flute conventions of non-invasive breathing techniques discussed in Tromlitz (1991), Rockstro (1967), Toff (1996), Wye (1999), and Debost (2002). Red numbers indicated that the breath was exaggerated beyond traditional breathing standards, and that the breath was not only functional, but also part of an interpretational technique. The letters outlined in boxes are simply a reference point by which the breath location can be pinpointed for further discussion in this chapter. While no quantitative empirical analysis is completely foolproof, when the ‘Playback Speedup’ tool was used for analysis, the reverberations on certain recordings had a slow decay, which

made it at times problematic to hear each breath taken between notes because the echo of the flute tone was also lengthened. Despite this, each recording of the twelve excerpts was tested numerous times for accuracy. This simple nominal study was designed to allow for clear results as the analysis aimed for a general survey of performance trends.



**Figure 5.4** Breath placements in bars 1–8 of *Etude 1*.

### *Results and Discussion*

The first comparative analysis of the recorded performances of bars 1–8 examined the impact of the varied nature in how these breaths were interpreted by flautists, and where they were placed. The data is revealing in several ways. The most striking result from Figure 5.4 is that Gallois (3) was the only performer out of the twelve recordings who took breaths in the exact spots as indicated by Piazzolla.

Secondly, in the remaining eleven recordings, the published breath notation did not always dictate the decision of a performer's place to breathe; instead performers often created unique breathing patterns that were adhered to in the entirety of the excerpt. Specifically, the relocation of breath marks was used to shape musical phrasing in the artist's own brand of musical direction and thus often changed the stress of the original 333322 pattern. An example of this modification can be seen in the recordings of Helasvuoto (2) and Lundin (7), which share similar interpretational habits in that they both not only breathed in Piazzolla's outlined spots but also added in additional breath spots at letters E, I, and M. By adding in the extra breath at these three locations, this phrasing suggested that the quintuplet patterns, which always occurred on beat four, were treated as a 'pickup' glissando to move towards the next bar's down beat, regardless of the marked notation.

Both Toepper (5) and Zucker (9) chose to breathe at D, indicating that the four

opening arpeggiated crotchets were seen to function as one phrase of 3333. Curiously, both of these players chose to not repeat this breath placement in any other part of ostinato. Poulain (4) seemed deliberately to make the two successive breaths as notated at AB, FG, JK, NO, yet never completed the third breath in the series at C, K, H, and P. This resulted in the ostinato being eventually rephrased into a 332233 rhythmic cell over the eight bar ostinato, changing the overall rhythmic ‘flow’ of the line.

Daroux (6) took the indicated breaths only at H, L, and P, resulting in the longest phrases of the group, and always split the 33322 cell in half in these locations.

Yet not all of the data revealed a significant musical symmetry arising from breath location. The artists Jutt (1), Najfar (8), Montserrat (10), and Fabriccini (11) did not necessarily indicate a set pattern or noticeable trend for facilitating obvious use of symmetrical phrasing.

Thirdly, from this data we can also see that there was a slight trend among performers to ignore the first three breaths at A, B, and C when compared to their counterpoint sets at FGH, JKL, and NOP. Although it is difficult to pinpoint a precise reason for this, as mentioned previously, personal experience as a performer has indicated that these breaths would not be ‘needed’ so early in the excerpt by most players. Similarly, a possible explanation could be that performers who chose to ignore the breaths at A, B, and C might have done so because to breathe only after just starting of a piece would be deemed ‘unnecessary’ after inhaling a larger ‘starter’ breath at a full lung capacity.

#### *The Breath ‘Style’ in ‘Etude 1’*

Lastly, a goal of this analysis was to obtain nominal data relating to the ‘style’ of breathing that was used. This is not to say that all the breaths analysed were taken in the same way within the two groupings (i.e. a quick breath versus a slower speed of air inhalation), or even with a similar air. In spite of many diverse factors, it can generally be noted that the recordings revealed that flautists chose to opt mainly for a more obvious style of audible breathing on notated breath marks, as opposed to keeping with a more traditional style of ‘quiet’, ‘unobtrusive’, ‘inaudible’ breathing prescribed in previously discussed western flute manuals. The only divergences were Helasvuo (2), Lundin (7), and Najfar (8), who consistently opted for quiet breaths throughout – though it should be said that Lundin’s recording employed a high use of

reverberation which might have changed the results because of this choice of recording production. Gallois was the only flute player to chose to take not only all the marked breaths by Piazzolla, but also exaggerated all of them beyond ‘conventional’ breathing standards, which made this choice seem a deliberate one.

The notated breath mark with the highest observance of a louder breath choice was at N. This location occurs at the start of the fourth cycle of the 333322 pattern, and one theory could be that the repeated breaths helped the music come to a climax and served to ‘close’ the eight-bar ostinato, which is why the breath could serve as a ‘dramatic’ performative gesture more than the quieter breaths at A, B, and C. One might be able to see this trend with the recording by Barile (12), who showed the most diverse interpretation in comparison to the other recordings. He ignored all the indicated breath marks except for a quiet breath at H, yet in the closing of the ostinato decided to exaggerate the breath markings at L, N, and O.

It could not be determined through this simple quantitative study whether the choice to breath loudly was always solely an interpretative phrasing choice, as there are other factors that would change the results, such as simply a need for more air, or even technical details such as microphone position in relation to the flautist. A more qualitative approach of interviewing the artist directly about their recording choices and studio environment might shed light on this issue. It might instead be more realistic to observe that breathing choices were often used as a tool with which to facilitate phrasing, and became an expressive tool to enhance music making regardless of the interpretive purpose behind each breath, and/or style.

### ***An Analysis of the Correlation between Breaths and BPM used by Western Flautists***

#### *Methodology*

A second study of comparative recordings analysis on the same set of data was done by noting the tempo chosen by each performer to assess if the choice of breathing had any effect on the frequency of breaths taken. One might suppose the flute player who chose to play at the slowest tempo would need the most breaths due to the lung capacity required to make longer note durations, and equally, the fastest tempo would require the smallest number of breaths. Using the software Sonic Visualiser, the ‘Time Layer Instants’ counter in each of the waveform panes was manually configured using keyboard clicks to indicate where the main beats of the bar occurred.

Once these time markers were in place, one could check visually whether the assigned beats were correct and edit any misplaced beats that occurred with the simple ‘Edit’ tool. After confirming the accuracy of the beat points, the counting of BPM was an easy task, as one simply needed to count the inserted clicks over a fifteen-second sequence and multiply this number by four to obtain a general BPM (Figure 5.5).

Assigned Number	Flautist	BPM (crotchet)	Number of breaths taken in excerpt
5	Toepper, Irmgaard	116	11
9	Zucker, Laurel	124	7
1	Jutt, Stephanie	136	5
3	Gallois, Patrick	140	11
12	Barile, Claudio	144	4
2	Helasvuo, Mikael	144	9
4	Poulain, Loïc	144	8
10	Montsserat, Gascón	152	4
6	Daroux, Cécile	154	3
7	Lundin, Ilia	156	10
8	Najfar, Reza	158	3
11	Fabbriciani, Roberto	168	6

**Figure 5.5** A table displaying BPM versus the number of breaths taken by performers in *Etude 1*.

#### *Interpreting the BPM data*

The most significant findings were that despite a set crotchet speed given by Piazzolla of 138 BPM, the data in Figure 5.5 revealed two interesting results: first, that the artists did not necessarily stick rigidly to this tempo and secondly, that tempos chosen did not necessarily coincide with number of breaths taken. For example, Jutt (1) and Gallois (3) played closer to the 138 BPM marked on the score more than any of the other players, though with very different numbers of breaths taken – eleven from Gallois versus only five from Jutt. Similarly, Barile (12), Helasvuo (2), and Poulain (4) played at the same tempo, yet also diverged in the number of breaths taken, especially Barile’s four inhalations. Deroux (6) and Najfar (8) took the least breaths in the recordings surveyed, with only three, yet did not play the excerpt the fastest. Toepper (5), the artist with the slowest BPM, took eleven breaths in all, yet this is the same number of breaths as taken by Gallois (3). Overall, noticeable trends of breath choices and BPM were not obvious by the scattered data presented in Figure 5.5. Yet



when combined with the data in Figure 5.4, one can see that that breath choice went solely beyond fulfilling a need for air intake, as the combined data could indicate that breath frequency was made to facilitate phrasing decisions, too.

The three recording analyses sought to discover a general performing trend of flute players in regards to the breath notation. No wide-ranging agreement was found of an overall determining performance trend, nor any one way in which the breath notation is adhered to as a general rule. Instead the data suggests that the practice for interpreting the breath marks varied, and that the rules of western notation coupled with Piazzolla's own interpretations produce diverse understanding of how to execute the breath mark. An implication of this is the possibility that notation was not seen as a 'fixed thing' and, more importantly, the flute players surveyed enabled new ways of phrasing in an attempt to mediate between the western traditions and the unfamiliar breath notation. This juxtaposition revealed innovative new additional interpretations that went beyond the notation written in the score.

While these analyses have contributed new insights as to how modern flautists might phrase the 333322 ostinato using breath marks, wider results could also come from further work on the breath choices in other similar ostinatos in *Etude 1*. Another analysis could also explore how flute players might change interpretations further in the score to ask 'do performers always keep the same breath mark placement and breathing style when this ostinato notation happens, or are variations made?' Other interesting parallels could be drawn between nationality and interpretation, and even comparisons of earlier recordings with later recordings. Performers using other instrument types beyond the woodwind family, such as violin, euphonium, and accordion might hold interesting and diverse results in a wider study.

As the recording analysis has confirmed, defining problematic notation as an 'either/or' decision using only the 'rules' of long established western notation practices, or broad stereotypes of tango practice limits the other opportunities that might be gleaned from a further exploration of the breath notation in Piazzolla's *Etude 1*. To depart from finding authentic answers or even defining notational 'meaning', the questions focus on wider possibilities: 'can this notation be used to glean other information about phrasing in tango performance?'; and 'how can the breath notation can be understood in relation to other aspects of Piazzolla's performances for other possibilities of interpretation? Three important factors in tango

performance will be used to explore the breath mark as a possibility reflection of wider relationships within musical form and phrasing to indicate further performance possibilities: 1) the unwritten notational practices of shortening time values, 2) rhythmic phrasing, and 3) Piazzolla's use of physicality and musical expression. This will be done through a range of analyses of Piazzolla's 333322 ostinatos: within scores, an audio recording, and a live video performance.

### The Unwritten Notational Practice of Shortened Time Values

The codified notational practices that tango players use that are *not* written in the tango score are an important element and starting point in observing ways that the breath commas might inform interpretation. Though not seemingly obvious to an outsider of tango practice, Fain (2010, pp. 48, 123) and Gallo (2011, p. 48) suggest that when a long note has an accent in a melodic rhythmic section, the duration would be performed at different value than marked, and that this change would be understood and executed naturally by *tangueros* (Figure 5.6). It is said to be achieved technically by 'picturing the note's decay'; the shortened sound is always made with 'continued resonance' to fill the silence the space creates (Fain 2010, p. 48; Gallo 2011, p. 48).



**Figure 5.6** A tango performance practice of a notated accented minim.<sup>117</sup>

### *Shortened Time Values and the Score of Le grand tango*

A comparable example of this practice through notation can be found in the opening 333322 pattern of *Le grand tango* (Piazzolla, 1982), written for the Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich (Figure 5.7), who, it should be noted, was not a trained tango musician. The tango practice of shortening the four dotted crotchet note lengths is visibly notated in the cello line, even if the piano part of typical 3+3+2 rhythms was not changed. While there is scholarly evidence of transcriptions from recordings that Piazzolla followed the traditional practice of shortening certain notes in a rhythmic

<sup>117</sup> As presented in Fain (2010, p. 123).

passage,<sup>118</sup> to conclude that the composer would have originally notated this 333322 pattern with such visually odd notation is highly debateable. The first observation is that this shortened notation deviates from the visual aspect of the ‘additive’ patterns that is a common trademark of Piazzolla’s scores, including the ones shown in *Etude 1*.<sup>119</sup> Secondly, it is written that Piazzolla ‘gently coached’ Rostropovich in tango style, and the cellist made several edits to the score that remained in its published edition before he performed it (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 228–29). Though it is difficult to pinpoint which edits were a result of this partnership, it is possible that this shortened notation was written as a ‘translation’ for the ease of understanding a tango practice not obvious to one unfamiliar with the notational language.

a Mstislav Rostropovich

## LE GRAND TANGO

per violoncello (o viola) e pianoforte

Astor PIAZZOLLA  
(1921-1992)

Tempo di Tango (♩ = 116)

VIOLONCELLO

*mf marcato*

Tempo di Tango (♩ = 116)

PIANOFORTE

*mf marcato*

*ga bassa*

**Figure 5.7** *Le grand tango*, bars 1–3.

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, the descriptive notation by Drago (2008, p. 69) of Piazzolla performing the second movement of his *Concerto for Bandoneón and Orchestra*. The published notation shows a series of quavers, and in Drago’s analysis, Piazzolla always performed the second quaver in a two-note grouping as a semiquaver.

<sup>119</sup> Additive rhythms (such as Piazzolla’s use of 333322) are perceived as ‘a product of grouping rather than of metrical structure’ (Agawu, 2003, pp. 87–88). Read (1980, p. 88) simply describes additive rhythm as ‘any theoretical pattern of eight quavers (or further subdivisions) of a 4/4 measure that does not duplicate the formal interior arrangements would constitute an additive metrical framework’.

### *Shortened Time Values and Applications to the Score of Etude 1*

When the unnotated practice of shortening time values is applied to the 333322 patterns in *Etude 1*, the dotted crotchets that appear in the opening would be shortened by as much as a crotchet. Even if this practice would not naturally be inherent, the transformation of the dotted crotchets into shorter note lengths would allow for space between the notes, and to do so, a space would naturally occur in the phrasing. It could be said that, similarly to the *luftpause* notation, that Piazzolla used the comma simply to indicate a space between the notes to be observed by the performer, which would result in shortened note lengths.

### **Rhythmic Phrasing**

As data gleaned from tango performance practice can indicate that the breath mark might be considered a notational device for ‘space’, the question still remains: ‘why might Piazzolla have specifically used commas between each of the first three dotted crotchets throughout the score (3’+3’+3’) yet omitted this after the fourth dotted crotchet? One clue to this might be explored by examining the rhythmic functionality of the pattern itself, which contributes to the sense of rhythmic phrasing. Drago observes:

The lack of coincidence (in the second bar) between the accents of the [333322] meter and the main accent of the 4/4 bar creates what might be called ‘a rhythmic expectation’ that the final two beats (of the second bar) resolve (Drago, 2008, p. 83).

The concept of Drago’s rhythmic expectation can be applied to the opening phrase of *Etude 1*, where the four notated dotted crotchets are tied over two bars, without downbeats to anchor the rhythm, in what Gallo (2011, p. 41) would dub as a ‘displaced ternary pattern’. Drago further explains that this displacement creates a ‘rhythmic suspension’, and it is only when the player reaches the 2+2 (beats 3 and 4) does the phrase ‘resolve’ rhythmically (2008, p. 83) (Figure 5.8).

In a wider perspective, this cadence-like function is not unique to tango music. As Ken Stephenson (2002, pp. 56–57) argues, cadences that veer away from traditional formations of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmical sets do not have to always be present for recognised cadence behaviour to occur, especially in the case of rock and popular music. Dan Traut (2005) surveys what he calls a ‘stock’ technique of rhythmic suspension through the 333322 pattern as employed by musicians

including the Beatles, AC/DC, Madonna, U2, and Tom Petty. He suggests one of the reasons that this two-bar rhythmic tool is so powerful stems from the ‘tension of hearing the surface rhythm, yet sensing the underlying metre’; and that one gets ‘back on track’ with the ‘two-groups at the end’ (ibid., p. 62).

Drago’s further discussion of the 333322 pattern supports further evidence of rhythmic phrasing within a two-bar cycle. The ‘coincidence points’ between the 4/4 meter and the 333322 pattern reveal a ‘rhythmically duplicated (expanded) 332 hypermeter’ (Drago, 2008, pp. 83–84) (Figure 5.9). While Drago’s research uses this hypermeter evidence to point towards compound-duple and simple-triple metric possibilities, his findings are applicable in this instance in that they support rhythmic ‘closure’ within the two-bar phrase. Specifically, it can be said that the underlying additive 332 quaver pattern causes the two-bar cycle to function as a rhythmic cadence that occurs four times, shaping the wider eight- to ten-bar ostinatos found in *Etude 1*.



**Figure 5.8** A 3+3+3+3+2+2 quaver pattern in 4/4 time with a resolution in bar two, beats 3 and 4.<sup>120</sup>



**Figure 5.9** A 3+3+3+3+2+2 quaver pattern in 4/4 time with an underlying 3+3+2 crotchet hypermeter.

<sup>120</sup> Figures 5.8 and 5.9 are modified versions of the notation originally shown in Drago (2008, p. 83).

What is striking when two bar rhythmic phrasing is applied to *Etude 1* is that the breath marks facilitate this rhythmic suspension. The strong relationship between this suspension and the notation of Piazzolla's 333322 pattern marks can be observed. If the last 2+2 rhythms of the two-bar cycle serve as a resolution, this might explain why the breath commas appear on the first three dotted crotchets (3'+3'+3') yet not on the fourth dotted crotchet. This would be because the fourth dotted crotchet functions as the 'leading note' to the 2+2 resolution that occurs in the second bar of the rhythmic phrase. In relation to the breath notation in question, there would naturally *not* be a breath after the fourth dotted crotchet as it is the leading tone to the 2+2 resolution; adding a breath (or space as was discussed in tango practice conventions) would break up that 'climactic push'.

### ***Rhythmic Phrasing in the Score of Michelangelo '70***

In the wider context of Piazzolla's further compositional output a similar 333322 pattern can similarly be seen in an arrangement of *Michelangelo '70* made by Piazzolla for his second quintet. In particular, a rhythmic ostinato consisting of two-bar cycles of a 333322 pattern that is comparable to the opening bars of *Etude 1* occurs in piano and the bandoneón lines. This is outlined in red in Figure 5.10.

Though specifically in further ostinatos throughout the score, at numerous times when the two-bar cycle is completing, a crescendo is marked in all the instrumental parts on the fourth beat, which corresponds to the 2+2 closure that occurs in the instrumental parts that are scored to play the ostinato, as marked with a yellow circle (Figure 5.10). It can be noted that a crescendo was not placed between first three dotted crotchets in the 333322 pattern, and only when the rhythmic phrase is resolving. This additional factor supports the idea that breath marks in *Etude 1* are not notated after the fourth dotted crotchet in order to facilitate a resolution to the 2+2 closure. In this case, the use of dynamics facilitates the closure of the phrase.



Michelangelo '70

Allegro (♩=120)

bar 1

Piano *fp.*

Bandoneón

Drum *fp.*

Guit. Elec.

5

9

arco x Tambor arco x Tambor arco x Tambor arco x Tambor arco x Tambor

**Figure 5.10** *Michelangelo '70* bars 1–14.<sup>121</sup>

### ***A Recording Analysis of Piazzolla Performing a 333322 in Michelangelo'70***

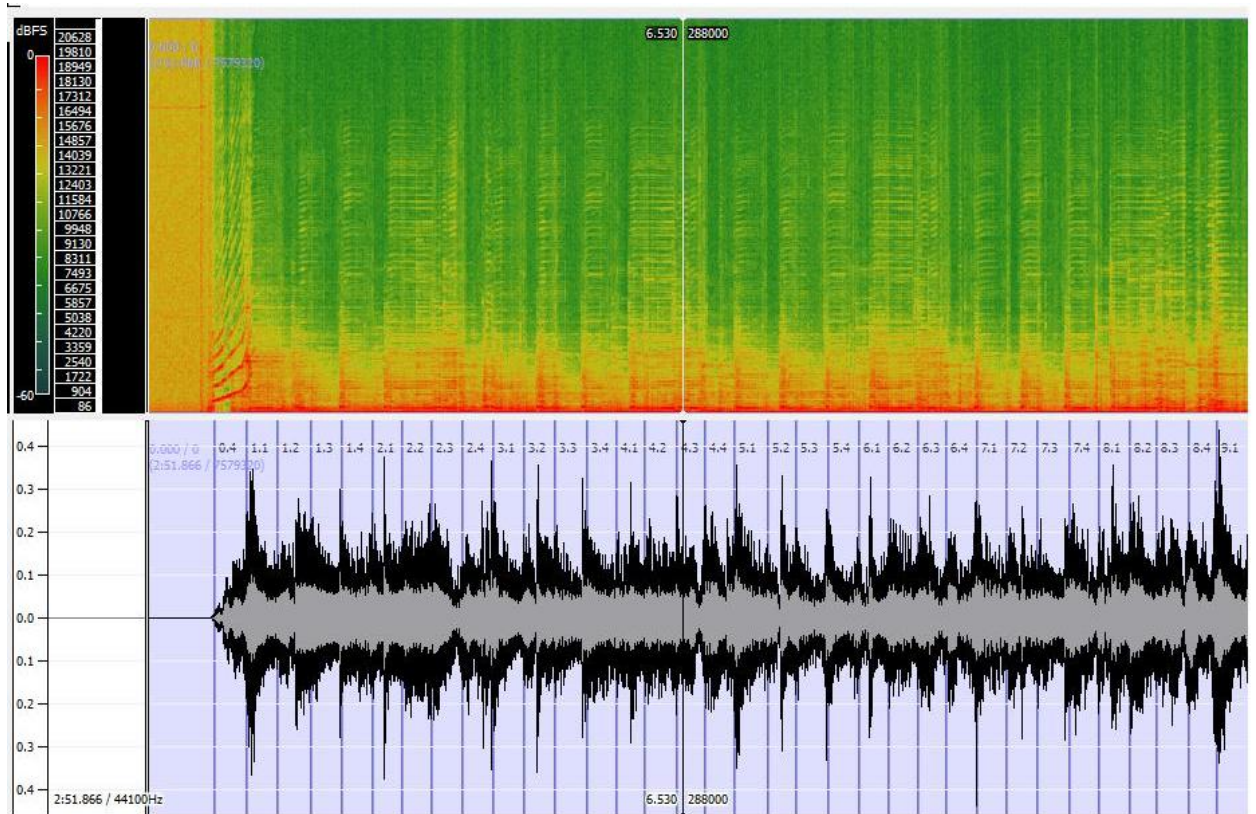
As the use of rhythmic phrasing through two-bar cyclic resolutions has been expressed through dynamics, it would be useful to analyse Piazzolla performing this 333322 pattern to determine whether there is evidence of a similar rhythmic resolution in a similar ostinato section. It would also be interesting to see if the notation translates into the audio recording when played by the composer himself. A sample of Piazzolla's Second Quinteto was chosen from the 1986 album *Tango: Zero Hour* (Piazzolla, 1986a) (See enclosed CD, track 32). There were two specific reasons that this album was chosen for this example. First, the instrumentation in the recording is the same as in the scores presented in Figure 5.10, which lends itself to a comparable study. Secondly, this recording was made in 1986, the year before *Etude 1*, which gives it a similar time frame and a corresponding link between the published score and the recorded performance.

<sup>121</sup> Source: La Fundación Papel Nonos, Biblioteca de Música Astor Piazzolla (Mar del Plata, Argentina) and copied in the handwriting of José Bragato.



### *Methodology*

The opening eight bars of *Michelangelo '70* was opened in the software Sonic Visualiser, and representation through a 'plain' spectrogram was chosen. A spectrogram is similar to a waveform pane, in that the frequencies are displayed on a 'y' axis while the 'x' axis marks the time, yet a spectrogram is a time frequency portrait of acoustical signals that plots the intensity with degrees of amplitude by displaying varying shades of colour pixels. As spectrograms show the frequency, loudness and length of every sound, they make it possible to see exactly what performers might be doing at any given point. The spectrogram was set to the scale at 'dbv' (the scale displacement is proportional to the log of the absolute voltage) and the window was set at 1024 at 93.75%. The 'Normalize Visible Area' (for both the spectrogram and waveform pane) and 'Normalize Visible Columns' (for spectrogram) switch was pressed for each of the panes to adjust the display gain continuously so as to ensure full scale displacement for the largest value of frequency in the visible section of the spectrogram. The 'Time Layer Instants' counter was manually configured to indicate time location (bars: beats) in relation to shown frequencies (Figure 5.11).



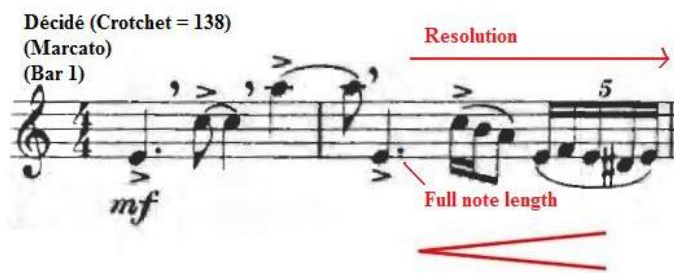
**Figure 5.11** A spectrogram of Piazzolla's second quintet performing a 3+3+3+3+2+2 pattern in *Michelangelo '70*, bars 1–8.

### *Results and Discussion*

One can see that the spectrogram data in Figure 5.11 mirrors aspects of the notation from the score of *Michelangelo '70*. For example, the ascending violin glissando shown in Figure 5.10, bar 1, is also found at beat 0:4 in the spectrogram. This is then followed by vertical columns that represent note length as a bar of colour. Strong evidence was found to support the notion that Piazzolla's quintet performed rhythmic phrasing in two-bar cycles. Interestingly this correlation is related to resolutions of the rhythmic phrase within two-bar cycles that underpins Drago's model. This can be seen in the fact that the most striking observation was that the fourth column of sound (which represents the fourth dotted crotchet in a 333322 pattern) in the spectrogram was played visually longer than the other crotchets, even if not necessarily louder. This is not to say that Piazzolla always played the 333322 pattern this way in this track, but this performance practice was not a one-time occurrence as this pattern was repeated four times in the opening eight bar ostinato.

### *Application of Rhythmic Phrasing to Etude 1*

The data of this spectrogram coupled with Bragato's score serves as a basis for understanding the breath notation positions placed by Piazzolla in the score of *Etude 1*. When using this data to correspond to the performance practice made in the recording, one interpretation of the results of the breath mark notation is that one might make the fourth dotted crotchet longer and/or even louder to 'push' towards the finishing rhythmic resolution. In this approach, it would not make musical sense to breathe (or even add space) after the fourth dotted crotchet in the 333322 pattern as this would result in a loss of the climax in the second bar (Figure 5.12). This is not to say that this interpretation is indicative of an 'authentic' reading of this notation, but that instead there are two ways that Piazzolla might have interpreted this notation based on these analyses, offering ways to resolve the initial problems of the breath commas that were first encountered.



**Figure 5.12** A demonstration of rhythmic phrasing from *Michelangelo '70* in application to *Etude 1*.

### **Piazzolla's Use of Physicality and Musical Expression**

Musical gestures, such as a performer's expressive movement, have often been explored as a valued element in music performance understanding, and the wide ranging spectrum of possibility for perception of these gestures has resulted in much musicological research that explores body movement as an element of performance analysis (see Rink, 2004; Pelinksi, 2005; Davidson, 2007; Dahl, et. al, 2010; Jensenius et. al. 2010; Godøy, 2011; Windsor, 2011). Performers' gestures and shared bodily experiences 'offer objective basis for the exploration of analysis' in a phenomenological approach (Montague, 2011, p. 43). According to Rink (2004, p. 48), a performer's 'physicality' as one branch of an interpretational analysis allows

the score to be explored as a ‘process’ rather than as a fixed object – another way to understand any given performer’s decisions. Accordingly, an attempt to contextualise physicality in the performance could be addressed as a move away from the performance experience existing solely in the score and in the recording, as an embodied process too. This would reflect another pragmatic approach to contextualising the breath notation of *Etude 1*, and offer wider possibilities for future interpretations.

Previous discussions about the creation of *mugre* have revealed that one of the ways in which an expressive and valued artistic performance within the tango is achieved from elements of intense physicality. Although tango and the achievement of *mugre* might be obtained through sweat, racing heart beats, breathing, and visible corporality, Pelinski (2005, sec. 8) similarly observes that *tangueros* ‘conceptualize their tango experience through conceptual metaphors originating in embodiment’. He notes that the language surrounding the creation of tango is recounted by various *bandoneonistas* who claim that the instrument becomes an extension of not just their ‘arms’ and ‘hands’, but also their ‘heart’, ‘soul’, and ‘body’ (ibid.). Thus he suggests that musical ‘meaning’ is intertwined with these bodily experiences, and to ‘understand with the body’ is ‘to replicate with inner corporeal movements the subtleties of a good tango performance’ (ibid.). More importantly, and as discussed previously, these associations of embodiment feed into a valued performance, become part of the tango style and are ‘inscribed directly in the experience of sound’, such as the ‘discontinuity and contrasts in rhythms, dynamics, agogics, texture, timbre’ (ibid.).

### ***Contextualising Piazzolla’s Musical Gestures***

A comparable use of gesture, as a device for displaying both *mugre* and musical expression, is found in Piazzolla’s own description of his performances:

I play with violence. My bandoneon must sing and scream. I can’t conceive of pastel tones in tango. I speak to the bandoneon so he doesn’t stand me up in the middle of a concert. Sometimes I beat him up. Those hits to the box in the middle of a piece are often part of the music, a percussive effect’ (Gorin, 2001, p. 144).

Perhaps given the composer’s own words, it is no surprise that descriptions of corporality through his own brand of bandoneón technique have often been

considered a trademark of his performance style. Piazzolla was often admired for the unusual way in which he played the bandoneón – standing instead of sitting during performances, placing the instrument on his right bent knee – and his musical gestures can be further linked to the musical embodiment said to be synonymous with the tango experience, and extended to the valued physical achievement of *mugre*. One example of this can be observed in the language of the liner notes by Paul Badde (1987) from the album *Quinteto Tango Nuevo: Tristezas de un Doble A* (Piazzolla, 1987a):

He has become one with his instrument ... And so, he continues to hold on to it in a double-fisted grip, as if grasping the horns of a bull, digs deep into the music, slams on both sides of the bandoneon in spite of its protestations, pulls it apart abruptly, pushing, pressing, and oppressing it, hangs on to the keys like a race car driver navigating a hairpin bend, then lets single notes glide down his shin – while deftly turning a page with his left hand – then catches them at the bottom and pulls them to the top with him. He sighs, breathes, whispers, cries and thinks with the thing, rests in its melodies, dreams himself into it, making the bellows tremble by tapping the beat on the black wood, and then looking down on it all of a sudden in surprise, as if he was holding a screaming, roaring, impressible life form in his hands ... He dances with the instrument, rides it standing still, and finally jumps high into the air like a kicking pony let loose in the springtime. Triumphantly he pulls apart the bandoneon three feet above his head, like a brilliant magician throwing off his last card, like a victorious Laocoön pulling off another defeat of the dragon ... Piazzolla really has no choice: he must play (Badde, 1987).

Though Piazzolla's performance techniques and the incorporation of physical movements might be considered an important part of his musical trademark, in the words of Godøy (2011, p. 231), 'music is primarily made with body movements: by hitting, stroking, bowing, blowing, shaking, kicking, etc and by musicians who communicate in performance through body movements such as waving hands, nodding heads and swaying torsos'. Additionally, the series of any embodied gestures are undoubtedly a 'necessity' for performance'; they serve as 'musical objects', 'just as much as the score constitutes a reservoir of information about the performative gestures necessary to the piece' (Montague, 2011, pp. 37–38). Therefore instead of understanding Piazzolla's gestures as an innovative achievement of performance uniquely his own, it is more useful to appreciate how, and to what extent, they become exclusive to the performer when explored further.

Among the many models and theories by which to understand body movement

in musical performance,<sup>122</sup> one method categorises gestures into their ‘relative importance to the sound production’ (Jensenius, et. al, 2010, p. 46). This broad-ranging approach is relevant not because it gives meaning and definitive solutions to every aspect of a gesture, but because it is anchored in distinguishing movement in performance according to the relation to the physical path that enables the instrument to speak. This is highly applicable when one is trying to understand the inter-idiomatic borrowing techniques so popularly used in tango performance practice.

According to this manner of sound-producing categorisation, gestures are viewed as what is necessary for performance on any given instrument, such as how they either ‘make the sounds’ (such as fingers hitting a piano to set the hammers in motion), how they indirectly affect the making of sounds (foot tapping, head nodding), or how they ‘supplement the making of sounds’ (the eyes closed during a performance)’ (Windsor, 2011, p. 46). It is important to note that gestures are not necessarily exclusive to one category, and many have what Jensenius, et al. (2010, p. 24) term ‘functional multiplicity’, and which as Windsor’s research suggests (2011, p. 51), can even complement or contradict each other. Despite the many ways in which corporeal movements are produced on multiple levels, and from a combination of approaches to understanding them, a general understanding of the three categories of gesture could be applied to examples of descriptions of Piazzolla’s performance to offer a better contextualisation of his unique physicality.

Accounts by Badde describe ‘slams’, ‘pushing’, and ‘pressing’ of the bellows, yet a more realistic framework of this body movement would indicate that this gesture contributes to the basic sound production and articulation techniques essential to the bandoneón. Fundamentally, the accents, phrasing, and volume come entirely from the physical movement of the bellows. The tone is determined by the air column, controlled by closing and opening the bellows horizontally; fluid bellow movement is necessary to shape the phrase. Specifically, this necessary movement for sound production would be categorised by Windsor (2011, p. 51) as a ‘physical mapping to acoustic sequence’, having a direct relationship with the sound on a basic level.

Piazzolla’s use of ‘hits’ to the box in the middle of a piece as a ‘percussive effect’, are what Windsor (ibid.) might classify as ‘indirect’, sound-facilitating

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<sup>122</sup> Some of which are extensively outlined in Jensenius, et. al, 2010, p. 12-35.

gestures, signifying ‘cyclical movements’ related to the beat, ‘tempo changes’, and ‘dynamic shaping’. These gestures would have no direct physical role with sound production of the instrument (and can often disrupt the mechanics of the performance), yet ‘accompany aspects of musical sound production in a potentially predictable manner’ (ibid.).

When Piazzolla pulls the bandoneón bellows apart ‘three feet above his head’, and makes ‘sighs, breathes, whispers, cries’, these actions could be described as ‘supplementary movement’ (ibid.). Though it is hard to identify how and when they were achieved through Badde’s account, this type of gesture might ‘appear to have no casual relationship with the sound’, but ‘still play a huge role in performance’ (ibid.).

No formal work has been done specifically regarding Piazzolla’s performance gestures in relation to his compositional style, though the link between the two elements becomes even more applicable when one recalls that he was not only the composer of his own works, but also their performer. Piazzolla’s performative movements are particularly relevant to understanding his musical style, and especially in light of the corporeal embodiment that Pelinski suggests occurs in the language of tangueros, which become ‘inscribed directly in the experience of sound’, and can also form part of the construction of *mugre*. Parallels between a performer’s physicality in tango music and musical expression can be made to wider research that has shown that the gestures of musicians tend to communicate data about the musical structure of the piece (Dahl, et al., 2010, p. 51). A study of piano performance and body movement investigated by Jane W. Davidson (2007) found a relationship between consistent use of body movement and expressive locations in a Beethoven score. She found that:

The specifically identifiable expressive locations and movements could be particular indicators of specific features of the intention, and the evidence that certain movements have a relationship with musical figures (hand lifts tend to occur at rests and held notes) suggests that some of the specific movements may be the best, or the only possible, movements to deal with the expressive content of a particular location (Davidson, 2007, p. 399).

Analysis of Piazzolla’s visible performance gestures might also reveal a relationship between specific movement within an ‘identifiable expressive location’, specifically when explored in a predetermined framework, such as the eight-bar ostinato of *Michelangelo ’70*. Davidson’s findings become a platform from which to explore a

possible link between Piazzolla's body movements in the 333322 figure, which becomes another pathway to further understand the notated breath commas embedded in the score of *Etude 1*.

### ***A Gestural Analysis of Piazzolla's Live Performance of Michelangelo '70***

The 1985 recording of *Michelangelo '70* used for the gestural analyses comprises footage taken from a televised concert broadcast by the VPRO<sup>123</sup> at the Music Centre Vredenburg in Utrecht, Netherlands (Piazzolla, 2012) (See the audio portion of this performance in the enclosed CD, track 33). This video was selected out of four potential options made between 1985 and 1988, all of which had been uploaded to Youtube by registered members of the site at the time of writing.<sup>124</sup> The three other videos were deemed unsuitable for this analysis due to one or more of the following factors: poor quality of the recording made the observation of movement impossible (for example, movements were out of time with the audio, or contained blurred images of performers), the camera was not focused on Astor Piazzolla at an angle from which analysis could be determined (for example, camera was directed to his left side or focused on only his bandoneón keys, or just his face, etc.), and the camera was not focused on the composer but on other members of the quintet.

The specific performance of the Utrecht concert was ultimately the most suitable video out of the selection as it was the only one that allowed for the longest continuous image of the performer in one full 333322 ostinato figure. This is an important trait as it allowed for an element of continuity with which to observe one full instance of an ostinato over the case of one performance – a rarity as most of the videography would move very quickly from one aspect of performance to the next within seconds. Although the video did not encompass a perfect view of the composer at all times, i.e., the camera angle was at a distance, or focused on Piazzolla's torso upwards, it did allow for brief study of body movements across at least one full ostinato to be made. Two further advantages highly applicable to this study were that in the chosen video recording, the instrumental ensemble was made up of the same orchestration that appears in the score of *Michelangelo '70*, and four out of the five members of the second quintet also played in the audio recording on the album

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<sup>123</sup> Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep

<sup>124</sup> As of April 2012, all of the four recorded performances of *Michelangelo '70* available were only accessible over the internet; the analysed footage was not known to be available for purchase as part of Piazzolla's commercially released output.



*Tango: Zero Hour*,<sup>125</sup> which made it even more relevant for understanding the links between physicality, the score, and the recording.

### *Methodology*

A careful and repeated observation of the video segment over several occasions was made by the author. As a consequence of the limitations of the camera angles previously outlined, the study focused on the first 31 seconds of the performance. The two advantages for gesture analyses within this timing are that it allowed for a continuous camera shot of the composer in the only uninterrupted view of one full ostinato (corresponding to bars 1–8 of the score), and the camera remained on the composer at the start of a second ostinato (bars 9–14), so a comparison of the two might be generally made.

Musical gestures were determined according to Windsor's discussion of gesture, in which movement were categorised according to how they affected the sound production technique of the instrument. In light of this, all physical gestures that encompass a performance of *Michelangelo '70* (such as each individual stroking of the bandoneón buttons, every bellow movement) were not accounted for, nor was this analysis a comprehensive detailed study of every move required by the performer to enable sound production. Instead, distinctive and repeated body movements that seemed significant to the 333322 ostinato *beyond* the movement of basic instrumental requirements were carefully noted, such as the 'indirect' or 'supplementary' use of gestures. This enabled the study to focus on gestures that might depart from the requirements of the instrument, which would detail a more comprehensive examination of Piazzolla's unique use of physicality and contribute to understanding, in the words of Rink (2004, p. 47), his 'artistic prerogative' through such movements.

### *Results*

The gestures made by Piazzolla within the two ostinato sections revealed that there were variations of four characteristic and repetitive movements: a bounce, a downward head nod, lateral movement of the head from side-to-side, and a torso sway to the right (Figure 5.13). Similar to the findings of Davidson's study of piano player's expressive movements (2007, p. 391), each of the four variations in this analysis were not always of the same 'amplitude or speed'; however they 'always

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<sup>125</sup> The sole difference being Oscar Ruiz López on electric guitar instead of Horacio Malvicino.

preserved the same overall form, direction and style'. Following Davidson, the gestures did not have the same start or end point, and neither did they contain the same traces of vertical or horizontal length, yet the four categories of movement did have similar directional motion. For example, differences in 'amplitude or speed' might be found in Piazzolla's lateral head movement from side-to-side, which contained variations of parallel smoothness and horizontal reach, or similarly in his head nods or bounces. Yet the movements contained a 'similar form, direction and style': the lateral head movement from side-to-side was always done from the left to right, Piazzolla's head nods were all directed downward, the torso sway was always done to the right, and the bounce was always made in a similar style with his bandoneón resting upon his knee.

Overall, the data reveals that the first ostinato mostly used a combination of head nods and lateral head movement (with the exception of the bounce on the first downbeat, which will be discussed later), and specific movements were made only in relation to certain rhythmical notation in the 333322 pattern. When downward nods appeared, they only took place on the dotted crotchet rhythms (3333), and each dotted figure was always given its own singular movement. This contrasts with the lateral movement of the head from side to side, which only occurred as an elongated gesture, and always over beats three and four of the bar (2+2).

Although the gestures of the second ostinato could not be contextualised in their eight-bar entirety, the tendency to use a torso sway and bounce revealed there was a different set of movements in this section compared to the first. Additionally, in contrast to the first ostinato, there was no inclination of gestural division between the 3333 and the 2+2 notation; the same bounce gesture was mostly used regardless of the position of the expressive location.

Bar number 1 2 3 4

Bandoneon

Video time in seconds (approx.) :10 :13

5 6 7 8 9

:16 :19 :22

10 11 12 13 14 camera switches to pianist

:26 :29

**Key:**

- = bounce
- = downward head nod
- = lateral movement of the head from side-to-side
- = torso sway to the right

**Figure 5.13** A gestural analysis of Piazzolla's performance of *Michelangelo '70*, bars 1–14.<sup>126</sup>

*Discussion of the Gestural Analysis*

The four body movements fell into the general category of indirect, sound-facilitating gestures. These gesture patterns were connected to a performed phrase structure in the

<sup>126</sup> The absence of any symbols above the notation concludes that use of 'supplementary' or 'indicative' body movement could not be determined in this study.

music. What is striking is that the gesture analyses produced results which support the findings in both the score and the recording analyses with regards to rhythmic phrasing. In the model that Drago proposes, 333322 patterns are resolved in the 2+2 resolution that occurs on beats 3 and 4 of the two-bar riff. Similarly, gestural patterns within the performance revealed that there might also be links between specific movement and a similar internal structure within the riff. As seen in the data, in the first ostinato certain types of notation entailed certain types of body movement. Specifically, downward head nods were found on individual dotted crotchets, and lateral head movement over two beats' worth of music. To interpret this in the context of rhythmic phrasing, one can see that the shift from nods to lateral movement on beats 3 and 4 occurs on the 2+2 resolution. Additionally, when beats 3 and 4 are thought of as the 'cadence', the duration of the lateral side movement might be interpreted as a gestural 'push' of the music towards a resolution and towards the downbeat of the next riff. This is not to say that the 2+2 cadences always entailed the lateral head movement, or that this would apply to every 333322 pattern, as this was not the case in the second ostinato. Yet although bounces might have been the overriding movement in this section, the fact that only one gesture was used (regardless of which one it happened to be) still implied that the 2+2 resolution was expressed as one unit, and not as two individual beats.

The use of gesture might further suggest that rhythmic phrasing and gestures are interlinked beyond the two-bar riff. For example, as noted in the data, the use of body movement changed quite dramatically in bar 9, from mostly nods and lateral movement, to a torso sway and bounce. There might be several explanations for this, but it should be noted that the dynamic shift resulting from the marked 'forte' might have been an important factor in the change of gesture. A secondary factor (and one that could be also intertwined with dynamic choice) could be that this is the start of the second ostinato, and the change in gestures might also implicate the wider phrasing of eight-bar groupings. Similarly, on a smaller level, gesture patterns were found in two-bar sections. For example, in the opening ostinato, though Piazzolla's gestures might not have occurred in every riff out of the four, the first obvious example of the two-bar cycles can be seen in bar three, where suddenly gestures became apparent after two bars where none were noted.

Gestures made in time with the syncopated pulse might be interpreted as a

time-keeping device where they became relevant to highlighting the additive pattern in the rhythmic phrase. This practice and the gesture might be linked to the concept of tango swing. For example, even though there was an underlying crotchet pulse in the bass part, the syncopated physicality in the 333322 pattern differed from a gesture that would have indicated the crotchet downbeats. This could tie in with a general performance practice for rhythmic passages, in which syncopated beats are kept in strict time on top of an underlying pulse, as discussed in Chapter 4.

This is not to say that specific body movement found in the data can be used to detail certain meanings or even intentions. Davidson (2007, p. 399) suggests that ‘expressive movements used by the performer have some consistency over time, with the locations of the expression being common, but the movements being used flexibly within and across manner and time’. One example of flexible uses of movement that depart from finding intended ties between notation and specific movements can be seen in the variables that occur in the data, such as the bounce that occurs on the downbeat at the start of bar 1, or the small torso swing in the second ostinato. Further analysis of Piazzolla’s gestures across more accounts of this specific 333322 pattern would reveal different results, and more empirical data is needed in this area.

This gestural analysis sought to discover a link between musical expression and Piazzolla’s use of musical gestures. This study provided a deeper understanding of how various gestures expressed difference (and even similarities) to indicate notational locations that correspond to musical structure on multiple levels, from inside the two bar riff, to the 333322, to the wider eight-bar ostinato. Similarly, as visible corporeality is seen as an important part of the creation of *mugre*, it might also be said that on a deeper level such gestures also become physical representations of overall structure and form. There is much work that could be done on this fascinating correlation.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter moved away from indicating an ‘authentic way’ of interpreting the breath notation found in Piazzolla’s flute etudes that answers flautists’ initial questions: ‘should all the breaths be taken?’, ‘should the breath be taken loudly, quietly or more exaggerated?’, and ‘what do the breath marks ‘mean’?’ While this discussion cannot provide more than hints at the numerous questions that have arisen in relation to the breath notation of *Etude 1*, the analysis of *Michelangelo ’70* through

score, audio recording, and live video performance has revealed insights between tango notational practice and rhythmic phrasing, and explored them along numerous avenues. The methods of expressing the ostinato through these different mediums all contribute to the numerous possibilities that exist for a performance of *Etude 1*.

The way that tango players traditionally practice shortening rhythmic notation indicates that breaths could equally be linked to the practice of shortened dotted crotchets; breaths (or even space) might facilitate this practice. Drago's model of rhythmic phrasing within a hypermeter helps to suggest why the breath marks might be placed where they are in the score, and detailed levels of 'rhythmic expectation' and 'resolution' between the two bar riffs. The evidence provided in the score, the audio recording, and the live performance has revealed that rhythmic phrasing was expressed and differentiated by the composer in a multitude of ways, such as use of dynamic shaping, changes in note lengths, and even physical gestures. With this data, the breath mark of *Etude 1* that is written between dotted crotchets becomes an expression of musical 'possibility' more than a fixed symbol. Similarly, further applications of breath mark possibility could be extended into other areas where 'odd' breath notation occurs in the etudes, and not necessarily in rhythmic notation, such as those that occur at the end of the expressive melody within *Etude 4*.

In light of this, there is more empirical work to be done between the links of score, recording, and live performance. Further study of the 333322 ostinato (and other variations of 3+3+2 polyrhythmic rhythms) could be made across the similar mediums in multiple performances of Piazzolla's music. It would be also interesting to see how interpretations might evolve in his second quintet over a longer time span, for example from the initial performances with the group, to those made at the end of his career. Piazzolla was quoted as saying 'I never play the same piece twice' (Carrizo, 2007, p. 84), and accordingly, the myriad ways of expressing and interpreting the ostinato that have been explored in Piazzolla's own mediums of score, recording, and live performance reveal that musical approaches should similarly be fluid and flexible.

## Chapter 6: Melodic Possibility

### Contextualising Piazzolla's Melodic Writing

One of the most striking visual features of the *6 Etudes* is the highly detailed notated ornamental figures that appear within various expressive melodies (see Figures 6.1 to 6.4). This notational style occurs in the two movements of the set that are given tempo markings by the composer to indicate temporal freedom for the etude's entirety, such as *Etude 2 (anxieux et rubato)* and *Etude 4 (lento meditativo)*. Similarly, it can also be seen in 'B' sections within ABA frameworks, where a contrasting rhythmic melody in the 'A' section sandwiches this languid melodic style, such in *Etude 3 (meno mosso et più cantabile)* and *Etude 6 (meno mosso tristemente)*. These extemporaneous figures add an improvisatory character to each melodic line as notated turns, repeated notes, appoggiaturas, acciaccaturas, glissandi, and mordents are interspersed regularly. Such flourishes simultaneously add an effect of *rubato* to the phrase, with the notated rhythmic manipulation evoking a feeling of spontaneity. Beyond notated flourishes, a sense of temporal freedom is also supported by other musical markings in these examples, where detailed breath marks, use of 'accelerando', 'ritenuto', 'rallentando', and 'tempo ad lib.' all similarly contribute to the 'spontaneous' feel of the line.

Furthermore, this meticulous notational style is not limited to the *6 Etudes*. Similar 'written' flourishes can similarly be found in Piazzolla's other flute score, the *Histoire du tango* (1986). Examples of notational parallels with the etudes can be seen in the predominantly *rubato* movement *Café 1930* at the highly detailed flute line marked *lentamente* (starting in bar 63 of Figure 6.5). Similarities can also be found in the 'B' sections of ABA frameworks, such as in *Nightclub 1960* (starting from the repeated notes in bar 26 of Figure 6.6). Yet, even beyond Piazzolla's flute output, similar qualities appear in the melodies of pieces written during his self-proclaimed 'erudite' compositional period (1978–88), and can be seen in *Romántico* from the 1984 *Cinco piezas para guitarra* (Figure 6.7), and the 1986 composition *Mumuki* (Piazzolla, 1987b; Figure 6.8).

Anxieux et rubato (♩ = 80)

*mf* accel. -- riten. -- accel. -- rall. --

accel. -- rall. -- accel. -- rall. --

accel. -- rall. --

Figure 6.1 *Etude 2*, bars 1–12.

Meno mosso e più cantabile  
(bar 49)

*rall. -- --*

Tempo I  
(ad lib.)

Figure 6.2 *Etude 3*, bars 49–56.

Lento-Meditativo  
(Tempo ad lib.)

*p*

*mf*

*p*

Figure 6.3 *Etude 4*, bars 1–8.

(Bar 69)

Meno mosso (tristemente)

*p*

*cresc. -- --*

*ff*

*p*

Figure 6.4 *Etude 6*, bars 69–78.



*molto espressivo*

62 *rall. - - -* *V* *lentamente*  
*p* 5

64 *tr*

67 *ad lib.*

Figure 6.5 *Café 1930, Histoire du tango*, bars 62–70, flute.

25 *rall. - - -* *Lento molto cantabile*  
*p*

29 *rubato* *rall. - - -*

Figure 6.6 *Nightclub 1960, Histoire du tango*, bars 25–35, flute.

Moderato ad libitum ♩ = 100

(bar 17) CVII- CVIII CVI CV

*mf*

CIII etc.

Figure 6.7 *Romántico (mvt 2), Cinco piezas para guitarra*, bars 17–19.



**Figure 6.8** *Mumuki* for a tango quintet, bars 5–8.

### *'Composed-in' Compositional Styles*

Piazzolla's melodic writing within the *6 Etudes* does not seem so unusual within a wider framework of western art music, in which compositional styles – for example, from composers such as Scarlatti, Handel, J.S. Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Beethoven, and Chopin – have been said to embody and reflect improvisatory elements (see, for example, the recent collection of writings edited by Solis and Nettle (2009) from Hatten, Levin, Kinderman, Moersch, and Temperley). Using this research framework, Piazzolla's writing can be said to use similar compositional techniques to those that Hatten (2009) finds in his exploration of a similar notational style in Chopin's Nocturne in E♭ Major, Op. 55, No. 2 and the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, No.1. For example, he notes that Chopin's use of irregular diminutional subdivisions of the beat, varied return of the opening theme, asymmetrical rhythms, overlapping phrase structures, and a continuously developing recycled melody all contribute to what he calls 'composed-in' improvisation (p. 284). He suggests that such a writing style is implied in works that are fully notated to suggest spontaneity and improvisatory freedom, and although embedded in a coherent written form, can be seen as a way of 'enshrining the spontaneous intimacy of artistic conception' from a need of the composer's 'intimate personal disclosure' (p. 289).<sup>127</sup>

Although it is fascinating that Piazzolla's notational style has parallels to musical techniques similar to those of Chopin, perhaps more important are the wider implications for the use of this notational practice in the first place. Hatten's study of selected works by Chopin and Schumann that contain characteristics of this style concludes that implied improvisation are 'manifestations of vital music-cultural practices' (ibid., p. 291) that sees philosophical values associated with a Romantic

<sup>127</sup> In which he uses Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, final dance (no.18) to demonstrate this concept.

19<sup>th</sup>-century setting as a motivation. Hatten forges connections between specific musical techniques to reflect a ‘more distant culture’,<sup>128</sup> as part of a value system that prizes ‘authenticity’ and ‘naturalness’,<sup>129</sup> and emulating the notion of ‘freedom from constraints’.<sup>130</sup> He similarly examines implied improvisation that resonate with values that place ‘emphasis on individuality and personal expression’.<sup>131</sup>

Links between both a spontaneous improvisatory writing style and what Hatten termed a demonstration of ‘vital cultural music practices’ – such as those relating to values of authentic individual telling, personal disclosure, freedom from constraints and a display of virtuosity – can also be seen in Kinderman’s study of improvisation in Beethoven’s creative process (2009). Kinderman’s argument, which draws from historical accounts, is that although Beethoven might have indicated an improvisational style in a ‘concrete’ form (for which he was subsequently criticised), one should not ignore evidence that recalls that he was ‘disinclined to play his own published works and preferred to extemporize instead’ (2009, p. 297), often performed (and at times preferred) to play without any scores at all, shaped his musical thoughts ‘while not paying attention’ (ibid., p. 309), and limited his reliance upon predetermined patterns that were conceived in advance so that communicative gestures were of the ‘here and now’ (ibid.). Kinderman suggests that Beethoven’s relationships to improvisation and composition cannot be separated, and are part of wider embodied aesthetics; ‘to oppose extemporisation to “composition proper” misrepresents his creative process by ignoring the crucial interdependence of freedom and determination in the concrete stylistic context in which Beethoven worked (ibid, p. 308).<sup>132</sup>

Temperley (2009) uses historical evidence to reconceptualise Chopin’s piano preludes. He suggests that the fact that they appear in printed form has resulted in

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<sup>128</sup>Specifically he categorises this as an ‘association with folk, primitive or historical cultures; or escape from the prevailing culture’, ‘viewed as urban, print-oriented, overly complex, alienating, and even corrupting’ (Hatten, 2009, p. 288). For example, in the case of the two Chopin Nocturnes, he makes connections from ‘Moorish flourishes’ and exotic scale treatment (p. 287) to a wider suggestion that perhaps the composer might have been influenced from his stay on the island of Majorca seven years earlier (ibid., p. 284).

<sup>129</sup> Such as ‘cuing’ of the ‘other’ or the ‘originary’ (ibid., p. 288).

<sup>130</sup> Specifically ‘as wilful break from oppressive social convention’ (ibid.).

<sup>131</sup> Such as ‘intimate disclosure’ and ‘virtuosity’ (ibid.).

<sup>132</sup> In which he is referring to a divide and opposition of these two concepts from the 1800’s, in which the shift to prize the ‘faithfulness’ to the ‘work-concept’ is often associated with Beethoven, in what has been called the ‘Beethoven Paradigm’, as he cites in this discussion Lydia Goehr’s *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the philosophy of Music*, (Oxford: Clarendon) 1992, p. 234.

them being removed from their initial place of improvisational territory. This act entrenched the set in the modern pianist's canon, viewing it as one long work to be performed in its entirety. Drawing upon evidence from the composer/improviser/performer relationship and historical purposes of 'preluding' in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Temperley argues that the preludes should be seen instead as individual sketches, 'artistic miniatures', or a 'model for improvised introductions' from Chopin (Temperley, 2009, p. 338).

Temperley further argues that the tradition that lay behind the preludes 'is fanciful improvised introduction, designed to set the scene and mood for an equally romantic transmission of a work of genius' (ibid., p 339). Equally, such an understanding of Chopin's notational style could fall under Hatten's description of 'intimate disclosure', 'individuality', and 'personal expression'.

In a similar approach to considering the 'improviser, pianist and composer' relationship to explore possibilities of the notated score, the work of Levin on the topic of *Improvising Mozart* (2009) suggests a direct application of improvisatory writing within Mozart's compositions for new frameworks for contemporary performance. Levin draws on the most 'authentic source possible: the composer himself' (Levin, 2009, p. 146). Historical documents such as Mozart's initial sketches, performance treatises from the 18<sup>th</sup> century that outlined composer/performer relationships, multiple cadenza options for any one concerto, written embellishments that vary across manuscripts of the same piece, and letters to his family describing his performances all serve as a 'tutor' (ibid.) for modern day performers. This application becomes central to being an expressive performer in a shift away from classical performers merely 'reproducing' text of the repertoire with no training in inventing it (ibid., p. 143). In conclusion Levin passionately enthuses:

The revitalisation of the music through intensification of content, both lyrical and virtuosic, and the personal stake of improvisation, promises to exchange the glow of life for the humdrum conventions that have made much of classical music into something we relax to, that is, something to which we need not pay attention. If we want the audience to pay attention, we must do what actors do: invest our performances with spontaneity and danger. Improvisation guarantees both (Levin, 2009, p. 148).

Similar approaches in methodology are taken by Moersch (2009) in her study of keyboard improvisation in the baroque period. She draws from wider treatises on style

available from the era, various composers' written-out embellishments, and historical accounts to provide a model for her to apply extemporisation within modern-day performances.

This chapter will combine theoretical approaches discussed by Hatten, Kinderman Temperley, Levin, and Moersch that are based within various outcomes of and applications to 'composed-in' compositional styles. Despite the concrete form in which Piazzolla's highly detailed melodies in the score of the *6 Etudes* seem to appear to the western performer, it will be argued that they should not be understood as completely disparate entities from the 'vital cultural practices' of his creator-composer-performer process. From this viewpoint, a re-contextualisation of the etudes involves a new outlook of the score. It requires an exploration of the *6 Etudes* that does not simply an evaluation of them as a 'work-concept', unrelated to numerous other platforms from which to view them; a departure from the viewpoint that they exist to be played as an act of determinate preservation. Given the scholarly title of 'etudes' and Piazzolla's own words that he composed these pieces 'as a kind of dictionary of New Tango accentuations, melodies, feelings, all related to New Tango', it will be suggested that these pieces can be used as studies; as a learning tool for future performances. Analysis of the etudes will be approached through numerous methodological applications drawing from a wide frame of reference: interviews and writings from the composer and his musical colleagues, tango pedagogical manuals, my own experiences as a flautist negotiating tango music in a western context, a recording analysis of *Etude 4*, application of the tripartite score process, a melodic reduction, an ornamental analysis, application of tango pedagogical methods, and transcriptions of Piazzolla's playing. Returning again to Pinkola-Estes' theory of the 'and/and' model as a method for creative enquiry in application to Piazzolla's notation, the *6 Etudes* can therefore be seen this way *and* this way *and* that way in seeking fresh interpretations and new renditions.

### ***Piazzolla's 'Vital Cultural Practices' of the Score and Performance***

One cannot ignore that at the forefront of Piazzolla's philosophy to writing and performing was the spontaneity and varied character that his musical style is said to

embrace.<sup>133</sup> He himself described the compositional process as ‘an instant of enlightenment, of magic, of sorrow, and pleasure, the main ideas appear’; ‘the role of intuition was fundamental’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 149). He often used the motto ‘inspiration-perspiration’ for his writing philosophy (ibid.). The manner in which Piazzolla’s writing came to fruition also supports this view. His son, Daniel, called him a ‘work machine’ (ibid.), who was said to write very rapidly ‘with an almost instinctive grasp of the technicalities, something very evident in the speed in which he wrote his arrangements’ (ibid.). In a 1985 interview, Piazzolla described to a journalist: ‘I write like the devil, I am quick to write’ (Strada, 2006, p. 35);<sup>134</sup> his second wife Laura Escalada, in an interview with the Barcelona paper *El País* in 2000, recalled that he ‘used to write with impressive ease and did not correct his works (Pelinski, 2002, p. 9).<sup>135</sup> Perhaps as a result of this style of speedy output, it is not surprising that over the course of his career he is said to have composed in excess of 3,000 different works (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 149).

Yet Piazzolla’s approach to his own scores for performance was also seen to entail a similar spirit of ‘spur-of-the-moment’, ‘immediateness’, and ‘spontaneity’, which he described as an embodiment and process of how he ‘felt’ at any given time. For example, in a form of intuitive decision-making during the performance process itself, he recalled that the length of his bandoneón solos was always a surprise, even to him, and depended on how he felt, and which musician he would evoke as a musical muse that day (Gorin, 2001, p. 142); sometimes he would choose to play a solo for audiences that lasted up to twenty minutes, completely on a whim through feel-based inspiration (ibid.).

It would also seem that he also hoped that other instrumentalists in his numerous ensembles would carry the same intuitive, spontaneous ethos when it came to performing his works. Multiple interviews reveal that Piazzolla spoke about encouraging musical freedom for his colleagues, whom he conceived as ‘soloists’ within the wider framework of his ensembles (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 159).

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<sup>133</sup> And it should be noted similarly by those who simply listen to his music, too. For example, its varied nature is described in Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 162) by Argentine ballet dancer Maximiliano Guerra: ‘His music is celestial and angelic and at the same time sensual, seductive and down to earth. It’s rooted in the earth, in fact. It’s the knife, the fight, the passion, the sex, the love, the hatred. It has everything. It is magic.’

<sup>134</sup> Original text reads: ‘Yo escribo como el diablo, soy rápido para escribir ...’

<sup>135</sup> Original text reads: ‘Piazzolla solía escribir con una facilidad impresionante, y no corregía sus obras.’

Piazzolla said to Walter Acosta of the BBC Latin American (Spanish) service in an interview that

I give the parts to the violinist ... It's written down C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C – but I tell him to play it as he *feels* it (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 159 citing Acosta, 11 July 1980; emphasis in original).

Azzi and Collier (2000, p. 159) also indicate that Piazzolla 'needed stimulating musical companions, individual musicians for whom he could write, musicians who could showcase their skills'. To support the idea of his need for performers to add unique individualised expression to his compositions, Piazzolla outlined the use of improvisation as one of the tools that contributed to the effect of 'feel'. Speaking to Argentina's *La Nación* about his second quintet he said:

It is not that my music has improvisation, but it *does* have change, it takes flight ... You close your eyes and play. The violinist plays one way one day, another day the next. Sometimes he adds things. The pianist improvises with *rallentandos* and *accelerandos*, depending on how he feels. That's what's so nice about it! (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 206, citing *La Nación*, 18 December 1981).

In another interview Piazzolla complemented the interpretation of the quintet's violinist Fernando Suárez Paz:

he not only plays well, he is very expressive. He is very intuitive about adding things; his phrasing enhanced my music (Gorin, 2001, p. 80).

Though to say that Piazzolla, in his flexible approach to his own scores – and similarly, his hopes for how performer might improvise them – was to be interpreted on purely 'feel' and 'intuition' alone without grounding in his original notation would be incorrect. It would seem that Piazzolla's expectation for his musical output would be that it is not left exclusively to the performer to incorporate 'feel' (for example, with the use of improvisation); his scores intended to provide a clear platform for this to occur, too. During his compositional lessons in Paris (1954–55), Nadia Boulanger said of the scores that he had prepared for her that 'the music is well written, but it lacks *feeling*' (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 51). Perhaps with a view to clarifying his musical intentions and improving his scoring, it is not surprising that after Piazzolla's

return to Buenos Aires two of the ten objectives<sup>136</sup> for his *Tango Nuevo* mention the importance of both ‘feel’ and notation to his new musical ‘revolution’:

(Objective 3) To play tango as it is *felt*, eliminating all kinds of extraneous influences which can impinge on our fixed purposes (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 58).

(Objective 9) Since nothing is [solely] the fruit of improvisation, the scores will be written with the best musical improvement that can be obtained within the genre, which will help it to be evaluated by the most demanding experts (*ibid.*, p. 59).

Piazzolla’s musical colleagues recounted how the scores he provided and the process of learning them were an important part of their regular ensemble work. This approach surprised those who were not used to such intricate scoring within the genre, where playing *a la parrilla*<sup>137</sup> tends to be a more common practice (Gorin, 2001, p. 48). It was said that fellow tango musician Osvaldo Pugliese remarked, ‘Piazzolla forced us all to *study*’ (Azzi, 2000, p. 150; emphasis in original).

A specific example of the value Piazzolla placed on the scores he gave to members of his ensemble can be observed in a scene from Tony Staveacres’ 2005 documentary *Astor Piazzolla in Portrait*. Héctor Console, a bass player, and member of the Second Quinteto, recalls how the music challenged him beyond what he had encountered earlier in other tango ensembles upon his first experience with it:

I was worried by the music which was quite complicated. I’d played with other groups, but with Astor it was something else. For the quintet we worked four to five months intensively. I’d played other demanding bass pieces, but none as demanding as Astor’s (Staveacre, 2005, ‘Biography’, 1:07:35).

Yet this sentiment would even seem to be the case to those musically trained outside the world of tango. Pablo Ziegler, a jazz pianist whom Piazzolla asked to join his Second Quinteto in 1978 recalls:

Piazzolla give (sic) me a bunch of music papers and I had to study in my house during several days and weeks because it was a lot of music. Everything is written ... it is like classical music ... (Staveacre, ‘Biography’ 2005, 1:05:23).

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<sup>136</sup> In which he formally wrote these aims for his 1955 *Octeto* entitled ‘Decalogue’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 58).

<sup>137</sup> Playing by ear without the music. This literally translates to mean ‘to the grill’, referencing the effect of being ‘held over the flames’ when playing by memory.



Drawing a reference to the same compositional time frame as the *6 Etudes*, similar reactions to Piazzolla's scores were made from jazz player Gary Burton in Staveacre's documentary. Burton had been invited to perform in Piazzolla's Second Quinteto at the Montreaux Jazz festival in July of 1986:

(1:09:02) [The Narrator] It was a tough time for jazz vibraphone star Gary Burton. He was entering a new musical world with very little time to learn very complicated scores. [Burton then speaks] 'And then the circumstances weren't great either, but, we were to follow Miles Davis who started late and played a long two hour show, finished after midnight. So it was a star-studded evening of, you know, a lot of pressure and everything – and it was only our fourth concert on the tour that we were playing all this new music. (1:10:44) He had written all this music, and um, none of us had really had a chance to learn it or play it. [Film switches to Ziegler] Piazzolla wrote very difficult charts like this, for vibes [outstretches his hands wide to show how long they were] and Gary was studying like a crazy [sic] because Piazzolla wrote like [sic] chamber musician, everything. [Film then switches to Burton] In the case of tango music, like classical music, it's all written out, so there is a lot more music to remember and to play correctly. Even the afternoon of Montreaux, once we were there I remember staying after the sound check and practicing my parts for about an hour (Staveacre, 'Biography', 2005).

Despite the value Piazzolla might have placed on his scores and the study of them required of his performers, how definitive this notation was intended to be for the performance is questionable when one observes further accounts by the composer and the musicians who worked with him in other clips from the same documentary (*ibid.*). It would seem that although Piazzolla's notation was an integral part of the interpretational process, it was up to the performer to add appropriate ways to express 'feel'. One way that this might be done was through improvisation:

(1:11:37) [Former guitarist in the *Quinteto*, Horacio Malvicino] And Gary who study [sic] very much all the things of Astor. He learned so much about the rhythm of Astor and the way of improvisation that is outstanding. [Film switches to Ziegler] (1:12:09). I told Astor, 'Astor, you have to leave some space, because Gary is one of the great vibes improvisers in the world, he has to demonstrate his ability about this music.' [Ziegler makes grumbling sounds imitating Piazzolla's response of] 'Oh ... No. I like [sic] he has to learn my way, blah blah blah ... ok.' [Film switches to Piazzolla] (01:12:36) What I write is written – everything, 99%. Improvisation is falling with jazz music, and I don't like to make a competition with jazz music. [Film switches to Burton] For me that is what is enthralling about it, the chance to become a tango musician instead of a jazz musician. (1:13:14) In Astor's case, he wanted me to improvise – but he didn't want me to play typical jazz improvising. He would have little

spots in the music. He would say [pointing], ‘there, do something in that measure, or during that few seconds there, add something’ (Staveacre, ‘Biography’, 2005).

In a later interview, Burton elaborated more on this process:

In his music, instead of soloing at length as we do in Jazz, I found myself soloing in small bits and pieces throughout the performances of the written compositions. He would later tell me to use my written part as a guide and make it sound ‘something like it’. He taught me a lot about phrasing and use of dynamics. It was a challenge at first to find the flow of going back and forth between written and improvised phrases, but he kept showing me how to do it. I learned a tremendous amount of musicianship from him and his music. For me, playing with Astor was not just another gig. This was one of the two or three most important exercises in my career. It changed my playing (Gorin, 2005, p. 205).

It would seem that the score played an integral role in providing a basis for any additional improvisations – and helped to shape part of the ‘feeling’ Piazzolla often referred to as integral to performance.

Within the *6 Etudes*, a similar musical ethos of the relationship between score and flautist can be found on with the words ‘*Estos estudios tanguisticos dependen de la gracia del soloista*’. Though this appears in Spanish on the published score by Editions Henry Lemoine, curiously this particular sentence, which translates to ‘these tango studies depend on the soloist’s grace’, is not included in any of the editions of the accompanying English, German, and Italian text that are offered by the publisher. However, unless one was familiar with the Spanish in which this directive was originally written (one can see this in the manuscripts included in the appendix), this important performance philosophy might be overlooked, yet it can be strongly rooted in the advice Piazzolla gave his performers for a similar feel-based approach. Though it might seem mundane to mention this omission, perhaps due to a poor translation and oversight from an editor, the idea that these studies do not depend on the soloist being at the mercy of the notation for any determinate rendering, but rather that the notation is to be delivered with a feel of *gracia*, i.e. ‘flair’, ‘gift’, or ‘gracefulness’ from the soloist is integral to Piazzolla’s ethos for performance. The composer-creator relationship is embedded into the notation and is an important part of the work’s identity. In a 1989 interview Piazzolla said more about this relationship:

When we were rehearsing here with this new group [The New Tango Sextet], two months ago, we had nearly two months of rehearsals, and I told them it is not a question of playing the exact notes that are written here on the music, what’s important is communicating between us

... I repeat it again, it is not a question about ‘being a good musician’ and playing what is written. Each one has to give a little of himself ... I was talking the other day with my pianist [Gerardo Gandini]; he is a contemporary composer, and a contemporary concert pianist ... in this case he likes this music very much, and I permit to add his music to my way of writing ... he composes ... he goes putting his type of music twelve-tone system, atonal system of music and it fits *perfectly*. I mean, when you do it with your heart, everything fits (Amirkhanian, 2013, 1:04:04).

Yet specifically it would also extend to his ‘erudite’ scores. This relationship can further be recalled by the note about the etudes that Piazzolla wrote to the American composer, jazz musician, and author Gunther Schuller:

I composed these Tango Studies as a kind of dictionary of New Tango accentuations, melodies, feelings, all related to New Tango ... I am sure – thank God – I have a strong influence of J.S. Bach,<sup>138</sup> but I am also sure that the most important [sic] for a creator-composer is the word *style*; and I always try not to lose my feeling of Tango in all of my music (Dyer, 1990).

This comment echoes the conclusions of previous research found within the collection of Solis and Nettle (2009) of how the composer-creator-performer relationship can be a means for understanding the compositional process of improvisatory writing styles. Piazzolla’s stance within his own compositions about this relationship is a vital, ‘most important’ part of his wider musical ‘style’, always grounded within the ‘feeling’ and setting of a tango, and it can be further explored in wider tango performance manuals.<sup>139</sup>

### ***Wider Tango Practices of Treating the Melodic Line***

When observing the backdrop that might link these etudes to tango practices, Piazzolla’s notes to the performer indicating a flexible view of his notation would not be seen as a common approach for performance in the genre. Discussions and methods as to how to enhance the melodic line, as an important part of musical

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<sup>138</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate this said influence further, yet J.S. Bach and/or influences of the baroque era as a means in which to understand Piazzolla’s compositions should not be discounted as a way to approach his scores given how many times the composer has mentioned this musical influence. Thus, unsurprisingly it has been offered as a popular theoretical model by previous scholars in which to approach his notation. See for example the work of Drago (2008, p. 102–24), Pelinski (2008) and López (2008).

<sup>139</sup> This of course brings up issues relating to questions regarding what Piazzolla meant by ‘style’ and how it connects to the ‘feeling of tango’. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into debates about what exactly defines Piazzolla’s tango ‘style’ and is debated fervently by tangueros and scholars alike (for a detailed exploration of this topic, see the work of Andrea Marsilli (2012)).

expression, are often found in tango performance manuals (see for example, Salgán, 2001; Drago, 2008; Monk, 2008; Fain 2010; Gallo 2011). The pianist Salgán warns would-be tango arrangers/performers that ‘pieces should flow spontaneously through free inspiration, without searching and without formulas (2001, p. 30); ‘performances should not have singular structures, and should avoid a repetitive character’ (p. 137). Violinist Gallo (2011, p. 59) similarly advises that when interpreting expressive melodies ‘a good tango performer never plays an expressive fragment the same way and always seeks to vary it spontaneously’.

### *A Western Reading of Piazzolla’s Expressive Melodies*

Yet outside tango methods, melodic ornamentation is not so prominent when dealing with Piazzolla’s flute scores, even with a reference to tango as the core style of the piece, which might seem to entail a different musical approach. As explored previously, when I performed the etudes in my first tango music class, the accepted differences as to what constituted ‘accepted’ expressivity were problematic when I contextualised the score within western musical traditions. Another example of this experience can be seen when I was doing my Master’s degree recital preparation at a UK music conservatory. I can recall a very memorable moment when in a flute lesson I inserted an un-notated glissando in *Café 1930* – completely on a whim on the spur of the moment – perhaps not dissimilar to the *gracia* of the soloist that Piazzolla might have imagined. The spontaneity of this glissando was most likely at the limit of how I might have gone beyond the notation of the score, and seemed quite radical at the time. After I demonstrated the glissando, my flute instructor disagreed with this approach completely – if Piazzolla had wanted this ornament to be made, he would have notated it that way in the score; I was heavily advised against this addition. In my final performance of *Café 1930* I chose not to add any extras – I did not want to take the risk of being deducted marks by my classically trained examiners who would have had the score in front of them – and at the time this consequence was more important to me than playing how I ‘felt’ in relation to Piazzolla’s given notation.

### *An Analysis of Etude 4 by Western Flautists*

Beyond my own experiences as a flautist trying to negotiate Piazzolla’s flute music in a conservatory setting, an empirical study of other score interpretations of etude melodies would shed more insight into the use of improvisation through

ornamentation as an expressive device. A simple listening analysis of the sixteen available commercial recordings by western flautists (Figure 6.9) was made where the analysis sought to observe how (and if) western flute players added ornaments or flourishes to the score in an improvisatory manner. Specifically, *Etude 4* entails multiple restatements of the melodic theme, and provides many potential opportunities for a flautist to add ornamentation, perhaps in a manner resonating in Piazzolla's feel-based approach.

Flautist	Album Title	Label	Released	Nationality
Jutt, Stephanie	Mckinley, Griffes, Piazzolla, Jolivet	GM Recordings	1990	American
Helasvuo, Mikael	Piazzolla: History of the Tango, 5 Piezas & 6 Etudes Tanguistiques	Ondine	1992	Finnish
De LaVega, Jorge	Astor Piazzolla: A Flute and Piano Tribute	Milan/BMG	1995	Argentine
Gallois, Patrick	Piazzolla For Two	Deutsche Grammophone	1996	French
Poulain, Loic	Astor Piazzolla	Mandala/ Harmonia Mundi	1997	French
Franco, Fabio	Tango y Nada Mas	Symposion	1998	Italian
Gafni, Margalit	Opus 3 Interpreta Piazzolla	Epsa Music	1998	Israeli
Toepper, Irmgaard	Piazzolla: Complete Music for Flute and Guitar	Naxos	1998	German
Daroux, Cécile	Astor Piazzolla: Histoire Du Tango	Harmonia Mundi	1999	French
Le Grand, Catherine	Inspirations: Music for Solo Flute	In1Breath	2001	American
Barboza, Marcelo	Tangos & Choros: Flute Music From Argentina and Brazil	Meridian Records	2003	Brazilian
Zucker, Laurel	Inflorescence II: Music for Solo Flute	Cantilena Records	2003	American
Montsserat, Gascón	Tangos and Habaneros for Flute and Guitar	Prodigital	2005	Spanish
Bomfim, Marcelo	Só Para Flauta/ Just for Flute	Marcelo Bomfim	2009	Brazilian
Fabbricani, Roberto	Histoire Du Tango	Phoenix Classics	2010	Italian
Barile, Claudio	Historia del Tango, Tango-Etudes, y Otros	Irco- El Arca de Noe	2011	Argentine

**Figure 6.9** A list of the sixteen commercial recordings available of *Etude 4*.

### *Results and Discussion*

The results revealed that only three flautists – Daroux, Bomfim, and Gafni – employed ornamentation as an expressive device. Despite this small number, a trend can be seen in that these additions took the predominant shape of the use of a glissando only, which was not so dissimilar to my own interpretation in my flute lesson (see Figures 6.10 to 6.12). Additionally, these flautists often chose the same places in which to insert these figures. For example, Daroux and Gafni both chose glissandi to prolong the cadence in bar 28 (Figure 6.10); Bomfim and Daroux made similar choices in bar 44 (Figure 6.11). Daroux, who inserted the most ornaments of all the flautists, chose to use a glissando in the same melodic content twice: in bar 16 and bar 47 (Figure 6.12). Even in this small analysis, the performers demonstrated that ornamentations beyond glissandi were not used, despite the fact that a wide variety of ornamental figures might be added as a common interpretational practice in tango styles (more of which will be discussed later in this chapter).

Though it was not the purpose to empirically analyse findings beyond added flourishes, one unexpected result merits mentioning as it fits into wider ideas of how players might use expressivity within stylistic boundaries. The flautists Daroux, Franco, and Barboza interestingly all chose to employ the alto flute in lieu of the C flute. When asked about this performance decision, Italian flautist Fabio Franco commented:

The choice, as you guessed, [to use the alto flute] was made based on the colours and the moods that this instrument offers and Tango no. 4 lends itself well to this kind of sound (Fabio Franco personal communication by email, February 2012).<sup>140</sup>

Use of cross-instrumentation for these etudes is important within the wider picture; it points to the limits of how expression might be used and perceived as ‘accepted’ within western flute performative traditions. For example, as in the case of Franco and Barboza’s results (and also including further recordings by players who have adapted these etudes to other instruments, such as saxophone, oboe, violin, euphonium, and accordion), it might be seen as appropriate to change the instrument type used for performance, but not necessarily the notes of the melody.

This is not to say that flautists, such as those in this recording analysis, who chose to make only minimal additions to the score, or the final decisions I made for the exam regarding *Café 1930*, or my instructor’s teaching advice, were misappropriated, inaccurate, or even grossly erroneous. Though perhaps more importantly in this case – and has been discussed in previous chapters – is that musicians of any genre tend to work within performative norms, C-Models, and performing traditions as to what is considered appropriate in any given style for any given piece. A more detailed empirical study across a wider range of instruments would lend more insights into how western players might use performance ‘deviations’ for a wider comprehension of how Piazzolla’s expressive melodies are interpreted, such as the range of timing, phrasing, or even dynamic contrasts through decibel measurement over the entire etude.

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<sup>140</sup> Original text reads: ‘La scelta, come tu hai intuito, è stata fatta in base ai colori e alle atmosfere che questo strumento offre e il Tango n.4 si presta benissimo a questo tipo di sonorità.’



**Figure 6.10** Unmarked glissando ornamentation by Daroux and Gafni in *Etude 4*, bar 28.



**Figure 6.11** Unmarked glissando ornamentation by Daroux and Bomfim in *Etude 4*, bar 44.

**Figure 6.12** Unmarked glissando ornamentation by Daroux in *Etude 4*, bars 16 and 47.

### An Alternative Reading Using the Tripartite Sequence

An alternative framework is proposed within which to understand the *6 Etudes*, which moves away from either/or approaches to the melody to a wider platform from which to view them. The exploration of wider tango publications, such as reduced scores and arrangements, introduces the possibility of contextualising this melodic notation within wider tango practices. When studying the tripartite process of how tango players might use such scores, the etudes can be seen as a notational extension of this

practice.

Initially it would seem that Piazzolla's highly detailed melodic notation (as seen in Figures 6.1 to 6.8) are a different breed of composition from those that appear as commercially available tango scores often published in reduced formats. Such publications appear as a simple melody with basic harmonies as a blank canvas, without the original tango lyrics to accompany them, for instance, the oft-performed 'classics' of the genre, such as Ángel Villodo's *El Choclo* or Carlos Gardel's *El día que me quieras* (Figure 6.13).<sup>141</sup>

**EL DÍA QUE ME QUIERAS.**  
TANGO CANCIÓN

*Carlos Gardel*  
*transcrita por*

**Figure 6.13** The 'A' section of Gardel's *El día que me quieras*.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the simplicity of the music, tango musicians might not necessarily need more than a basic outline for performance, primarily due to a common practice that performances of tango music are often arranged by the performer.<sup>143</sup> Specifically

<sup>141</sup> For a broader frame of reference beyond tango, in a western art-music context Moerche's findings of keyboard improvisation in the baroque (2009, p. 167) suggests that 'composers only provided a skeletal framework to be elaborated upon *ad libitum* by the performer'. Such reduced scores are similar to sheet music found in pop/rock, jazz and other Latin American genres, which are often published in a 'songbook' or 'greatest hits' collections.

<sup>142</sup> Source: Wyman (2006/2007, p. 42).

<sup>143</sup> Similar to other musical styles, as discussed in footnote 141.



relating to Piazzolla's music, an example of this was apparent when I travelled to his official score archive ('La Fundación Papel Nonos, Biblioteca de Música Astor Piazzolla). I asked the head archivist, Jorge Strada about his visitor demographic: 'So who comes to visit the archive? Do you have many Argentine musicians that come to source scores here?' His response: 'Not many from Argentina, it is only westerners who come looking for scores, like you; tango players arrange their own' (interview with Jorge Strada, Mar del Plata, September 2010).

### *Understanding the Arrangement Process*

Marc Arthur Wyman, the editor of the reduced score of *El día que me quieras* (Figure 6.13) writes about his process of score reduction for future would-be arrangers:

I have made these over the course of more than four years. They were done as necessity dictated, more or less. Some were done for pleasure, or to correct an existing inaccurate chart, or because I couldn't find any written music. I tried to simplify melodies as much as possible, to get the unadorned essence of any tune. Why clutter things up in an elementary, silly arrangement á la Korn?<sup>144</sup> My idea is specifically to not influence a performance, to allow full flower creativity from the performer, in the moment of performance or when beginning an entirely new arrangement (Wyman, 2006/ 2007, 'The Work').

Following Wyman's philosophy, the skeletal score in this case serves as a basic functional outline in which the performer is expected to build upon further. Yet, in a more detailed explanation, such scoring can be seen as part of a wider multilayered compositional process. Wyman's reduction could be seen as a form of 'sketch', as Beard and Gloag (2005, pp. 165–66) indicate, 'the 'first step' plan, that pre-dates the final creation. The second sequence of the process continues when players arrange (and at times notate and/or publish) their version from reduction scores for their own performances. Thirdly, at times these arrangements (and especially those from famous players) are in turn then performed by yet other tango musicians, but not always completely as the arrangement dictated in notation. Arrangements at times can be altered vastly by the performer over numerous performances by the performer who arranged it in the first place.<sup>145</sup> The new interpreter will add to that arrangement,

<sup>144</sup> Here Wyman is referring to a publishing house (which is now called Ediciones Musicales Julio Korn-Intersong), which was one of the largest publishers of tango scores since 1924 (and other printed publications, such as magazines) within Argentina.

<sup>145</sup> For instance, as tango bandoneonist and teacher Ben Bogart notes (personal communication via email, 13 March 2013) many players aspire to play famous arrangements on stage as written, for

resulting in a new version.

Yet this is not to say that the arrangement process should be seen as the straightforward following of a directional path to fruition. For example, one must not forget that Wyman noted above that in ‘editing’ his reductions, he tried to ‘simplify the melody’, and even used dictation methods when he felt the need.<sup>146</sup> Wyman also indicates he studied previous arrangements (i.e. ‘á la Korn’) to make the final skeletal reduction. With this circumstance in mind, his ‘final’ score reduction within his book can be viewed as really just an arrangement of another’s previous interpretation (regardless of whether that was notated or not).

In an attempt to move away from casting the creative process of the reduction-arrangement-rearrangement as an exclusive tango practice unrelated to other contexts, links can be furthered to any other musical tradition to some degree or another – whether that tradition is based within the score, or through other means. According to Nettl (2007, pp. 30–31), all compositional models include a sequence of ‘precomposition-composition-revision’, and are all parts of final the creation of a piece, or performance. The fact that it may (or may not) be written down is insignificant in a larger understanding of the creative process (ibid.).

Blum (2009) similarly lays out fascinating ground work as to how representations of musical improvisation can be seen as having similar processes across cultures, despite any given preset terminology or even a linear path to define such stages. He forges relations that not only also resonate to Nettl’s basic sequence, but also to descriptions from a large array of historical texts from around the globe. For instance he argues that Busoni’s tripartite sequence from almost a century ago: musician improvises/ improvisation captured in notation/ improvisation reborn through appropriate responses to notated signs (Blum 2009, p. 243 citing Busoni, 1916) is not so dissimilar to the creative phase described by Ishāq al-Mawsili’s (who died in 850 CE): male musician creates melody/ he teaches the melody to a female musician/ the woman revises and renews the melody (Blum, 2009, p. 243). Using this

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example, those of Nestor Marconi. Yet Marconi would change his own arrangement over a series of performances. Furthermore Bogart comments that there is no set pattern for interpreting arrangements, as it ultimately changes depending on whose are being read, and which performer is interpreting it.

<sup>146</sup> Though it warrants discussion beyond the scope of this chapter, Wyman’s process also points to values of authenticity as to what ‘original source’ he would have based each reduction. For example, in the case of Gardel’s recordings of *El día que me quieras*, due to the vocalist’s melismatic singing and improvisational style of delivery, he would have then had the choice of numerous recorded versions for his final product.

framework as a theoretical model, the overall reduction-arrangement-rearrangement sequences of *El día que me quieras* as shown in Figure 6.13 can be further analyzed, which will serve as a model in which to approach the *6 Etudes* in future discussions in this chapter.

Though it is not clear as to which reduced score (or even recording of Gardel's original music) might have been used for the initial compositional base of *El día que me quieras*, the notated arrangement of Argentine *bandoneonista* and pedagogue Rodolfo Maderos' can be compared to that of the original reduction as provided previously by Wyman (Figure 6. 14 ). In a brief comparison between the two, a quick glance will reveal that Maderos' version contains the same number of bars in the opening introduction, which occurs before the main vocal line by Carlos Gardel would have started ( bar 9 in both versions). Differences can be seen in choice of time signature, and key signature. Maderos' version includes dynamics, a 'mood' (i.e., the Italian word *lontano*, 'from a distance', 'far away', perhaps reflecting the thematic material from original lyrics), a left-hand accompaniment, altered rhythm in some of the bars, the predominate use of a slur to mark phrases, and additional written flourishes in both hands.

**"EL DIA QUE ME QUIERAS"**

Música: Carlos Gardel  
Arreglo: Rodolfo MADEROS / 7

BANDONEÓN

*pp*

LONTANO

4

8

*dolce*

13

17

(El día que me quieras) (2)

21

25

**Figure 6.14** 'A' section of Gardel's *El día que me quieras*, arranged by Maderos.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Source: the library of Argentinean bandoneónist and tango score archivist, Santiago Argilla.

## ***A Performance Analysis of El día que me quieras Demonstrating the Tripartite Sequence***

### *Methodology*

An example of a rearrangement process can be demonstrated by two ‘live’ video clips that were made using Maderos’ arrangement uploaded to Youtube by professional Argentinean tango bandoneonists, Hugo Sattore (2013) and Luis Caruana (2013). These videos, while not ‘commercially’ released, pragmatically allowed for a demonstration of the tripartite system to be analysed in a casual ‘everyday’ setting. Moreover, the live performances allowed for an unedited, perhaps more ‘spontaneous’ reading of Maderos’ score of *El día que me quieras*. The simple nominal listening analyses of the two performances were made over repeated and separate occasions. Any notable changes in the notation from Maderos’ version were noted.

### *Results and Discussion*

The first rearrangement analysed was by Hugo Satorre (2013). When playing the opening ‘A’ section, Satorre kept many of Maderos’ original additions to the reduction score, for example, playing the ornamentation that was notated on the melodic line. Yet in a departure from Maderos’ embellishments, he further adds others (for example the mordent in the right hand on the first ‘F’ in bar 15). Also notable is Satorre’s wide use of *rubato* despite Maderos’ already altered rhythmic notations – one example being the practice of a ‘rush’ from the end of a bar to the next downbeat to arrive at a phrase ‘early’ in relation to the implied pulse occurring between bars 7 and 8.

Moreover to further demonstrate the vast variety of interpretations that might arise from Maderos’ arrangement, Luis Caruana (2013) in the same ‘A’ section reveals even more diverse qualities than those of Satorre (See enclosed CD, track 34). Caruana’s rearrangement is more embellished, with not only more liberal use of added ornaments over many bars (i.e. bars 2, 4, and 6, etc), but he also adds in repeated notes for emphasis (i.e. in bar 7), wider use of articulation (i.e. the shorter articulate notes in bar 8) and like Satorre, uses liberal *rubato* (i.e. the rhythmic ‘stretch’ of the main chorus by Gardel which would have started in bar 9).

Overall it could be said that perhaps not so dissimilar to the wider implications from the analysis of the western flute recordings of *Etude 4*, this small scale analysis

of arrangements by Maderos, Santorre and Caruana have similar parallels in outcomes. Each of the three tango performers shares varying degrees of similar common notated (and un-notated) improvisatory gestures. For example, in these instances, the ornaments used by all three bandoneonists take on similar characteristics for ‘improvising’, i.e. use of *rubato*, added glissandi, turns, mordents, and altered articulations.

This results are not so surprising given musicological theory that points that one’s creativity (such as improvisation), is a product of wider cultural and social settings, even if how these complex phenomena interact are viewed as flexible (see for example, this viewpoint from Monson 2009, and Nettl 2013). In a stance away from ‘essentialist’ qualities that should pinpoint to specific authenticity in ornamentation, and as a way to draw a wider net is to see ornamental embellishment as part of a wider, yet flexible practice of tango expression from a variety of cultural practices.

### ***Contextualising the Tripartite Model to Further Tango Practices***

The analyses used to understand the reduction-arrangement-rearrangement processes within interpretations of *El día que me quieras* is not dissimilar to the pedagogical models that were used within my flute lessons with Fain in Buenos Aires. She regularly assigned a similar style of recording and score analyses by not only Astor Piazzolla, but a large range of tango performers through a variety of instrumentation and ensemble settings. The purpose for this work was not to be able to directly *emulate* any given musician’s improvisation for my own future performances, but to understand the numerous *possibilities* of expressive techniques that might be used; a sort of ‘catalogue’ of improvisation that I could draw upon in the future for my own interpretations (this idea is similarly discussed in Fain, 2010, p. 81). By exploring this framework of typical tango improvisation, I was encouraged to add my own version of creativity and innovative improvisation to a notated melodic line, such as ornamentation. This type of analytical enquiry encouraged in my lessons would have been applicable to both interpreting traditional tango scores, the works of Astor Piazzolla and more modern works composed recently (also see Fain, 2010, p. 14).<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> To draw parallels with improvisation and the dance, some Argentinean dancers of the ‘home tango’ say that it is only the novices of the genre who ‘plan and reproduce steps’; ‘the real milonguero will

Comparable philosophies also occur in teaching methods of tango player Ben Bogart with his bandoneón students. He uses commonly circulated written arrangements by well-known players, e.g. such as Maderos, as a means in which to teach stylistic ways to ornament a phrase, and to add further ones as part of tango musical training (personal communication via email, March 2013). Similarly, Horacio Salgán, in his *Tango Course* (2001, p. 59), elaborates on this idea of the importance of knowing the ‘essential’ elements of the genre to add to the melody. He writes that often times piano parts– which contain only the basic notes of the melody, without phrasing, ties or accents, and with an accompaniment– fail to communicate a ‘good’ tango performance unless one knows the ‘necessary details needed to be able to properly perform tango music’. Additionally, as was demonstrated with my initial experiences playing for tango teachers, it could even be said that to perform the reduced score ‘as is’, without knowledge of its accompanying ‘insider’ tradition, can lead to vast differences in performative traditions when tango effects so often added spontaneously to the music are omitted.

### **The Tripartite Sequence to Exploring the 6 Etudes**

Given Piazzolla’s focused attention to notational detail in his ‘erudite ‘work’, it would seem that the 6 *Etudes* would include all that the ‘outsider’, western flautist would need to know about performing the tango, which might seem to be a different breed of composition far removed from a tango reduction. The melodies would appear already to contain ornamentation and rhythmic *rubato*; the ‘necessary details’ (echoing Salgán above) have already been filled in for the performer and are in place ready for performance with no additions needed from the aural field.

Yet when the etudes are seen as an example of one possibility of an arrangement – and again, referencing Piazzolla’s letter to Gunther Schuller where these etudes intended as a ‘new dictionary of tango sounds’ – they can become one of *multiple* ways in which the notated writing could have taken place. Similar to Kinderman findings in his study of Beethoven (2009, p. 289), the written embellishments of *Etude 4* can be likened to just one possibility that could have

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elicit, improvise and sustain an original – and, ideally, a pleasurable engaging, and provocative – dialogue through the dance (Cara, 2009, p. 456).

occurred out of many, a way of ‘enshrining the spontaneous intimacy of artistic conception’.

Returning to evidence that Piazzolla would quickly write scores through a rather ‘speedy’ and spontaneous process, the *6 Etudes* can be viewed as a ‘snapshot’, an ‘arrangement’ of one way that the composer might have improvised a more basic melodic line in any given moment. In other words, they can be viewed as a work not necessarily intended to be interpreted for direct emulation, but as a means to open further creative improvisational opportunity. Thus, an analysis of these etudes starts from the view of the published score not as a concrete, ‘finished’ product but as part of a larger cyclical, flexible, creative process within which further improvisational opportunities occur. In a shift away from a simply determinate reading to the etudes, this chapter argues that within these expressive melodies lie a model that could provide the western flautist one version of an improvisation on the melody, one sketch of how it could be done, as well as a platform for further improvisational processes to occur among the musicians that play them.

#### ***A Score Reduction and Ornamental Analysis of Etude 4***

As both Nettle (2007) and Blum (2009) have suggested, the process of improvisation through flexible use of ‘reduction-arrangement-rearrangement’ does not have to follow any set directional path to performance. ‘Working backwards’ from a score can help one understand how then to rearrange the piece further. In a similar method to how an arranger might start with a melodic ‘sketch’ as the basis for improvisation to occur, a useful way to access the use of improvisation within Piazzolla’s writing would be to employ a similar technique through a straightforward melodic reduction to reveal an underlying core melody as a foundational starting point. Like Wyman’s approach to his reduction scores in *The Tango Fake Book: Tango melodies and chords ‘a la parrilla’*, the core melody is found first, stripping the rhythmic and ornamental embellishment (as Wyman called it, ‘clutter’), to find the basic melodic line.

*Etude 4* is an ideal model from which to approach Piazzolla’s written scores. Not only does the notation in this specific score seem to detail a wide variety of written-in ornamentation that is interspersed throughout, it additionally entails a large degree of temporal freedom. With its ABA<sup>1</sup> format, this is the only etude without a suggested metronome speed. As the temporal marking suggests, this melody



encompasses an overall contemplative and melancholic mood throughout its entirety, and explores the middle and low range of the flute by avoiding the upper registers; this allows the demonstration of the ‘mellower’ tonal range of the instrument.

Predominately the melody is constructed of antecedent and consequent responses made up of four to five bar phrase segments, which overall form larger eight-bar sentences. Although the harmony can only be implied due to its lack of chordal accompaniment, it centres tonally on e minor. With the climax of the piece at bar 45 with a G#5, the harmony tonally shifts to a final closure of an implied F# minor dominant to tonic cadence.

### *Methodology*

The melodic reduction process in this case was relatively straightforward and was done by: 1) the elimination of any ornamentation and rhythmic splitting, where dotted note groups and syncopations for their simplest possible metrical and rhythmical version were substituted 2) the elimination of any melodic splitting, in which groups of notes that seemed to revolve around one pitch were reduced, 3) the removal of any octave displacement, and 4) the elimination of dynamics, articulations, accents, and breath marks. This resulted in the melodic reduction found in Figure 6.15. This is not to say that this reduction is the only way that this core melody could have emerged, or should be seen as any sort of ‘fixed’, ‘authentic’ reduced form. After all, perhaps one of the most creative aspects of reduction-arrangement-rearrangement process is the indeterminate product and possibilities of each step that might emerge.

With one potential version of a core melody established in Figure 6.15, any notations that were added beyond the basic reduction were then classified as a form of ‘written embellishment’. A second analysis (Figure 6.16) was made that classified where these ornaments were used, and what function they could have served to enhance the core melody.

## Melodic Reduction of Tango-Etude no. 4

Lento-Meditativo (Tempo ad lib.)

A

e minor

9

15 B e minor

23










31 A'









38 f# minor




45

**Figure 6.15** A melodic reduction of *Etude 4*.

Following pages: **Figure 6.16** An ornamental analysis of *Etude 4*.

Bar Number:	Notation example:	Description:	When used:
	<b>Passing Tones</b>		
43		Descending diatonic semiquaver passing tones	To connect to an adjacent lower note; to smooth the melodic line
1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 38		Descending diatonic semiquaver triplet passing tones	To connect to an adjacent lower note; to smooth the melodic line
27		Descending diatonic demisemiquaver passing tones	To connect to an adjacent lower note; to smooth the melodic line
3, 11		Descending chromatic quintuplet passing tones	To connect to an adjacent lower note; to smooth the melodic line
40		Descending chromatic septuplet passing tones with an insertion of tonic note	To connect to an adjacent lower note; to smooth the melodic line; to help establish tonal centre
7, 9, 11, 13, 26, 28		Ascending diatonic semiquaver passing tones	To connect to an adjacent upper note; to smooth the melodic line when shifts occur in underlying harmony
12, 25, 41		Ascending chromatic semiquaver passing tones	To connect to an adjacent upper note; pick-up notes to add 'push' towards the start of a new phrase
49		Ascending quintuplet chromatic passing tones, approached by the octave below the preceding pitch	To connect to an adjacent lower note in cadential closure; to add harmonic 'stretch' to a cadential resolution
44		Mixed demisemiquaver passing tones, using both descending and ascending direction, and a mixture of chromatic, diatonic and intervallic steps	To help establish the implied underlying harmony to close the phrase

(Bar Number)	(Notation example)	(Description)	(When used)
	<b>Glissandi flourishes</b>		
7, 11, 15		Ascending chromatic glissando	To connect to an adjacent upper note, placed between two adjacent cadential notes; to end a phrase; to smooth the melodic line
20		Ascending diatonic glissando	To connect to an adjacent upper note, to start a new phrase; to smooth the melodic line
32, 42		Descending diatonic glissando	To connect to an adjacent lower note, to smooth the melodic line
	<b>Note Repetitions</b>		
10		Addition of a continuously repeated tonic pitch (lower)	Inserted between repeated note in melody between descending diatonic notes, helps to establish tonic pitch
17, 18, 19, 20, 46, 47, 48		Addition of descending chromatic notes (lower)	Inserted between continuously repeated notes in core melody, helps to move the melody forward
49		Addition of descending diatonic notes (lower)	Inserted between continuously repeated note in core melody, helps to re-establish a tonal centre to close the phrase
22, 24, 30, 32		Ascending repeated arpeggiated note	To create forward movement within main melodic line; to emphasise tonality
34, 35, 36		Note doubling of 'core' melody	To build rhythmic movement within main melodic line

(Bar Number)	(Notation example)	(Description)	(When used)
	<b>Note Repetitions (Continued)</b>		
49		Octave doubling of 'core' note from melody	Emphasises tonality, to suspend a cadence
22, 24, 30, 39, 41		Repeated note appoggiatura	A pitch that resolves the phrase is sounded 'early'; before the downbeat of the bar occurs; to establish the effect of getting to the closure of a phrase early
2, 6, 39		Cadential appoggiatura	Inserted between two adjacent with repeated pitches; to help establish the dominant to tonic relationship

### *Results and Discussion*

Overall, it can be said that even in this short analysis, a larger framework for ornamentation is in place; even if the detail of each individual figure was not always the same, there were still trends of how and when they functioned across the score. This can be supported by three predominant embellishments that emerged in the analysis: passing tones, glissandi, and repeated notes.

First, diatonic and chromatic passing tones (both tongued and slurred) were used to connect a wide range of intervals of adjacent notes. Piazzolla frequently took a note from the core melody, and 'divided' it into descending or ascending figures. These helped to add a smooth contour to the melodic line, without large intervallic leaps to interrupt the arches that this melodic shaping creates. The amount of rhythmic 'splitting' used was related to the distance of interval that needed to be connected. For example, as shown in the data from Figure 6.16, smaller intervals were connected using passing tones (diatonic or chromatic) consisting of duplets or triplets. And likewise, larger intervals that occurred between two adjacent notes entailed longer passages to fill the gap between notes, such as septuplets or demisemiquavers.

Secondly, glissandi flourishes (both tongued and slurred) were often added to cadence points to end a phrase and to connect two adjacent notes. These ‘sweeps’ were used in between notes of the core melody, similar to the way that passing tones were notated. Yet they differed in that they were used to connect notes *between* the main notes of the core melody instead of dividing the original notation rhythmically. Glissandi overall generally functioned to give a sense of rhythmic displacement, by either helping to give a sense of ‘push’ to heighten a cadential moment, or even, oppositely, to suspend a cadential resolution. Though it is not present in the Editions Henry Lemoine score, the original manuscript of the etudes gives an example of how these glissandi can function outside the confines of the bar lines (Figure 6.17). For instance, between the last two bars of this excerpt (bars 14–15), the ascending glissando from a D5 ‘leaps’ across the bar line (as opposed to visually ending before bar ends) to ‘resolve’ to an F#5. This writing style suggests a timing suspension of the cadential resolution in this area, which is not obvious in the published score.

Lastly, multiple uses of note repetition (either in diatonic or chromatic passages) from an underlying implied harmony, and/or from the core melody added a sense of movement and progression in the melodic line. For example, the repeated note appoggiatura right before a downbeat occurred added a feeling of ‘arriving’ at the phrase early, as a means of anticipating the closure of a musical sentence. Repeated notes from the underlying implied harmony tended to emphasise tonality, as it was these insertions that helped the harmony progress towards cadential resolution.



Figure 6.17 The original facsimile of *Etude 4*, bars 1–15.<sup>149</sup>

### *The Expressive Melody of ‘Etude 4’ in a Wider Perspective of Tango Practices*

Returning to the idea that composers and performers tend to work within stylistic conventions and wider performative norms, these three overriding embellishments that emerged from this small analysis of *Etude 4* should be seen as part of a larger framework, a sort of selection of ‘composed-in’ improvisational styles in which Piazzolla frequently drew from to notate within his scores. These ornaments and their function within the etude are not so dissimilar to those that can be found in other score examples by the composer from the same era in relation to similar uses of glissandi, passing tones, and note repetition. Additionally, connections can be made to further tango performance techniques to show how the ornamental results of *Etude 4* can have wider relevance on a macro-level perspective.

#### *Glissandi*

The glissandi used at the ends of phrases in *Etude 4* can be compared to those discussed by Fain (2010, p. 72) and Gallo (2010, p. 72). Both suggest that this use of glissandi notation<sup>150</sup> (whether added or written in the score) enhances the expressive melody as it creates an opportunity for an *accelerando* or *rallentando* use of timing to occur in relation to the downbeat that it proceeds (Fain, 2010, p. 72; Gallo, 2011, pp. 110–11). The opportunity for glissandi to aid timing aspects within a phrase can be seen in *Campero* from the *Cinco piezas para guitarra* (1984), where ascending

<sup>149</sup> Source: the personal library of American flautist Stephanie Jutt.

<sup>150</sup> Including the use of *portamenti*

glissandi in the *Lento* section occur at the end of the musical phrase (Figure 6.18). Glissandi also appear in a similar situation in *Despertar* (no. 4) from the 1989 *Five Tango Sensations* (Piazzolla, 2001) written for bandoneón and string quartet (Figure 6.19).

As seen from the analysis, the glissandi in *Etude 4* were not always written solely at the close of a phrase; they were also generally added to connect notes in the melody, similarly to passing tones. Such use of glissandi can be seen in *Tango No. 2* from the *Tango suite para dos guitarras* (Piazzolla, 1985); in this case these were all descending (as circled in red, Figure 6.20).

It would also seem that in general, glissandi have a wider notational purpose within inter-idiomatic borrowing techniques, which has been discussed as an important part of tango interpretation. Elements of this practice can be seen when specifically it is chromatic (as opposed to diatonic) glissandi, which are thought to be a product of certain technical aspects of the bandoneón. Drago suggests:

Given the particular layout of the bandoneon's buttons, it is often easier and better for agility to play chromatic rather than diatonic scales, especially on the right hand. Although it is difficult to speak about an ordered layout of the buttons ... there is an overall function of the fingering of the chromatic scale that gives it certain fluidity (Drago, 2008, p. 111).

In another use of inter-idiomatic borrowing, Fain (2010) suggests that the violin is the inspiration from which to base interpretations of what she calls 'tanguero glissandi' (p. 73). This is due to the violin 'having no tempered sounds', and that 'it can gliss freely without dividing the glissando into semi-tones', which as she points out unless the interval is small, is almost impossible on the flute (*ibid.*). Yet despite the instrumental model used in which to mimic the glissandi notation, more important is the fact that inter-idiomatic borrowing could specifically be linked to this notational practice. This has wider applications.

### *Passing Tones*

Beyond how they appear in *Etude 4*, passing tones to connect intervals occur frequently in Piazzolla's scores, such as in *Café 1930* from the *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986; as circled in red, Figure 6.21), where similar usages of quintuplets and sextuplets appear. These embellishments add a sense of melodic contouring which contribute to the smooth melodic arches absent of large intervallic leaps so



typical of Piazzolla's expressive melodies. As glissandi and passing tones can function similarly as embellishments, it is unsurprising that the composer uses them interchangeably. As an example, passing tones and glissandi can both be seen interspersed within a melody in *Despertar* from the *Five Tango Sensations* (Piazzolla, 2001; Figure 6.22). Pitches that are adjacent to each other from the 'core' melody are connected with embellishments from a variety of duplets, triplets, and septuplets (marked in yellow). Additionally, both ascending and descending glissandi are used within the melodic line and as a 'push' towards the opening of a new phrase (marked in red).

(Molto Accentuato, crotchet = 100)  
Bar 40

rall. CVII Lento dolce

Milonga  
CVII

CVIII CVII CVII

pizz. rall. CVII

Lento dolce CVII mf a tempo

Figure 6.18 Campero, *Cinco piezas para guitarra*, bars 40–55.

**Five Tango Sensations**  
Nr. 4  
**Despertar** ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

*Largo* (♩ = 76)  
(ad lib.)

Bandoneon

The musical score is written for Bandoneon. It features a melodic line in the treble clef and a harmonic accompaniment in the bass clef. The piece is in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Largo' with a quarter note equal to 76 beats per minute, and the performance instruction is '(ad lib.)'. The score is divided into five systems, with bar numbers 9, 17, and 25 indicated. There are two red circles: one around the final notes of the fourth system and another around the first notes of the fifth system.

**Figure 6.19** *Despertar* (no. 4), *Five Tango Sensations*, bars 1–28, Bandoneón.

## TANGO n. 2

Andante ( $\text{♩} = 80$ ) rubato, melancolico

Figure 6.20 shows the musical score for Tango No. 2, Tango suite para dos guitarras, bars 1–11, for Guitars I & II. The score is in 4/4 time and G major. The tempo is Andante ( $\text{♩} = 80$ ) with rubato and melancolico markings. The dynamics are mostly piano (*p*). The score includes fingering numbers (1-5) and bar numbers (5, 10, CII). Red circles highlight specific fingering patterns: a triplet in bar 3, a triplet in bar 7, and a triplet in bar 10. The piece concludes with a *rall.* marking.

Figure 6.20 *Tango No. 2, Tango suite para dos guitarras*, bars 1–11, Guitars I&II.

22 (Molto Espressivo)

Figure 6.21 shows the musical score for Café 1930, Histoire du tango, bars 22–30, for Flute. The score is in 4/4 time and G major. The tempo is Molto Espressivo. The dynamics are mostly forte (*f*). The score includes fingering numbers (5, 6) and bar numbers (22, 26, CII). Red circles highlight specific fingering patterns: a triplet in bar 23 and a triplet in bar 26. The piece concludes with a *rall.* marking.

Figure 6.21 *Café 1930, Histoire du tango*, bars 22–30, Flute.

**Figure 6.22** *Despertar* (no. 4), *Five Tango Sensations*, bars 103–27, Bandoneón.

#### *Repeated Notes*

The repeated notes in *Etude 4* create a sense of ‘flow’ and movement within the piece, by establishing implied tonality and/or by creating melodic expectation in cadential areas. A wide variety of written embellishments occurs in the solo bandoneón line of *Asleep* (No. 1) from *Five Tango Sensations* (Piazzolla, 2001) in the form of glissandi, passing tones, and a frequent use of note repetition (circled in red) (Figure 6.23).

The repeated notes in bar 26 can be likened to what Drago (2008, p. 116) calls the ‘note doubling’ effect, a common practice used by Piazzolla of ‘filling an interval either diatonically (ascending or descending) or chromatically but playing



each note twice, and slurring the second of each pair to the next note'. Bars 32 and 34 contain a note doubling style that is on a smaller scale but functioning in a similar manner – for the dramatic emphasis and momentum of the musical line.

Similar to the functionality of the appoggiatura figures in *Etude 4*, which were written to anticipate the downbeat closure of the next bar, these repeated notes give the sensation that this phrase is closing 'early'. Similar functions can be seen in Figure 6.23, such as the repeated sets at the D4 pitch at bars 17 and 18; the D5 at bars 18–19 and 21–22; the C5 at 20–21; the E5 at 26–27 and lastly, the A4 at 37–38.

(Muy moderato, crotchet= 80)  
bar 8

9 a tempo

19

27 f

**Figure 6.23** *Asleep* (no. 1), *Five Tango Sensations*, bars 8–38, Bandoneón.

Note repetition that functions to arrive to a phrase early would not seem to be so unusual according to the work of Kutnowski (2002), who explores how Piazzolla's instrumental *rubatos* reflect how tango players might have shown heightened intensity in music. Using an analysis of Carlos Gardel's voice transcribed through

rhythmic notation, he argues that a vocalist heightens anxiety by adding rhythmic and melodic distortion based on their ‘expressive desires’. This was done by vocalists who would speed up the ends of phrases to arrive at the resolution early (p. 107), and, as we have seen in how musically *mufarse* is expressed, could reflect a representation of anxiety as if a person ‘was losing control of their emotions’ (ibid.) Kutnowski’s analysis can have connections with the use of repeated notes in Piazzolla’s scoring.

The use of note repetition to arrive to a phrase early can also be related to inter-idiomatic borrowing through bandoneón technique. Link writes:

Interestingly, one can link this type of rubato to the physical act of playing the bandoneón. Similarly to the voice, the sound production on the bandoneón corresponds to the airflow through the instrument. Thus, a sustained sound can only last a limited length of time. If Piazzolla wanted to highlight a note by sustaining it, then he had to arrive at that note early due to the limited amount of airflow. He often had the bandoneón fully extended upon approaching the ends of phrases and thus had depleted the air supply. Therefore, he had to arrive at the end of the phrase early in order to maintain the sound. Often this extension is accentuated on the left side of the instrument because the right hand had to remain upright to play the melody with mobility ... (Link, 2009, p. 74–75).

Beyond the expressive devices notated within the printed scores shown in the analyses as note repetition, glissandi, and passing tones, Piazzolla advised performers not necessarily to play what he had written, but also to improvise, and to play as they might ‘feel’, with a sense of *gracia* as a means of adding something to his music. An example of how he performed his own scores would be useful to understanding how he expressed this philosophy, and give a clearer picture of what a ‘feel-based’ reading of his music entails.

### ***A Recording Analysis of Piazzolla Performing Asleep***

The piece specifically chosen for this study was the movement *Asleep* from *5 Tango Sensations*, which consists of material from part of a larger composition entitled *Sette Sequenze* (1983). This score has links to *Etude 4* in that both of the two notated melodies, although relatively straightforward and simple, share the use of numerous written glissandi, repeated notes, and passing notes.

Piazzolla’s recorded interpretation used for the analysis comes from the 1989 album released with the Kronos Quartet: *Five Tango Sensations with Astor Piazzolla* (Kronos Quartet, 1989). It was said that this was done in a quick three-hour recording

session (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 27). Violinist David Harrington commented about this specific recording experience with the composer:

Basically, we sat down, got the sound and played ... we've never done a recording quicker, and probably never will again ... Piazzolla had a centred sternness to him ... he just pulled the sound out of Kronos (Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 271–72).

The quickness with which the recording was made is useful in this analysis as it would suggest that Piazzolla's interpretational process was more 'spontaneous', and suggests that there was an impulsiveness to the musical decisions he might have made, perhaps in keeping with his aforementioned performance ethos.

This specific timeframe in which Piazzolla performed with the Kronos Quartet during the later part of his career was also chosen as it would theoretically demonstrate a style of interpretation when performing with 'western musicians', in the common instrumental set-up of a string quartet, that is quite different from the instrumental line-up of his Second Quinteto of that same era. The opening 52 bars were used specifically as they allowed for two types of playing to be observed: bars 1–8 are Piazzolla playing alone, with no accompaniment from the string quartet; bars 9–52 have the quartet in the background of his solo line.

### *Methodology*

After numerous listenings on several different occasions, a simple transcription was made of Piazzolla's use of ornaments in his own bandoneón performance. Any variations that were played beyond the published score were then notated underneath the original musical line (Figure 6.24). Since the purpose of this analysis was to draw links between ornamentation aspects within the tripartite score system, this small analysis did not take into account departures in rhythm or articulation (i.e. rubato or the addition of non-notated slurs). Of course a more thorough study of Piazzolla's use of written extemporisation within his melodies from this 'erudite' timeframe would reveal richer results and more research would be useful as a way to point to a wider variety of improvisation techniques that Piazzolla used.

### *Results and Discussion*

This particular performance excerpt of *Asleep* showed six different eight-bar phrases. Only in the first phrase (which was scored as a solo with no string accompaniment)

were no changes made to the original score with regards to ornamentation; every other phrase entailed at least one small divergence from the score. When alterations were made, they consisted of glissandi, repeated notes, pitch changes, mordents, and appoggiaturas. Wider implications can also be drawn from this excerpt, and three patterns emerged in this small recording analysis.

First, Piazzolla added spontaneous figures that were identical (or at least similar) to those that were *already* notated in the score. For example, while his score detailed a large amount of glissandi already within the notation, he freely added more in his performance at other points. Another instance of this trend can be seen with the passing tones used in bar 36, some of which were already notated. In this bar, he added more passing tones by altering the starting interval a major third higher, which resulted in a longer ‘filler’. Similarly, the appoggiatura that is a ‘written’ mordent in bar 32 on the pitch A4 is repeated again, but on the F#4 in that same bar. In other words, even though they might have been spontaneously added, it would seem that he judiciously chose ornaments that fit with the notation already in place.

Secondly, he used improvisational additions in his recording that functioned similarly to identical ornaments found in not only in the score of *Etude 4*, but his other output from the same era (see previous score examples). The addition in bar 18 of repeated notes in addition to the notated glissando link strongly with previous analyses; in this case the note repetitions similarly add a sense of pushing towards the phrase early in a rush to closure, and the glissando similarly connects adjacent intervals to result in a smooth melodic line.

Lastly, the extra additions beyond the written notation stayed within the harmony and close to the melody. Even when he happened to change the original notes (see for example changes at bar 21 and 38), Piazzolla did not ‘stray’ from the given tonal centre, or even far from the pitch class of the score.

Overall, it would seem that all three of these instances use the notation as a guide from which to inspire more embellishments. Ornaments written in the score suggest where others could take place in similar notational settings. If we return to the ideas found in Piazzolla’s 1954 ‘Decalogue’ we find that he did outline that his ethos for the creation of *tango nuevo* would not be only up to the performer to improvise his scores, but that his notation would be an integral part of that improvisation. This ethos still seems highly relevant within a recording made 35 years from when his original



objective was written. And lastly, it would also seem that even the ‘erudite’ score of *Asleep*, written to be played with a western string quartet, can also be seen as an arrangement ready for original and creative renditions. More importantly, this strongly suggests that Piazzolla’s scores are indeterminate and flexible in combination with the notational information that he provides for the performer across his melodic writing.

**Five Tango Sensations**  
No. 1  
*Asleep* Astor Piazzolla

**Muy moderato (crotchet = 80)**

Published bandoneon part  
Solo ad. lib.

As performed by Piazzolla  
(blank bars indicate there was no embellishment change)

**Figure 6.24** A comparison analysis of Piazzolla’s recorded performance to the notation of *Asleep* (no. 1), *Five Tango Sensations*, bars 1–52.

## Conclusions

This chapter has given an account of a new way to approach the melodic line within Piazzolla’s published scores from the last decade of his life – as flexible,

indeterminate and as a platform from which new improvisations such as ornamentation can occur. The purpose of this chapter was to set out an alternative framework with which to understand the *6 Etudes* by exploring uses of the ‘and/and’ model. In particular, this chapter drew upon the findings of numerous scholars that the ‘vital cultural practices’ of the compositional process should not be separated from understanding a score in which written improvisation occurs, and can provide new insight into score study. Such vital practices included the tripartite score process and historical accounts by the composer and his colleagues, all of which can provide evidence with which to explore *Etude 4* further.

Moving away from the idea that the spontaneity imagined by the composer was only a process of ‘feel based’ playing, this chapter gives evidence that Piazzolla composed and performed within similar frameworks within his melodic writing, but that this notation is equally connected with wider tango devices found in tango literature such as inter-idiomatic borrowing and earlier vocal styles.

While this chapter focused on ornamentation specifically, this does not mean that the use of ‘vital cultural practices’ discussed here should be seen as fixed, ‘authentic’, or all-inclusive. Instead, like the cultural contexts that shape them, they should be seen as complex and ever-changing, providing a path for new models by which to approach this notation. A number of areas fell beyond the scope of this thesis and still need consideration. Further research could be done in other areas in which Piazzolla used ‘spontaneous’ means of expression in his melodies, both in the score and in his performances of them. For example, a common practice that was not explored in this chapter was the multiple uses of expressive *fraseo* through timing, rhythmic alterations, and the use of a wide variety of un-notated articulations – all of which could also emerge as important spur-of-the-moment additions to the musical line. Further ways that Piazzolla used ornamentation beyond this small study would point to a wider understanding of the framework in which he worked. There is also a need for more examination across more of his compositional periods for a larger perspective from which to understand the composer-performer relationship at different points across his career.

The findings of this chapter highlight ways in which performers of Piazzolla’s music can apply the tripartite sequence to the *6 Etudes* as well as other works. For example, in one’s own rearrangement of *Etude 4* it would not seem remiss to add a

glissando, repeated notes, and passing tones in keeping with similar functions as part of a set framework that Piazzolla already provides within his scores and his own performances.

Returning to the conundrum I faced in my rendition of *Café 1930* for a conservatoire exam, or the lack of added embellishments by western flautists seen in the analysis of western recordings, the results above indicate that adding a spontaneous glissando (as well as other embellishments used by the composer) would not have been inappropriate within the wider cultural practice in which the composer worked. Additionally, to do so becomes a way in which the performer can embody the spirit of *gracia* that Piazzolla encouraged from his musicians and his colleagues, all as part of a wider creative outlook for performing these etudes.

This is not to say that to perform Piazzolla's erudite scores 'as is', with no changes to the score should be seen as 'inappropriate' or even be said to be lacking a tango essence in its more determinate reading. One can still capture the 'extras' – after all, Piazzolla did intricately notate some of them. His melodic writing is often so beautifully involved and rich that one can read it 'as is' and one would still have the essence of tango as the core of its musical style. Yet not to consider additional and spontaneous gestures to the notated score would be to miss all the other creative opportunities of numerous melodic possibilities that can emerge.

## Chapter 7: Rhythmic Ornamentation

Due to the technical demands required by the score, *Etudes 1, 3, 5, and 6* have often appeared as competition repertoire. Multiple repeated notes, arpeggiated flourishes, long glissandi, and rapid octave displacements characterise much of the notation of these movements (Figures 7.1 to 7.4). When played at Piazzolla's given tempo marks, the music requires the performer to have highly developed skills for a fine reading: fast finger technique, swift double tonguing, a crisply executed low register, strong lip flexibility, and impeccable embouchure control for quick octave jumping.

(Marcato, crotchet = 138)  
Bar 37

42

47

**Figure 7.1** *Etude 1*, bars 37–51.

Molto marcato e energico, crotchet = 138  
bar 27

31

35

38

**Figure 7.2** *Etude 3*, bars 27–39.

(♩ = 120)

7

13

18

23

*f*

*ff*

*mf*

*p*

*ff*

*fz*

*ff*

8

13

Figure 7.3 Etude 5, bars 1–26.

(Avec anxiété, crotchet = 132)

bar 52

55

60

65

69

*p*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

Figure 7.4 Etude 6, bars 52–69.

### Initial Perceptions of *Etude 5*

As a result of Piazzolla's notational style perhaps it is unsurprising that *Etude 5* (partly shown in Figure 7.3) was one of three unaccompanied flute solo requirements of the United State's National Flute Association (NFA) choice for the highly prestigious Young Artist Competition in 2012 (NFA, 2011).<sup>151</sup> The score list for this read:

1. Johann Sebastian Bach: Solo für Flöte a-moll, BWV 1013, III. Sarabande, no repeats, with ornamentation (Edition Breitkopf 8550)
2. Shulamit Ran: *East Wind* (Theodore Presser)
3. Astor Piazzolla: *Tango Etude No. 5* for flute solo (Henry Lemoine)

How *Etude 5* fits within a wider picture of the flute canon, even in this instance, lies at the heart of demonstrating how the etude is contextualised, and then approached by western players for performance. The jury's score choices in this round are to usually name two standard 'classics' of the repertoire – one pre-twentieth century work<sup>152</sup> and then generally a more 'contemporary' selection written in the twentieth or twenty-first century.<sup>153</sup> The third choice is also an oft-performed 'standard' of the literature – although the choice often reflects a musical style from another, perhaps unfamiliar musical genre, one outside a 'western' tradition.<sup>154</sup> This framework was present in the given list that year.

J.S. Bach's *Sarabande* represents the time-honoured, standard core material selection; this piece specifically is often seen as an essential standard in any western flautist's musical education, often called '*the Partita*'.<sup>155</sup> The nature of the precise

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<sup>151</sup> This contest for those under the age of thirty is the 'crème de la crème' for an aspiring flautist, a pinnacle standard to achieve that usually will jumpstart one's classical flute career within the United States. The winner receives \$5,000USD, a write-up in the *Flutist Quarterly*, and a full recital at the following year's competition. Hundreds of applicants apply each year in the hope of competing. Twenty-five entrants make it past the first 'Qualifying' round' to progress to a 'Live Preliminary' round. The repertoire then is then performed unaccompanied at the convention in front of a jury consisting of professional flautists.

<sup>152</sup> For example, other years have included Jacques Hotteterre, *Échos* (1708), C. P. E. Bach, *Sonata in A Minor for Solo Flute* (1747) and Nicolò Paganini, *24 Caprices, Op. 1, #21 in A Major* (1805–1809).

<sup>153</sup> For example, other years have included Edgard Varèse, *Density 21.5* (1936/1946), and John La Montaine, *Sonata for Flute Solo, Op. 24* (1957).

<sup>154</sup> For example, other years have included Katherine Hoover's *Kokopelli* (1990) and Wil Offerman's *Honami for Solo Flute* (1994).

<sup>155</sup> Described as '*the Partita*' in the repertoire by Anderson, 2002. William Bennett's quote for British Flute Society Journal about performing this piece in a 'masterclass' supports this sentiment: 'you have



Breitkopf (Urtext) edition chosen by the jury calls for the performer to engage with creative manipulation of the notation through knowledge of baroque ornamentation style.

The ‘contemporary’ classic in this year was *East Wind* by Shulamit Ran, which has entered the modern flute canon since being commissioned for the final round of this same competition in 1988. Her score entails intricate notation that requires a detailed placement of extended techniques, such as key spits, key clicks, and pitch bends. With such detailed writing, Ran leaves the execution and resulting sound effect of the extended technique to the ingenuity of the flautist. She writes to the performer that ‘a considerable measure of freedom, temporal and gestural, may be introduced, and a prevailing sense of fantasy is to be aimed for’ (Ran, 1987, ‘Performance Notes’).

Regardless of the word ‘tango’ in the title, and its placement by the NFA as a score representing a non-western, ‘other’ musical genre, *Etude 5*, the third selection, does not obviously require the performer to creatively manipulate the notation in the way that the other two selections might have necessitated. For example, because of its relatively straightforward notational style, it lacks any indication that extended techniques would invite the performer to engage with creating new sound effects (as in *East Wind*). Nor does it seem to have opportunities to exhibit one’s musical ingenuity by displaying ornamentation and mannerisms from a wider musical framework (as in the *Sarabande*).

Perhaps due to this perception, American flautist Laura Kaufman, the first place winner of the NFA Young Artist’s Competition that year, reflects about her first impressions, and then dissatisfaction with the score when preparing it for the jury:

When I first started learning the Etude, I have to admit I was quite sceptical of the piece. Without any background knowledge, or listening to any recordings – it seemed quite boring ... At first I was relying completely on exactly what was written on the page, and although I was doing all of the dynamics, playing it rhythmic, etc. ... it was sounding really straight-laced and the style was completely square (Kaufman, personal communication by email, 14 May 2013).

Kaufman indicated that a more rewarding approach to *Etude 5* would have to draw on outside knowledge, for example, by listening to recordings or through researching

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in your hands one of music’s greatest treasures. Respect it. Honour it (don’t mess around with it too much!)’ (Bennett, 2011, p. 19).

further performance contexts. Yet, unfamiliarity with tango style, as well as not wanting to jeopardise her chances in the competition, resulted in her adopting an interpretive approach influenced by a classical tradition that remained within the boundaries of her musical education:

I honestly was not brave enough to throw myself 100% into ‘tango’ territory. I didn’t feel that I truly understood the style or history enough to go further in that direction. I certainly find the style fascinating and really fun to play – but it’s not a style that is taught in any depth at all in the schools I’ve been too (I certainly wish it were!). Also considering that the competition was judged by classical flutists I didn’t want to do anything that was going to make the judges scratch their heads too much (ibid).

Piazzolla scholar Drago (2009, p. 58) remains critical of any musicians who use a ‘routine tendency to standardize’ a musical reading by using ‘European aesthetic standards’ – though more useful to contextualising Kaufman’s comments is his list of reasons why this may be the case. He points out that besides perceived ‘instrumental taboos’ by performers to play with ‘ugliness’ or with ‘funny’ sounds’ (ibid., p. 137), tango scholarship is still in its early stages and the style has been mostly an oral practice (ibid., p. 58). Only recently has a systemised methodical teaching method become available (ibid.). Furthering Drago’s observations, it can be said that Kaufman’s idea of listening to recordings and acquiring ‘background knowledge’ to understand tango style was *solely* approached within a western framework. She would not have considered Piazzolla’s own performances as an inspiration, or even other tango scores for wider contextualisation. Instead, she drew ideas from a live performance that she had found on YouTube by Claudio Barile (2013), principal flautist and soloist of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic. She recalls upon watching his video:

I realized how interesting this etude could sound. I understood straight away that I was missing the exaggeration of the accents – and the consequence of that exaggeration which is a subtle swinging on the rhythm. The style was the hardest thing to master. To communicate the style to the point that I understood it, I had to go much further with the accents than was comfortable. I had to figure out how to communicate the flow/rhythm of the style – a somewhat difficult task since it’s written without accompaniment. It would have probably been much easier with some sort of rhythm instrument. Every day I worked on it, I got slightly more comfortable with the swing of it, and also more adventurous with taking some



liberties with the runs to make them a little more dramatic (like the run in bar 13) (Kaufman, personal communication by email, 14 May 2013).<sup>156</sup>

As a result, Kaufman's quest for new ideas about what she was 'missing' in the rhythmic flow was drawn from a classical player who pushed her musical boundaries enough to make the notation less 'boring', yet remained within a style that she guessed would still be acceptable by the jury. Previous chapters have discussed how performers from any genre tend to work with the boundaries of what constitutes an 'acceptable' interpretation. This practice can be seen here to reflect Kaufman's further decision to make her interpretation more rewarding to play.

### *A Recording Analysis of Performances of Etude 5 by Western Flautists*

Of course one cannot say that Kaufman's creation of rhythmic expression represents the collective view of how western flute players might approach the score of *Etude 5*. A simple recording analysis could suggest further methods might be employed by performers that capture the 'flow', 'style', and 'swing' to add rhythmic flair to one's performance.

#### *Methodology*

A simple comparative listening analysis was made on several different occasions in multiple listenings to each performance. The manner in which flute players conveyed a sense of rhythmic 'flow' through tempo choice, rubato, vibrato style, articulation changes, accent exaggeration, and note lengths that warranted further discussion was noted. As this was a relatively basic study, the purpose was to gain a general understanding of how flautists might use manipulative techniques to create such an effect; thus every performative detail was not accounted for in this instance.

The BPM data was obtained using the software Sonic Visualiser. Each recording of *Etude 5* was individually opened in a waveform pane and the 'Time Layer Instants' counter was manually configured using keyboard clicks to indicate where the main beats of the bar occurred. Once these time markers were in place, it was possible to check visually whether the assigned beats were correct, and edit any

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<sup>156</sup> To support Kaufman's conclusions, her comment about hearing the exaggerated accents in Barile's playing of *Etude 5* has ties to the empirical accent data found in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.22). One can recall that in an analysis of the decibel contrast between the accented note and the adjacent non-accented note, Barile was one of the players that had the largest degree of difference in accent 'contrast' between the two notes.

misplaced beats that occurred with the simple ‘Edit’ tool. After confirming the accuracy of the beat points, the BPM was found by counting the inserted clicks over a fifteen-second sequence and multiplying this number by four to obtain a general BPM (Figure 7.5).

Artist name	Album title	Label	Album Release	Nationality of Performer	BPM
Poulain, Loic	Astor Piazzolla	Mandala/ Harmonia Mundi	1997	French	120
Banile, Claudio	Historia del Tango, Tango-Etudes, y Otros	Irco- El Arca de Noe	2011	Argentine	120
Jutt, Stephanie	Mckinley, Griffes, Piazzolla, Jolivet	GM Recordings	1990	American	124
Helasvuo, Mikael	Piazzolla: History of the Tango, 5 Piezas & 6 Etudes Tanguistiques	Ondine	1992	Finnish	124
Toepper, Irmgaard	Piazzolla: Complete Music for Flute and Guitar	Naxos	1998	German	128
Le Grand, Catherine	Inspirations: Music for Solo Flute	In1Breath	2001	American	136
Najfar, Reza	Tango Appassionato	Novalis	2003	Iranian	136
Barboza, Marcelo	Tangos & Choros: Flute Music From Argentina and Brazil	Meridian Records	2003	Brazilian	144
Gallois, Patrick	Piazzolla For Two	Deutsche Grammophone	1996	French	152
Daroux, Cécile	Astor Piazzolla: Histoire Du Tango	Harmonia Mundi	1999	French	152
Zucker, Laurel	Inflorescence II: Music for Solo Flute	Cantilena Records	2003	American	152
Fabbriani, Roberto	Histoire Du Tango	Phoenix Classics	2010	Italian	156

**Figure 7.5** A list of the sixteen commercial recordings available of *Etude 5*, sorted by BPM.

### *Results and Discussion*

Piazzolla’s given speed of crotchet = 120BPM was not always upheld; as outlined in the data in Figure 7. 5, a large majority of the flautists in the survey chose to go faster than this tempo marking, up to 156 BPM. Qualitative insights from each individual flautist might lend more insight into this tempo choice, but overall it could be said that the faster speed created a more ‘virtuosic’ and rhythmically ‘exciting’ reading than those taken at the given speed.

Secondly, as one might expect, flautists used *rubato*, note lengths, vibrato style, articulation changes, and accent exaggeration to varying degrees. Zucker’s recording was highly notable because although she chose one of the fastest tempos, she also employed the most continuous use of *rubato* throughout her reading. This combination manipulated the overall pulse quite dramatically, creating a fast-changing, and unending sense of ‘push and pull’ throughout the whole of the movement.

The notated holds (*fermatas*) appear as a place where *rubato* could occur –

specifically that at bar 22, which marks the start of the ‘B’ section. This notational area has a direct effect on the overall sense of flow in the opening section, with the combination of the hold followed by the breath comma. Many performers (Helasvuo, Jutt, LeGrand, Barboza, Gallois, and Barile) held the pitch, G6, for the length indicated (three and a half beats) followed by a quick breath, ignoring the opportunity to insert a larger pause between musical sections. In contrast, Daroux, Toepper and Najfar lengthened the hold and treated the breath notation more like a miniature *caesura* for a more dramatic effect to enter the new ‘B’ section.

It was notable that vibrato was present in every single recording, even if it varied in both pitch fluctuation and speed across the twelve samples. Equally, it helped shaped the rhythmic ‘swing’ of a phrase when it was used as a ‘colour’ effect, to ‘highlight’ certain notes. Vibrato was used in this way by Helasvuo, LeGrand, and Poulain on accented notes, though not always on longer note durations (such as the hold in bar 22). Other flautists such Fabbriani and Daroux did the exact opposite, avoiding any vibrato except on longer note values, such as the aforementioned hold at bar 22. Others used vibrato more homogeneously, placing it on most note durations, whether long or short such, as demonstrated by Zucker and Gallois.

Articulation changes from those notated in the score were few, but mostly included the elimination (or addition) of slurs to help highlight a rhythmic idea. For example Barile and Najfar often added a slur to notes following the accents when it was ‘missing’, which helped to highlight any given rhythmic cell. Equally, Najfar ignored the slurs in the last bars of the piece, and opted for double tonguing, resulting in a more ‘percussive’, ‘emphatic’ ending.

Supporting previous data from the analysis of accent interpretation found in Chapter 4, it is unsurprising that in his recording of *Etude 5*, Barile exaggerated the accented notes more than any player with regards to extended note length, volume, and vibrato when the notation occurred. On the opposite spectrum was Zucker, who used a more homogenous approach, and in general lengthened all notes for a ‘legato’ effect, whether accented or not. Barboza used a combination of accent styles in correspondence with the ABA format. He alternated between two completely different readings of accentuation – sometimes with shortened notes, or at times all completely legato, similar to that of Zucker.

Lastly, the most divergent interpretation came from Daroux in five bars of the

'B' section. Though the rest of her reading shared expressive qualities with other players, in this small section she added various mordents and pitched key clicks to correlate with the notation already in place, resulting in a more 'spontaneous' reading that also highlighted certain accents. She was the only flautist who not only added new ornamentation, but also added extended techniques to the score. This interpretation is significant as it differed from the majority of the manipulation techniques that were used to create a rhythmic expression, such as those employed by Kaufman and others.

A more detailed quantitative analysis of the timing effects of 'flow' and 'swing' over a larger compositional range, and across several instrumental readings, could point to wider trends on the micro-level. Yet this nominal study was still useful in that it created a general sense of how rhythmic expression was conveyed. Similar to Kaufman, who drew on familiar contexts when approaching the score, this analysis revealed that performers predominantly chose methods of rhythmic expression that would fall within normative western performing contexts, even if there were no overriding or 'definitive' manner in which Piazzolla's notation was interpreted. Each performer's use of tempo choice, rubato, vibrato style, articulation changes, accent exaggeration, and note lengths was unique, yet remained within the style of western performance frameworks.

Daroux's interpretation, however, sets the stage for further exploration. Although it differs from the other recordings in the analysis, her additions in the 'B' section are not so far removed from the 'vital cultural practices' that contribute to 'rhythmic flow' and 'swing' within tango contexts. It will be argued further that stylistically appropriate ornamentation (not so very different than the framework that one would use within J.S. Bach's *Sarabande*), and the creative use of extended sound 'effects' (such as those required for Ran's *East Wind*) would not be so unusual when the score is viewed through the tripartite sequence. Exploration of *Etude 5* will include 1) the rhythmic tango melody, 2) the 'composed-in' ornamentation already in place within the score, and 3) a variety of ornaments and sound effects integral to the creation of swing and mugre. To do so negates an initial view of the notation as 'boring' and 'square', and instead calls upon the performer to use ingenuity to convey rhythmic expression.

### **The Rhythmic Tango Melody**

*Etudes 1* and *5* (in their entirety) and *3* and *6* (within the ‘A’ sections only) have notational properties that fit descriptions of what pedagogical tango manuals describe as a ‘rhythmic melody’. Different to the ‘expressive’ melody discussed in Chapter 6, rhythmic melodies are specifically said to be recognised when melodic phrases are embellished with accents or staccato notation, or other improvisational devices – whether written in the score or added by the performer (Fain, 2010 p. 34; Gallo, 2011, pp.17–19). Unlike the elongated, slurred passages in expressive melodies, additional characteristics of the rhythmic melody are that when slurs are notated, they only join other notes for a maximum of two sounds; if the notes are semiquavers, three or four notes might be joined together (Fain, *ibid*; Gallo, *ibid*). It can be similarly noted that all of these characteristics readily appear in Piazzolla’s rhythmic notation within the *6 Etudes*.

The descriptions by Fain and Gallo that pinpoint where a rhythmic tango melody occurs are highly applicable to the etudes, though personal experience has shown that this is not a straightforward task. It is not always the case that the accents, staccatos or even slurs are notated with such precision (if at all) in the basic tango scores that might circulate amongst musicians. Additionally, in an ensemble setting, rhythmic and expressive melodies can be played simultaneously, and overlap each other; within a solo work, as is demonstrated in *Etudes 3* and *6*, rhythmic melodies and expressive melodies are found within the same movement. Such factors can make locating the style of a rhythmic or expressive melody problematic.

An example that demonstrates limited notational details within a score can be seen in Wyman’s *The Tango Fake Book: Tango melodies and chords ‘a la parrilla’* (2006/7). In his version of the classic tango by Gerardo Matos Rodríguez, *La Cumparsita* (1916) (p. 36), one can see that no articulation marks or improvisational devices are given in the reduced score (Figure 7.6). Monk’s advice can be more helpful in this situation. He explains that even repeated equal and consecutive figures – such as a string of quaver rhythms – signifies that a rhythmic melody is being utilised (Monk, 2009, pp. 38–39).

**LA CUMPARSITA.**  
TANGO

*Gerardo Hernán Matos Rodríguez (1916)*  
*transcr. maw*

**Figure 7.6** The ‘A’ section of Rodríguez’s *La Cumparsita*.

### *Contextualising Improvisational Practices within Rhythmic Tango Melodies*

Similar to the treatment of a notated expressive melody, there is an acknowledged custom by tango musicians that one needs to add in *yeites*, the ‘extra’ contributions not found in the score, to make a rhythmic melody ‘more interesting’ (Monk 2009, p. 38). As a way of rearranging an existing score, this practice is discussed in numerous tango performance manuals, which advise a judicious addition of accents, *arrastrés*,<sup>157</sup> trills, mordents, turns, rhythmic variations, glissandi, extended techniques, percussive effects, and change of octaves (Salgán, 2001, pp. 46, 87–88; Monk 2009, p. 38; Fain, 2010, pp. 70–77; Gallo, 2011, pp. 102–9). Gallo gives advice about ornamentation, in that these effects

may be written in the score, but [it] is possible to add and/or change them spontaneously. It is possible for a solo to have no written ornaments. In that case performers can play them as they like in order to emphasize the melodic discourse (Gallo, 2011, p. 102).

Thus it could be said that the notation that characterises *Etude 5* to entail such virtuosity from the flute player – multiple repeated notes, arpeggiated flourishes, long glissandi and octave displacement – all demonstrate a form of ‘composed-in ornamentation’, a notated form of ‘extra contributions’ to the melodic line. Of course these figures could be read solely ‘as is’, but applying Gallo’s approach would entail that these new ones could be added, or existing ones substituted for others.

Gallo notes (2011, p. 102) that alterations of the rhythmic line are not included

<sup>157</sup> Which Salgán (2001, pp. 87–88) translates into English by calling it ‘The Slide’ in his manual, but will be called by its more common name as the *arrastré* in future discussions.

haphazardly. This practice, emerging from early tango styles, has ‘particular rules’ – one adds ornaments to ‘highlight notes or ideas’ and one should use them carefully so as not ‘overload the discourse’ (ibid.). In particular, these additions serve as a percussive technique that contributes to the overall ‘swing’. Passing tones, flourishes, mordents, repeated notes, and chromatic lead-ins can all be seen to emphasise down beats, and strengthen accents (as discussed as in Fain, 2010, pp. 70–77; Gallo, 2011, pp. 102–9). The frustration Kaufman had with *Etude 5* in figuring ways ‘to communicate the flow/rhythm of the music, and that it would have been ‘much easier’ with some sort of ‘rhythmic instrument’ can be eased with a new perspective on the performer’s role: as previously discussed, tango music generally does not use percussion, so instrumentalists have to become their own rhythm section by adding such ornamentation. An example of this can be demonstrated by descriptions of Piazzolla’s own percussive playing style. According to Leon Jacobson, the percussionist from the Opera Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires

Astor had a good deal of strength, especially in his left hand, with which he played diabolically well. He was left-handed but had complete mastery in both hands. With his instrument he had *diction*, with emphasis on every note he played ... staccato when necessary ... everything properly accented, syncopated—rather like a good percussion player. He played percussively not only in the rhythmic sections with slower cadences, when he played every note as if he were hitting it, or pushing it (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 161).

Piazzolla also discussed this technique in a 1989 interview with percussionist and composer Charles Amirkhanian (CA) for United States’ National Public Radio (NPR):

**CA:** (43:10) I notice in your ensemble, when you travel, there’s this incredible percussive feeling, and yet there is no drummer in the group, but you use a lot of extended techniques, we would call them in classical music, hitting the instruments and so forth. How did that develop?

**Piazzolla:** Well that’s ... when I learned to play ... I was a baseball player when I was a kid. (Audience laughter) I was a good pitcher and my left hand is very strong. This was [sic] the effects we did. (Here he demonstrates percussive techniques that involve hitting the bandoneón with his hands) It doesn’t break!

We tried to get, as we don’t have – our culture, the Argentine culture, it is not the same as the Brazilian culture. There is an African blood in the Brazilian culture. That’s why they have a good, important percussion in their music, and we don’t have nothing [sic] of percussion. We don’t have drums in tango. That’s why bandoneons are the ‘one’, as Aaron Copland said once

when he went to Argentina. He heard a typical Argentine orchestra – I think it was mine. He was at a place called ‘The Tango Bar’, and I was playing there. I was 22 or 23 years old and in came Aaron Copland. Of course I knew him, because of course, I was a musician. I said Aaron Copland came in, and nobody knew who was [sic] Aaron Copland! Who is Aaron Copland? I said, ‘he is a musician’, I couldn’t explain anymore. (Audience laughter) Well, let’s leave it that way! (more audience laughter).

So he came and discovered something I’d never discovered. It was that the bandoneons, they were playing in four (makes sound effect by singing ‘blump blump blump blump’) – that was the percussion. And the tango orchestras – let’s say they play – (moves away from microphone to pick up his bandoneón) I am going to play the bad [sic] way now. (Demonstrates three bars of *marcato* crotchets in 4/4 time). So that was the rhythm of the drum, and that is what he discovered, and I never discovered it. I never knew it.

**CA:** About as much fun as playing a tuba.

**Piazzolla:** Well ... yes. (Amirkhanian, 1989).

It would seem that as a means to break away from what he termed a ‘bad’ way of percussive marking (which for him was a rather stereotypical rhythmic support line of four crotchet downbeats), Piazzolla sought innovative ways that departed from traditional marking techniques. Upon composing his tangos without the use of percussion instruments for his Second Quinteto, he commented about the challenge and creativity required for such compositional writing:

The fact that I don’t have percussion, too forces me to evolve; I have to *invent* my percussion with the violin, the bandoneon, the guitar’ (Azzi and Collier, 2000, p. 206, emphasis in original).

But it could also be said that he also demonstrated innovative use of these techniques through improvisation, beyond the notated score, as Azzi and Collier further describe:

Piazzolla’s percussion effects were also achieved, more directly, with the rings he wore on his fingers. ... [His] bandoneon was always the first instrument to provide the ‘swing’ he wanted all his ensembles to display, partly through his own ability to improvise: here he took risks and did not play it safe. His *arrastres* (drags), his anticipatory hints to the rest of the band, were particularly expressive (ibid., p. 161).

Such improvisatory effects also contribute to a sense of *mugre* when certain musical techniques are played within the rhythmic line. One can recall previously that



mugre was described by Gallo (2011, p. 165) as ‘intentions, noises, clusters and percussion added to make the sounds “dirty”’. Similarly Gonzalez writes:

Mugre is defined in the musical sense as a set of certain intentional defects, that are ‘effects’ of different techniques that varying tango musicians utilise according to their instrument, to give a sensation of a ‘muddy’ sound. All these effects collaborate to build ‘la mugre’; some accents, attacks, and other percussive effects are directly baptized as *la chicharra* (‘the buzzer’), *la guitarrita* (‘the little guitar’), ‘the canyengue effect’, *el látigo* (‘the whip’), *el tambor* (‘the drum’), etc (Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 37).

Thus it will be suggested that Piazzolla’s rhythmic ornamentation (notated in the score or added by the performer) becomes an opportunity to inhabit the the role of a percussive instrument as an extended practice of accentuation. It is also culturally important when seen as linked to the creation of mugre in a musical setting. This can specifically be demonstrated using *Etude 5*.

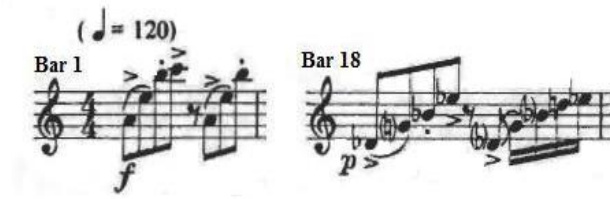
### **‘Composed-in’ Ornamentation within *Etude 5***

#### ***An Ornamentational Analysis of the Score of Etude 5***

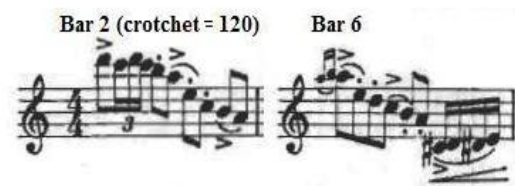
As shown in previous chapters, Piazzolla shapes a variety of rhythmic patterns through detailed accentuation. Similarly in *Etude 5*, three generally reoccurring rhythmic patterns appear throughout in several variations: 3+2+3 (Figure 7.7), 3+3+2 (Figure 7.8), and a 4+4 (Figure 7.9). Piazzolla also uses slight variations and combinations of these within a bar, for example a 4+2+2 (Figure 7.10), or a 2+2+2+2 (Figure 7.11). Using the model of a tripartite sequence (not so dissimilar to the ‘reduction’ of an expressive melody), a type of ‘skeletal score’ can emerge from the overall rhythmic cell in each bar.

#### *Methodology*

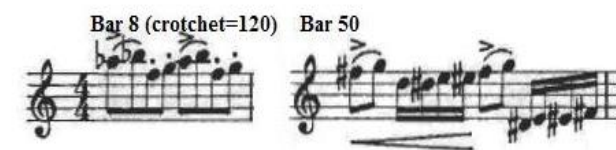
The basic rhythmic cell of each bar in *Etude 5* was found based on the accentuation pattern of the underlying quaver, as demonstrated in Figures 7.7 to 7.11. Once the rhythmic pattern of each bar was identified, any notation that was added beyond this pattern was then classified as a form of ‘written embellishment’. Each figure was then named and categorised (Figure 7.12).



**Figure 7.7** An underlying 3+2+3 pattern in *Etude 5*, bars 1 and 18.



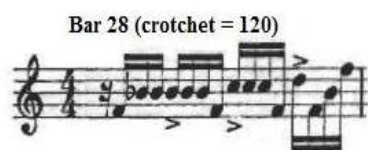
**Figure 7.8** An underlying 3+3+2 pattern in *Etude 5*, bars 2 and 6.



**Figure 7.9** An underlying 4+4 pattern in *Etude 5*, bars 8 and 50.





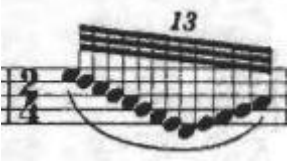











**Figure 7.10** An underlying 4+2+2 pattern in *Etude 5*, bar 22.



**Figure 7.11** An underlying 2+2+2+2 pattern in *Etude 5*, bar 28.

**Figure 7.12** An ornamental analysis of *Etude 5*.

<b>Bar Number:</b>	<b>Notation example:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>When used:</b>
	<b>Passing Tones</b>		
32, 34, 36, 38		Descending diatonic semiquaver passing tones	to connect to an adjacent lower note; at the beginning of the bar; to highlight beginning of new cell
53		Descending diatonic sextuplet passing tone	to connect to an adjacent lower note; when accents are 'missing'
13, 53		Descending diatonic septuplet passing tones	to connect to adjacent lower note; when accents are 'missing'
13		Descending diatonic octuplet passing tones	to connect to an adjacent lower note; when accents are 'missing'
	<b>Flourish</b>		
26		Diatonic flourish using both descending and ascending direction, with 'dominant' pitch as 'landing' note	to establish a tonal centre: to progress towards new key, or to establish cadence; when accents are 'missing'
22, 23, 60, 61		Flourish using both descending and ascending direction, with arpeggiated and chromatic progression	to indicate an implied harmony; when accents are 'missing'

(Bar Number)	(Notation example)	(Description)	(When used)
	<b>Note Repetitions</b>		
28		Note repetition within rhythmic cell	to add movement; to extend accentuation
8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 39, 40, 45, 48		Repeated melody within rhythmic cell	to emphasise melodic idea
14, 16, 18, 20, 54, 56, 58		Rhythmic doubling of melodic line with added 'leading tone' on repetition	to emphasise melodic idea; to emphasise an implied tonal centre
33, 35, 39		Repeated note before resolution	to suspend a note resolution
	<b>Mordents</b>		
2, 4, 25, 42		Triplet mordent	to highlight a melodic moment; on second quaver of cell
6, 30, 46		Appoggiatura mordent	at the beginning of the bar; to highlight a beginning of new rhythmic cell
	<b>Chromatic 'lead-ins'</b>		
6, 30, 46		Ascending chromatic semiquaver 'glissando'	on beat four; starts a m3 below the accented note that it proceeds; to connect phrases; to highlight accented note
11, 50, 51		Ascending chromatic semiquaver passing tones, tongued	On beat two and four; starts a M3 or m3 below the note that it proceeds; to connect phrases; to highlight accented note

### Results

Overall it was found that five general categories of ‘composed-in’ ornamentation were notated: passing tones, flourishes, note repetitions, mordents, and a form of chromatic ‘lead-in’. A brief comparison to the other etudes that also contain rhythmic melodies (*Etudes 1, 3, and 6*) can reveal that the ornaments inserted into the musical line in *Etude 5* are by no means unique to just this movement: they have relevance to a wider notational style.<sup>158</sup> Two excerpts from *Etude 1* (Figure 7.13) can demonstrate this. They reveal strong visual similarities with the ornaments found in the analysis of *Etude 5*, as well as new ones. These include various written turns (bars 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8), diatonic passing tones (bars 2, 4, 6, 8, 22, 24), a chromatic semiquaver ‘lead in’ (bar 22), and appoggiatura mordents (bars 26, 28, and 30).

The image contains two musical excerpts from Etude 1. The top excerpt, labeled 'Décidé (♩ = 138)' and 'mf', shows bars 1-8. It features a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is characterized by frequent mordents and various types of turns. The bottom excerpt, labeled '(Décidé, crotchet = 138) Bar 21' and 'p', shows bars 21-31. It also has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, with a key signature of one sharp. This section includes a chromatic semiquaver 'lead in' and several appoggiatura mordents. Both excerpts are marked with dynamic levels (mf and p) and include fingering numbers (5 and 7) and slurs.

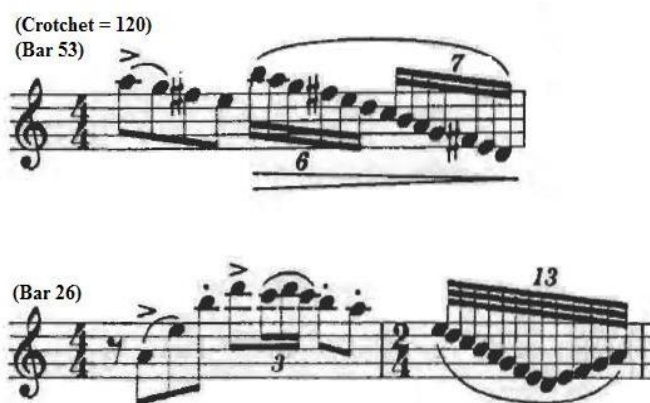
**Figure 7.13** *Etude 1*, bars 1–8, and 21–31.

<sup>158</sup> It is worth noting that the ornamentation used in *Etude 5* functions similarly to those found within Piazzolla’s expressive melodies explored in the previous chapter. This is important, as even within the two ornamental analyses in this thesis, larger structures of their usage can be seen to be evident. For example passing tones, glissandi and flourishes were used to connect adjacent notes, and helped with establishing tonality; repeated notes helped to emphasise an implied tonal centre, and often provides a ‘push’ towards a downbeat resolution.

### *Discussion of the ‘Composed-In’ Ornaments Found in Etude 5*

#### *Passing Tones and Flourishes*

The data showed that passing tones served two overall functions. First, they ‘extended’ the notated accentuation already in place, particularly at the start of the rhythmic cell. Second, although Piazzolla’s rhythmic melodies are mostly shaped by notated accents, one can see that in some bars, accent notation is ‘missing’, and passing tones and flourishes help highlight the cell instead, as a replacement for the accent. For example, bar 53 contains a 4+4 rhythmic cell (Figure 7.14). Instead of marking beat three with an accent, as Piazzolla has done in other bars containing the same polyrhythm, the beat is instead emphasised with diatonic passing tones. Similarly, in bar 26, one can see that a 3+4+2 rhythmic cell occurs over a two-bar segment. Though an accent is not in place to finish marking the rhythmic cell in full, the insertion of a 2/4 bar visually emphasises the down beat on bar 27; a flourish also highlights the closure of the 2+2 cell.



**Figure 7.14** *Etude 5*, bars 53 and 26.

In a wider practice, this can also be seen in the flute line of *Concert d'aujourd'hui* from the *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986) (Figure 7.15). In this excerpt, a recurring 3+3+2 pattern is prevalent. Yet instead of accents to mark the entire cell, the flourish is used in place in bars 43, 44, and 45.

(Presto, molto ritmico, crotchet = 140)

**Figure 7.15** *Concert d'aujourd'hui, Histoire du tango*, bars 41–48, Flute.

### Mordents

The mordents used in *Etude 5* have two different functions: the triplet mordent helps to emphasise melodic content, and the appoggiatura mordent is used to emphasise the beginning of the rhythmic cell. Yet highly relevant in this case, they can be seen as a way to contribute percussively to the melodic line. Gallo (2011, p. 108) explains that when mordents are coupled with accent notation they are there to ‘emphasize the rhythmic charge of the accents.’

An appoggiatura mordent and accentuation occur at the same time in *Etude 5* only on downbeats; the mordents can also be used in general to highlight any portion of the rhythmic cell. This is demonstrated in *Etude 6* (Figure 7. 16), where mordents help emphasise a 2+2+2+2 pattern on beats 1, 2, and 3.

Avec *anxiété* (Crotchet = 132)  
(Bar 18)

**Figure 7.16** *Etude 6*, bar 18.

Additionally, similar to previous discussions of passing tones and flourishes, a mordent helps to emphasise the rhythmic stress of a certain beat when an accent is ‘missing’. An example of this can be seen in *Bordel 1900* (Piazzolla, 1986) (Figure 7.17). The rhythmic pattern from the opening bars draws from the older *milonga* styles that were played in 2/4 time, in which the rhythmic stress would fall on beats

one and two for the purposes of ‘danceability’ (as discussed in Fain, 2010, p. 85). The notated appoggiatura mordent helps to highlight this beat pattern in bar 2, in the place of accent.



**Figure 7.17** *Bordel 1900, Histoire du tango*, bars 1–3, Flute.

### *Chromatic ‘Lead-ins’, and the ‘Cromático’*

The slurred ascending chromatic ‘lead-ins’ found in *Etude 5* are notated on the fourth beat of the bar and can be seen as a ‘preparation’ to an accented note at the start of a new rhythmic pattern, and are a way to connect rhythmic cells. This notation can be likened to a specific figure known by tango musicians as the *cromático*, which Drago (2008, p. 77) translates as a ‘chromatic’, or ‘pick-up’ note. Described as ‘one of the prominent stylistic features of modern tango’ (ibid.), *cromáticos* are also an ‘idiomatic’ element with Piazzolla’s music (ibid. p. 79).<sup>159</sup>

Thus, it is unsurprising that different lengths of *cromático* figures feature in other rhythmic melodies by the composer. For example, chromatic semiquavers and quintuplets appear in *Etude 1*, bar 22 (Figure 7.18) and *Etude 6*, bars 62 and 63 (Figure 7.19), as well as in other compositions by Piazzolla from the same time frame, such as in *Le grand tango*, bar 245 (Piazzolla, 1982) (Figure 7.20) and *Tango suite para dos guitarras*, bar 1 (Piazzolla, 1985) (Figure 7.21).

In *Night Club 1960* from the *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986) (Figure 7.22), although a four note semiquaver *cromático* is notated in bars 20 and 25, it also appears as a two-note chromatic appoggiatura in the guitar line at bars 19–20, and 23–24, which also serves to ‘lead-in’ to the downbeats of the following bars.

<sup>159</sup> It is worth mentioning that Drago (2008, p. 77) analyses the *cromático* as fitting into two categories of their style – whether they are ‘harmonically significant’, or not – though he rightly makes it clear that it is ‘difficult to draw a line between the two’ (ibid.). A differentiation of this kind has not been made in the present analysis. Instead the *cromático* is explored simultaneously as a harmonic and rhythmic tool within wider tango practices, as will be discussed further in this section.





Figure 7.18 *Etude 1*, bars 21–22.



Figure 7.19 *Etude 6*, bars 62–64.



Figure 7.20 *Le grand tango*, bars 245–46, Piano.



Figure 7.21 *Tango no. 1*, *Tango suite para dos guitarras*, bars 1–2, Guitar II.

19 (Deciso, crotchet = 120)

21 *mf*

23 *ff* *rall. ---*

Figure 7.22 *Nightclub 1960, Histoire Du Tango*, bars 19–25, Flute and Guitar.

### The ‘Arrastre’

The notated *cromáticos* seen in the above score examples have numerous parallels with an *arrastre*. According to Gallo (2011, p. 103) this is ‘the most important rhythmic ornamentation’ of all. Equally imperative, this effect is at the heart of how *mugre* and *swing* have often been conceptualised by *tangueros*.

Literally translated as ‘to drag’ a note like a glissando or a ‘slide’, the *arrastre* is notated as an upward (or downward) diagonal line starting from an imprecise point, and appears before the ‘arrival’ note (Figure 7.23). Like the *cromático*, this effect is a means to start, or connect one phrase to another (Monk, 2009, p. 40). According to the musical situation, it can consist of different lengths (for example, as small as only two notes), be ascending or descending in shape, and have numerous ‘starting’ points as its initial pitch (*ibid.*).



**Figure 7.23** Generic *arrastre* notation.

One can see strong visual similarities between the *cromáticos* found within Piazzolla's score examples and the ascending *arrastre* examples demonstrated in Monk's pedagogical manual *El Saxafón en el Tango* (2009, p. 40) (Figure 7.24).<sup>160</sup>



**Figure 7.24** Two examples of *arrastre* notation as published.

## **Improvisational Effects within the Rhythmic Melody and Mugre**

### *Cromáticos/Arrastres and Swing*

Both *cromáticos* and *arrastres* each are said to be played in a certain 'delayed' style that stretches time momentarily and has wider consequences for the creation of tango swing. *Cromáticos* are said to be played 'slightly slower in tempo', 'have a certain laziness about them', and 'gain momentum and shape as the music moves on' (Drago, 2008, p. 79). A similar style of musical interpretation is also made with the *arrastre*, as tango bassist Ignacio Varchausky describes in an interview:

The *arrastre* is generally played with a slight delay (*retraso*) with respect to the tempo of the piece. This generates a feeling of expectation and desire, almost physical in quality, for the

<sup>160</sup> While these examples visually resemble the *cromático* in this instance, *arrastres* do not have to be purely chromatic in character, or even start on beat four. For example, they can also occur on other beats in the bar, such as beat two, or even on up beats as part of 'syncope' pattern (see Salgán, 2001, p. 87)

arrastre to reach the last note and return to correct time. This delay in execution makes the work swing in tango terms (Farris-Thompson, 2005, p. 183).<sup>161</sup>

This effect can also be seen as a rhythmic tool that can be used to extend accentuation and highlight a note. It is said to be a ‘percussion effect’, an ‘attack of anticipation’ to draw attention to a rhythmic pattern (Salgán, 2001, pp. 87–88); it ‘emphasizes articulated beginnings or arrivals at accented sounds’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 103).

Equally, given the strong visual similarities and stylistic approaches between the *arrastre* and the *cromático* found in Piazzolla’s scores, this notation represents additional opportunities to create swing beyond the notated accentuation. For example, the performer can momentarily extend the timing in these areas as another way to mark rhythmic cells. Additionally, comparable to the use of glissandi flourishes and mordents, this is yet another way that Piazzolla demonstrates the emphasis of specific ‘arrival’ point and overall cell within a rhythmic melody.

### *Arrastres and ‘Dirtiness’*

Despite the view that many improvisatory musical sounds contribute to *mugre*, the *arrastre* is often used by musicians to fully capture its ‘essence’. Often it is the first example of musical ‘defects’ that *tangueros* give when describing in tangible musical terms how *mugre* is created. Initial definitions of *mugre* as ‘dirty’, discussed in Chapter 3, equally relate to how the *arrastre* has been described musically. Gonzalez writes:

But one that is so important, that without it the tango could not exist, or at least it could exist as another music. Thus, I’ll try to explain the most important and fundamental of those purported defective effects called: The Arrastre. The initial sound is ugly, it is somewhat indefinite, plastered, dirty, raw, and variable ... that then gradually defines itself as a harmonic sound that shows its intention and clarity, thereby creating suspense or tension prior to the

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<sup>161</sup> While there is much work to be done on the relationships between musical gestures (such as the *arrastre*) and how they are reflected in the dance, it is interesting that the musical *arrastre* (or *barrida*) reflects the ‘walk of tangueros on the dance floor’; a visible gesture of a physical drag, or ‘slur’ of the dancer’s feet can be seen with this move (for example, see Farris-Thompson, 2005, p. 171). Yet additionally, drawing parallels with the musical effect, this languid, yet purposeful movement is not one of quickness, but is a way of ‘suspending’ a partner’s step as the couple’s feet move together and drag across the floor. I remember a dance teacher once said it is to ‘move like a sly cat’ in terms of style and speed.

chord, which is the most characteristic and essential nature of the sound of tango (Gonzalez, 2010a, p. 37).<sup>162</sup>

Fain similarly refers to ‘dirtiness’ in its execution, as well as the tonal obscurity required to make this effect:

When you make an *arrastre*, it should not be with determined notes, but dirty, i.e., a cluster where you cannot hear clearly what the notes are (Fain, personal communication, 11 March, 2011).<sup>163</sup>

Similar accounts echo that the *arrastre* is said to ‘begin with a distant sound’ (Gallo, 2011, p. 103); Salgán (2001, p. 88) writes that ‘it does not require tonal clarity, but rather, on the contrary, is a rhythmical effect of an imprecise sound’.<sup>164</sup> Fain further defines the *arrastre* in her tango manual as

An effect produced by playing early a note or chord with sounds of an indeterminate pitch and duration, which cut off abruptly on reaching the pitch and duration of the written note. This has a striking effect on the rhythmic progression of both the melody and the harmony by blurring the edges of the precise outline of the articulations (Fain, 2010, p. 122).

The overall effect might be roughly notated as shown in Figure 7.25, where the sound can start a quaver or crotchet prior to its arrival point (Fain, 2010, p. 75).<sup>165</sup>



**Figure 7.25** The resulting effect of the *arrastre*, as played.

<sup>162</sup> Original text reads: ‘Pero uno tan importante, sin el cual el tango no podría existir, o en todo caso existiría como otra música. Trataré de explicar entonces al más importante y fundamental de estos supuestos defectos efectos llamados: El Arrastre. Este sonido inicial es feo, tiene que algo de indefinido, empastado, sucio, crudo, variable y que ... luego va definiéndose gradualmente en sonido armónico que muestra su intención y claridad creando de esta manera un suspenso o tensión anterior al acorde, que es el carácter más particular y esencial en el sonido del tango’.

<sup>163</sup> Original text reads: ‘cuando se hace un arrastre, no debe ser con notas determinadas, sino “sucias” o sea, un cluster que no pueda escucharse claramente que notas son’.

<sup>164</sup> In a wider contextualisation, the *arrastre* is not so far removed from jazz jargon ideas of ‘playing dirty’. Alyn Shipton explains it is used to describe a ‘rough’, ‘archaic’ instrumental tone; the complete opposite of ‘playing clean’ (2003(b), p. 147), which is a player who produces as ‘precisely as possible, what appears on the page’, ‘without blue note, or rasps or ‘coarsened intonation’ (Shipton, 2003(b), p. 148).

<sup>165</sup> Figure 7.25 is a variation of two notated explanations found in tango manuals by Salgán (2001, p. 87) and Gallo (2011, p. 104).

How to achieve tonal obscurity or ‘dirtiness’ in the start of the *arrastre*, and then clarity at the end with accented note, is left to the ingenuity of the player.<sup>166</sup> Each instrumentalist uses a range of extended techniques to find their own *arrastre* style (see for example, techniques listed in Salgán, 2001, pp. 87–90; Farris-Thompson, 2005, pp. 182–83; Monk, 2009, p. 40; Gallo, 2011, pp. 103–07). Specifically in relation to flute, *arrastres* can be made by flutter tonguing, pitch slides with jaw and/or tone holes, and un-tongued explosions through use of various syllable shapes with the mouth (see Fain, 2010, pp. 75, 100).<sup>167</sup>

It would not seem inappropriate to use the notated *cromáticos* within Piazzolla’s scores as a platform for harmonic experiment with a more indeterminate playing style, similar to interpreting an *arrastre*. Numerous options exist of how to interpret this notation. For example: a more ‘drawn-out’, ‘lazy’ temporal style could be used at these points; a completely different pitch to what is written could be the starting point of each *cromático*; experiments could be made with an obscure sense of sound when starting each one – these are just a few of the ways to evoke musically a sense of *mugre* as well as contribute to an overall sense of tango swing.

Additionally, given the prominence of *arrastres* in tango melodies and their importance within tango practice, it would not seem out of place to add them to other areas where they would enhance the accented note (as Piazzolla was said to do in his own performances, as described by Jacobson).

### ***Repeated Notes and Percussive Yeites***

Some note repetitions found in the ornamental analysis of *Etude 5* served to emphasise a melodic idea or suspend resolution, at times adding a leading tone with which to support an implied harmony. Note doubling was also used to help mark time and extend accentuation. For example, a string of semi-quaver repeated notes appear with notated accentuation to mark part of a 2+2+2+2 pattern (Figure 7.26). Similar to the ornamentation of the rhythmic cell with mordents, flourishes, and *cromáticos*, repeated notes help create a sense of ‘musical push’ towards the next accented note.

Yet in some instances it would seem that any sense of Piazzolla’s common

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<sup>166</sup> Which is not so far removed from how ‘playing dirty’ varies across instruments in jazz terms (see Shipton, 2003(b), p. 147).

<sup>167</sup> These are all effects that are not unique to tango flute playing, but are commonly used by flautists as general extended techniques in modern repertoire; they have been explained and categorised pedagogically by Robert Dick (1975).

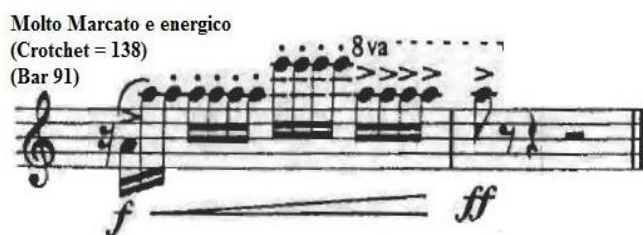
heavily notated accentuation – which would help to mark a wider rhythmic cell – is ‘missing’ altogether, and/or not used uniformly in bars where this occurs. Examples of this can be seen in *Etudes 1, 3, and 6* (Figures 7.27 to 7.29).



**Figure 7.26** *Etude 5*, bar 28.



**Figure 7.27** *Etude 1*, bars 55–56, and 95.



**Figure 7.28** *Etude 3*, bars 91–92.



**Figure 7.29** *Etude 6*, bars 11–12.

Though initially confusing when so much of Piazzolla's rhythmic melodies are visually abundant with accentuation, the presence of repeated notes with few markings can be seen to provide the musician with further opportunities to create a sense of *mugre*. Although a tonally 'pure' articulation style and clean, crisp double tonguing might be expected to denote a high standard of musicianship in classical genres, tango flute players might not choose to play all notes within a rhythmic cell uniformly, or even 'cleanly'. Data found in the accentuation analysis in Chapter 4 revealed that un-accented notes that followed their accented counterparts were played as 'shadow' notes, and had different lengths and decibel levels when performed by tango players.

A similar practice was demonstrated in a lesson in Buenos Aires with tango flautist Victoria Polti (25 September 2010), when I played the opening rhythmic melody of *La muerte del angel*. This section required the use of a syncopated single tongue as well as double-tonguing passages at a faster speed. In a move away from the clear tonguing style I had chosen, Polti suggested that I needed to 'dirty up' all non-accented notes in order to sound like I was giving the music *mugre*. Similar sentiments were expressed by Fain when I asked her for clarification of this idea:

Mugre means *sucio* in tango slang. And in relation to music, for example, when all that there is to play should not be played "clean" (as all sounds equally supported on the flute) (Fain, Paulina, personal communication by email, 11 March 2011).<sup>168</sup>

In a similar fashion, it could be said that repeated note passages which contain few accentuation markings also represent an opportunity to create a marked contrast in articulation style, as well as sonic representations of *mugre*.

This effect would be in direct contrast to one of the performance goals that a classical flautist might have when choosing tonguing styles in order to avoid 'untidiness' and 'ugly articulation' (Wye, 2002, p. 22).<sup>169</sup> One of Kaufman's frustrations with *Etude 5* when preparing it for the NFA competition was her struggle

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<sup>168</sup> Original text reads: 'Mugre significa 'Sucio' en slang tanguero. Y tienen que ver en la música, por ejemplo, cuando todo lo que hay que tocar no hay que tocarlo "limpio" (como todos los sonidos apoyados por igual en la flauta)...'

<sup>169</sup> For example, there are numerous commentaries on 'refined' flute playing and articulation: 'The tongue's encounter with the palate should produce no extraneous noises. Spitting and explosive attacks are unnecessary and indicate that the air is being expelled instead of released' (Morris, 1991, p.30); with single and double tonguing one 'must make sure that all notes have the same quality as the attack' (Debost, 2002, p. 250); 'move the tongue quickly, neatly and as little as possible' (Wye, 2002, p. 22).



to make a ‘clean’ attack with a homogeneous articulation quality on all notes. She describes that:

Cracking notes was a major issue because of the wide intervallic leaps and the corresponding accents between them. The piece quickly exposed any of the problems I was having with articulation-(it also highlighted problems I didn’t know I had!). I had to be extremely conscious of my jaw placement before I articulated the first note (Kaufman, L., personal communication by email, 14 May 2013).

Yet in an approach to the etudes different to a western one, the ability to execute a clean, precise articulation can become less worrisome. One might experiment with different ways of adding ‘dirtiness’ to tongued articulations. For example, a ‘less focused’ embouchure position would evoke a ‘grainier’, ‘muddier’ tone, and when combined with a ‘less-pointed’, ‘softer’ tonguing style could be an initial means to achieve such effects.

The repeated notes could also provide another opportunity for the essence of *mugre* to appear through percussive effects. Such sounds are also said to be evoked from the percussive ‘defects’ that *tangueros* use, such as the *chicharra*, *golpe*, *lija*, *tambor*, *bongo*, etc. (echoing Gonzalez). Piazzolla would often ask the performer to experiment percussively with their instrument when playing his scores. This is demonstrated in Staveacre’s documentary (2005), which features interviews of many of the musicians that worked with the composer.

Having first used a classical drummer (Leon Jacobson), Piazzolla chose the Argentine jazz drummer Enrique ‘Zurdo’ ‘Lefty’ Roizner to perform with him in the 1980s with a full-scale orchestra (Staveacre, 2005, Biography, 0:38:10).<sup>170</sup> Despite being given a score already notated with percussion, Roizner recalls that the composer gave him much freedom, yet also challenged him to make new interpretations:

He let the drum-kit discover or create things that he liked. He made me work and think. It wasn’t easy for me (ibid., 0:39:05).

Roizner experimented with the different timbres the drum-kit could make; for example, he said he decided to add a beat to the bass tom-tom as a new experiment with sound. When he demonstrated this to Piazzolla, the composer supported his idea

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<sup>170</sup> The documentary shows footage specifically of a 1983 concert at Teatro Colon with its resident philharmonic orchestra playing with Piazzolla’s expanded Quinteto (Staveacre, Biography, 0:38:54; Azzi and Collier, 2000, pp. 233–34).

fully and had no problems with such changes, saying with enthusiasm *¡Eso!* [That's it!] (ibid., 0:39:44).

Similarly, pianist Pablo Ziegler, who played with Piazzolla in the Second Quinteto from 1978, spoke about the innovations he has made in changing the notated rhythms:

Rhythmically I have tried to modify the classical cells of the Piazzolla school (3-3-2) expanding the rhythmical figures for two more measures. I am also trying to shift the accents between the melody and the rhythm trying to escape the quadratic rhythm. This has been done only by experimenting and improvising (exercise done with the supervision of Astor for ten years). Now, to improvise on a tango piece comes forth naturally and in an aleatoric way (Granados pp. 98, 2001, citing Pablo Ziegler, 1997/2001).

Perhaps then it is unsurprising that Piazzolla indicates a range of percussive effects in correlation with his notation. For instance, within *Nightclub 1960*, from the *Histoire du tango* (Piazzolla, 1986), although double and single tonguing articulation is marked<sup>171</sup> repeated note figures are indicated as *son grave indéterminé* [they are severely indeterminate] (Figure 7.30). A parallel performance direction and notation occurs in the *Tango suite para dos guitarras* (Piazzolla, 1985), when a string of repeated notes with 'cross' noteheads appear in the 'Guitar 1' line (Figure 7.31). Here Piazzolla advises the performer to 'produce different sounds of percussion, bongo, tambor, etc.'<sup>172</sup> What is interesting is that even in these two small excerpts one can see three different styles of examples of note repetition that are indicated by percussive effects: a repeated groove, a 'free-form' style, and a 'rhythmic accompaniment'.

Firstly, in *Nightclub 1960*, the note repetitions formulate a wider ostinato that functions as an overall rhythmic 'groove', more or less repeated over each bar. The 3+3+2 pattern is generally formed by a one-bar 'riff' that consists of dotted crotchet/quaver/crotchet rest/four semiquavers.

Secondly, in bars 1–8 of *Tango suite para dos guitarras* the notation takes an opposite style. It now evokes an improvisational percussive 'flourish', in which the

<sup>171</sup> It would have seemed unlikely that Piazzolla would have known or bothered to notate with such precision the traditional double tonguing syllables that flute players tend to use, such as a 'Tuh', 'Ti' or 'Too' (for single front stroke), and 'Kuh', 'Ki' or 'Koo' (back stroke), indicated in the score as 'T' and 'K'. Thus it could strongly be assumed that these were not included in the original manuscript, but added later by editor and flautist Pierre-André Valade.

<sup>172</sup> The score reads: *Producir diferentes sonidos de percusión – Bongó, tambor, etc.* (p. 3).

notated rhythms do not follow any set repeated pattern like they did in the excerpt from *Nightclub 1960*. Instead they seem to indicate a ‘free-form’ style of percussive sound, yet always within the boundaries of the overall rhythmic cell. This can be seen since, even within an improvisatory style of notation, the accents always support and align with those that appear in the ‘Guitar 2’ line. When the shift in metre happens at bar 9 to 6/8 time, the sense of a repeated note rhythmic ‘improvisation’ stops. Instead, *golpe* effects are marked, and these highlight both the new rhythmic cell (3+3/3+3+2) and corresponding meter changes.

In applications to the etudes, a variety and combination of rhythmic patterns might be experimented with in passages where consecutive repeated notes occur. For example, improvisations with percussive effects could appear within the framework of the overall rhythmic cell – they could take the shape of a repeated riff, a ‘freeform’ rhythmic solo or simply be an accompaniment in an ensemble setting.<sup>173</sup> Equally, different extended techniques could be used within these passages to mimic a percussion instrument. In relation to flute, this might include key slaps/key clicks, spit tonguing, lip pizzicato, tongue pizzicato, the use of air bursts of different syllable shapes (similar to beat-boxing techniques), or even guttural vocalisations.<sup>174</sup>

**Deciso** (Crotchet = 120)  
Bar 54

57

**Figure 7.30** *Nightclub 1960*, *Histoire du tango*, bars 54–59.

<sup>173</sup> Although it lies beyond the space of this chapter to give a detailed analysis, a variety of all three of these percussive improvisations are demonstrated by Suárez Paz (violin), in Piazzolla’s live performance of *Michelangelo ’70* (Piazzolla, 1986a).

<sup>174</sup> These are all outlined and explained in more detail in contemporary flute playing manuals; see Heiss, 1972, Dick, 1975 and 1986, and Levine and Mitropoulos-Bott, 2002.

## TANGO n. 1

**Allegro** ( $\text{♩} = 120$ ) *libero*      Producir diferentes sonidos de percusion - Bongo - Tambor etc. (a)

Guitar I

*f* D S D S D S D S D S

Guitar 2

*f* *energico*

5

S S D S D D S D S D S D S D S S D S S D S D S

CV CV CV CV CV

(♩ = ♩) Golpe sobre las 6 Cuerdas (b)

D S D S D S S D S S D S D

CVII CII 5

10

Figure 7.31 *Tango no. 1*, *Tango suite para dos guitarras*, bars 1–10, Guitars I&II.

### Conclusions

Initial observations suggested that the score of *Etude 5* be ‘lacking’ in opportunities to add extended techniques or ornamentation in its interpretation when compared to other repertoire on the NFA Young Artists Competition list, *East Wind* and *Sarabande*. Unfamiliarity with tango style, pushing performance boundaries to create ‘swing’, struggles with ‘clean’ articulation, and scepticism about the overall score

were some of the performance issues that Kaufman found when preparing for this competition. Moreover, despite the etude being perceived as part of an ‘unfamiliar’ musical territory, both her interpretation style and the recording analysis revealed that flautists might chose to stick to a purely western approach in rhythmic expression, despite the etudes’ title of ‘tango’.

This chapter has provided evidence that the notation of *Etude 5* and other Piazzolla compositions from the same time provides the performer with numerous opportunities to use ornamentation and improvisation to extend accentuation, emphasise rhythmic patterns, and create elements of swing and *mugre*. Although rhythmic ornamentation already appears to have been notated by Piazzolla, evidence suggests that additional effects can also be added sympathetically by the performer. Ornamentation such as flourishes, mordents, and *arrastres*, as well as extended sound effects, such as an indeterminate articulation style and improvisational percussive sounds, provide creative opportunities for the performer when they view the notation as ‘indeterminate’ within the tripartite sequence.

Of course this study is just a small representation of the many possibilities of improvisational techniques found within wider tango contexts that could be linked to Piazzolla’s notational style. It is limited in scope in addressing certain effects that could specifically be explored in *Etude 5*; there are many other effects in Piazzolla’s wider output that were not addressed here. There is much work to be done as to how Piazzolla’s ‘composed-in’ improvisational style of writing is connected to wider tango rhythmic ornamentation and improvisation. To do so would provide even more potential opportunities for the western performer to gather new ideas about approaching these scores.

Kaufman states her willingness and curiosity to add new techniques in her future readings:

Considering the Piazzolla etudes as a piece of music in the standard flute repertoire – they are appealing and refreshing because of their contrasting style. Particularly in preparing for the NFA competition, it was one of my favorite things to practice because it was much lighter and a lot of fun to practice. I would absolutely be interested in learning about the special effects that are used in the style. Clearly, we should be playing the music as *musicians* and not ‘flute players’. We sometimes have to push beyond the classical restraints of our instruments to accomplish a musical style or sound ... For a recital type performance situation I would

definitely go the extra mile to make it more authentic and enjoyable for the audience  
(Kaufman, personal communication by email, 14 May 2013).

This chapter hoped to be a starting point from which players unfamiliar with tango style might embrace new ways to play Piazzolla's rhythmic melodies, when given a framework to do so. It would seem that western flautists like Kaufman are interested in new approaches, and are willing to try these techniques in future readings. This would only enhance the current charm of the *Etudes* for players and audiences alike.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated how the ‘authentic’ in tango music has been constructed in a variety of multiple contexts as a means to approach the score of Piazzolla’s *6 Etudes* for performance. In this final chapter, the following will be discussed: 1) a summary of key research contributions, 2) wider research themes and their significance, 3) a direct research application to the interpretation and performance of the *6 Etudes*, 4) limitations of the research presented, and 5) future research directions.

### A Summary of Key Research Contributions from Each Chapter

One of the research questions outlined in the introduction was: ‘How does one navigate authenticity and the culture to which the tango is tied if one is an “outsider” when playing these scores’? Chapters 2 and 3 presented a myriad of ways by which authenticity can be viewed. It was argued that tango culture should be explored from many angles, functioning as a process instead of being identified as a fixed object. These two chapters provided an initial approach to how any aspects of tango culture might influence a reading of the etudes.

It was argued in Chapter 2 that the current tango performance research, which only appropriated one version of tango culture with which to construct ‘authentic’ musical readings, is limited in its understanding of the complexity of the genre. Overall this chapter demonstrated that tango authenticity functions in a way that is not necessarily collectively ‘shared’ similarly across nationality and sexuality. It was found that the numerous ways that national identity has been connected to the tango – including the use of locality, isolation through *la tristeza/ el mufarse*, and the tango hero – are all constructed through unfixed notions of authenticity by Argentines both inside and outside the country, and, equally, by foreigners. It was also demonstrated that a musical reading of Piazzolla’s scores that created meaning from an assumed sexual backdrop is problematic when one considers not only the composer’s own words on the subject, but also the many ways in which sexuality and gender roles can be understood beyond hetero-normative stereotypes. It was argued that reading Piazzolla’s scores based on generalised and assumed cultural constructions is not always helpful as a basis for performance interpretations. Instead it was concluded that a model that views cultural authenticity as fluid and flexible

creates new space for a fresh outlook on the *6 Etudes*.

Using the notion of a flexible cultural platform from which to view the tango, the exploration of *la mugre* in Chapter 3 moved away from pinpointing an exact, immovable definition of the term. Discussed as an essential quality by which to formulate an authentic tango performance, it was argued that a survey of its uses through descriptions of the musical locality and physicality lent itself to a wider consideration of how it has been perceived from a variety of sources. Thematic explorations revealed that while *mugre* has been tied to certain musical ‘defects’ of the tango, it is argued that these techniques are also inseparable from other notions of how authenticity is constructed, such as embodied corporality and the cultural landscape surrounding the tango experience. Overall, this chapter demonstrated that the creation of *mugre* within the musical performance should not be viewed as the result of a single gesture, but is part of a larger cultural ethos often embodied by the performer, and evoked through place. It was also argued that *mugre* is yet another way to explore a multi-layered cultural context within which to approach the musical score.

Chapters 4 and 5 addressed the initial research question: can differences in playing styles between classical flautists and Piazzolla’s own performances and those of tango players be quantitatively measured? To explore this question, the narrative of Piazzolla’s advice to the performer on the cover of the score was fully explored using various analytical methods as an entry point to illuminate how this notation might be viewed beyond western contexts. Rather than seeking an authentic way to interpret the given notation, it was argued that Pinkola-Estés’ ‘and/ and’ model is a pragmatic means to move away from ‘either/or’ dichotomies; it allows a wider circle to be drawn around the numerous ways that the *6 Etudes* could be interpreted by western performers.

Chapter 4 specifically explored Piazzolla’s comment within his notes to the performer that one ‘should well exaggerate the accents’ in the manner in which they would be performed on the bandoneón. This was used as an entry point to argue that differences in accentuation style by western players in comparison to those by tango musicians exist in a way that can be quantitatively measured from aural information. When tango players performed a 3+3+2 pattern, it was found that the quantitative data correlated with the use of tango swing, the ‘*acento largo*’, and inter-idiomatic



bandoneón techniques. In the case of the western flautists, while interpretation of the 3+3+2 pattern in *Etude 6* varied individually across the recording analyses, the data fell within 'normative' accentuation indicated by flute manuals. It was concluded that there was a considerable difference to tango accentuation in comparison to the accentuation style made in western recordings. Yet as a means to move away from generalising what constitutes a purely 'tango' or 'western' reading, it was argued that performers engage in macro- and micro-level associations to performative norms for each musical style – making each performance unique, yet also placing it within the boundaries of a framework that dictates any given wider performance tradition. It was concluded that numerous analyses did not point to any authentic way that the tango accents should be interpreted in Piazzolla's etudes to be musically 'correct'. Instead it was demonstrated that this notation, which initially evoked European notational readings and might seem redundant to the western performer, is part of an important visual component within wider use of various tango performance practices, a 'signalling device' of an aural and oral, didactic tradition.

Chapter 5 was based on Piazzolla's note to the performer that one 'should well exaggerate the respirations' in the manner in which they would be performed on the bandoneón. In keeping with western performative contexts, it was found that western flautists largely ignored Piazzolla's frequent breath mark placements in *Etude 1* and instead used other ways to create their own unique style of phrasing, mostly with 'exaggerated' breath styles. It was argued that in a move to facilitate wider performance contexts, the breath marks could be seen as part of a wider 333322 two-bar cycle frequently used in Piazzolla's compositions. It was demonstrated that the specific placement of the breath notation facilitated 'rhythmic expectation' and 'resolution' within a rhythmic phrase and could also be used in conjunction with added dynamics, space between notes, and note lengths. Overall it was suggested that the notation in *Etude 1* was not incidental, but facilitated musical structure on multiple levels, from inside the two-bar riff, to the overriding 333322 pattern, to the wider ostinato. A range of analyses indicated that Piazzolla would have expressed this rhythmic phrase in interrelated, yet different ways across the score, the recording, and through his gestures in a live performance. The overall findings did not point solely to one way to interpret the breath marks in *Etude 1*, but give the performer many examples of how to understand this notation as a part of rhythmic phrasing, and how

the breath notation can help facilitate wider musical form.

Chapters 6 and 7 addressed the initial query ‘how might a classical flautist approach the score to convincingly incorporate performance traits that are evident from Piazzolla and his ensemble musicians?’ As a way to address the resulting tension between these two initially diverse elements and how they might be connected, it was suggested that the composer’s vital cultural practices become a way to approach the etudes. These two chapters demonstrated how the etudes become a ‘learning tool’ within the tripartite sequence in which further improvisation can occur.

In Chapter 6, wider musicological readings on the importance of a composer’s ‘vital culture practices’ were used to explore the implications of his ‘composer-creator’ relationship and the notation of *Etude 4*. It was argued that despite the intricacy found in many of his expressive melodies across his ‘erudite’ period, Piazzolla’s language from interviews and from those that worked with him became avenues for exploring his melodic notation as indeterminate. It was demonstrated that although a recording analysis of *Etude 4* revealed that flautists play the melody ‘as is’ with only minimal ornamentation, it was argued that further embellishments could be added to the score when viewed through the tripartite sequence. Using this platform to view the expressive melody of *Etude 4*, it was argued that the notation can simply be seen as an ‘arrangement’ ready for further ‘rearrangement’ and is, literally, an ‘étude’ – practice material – for future improvisation. To demonstrate this, an ornamental analysis was used to reveal that the composer used embellishments to enhance a simpler core melody; equally in his recording he added further embellishments or substituted others within the framework provided by the notation already in place within his score. Both *Etude 4* and Piazzolla’s own performance revealed numerous ways that a similar ornamental framework could be applied to the expressive melodies in his etudes and further works of the same period. It was suggested that the melodic ornamentation Piazzolla uses in both his compositions and recordings have wider significance within specific tango techniques and performative gestures. This offered a wider perspective within which to situate the notation to make future ornamental choices.

In Chapter 7 western flautists demonstrated that the choices to convey rhythmic expression used for *Etude 5* were mostly drawn from normative western practices, even if there was not one set way that flautists interpreted the notation

overall. It was argued that although the notation in the etude might initially be seen as ‘straight-laced’ or ‘square’, the performer could actively engage with it to create new ornamentation and extended techniques within the definitions of a rhythmic tango melody, *yeites*, and how *mugre* is conceived by *tangueros*. Using a tripartite model of the score, it was demonstrated that Piazzolla’s underlying rhythmic cells provide a basic framework in which ornamentation such as passing tones, flourishes, mordents, and *arrastres* can occur, each with a wider purpose of marking time and as a means of extended accentuation. Equally, it was found that the repeated notes in the notation could offer the flute player many ways in which to add extended techniques through tonal effects and percussive sounds, all of which contribute to further rhythmic expression.

### **Wider Research Themes and their Significance**

The perception at the start of this research was that the spontaneous use of ‘feel’ and ‘intuition’ required for a successful and authentic reading of the tango seemed a hopeless task for the foreigner, who is often said to misappropriate the genre. Classical performers were thought to ‘lack spice’, not understand the tango ‘tricks’, nor successfully bridge the ‘gap’ between the two performative styles. While the research did not confirm an authentic ‘native’ tango musical reading for the *6 Etudes* by anyone one person’s standards (nor was it the intention of this research), new ways to negate ethnocentric musical viewpoints from any single cultural stance were found using a broad range of methodologies. Five recurring themes emerging from the work as a whole that have wider significance in painting a new picture for the performance and interpretation of Piazzolla’s scores.

First, my initial experiences as a player within a conservatoire setting were that western flautists largely approached the etudes from a western tradition, and overall this perception was verified. As demonstrated in Chapters 3–7 through recording analyses, and interviews with classical players such as Yates, Boustany, Kaufman, and Franco, players mostly drew on their own, well-trying, familiar, and recognised traditions established over many centuries, much longer than the relatively one-hundred-year-old tango style. This finding adds substantially to the understanding of how any given musical genre might be culturally perceived, interpreted by western musicians, and then re-appropriated and consumed by international audiences.

Secondly, when comparative studies were made, there were quantifiable

divergences in the interpretations of western flautists that were contrary to the oral/aural traditions from tango approaches in relation to accent notation, the breath comma, and the use of expressive and rhythmic melody. While there might have been stylistic traits that were similarly used across readings, individual performances were highly unique on a micro-level. There was little evidence of any ‘authentically pure’ performance model from any one tradition in the interpretive processes examined, even if individual performances functioned within a larger macro-level framework that musicians interpretively used, whether from western or tango backgrounds. This challenged an initial belief that there would be a truly authentically ‘native’ and ‘Argentinean’ way to perform the etudes. This quantitative musical evidence contributes to the growing literature within cultural studies that supports a view that any one version of an ‘authentic’ tango performance does not exist.

Thirdly, initial concepts of what constitutes an ‘authentic’ cultural setting of Piazzolla’s scores were challenged, and then expanded from the viewpoints of the current tango performance literature. Beyond backdrops of nationality, gender, and sexuality, other previously unexplored cultural aspects were linked to Piazzolla’s scores. The findings of every chapter demonstrated that certain vital cultural practices are inseparable from the notation, bearing strong relationships to *mugre*, *mufarse*, corporeality, and place, for example. These practices never pointed to one authentic manner of musical interpretation, but were multi-layered and flexible in their use. In a wider outlook, beyond the compositions of Piazzolla, or even the genre of the tango, such backdrops demonstrate the value of cultural associations as a means to approach a western score that implicates an aural and oral tradition outside of western musical styles.

Fourthly, this thesis challenged original perceptions that a number of key features are missing from (or at least different to) the score of the *6 Etudes*. It was initially perceived that the musical characteristics found in Piazzolla’s performances, from his ensemble musicians, or even aspects of the dance, seemed far removed from the given notation. In contrast to this initial perception, not only were links made in each of these areas, it was overall found that everything a performer needs for a ‘tango’ reading is relayed through the notation when reframing the scores for a new interpretational outlook. To demonstrate this, certain notational areas that were initially ‘redundant’, ‘obvious’, or technically problematic were found not only to be

purposefully placed, but also to serve as ‘signalling devices’ towards wider aspects of tango practices, such as rhythmic phrasing, the creation of swing, accentuation marking, inter-idiomatic borrowing, and ornamental improvisation of both rhythmic and expressive melodies.

Lastly, the current findings add substantially to our understanding of how Piazzolla’s score might be a catalyst for newly inspired tango interpretations. Even though a determinate reading of the score was thought to be ‘stiff lipped’, ‘square’, ‘boring’, or ‘straight-laced’ by some classical flautists, the application of the tripartite sequence calls for notational freedom and heightened musical expression to occur, and equally provides a framework upon which the performer could draw for re-arrangement. This is not to say that the score has to be reframed for a successful performance, yet one cannot ignore the evidence that a reading of the *6 Etudes* can move beyond the determinate preservation of a fixed object.

### **A Direct Research Application to the Interpretation and Performance of the *6 Etudes***

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice which can be implemented by flautists. Work as a performer, teacher, and academic often needs to integrate practically the findings of one’s own research not only into performances, but also in a pedagogical setting. My experience is that performers often need to consolidate and then consume information into lessons or masterclass sessions (often lasting only 60 minutes, or less). Subsequently, what follows is a pragmatic model for condensing the various key findings of this thesis into the interpretation and performance of the *6 Etudes* for players of varying levels, and equally within a limited time frame (see also Quiñones, 2011). This demonstration is by no means intended to serve as a complete analytical study guide, but will highlight key areas in the score where creativity and new approaches by the performer might be considered for rearrangement processes to occur.

The score of *Etude 3* was chosen for demonstration because it is not only one of the most popular of the *6 Etudes* to be commercially recorded by western flautists,<sup>175</sup> but also part of current exam repertoire requirements in the UK.<sup>176</sup> This

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<sup>175</sup> From recordings by flautists available on the commercial market (along with Nos. 4 and 6).

<sup>176</sup> For example, it is now listed as one of the Grade 8 exam choices for both the syllabuses of the Trinity College London (2013–2014), and the UK Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) (2014–2017).

etude can easily incorporate many of the elements that have been discussed, as it provides two rhythmic melodies to explore as well as an expressive melody, resulting in the form of A A<sup>1</sup> B A. Unlike the other five etudes, where the last section slightly varies from the opening, the ‘A’ section is fully repeated to close the etude. This repeated musical content gives the performer multiple opportunities to experiment with new variations. Suggestions for future performances will be divided between discussions of the rhythmic melody (section ‘A’ and ‘A<sup>1</sup>’) (Figures 8.1 to 8.2) and the expressive melody (section ‘B’) (Figure 8.11).

**N°3**

**A** 3+3+2 4+4 3+3+2 4+4 3+3+2 etc.

Molto marcato e energico (♩ = 138)

ff

6

f

11

mf

9

ff

15

f

f

f

19

f

f

23

decide

27

ff

31

**Figure 8.1** The ‘A’ section of *Etude 3*, bars 1–31.

**Figure 8.2** The ‘A<sup>1</sup>’ section of *Etude 3*, bars 32–48.

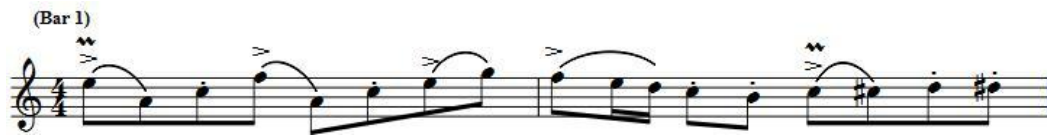
### *The Rhythmic Melody*

The ‘A’ and ‘A<sup>1</sup>’ sections of *Etude 3* (Figure 8.1 and 8.2) are characterised by bars that contain various rhythmic cells shaped by an underlying quaver: a 3+3+2 and 4+4 (alternating in bar 1–8), a 4+2+2 (for example, bar 13), a 3+2+3 (for example, bar 41), and a 2+2+2+2 (for example, bar 43). Each cell provides the framework within which other ornaments or new techniques could be sympathetically added to become a means to mark time, express the tango ‘swing’, and create tonal colour, all of which are qualities that have been perceived to be important to the expression of *mugre*.

#### *Interpretative Suggestions of the Rhythmic Melody*

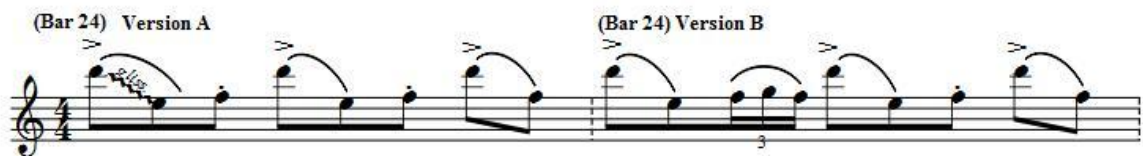
- 1) When combined with the given notated accentuation, ornaments help to further highlight a note. Examples of this can be seen in the uses of descending semiquaver passing tones in bar 6, the acciaccatura in bar 18, the mordents in bars 10, 19, and 22, or the descending flourishes in bar 43 (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). These provide a framework in which it might be appropriate to use such figures in other accented areas in the melody, or to exchange one for another. One of the many opportunities for new mordent placement is demonstrated in Figure 8.3. Both of the added mordents shown in each bar are similar to the manner in which they already appear notated in

other areas.



**Figure 8.3** *Etude 3*, bars 1–2 with added mordents.

- 2) This is not to say that all ornaments are solely in place to highlight the accent; at times they might be considered to have a ‘dual purpose’. For example, passing tones might help to connect two adjacent quavers to ‘smooth’ the melody (bar 6) (Figure 8.1); some simply add melodic colour, such as the mordent in bar 23 (Figure 8.1). These areas could be viewed as a ‘learning tool’ for how they might be added at other points of the melody. Figure 8.4 demonstrates two variations on the original notation of bar 24.



**Figure 8.4** *Etude 3*, bar 24, with an added glissando and a mordent.

- 3) As a means to move away from crisp and tonally ‘pure’ tonguing styles, and a means to create the ‘dirty’, muggy sound with tonal obscurity, marking time could include a mixture of percussive effects that could be employed interchangeably across the bar. These could include creative application of key clicks, key spits, beat boxing techniques, and ‘explosive’ harmonics. In Figure 8.5, note heads with a cross are added to the original notation of bars 1–2. The accented notes remain unchanged and the locations of the crossed note heads are only one demonstration of where variations in sound effects between the accented note and the note that follows might be used.





**Figure 8.5** *Etude 3*, bars 1–2 with added percussive effects.

- 4) In some bars, accentuation is ‘missing’ from the rhythmic cell. Such areas might be where one could create new rhythmic patterns in each bar. An example of this can be found in bars 28–29, where unaccented and repeated semiquaver flourishes occur (Figure 8.1). In Figure 8.6, a 3+3+3+3 semiquaver accentuation is inserted into the original notation of bar 28, yet still employing the originally given pitches. As a way of bringing closure to the phrase, ‘rhythmic cadencing’ might also be used; in the following bar (29), a 2+2+2 quaver closes the two bar phrase. The original pitches are changed to give the effect of an unpitched percussion instrument for a more ‘emphatic’ ending (Figure 8.6).



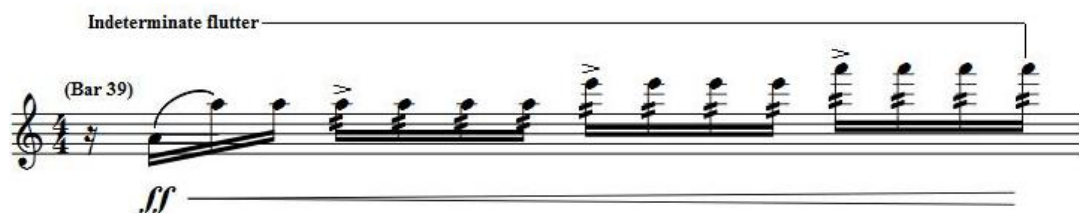
**Figure 8.6** *Etude 3*, bars 28 and 29 with added accentuation and percussive effects.

- 5) Another way to move away from ‘tonally pure’ articulations is to add instrumental ‘effects’ (*yeites*) that are common in tango performance practices. It is often described that this technique is how *mugre* appears. The notation already in place in bar 43 shows descending movement with the descending glissandos between the repeated pitch of the A5 (Figure 8.2). Yet even with this notation in place, such effects could be extended beyond the marked glissandos to incorporate further use of descending motion – for example, with pitch bends (Figure 8.7).



**Figure 8.7** *Etude 3*, bar 43, with ‘enhanced’ pitch bending.

- 6) Repeated tongued semiquavers (for example those found in bar 31 and 39) serve as an area where an ‘unclean’ articulation style could be included as another common mugre effect (Figure 8.2). One might still keep the note repetition – which helps to create a ‘push’ towards the end of phrase – but a move away from a clean double tonguing style might be replaced with an ‘indeterminate flutter’ (Figure 8.8.). Additionally, the added accents become another means to highlight the underlying 2+2+2+2 pattern when combined with the flutter effect (Figure 8.8).



**Figure 8.8** *Etude 3*, bar 39 with both added accentuation and flutter tonguing.

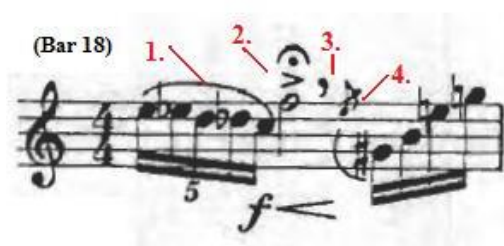
- 7) Other mugre effects might include *cromáticos* or *arrastres*, often said to be one of the most important elements in the creation of tango swing. The quaver rest at bar 40 gives enough space in the notation to insert an *arrastre* to enhance the given accent. This effect might then be combined with a pitch bend to further play with tonal obscurity, as shown in bar 41 (Figure 8.9).



**Figure 8.9** *Etude 3*, bars 40–41, with *arrastre* (bar 40), and pitch bend (bar 41).

- 8) A series of hold (*fermata*) notations with the use of a crescendo are given in four different locations across bars 16–22 (Figure 8.1). These are always followed by a breath comma. The specific combination of the hold and breath comma gives the sense of a ‘composed-in’ rhythmic rubato. One might experiment with different note lengths on the hold, or tonal effects over the four areas where this occurs. As suggested by the crescendo, this area suggests a ‘push’ to end the phrase, which might be a factor to consider with any alterations made to the notation.

The breath comma also becomes somewhere where spacing between phrases might vary each time. A variety of lengths in pauses would help build musical ‘suspense’ to the new phrase that starts after each breath comma. Other ways to manipulate time and to extend accentuation appear in the bar, and are offered in the different ornaments that appear before the hold, and at the start of the new phrase. The four different opportunities to manipulate the phrase with different types of timing choices are outlined in bar 18 (Figure 8.10).



1. Change the ‘lead-in’ ornaments to the notated hold (*fermata*)
2. Vary the length of the hold/ add a new tonal effect
3. Vary the space between phrases through breath or a pause
4. Change the ‘lead-in’ ornaments that start a new phrase

**Figure 8.10** *Etude 3*, bar 18, four areas where one might further manipulate timing of the phrase.

### ***The Expressive Melody***

Given that similar interpretational approaches that were discussed in the rhythmic melody can be used in the expressive melody, only a brief exploration will be made.

The short twelve bars of a highly contrasting ‘B’ section, *Meno mosso e più cantabile*, is characterised by a lyrical arpeggiated melody, without the heavy rhythmic accentuation given in the rhythmic melody (Figure 8.11). In a simple reduction, the expressive melody is shaped by underlying repetitive quavers which

also becomes a framework for ornamental, rhythmic, and pitch changes to be sympathetically made by the performer.

**Figure 8.11** The ‘B’ section of *Etude 3*, bars 49–60.

#### *Interpretative Suggestions of the Expressive Melody*

- 9) The expressive melody provides various ornamental figures that might be used in other areas, or simply exchanged for others in this section. Some examples include descending passing tones (bar 49 and 50), an acciaccatura (bar 51), and an ascending glissando (bar 57) (Figure 8.11). Each one of these has been added to the original notation of bars 49–50 in Variations A and B (Figure 8.12) to demonstrate further possibilities of their use. Furthermore one is not limited to adding only what appears in the score; evidence from Piazzolla’s live performances and other notational output from the same era might be included, such as a simple turn, also demonstrated in both variations (Figure 8.12).
- 10) What is interesting is that the six bars of the ‘Tempo 1’ section (bars 55–60) are simply another variation on the opening phrase of the expressive melody (Figure 8.11). For example, even though the pitches are the same across both examples, a comparison between bars 50 and 56 will show rhythmic differences between the initial quavers and then the resulting triplets (as circled in red, bar 56). Shown in Figure 8.12 are various examples that include not only triplets, but also dotted quavers, all of which take inspiration from similar rhythms that appear in the section.
- 11) In another possibility to alter the expressive melody, changes in pitches might also occur. For example, when comparing bars 51 and bar 57, the last upbeat of the bar uses different ‘lead-in’ pitches to the new bar that follows, even if

the notes of the core melody in each of the two bars remain the same. Variation B, bar 50 (Figure 8.12), suggests another way of altering pitches. In this bar, some of the original arpeggiated pitches were dropped, which provides a new variation – yet still employs the content from the original ‘core’ melody as a basis for this change.

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'Variation A (Bar 49)', is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line starting with a 'siss' marking. It includes various articulations such as slurs and accents. The bottom staff, labeled 'Variation B', also in 4/4 time, shows a similar melodic line but with a large slur over a sequence of notes and a '5' marking below the staff, indicating a specific fingering or technique.

**Figure 8.12** *Etude 3*, bar 49–50, two variations on the expressive melody from the given notation.

### Limitations of the Presented Work

As a way to extend the ‘and/and’ model of enquiry for performance of the etudes, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, though this research drew on a wide range of Piazzolla’s later compositions and recorded performances from the same time period, further studies could be made. One might ask ‘can notational characteristics and related performances from earlier periods have further implication for performance of the etudes?’ A more thorough examination would bring a wider scope not only to interpretations of his later work, but also to a wider understanding of his performance style over a longer time span. Further performance studies might also include an analysis of how Piazzolla’s colleagues interpreted and improvised his music under his direction as ensemble leader.

Secondly, this thesis only explored specific areas of tango performance that were mostly limited to the discussion of thematic elements found within the etudes. There is much more that could be addressed in terms of other practices that could be linked with further scores, for example, the use of rhythmic manipulation (*fraseo*

*básico* or *fraseo extendido*), or other improvisatory effects not fully explored in this setting (*la yumba, la chicharra, la sirena, el látigo*). Additionally, further tango contexts could be drawn upon which could further affect a new reading – notational influences from his study with Ginastera, his admiration for the bandoneón techniques of Troilo, his respect for Gardel’s phrasing and vocal style, or arrangement techniques from the De Caro brothers.

Thirdly, this thesis focused on Piazzolla’s connection with the tango world. Given that he often commented on the influence from other composers he admired, for example Boulanger, Stravinsky J. S. Bach, Bartók, and Copland, the question remains, ‘what notational traits might be linked to the etudes from other composers whom he admired for another analytical view of the score?’ Studies that went beyond these classical contexts would include admiration for other styles that also were said to influence his work, such as jazz, Jewish klezmer, and the bossa nova.

Finally, the studies in this thesis focused on western interpretation of the etudes. A more inclusive approach might take into account other instrumentalists (both tango and western) interpreting not only the etudes, but a wider range of his other compositions frequently performed in the western canon. Such research could equally use a quantitative approach; qualitative insight from performers on their interpretational decisions would be just as useful.

### **Future Research Directions**

It is predicted that as Piazzolla’s written compositions are played more frequently by western performers with each passing year, an interest in new musical contexts and a re-engagement with his published works will start to be explored thanks to easier access to bilingual information about tango performance intended for the global market. The numerous suggestions made here for the performance and interpretation of the *6 Etudes* are not so far removed from the observations of Luker of a ‘renovación’, ‘renewal’, and ‘rebirth’ of tango musical practices that consists of a performer ‘drawing upon genre conventions, stylistic details, and musical repertoires from previous periods of tango history and incorporating that material into current practices’ (2007, p. 69). The present research similarly becomes a resource for new tango practices by western performers interested in exploring Piazzolla’s works, and thematic elements of the tango style. Equally, it complements the tango performance manuals that have appeared in the last decade by giving a completely different slant to

their reliance on ‘insider/outsider’ dichotomies in which to place tango style. Such a new stance offers a welcome new perspective to the surge of new instrumental manuals that will continue to be published,<sup>177</sup> as well as a means to situate new arrangements of the *6 Etudes* that will be released over the next year by Editions Henry Lemoine.<sup>178</sup>

There is also a wave of interest in tango performance practices that have been acquired by non-tango musicians. Whether this is due to Piazzolla’s scores becoming more standard within the western repertoire is hard to say, though perhaps attraction to the genre is due to his music often being a classical player’s first entry point to the tango. Such growing interest can be demonstrated in recent musicological events, for example, 2013 saw the first inaugural meeting of the USA’s first and only ‘Tango Music Institute’,<sup>179</sup> led by ethnomusicologist Morgan Luker and tango bassist Pablo Aslan. In Buenos Aires, 2014 will be the first year of ‘Tango Para Músicos’. Organised by professional tango players from the city, this week-long event aimed to teach the ‘language of the tango’ in a bilingual setting to musicians from around the globe.<sup>180</sup>

Beyond tango settings, the approaches given for interpretation and performance of Piazzolla’s etudes also resonate with new studies within western performances. Such research projects aim to demonstrate the possibilities of radically different readings of canonical scores across a range of instrumental repertoire.<sup>181</sup> The creative choices that current performers use are explored to propose a new basis for ‘rethinking the obligations’ that a classical performer might feel they have to meet.<sup>182</sup> At the heart of this research is a similar stance: western performers of Piazzolla’s repertoire might engage with fresh, newly inspired ideas by pushing the boundaries of current interpretational processes that might exist in reading his scores,

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<sup>177</sup> Ricordi’s *Método de Tango* series – the publisher of the manuals by Fain (2010) and Gallo (2011) – aims to release future methods on contrabass, bandoneón, piano, and guitar written by prominent tango musicians over the next year. [www.metododetango.com](http://www.metododetango.com) [accessed 14 June 2013]

<sup>178</sup> Which already includes a version with added piano accompaniment (Piazzolla and Ollivo, 2006), and soon, a new edition written as a duet for two flutes by Exequiel Mantega.

<sup>179</sup> Held at the Reed College, Department of Music, (Portland, Oregon) 23–30 June 2013. For more, see <http://www.reed.edu/tango/> [accessed 14 June 2013]

<sup>180</sup> For more, see [tangoparamusicos.wordpress.com/](http://tangoparamusicos.wordpress.com/) [accessed 14 June 2013]

<sup>181</sup> For example, the Centre for Classical Improvisation and Creative Performance led by David Dolan at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, (London, UK).

<sup>182</sup> For example, as proposed by musicologists in the recent seminar ‘How creative can a musical practice be?’ (24 June 2013, The University of London, UK) given by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Mine Doğantan-Dack, and Diana Gilchrist with the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (CMPCP) (UK) and the Institute of Musical Research (IMR) (UK).

whether this is during an exam within a conservatory setting, on a commercially released recording, or in the formal western concert-hall recital.



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## Appendix A

A list of tracks found on the enclosed audio CD which contains excerpts of the performances discussed and analysed within the thesis:<sup>183</sup>

### Chapter 4

1. Piazzolla performs *Fracanapa*, bars 1-4 (Piazzolla, 1992)
2. Fain performs a four-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern (Fain, 2010)
3. Gallo performs a two-bar 3+3+2 quaver pattern (Gallo, 2011)
4. Zucker performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Zucker, 2003)
5. Lundin performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Lundin, 2003)
6. Ruggieri performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Ruggieri, 2007)
7. Gallois performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Gallois, 1996)
8. Fabbriciani performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Fabbriciani, 2010)
9. Poulain performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Poulain, 1997)
10. Daroux performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Daroux, 1999)
11. Jutt performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Jutt, 1990)
12. Franco performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Franco, 1998)
13. Najfar performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Najfar, 2003)
14. Toepper performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Toepper, 1998)
15. Helasvuo performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Helasvuo, 1992)
16. Barile performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Barile, 2011)
17. Bomfim performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (Bomfim, 2009)
18. De La Vega performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4 (De La Vega, 1995)
19. Quiñones performs *Etude 6*, bars 1-4

### Chapter 5

20. Toepper performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Toepper, 1998)
21. Zucker performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Zucker, 2003)

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<sup>183</sup> Any analyses that used the full commercially released track beyond just an excerpt were not included on the accompanying CD for international copyright reasons. This includes the full tracks used of *Etude 4* in the analyses from pp. 182-3, *Etude 5* from pp. 219-222, and *Asleep* from *5 Tango Sensations* from pp. 208-211. Also omitted is the audio portion of Sattore performing the opening 'A' section of *El día que me quieras* (p. 191). This is due to the video being removed from Youtube by the owner as of September 2013.



22. Jutt performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Jutt, 1990)
23. Gallois performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Gallois, 1996)
24. Barile performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Barile, 2011)
25. Helasvuo performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Helasvuo , 1992)
26. Poulain performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Poulain, 1997)
27. Montserrat performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Montserrat , 2005)
28. Daroux performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Daroux , 1999)
29. Lundin performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Lundin, 2003)
30. Najfar performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Najfar, 2003)
31. Fabbriciani performs *Etude 1*, bars 1-8 (Fabbriciani, 2010)
32. Piazzolla performs *Michelangelo '70*, bars 1-8 (Piazzolla, 1986a)
33. Piazzolla and his Second Quintet perform *Michelangelo '70*, bars 1-14 (Piazzolla, 2012)

## **Chapter 6**

34. Caruana performs the opening 'A' section of *El día que me quieras* (Caruana, 2013)

## Appendix B

A list of all commercially released recordings of the 6 *Etudes* available as of February 2012.

<b>Flautist Name</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Album Release</b>	<b>Nationality of Flautist</b>	<b>Etude No.</b>	<b>Catalogue No.</b>
Jutt, Stephanie	Mckinley, Griffes, Piazzolla, Jolivet	GM Recordings	1990	American	all	GM2026CD
Helasvuo, Mikael	Piazzolla: History of the Tango, 5 Piezas & 6 Etudes Tanguistiques	Ondine	1992	Finnish	all	ODE 781-2
De La Vega, Jorge	Astor Piazzolla: A Flute and Piano Tribute	Milan/BMG	1995	Argentine	6	BMG/Milan 7313835727-2
Gallois, Patrick	Piazzolla For Two	Deutsche Grammophon	1996	French	all	449185-2
Poulain, Loïc	Astor Piazzolla	Mandala/ Harmonia Mundi	1997	French	all	MAN 4916 and HMCD78
Franco, Fabio	Tango y nada más	Symposium	1998	Italian	3, 4, 6	1SCL01010
Gafni , Margalit	Opus 3 Interpreta Piazzolla	Epsa Music	1998	Israeli	3, 4	17101
Toepper, Irmgard	Piazzolla: Complete Music for Flute and Guitar	Naxos	1998	German	all	8.554760
Daroux, Cécile	Astor Piazzolla: Histoire du Tango	Harmonia Mundi/ France Musique	1999	French	all	HMN911674
Le Grand, Catherine	Inspirations: Music for Solo Flute	In1Breath	2001	American	3, 4, 5	None

Barboza, Marcelo	Tangos & Choros: Flute Music From Argentina and Brazil	Meridian Records	2003	Brazilian	4, 5	CDE84454
Lundin, Ilia	Astor Piazzolla: Le Grand Tango	Vista Vera	2003	Russian	1, 6	VVCD-00053
Najfar, Reza	Tango Appassionato	Novalis	2003	Iranian	all	150 174-2
Richman, Helen	Shadowdance	Capstone	2003	American	3	CD-CR8738
Zucker, Laurel	Inflorescence II: Music for Solo Flute	Cantilena Records	2003	American	all	66022-2
Montserrat, Gascón	Tangos and Habaneros for Flute and Guitar	Prodigital	2005	Spanish	1, 3, 4	PRO-1113
Ruggieri, Daniele	Latin Music for Flute & Guitar	Resonance/ Sanctuary Classics	2007	Italian	6	CD RSN 3103
Cecconi, Elena	Flautosolo – Works for Solo Flute	La Bottega Discantica	2008	Italian	3	DISCANTICA - 187
Bomfim, Marcelo	Só Para Flauta/ Just for Flute	Marcelo Bomfim	2009	Brazilian	4, 6	None
Fabbriciani, Roberto	Histoire du tango	Phoenix Classics	2010	Italian	all	PHOENIX 97319
Barile, Claudio	Historia del tango, Tango- Etudes, y otros	Irco- El Arca de Noe/ Cosentino	2011	Argentine	all	IRCO345

## **Appendix C**

The original manuscript of Astor Piazzolla's *6 Etudes*, as copied by José Bragato.

Source: The personal score collection of Stephanie Jutt.

# "6 ETUDES TANGUISTIQUES"

VRAL

## RE (6 Estudios Tanguísticos) para Flauta Sola

Estos estudios tanguísticos dependen de la gracia del solista,  
sobre todo exagerando los acentos y respiraciones que deberían  
parecerse a la manera de tocar los tanguos en el bandoneón.

A.P.

Astor Piazzolla

DECISO

(♩ = 138)

$\text{F}^{\#}$   $\text{D}$

The musical score consists of ten staves of handwritten notation. The first six staves are in 4/4 time, and the last four staves are in 5/4 time. The key signature is F# major/D minor. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *mf*, *ff*, *p*, and *f*. The word "Marcato" is written above the seventh staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat lines below the final staff.

2.

Handwritten musical score for a piece, consisting of 11 staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *p*, *ff*, and *accal*. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

(♩=80) Ansioso e Rubato N<sup>o</sup> 2

Handwritten musical score for "Ansioso e Rubato N<sup>o</sup> 2", consisting of three staves of music. The notation includes dynamic markings like *mf* and performance instructions such as *accel.*, *rit.*, and *rall.*. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of 12 staves. The score includes various performance instructions and dynamics. Key markings include:

- accell...* (accelerando)
- rall.* (ritardando)
- poco* (poco)
- 1<sup>a</sup>* (first ending)
- 2<sup>a</sup>* (second ending)
- accell*
- poco*
- accell*
- rall.*
- accell*
- rall.*
- accell*
- rall.*
- Meno mosso*
- Cantabile (ad lib.)*
- rall.*
- molto espressivo*
- accell*
- crec.* (crescendo)
- ff* (fortissimo)
- Tristemente*
- Rall.*
- mf* (mezzo-forte)
- pp* (pianissimo)
- mf*
- rall.*
- crec.*
- poco*
- poco*
- Rall*
- ff*



4. *Tempo 1<sup>o</sup> (♩ = 80)*

Musical score for the first piece, consisting of six staves. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked *Tempo 1<sup>o</sup> (♩ = 80)*. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf* and *p*, and performance markings like *accel.*, *rall.*, and *poco a poco*. There are also numerical markings (6, 5, 2) and slurs throughout the piece. The piece concludes with a *Rall.* marking and a *P* dynamic.

*Molto marcato ed energico* N<sup>o</sup> 3  
(n. 138)

Musical score for the second piece, consisting of seven staves. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked *Molto marcato ed energico*. The score includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and a performance marking of *Deciso*. There are numerical markings (3, 5) and slurs throughout the piece.



Musical score consisting of 15 staves. The notation includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include *Meno Mos e piu contabile*, *Tempo (ad lib.)*, *Rall.*, *Tempo 1<sup>o</sup>*, *accl.*, and *Deciso*. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, and includes fingering numbers (e.g., 5, 7) and slurs. The key signature changes from one flat to two flats. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

6.

Lento-Meditativo  
(Tempo ad lib.)

*p* *mf* *f* *pp* *mf* *f* *mf* *pp* *mf* *mf* *f* *pp*

*f* *lento* *Rall. poco più mosso* *dim.* *Tempo 1° (più meditato) poco* *Rall. poco* *più lento* *tr.* *pp* *morendo*

(♩ = 120)

*f* *ff*

This page contains a handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of 14 staves of music. The notation is dense and includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is written in a single system across the page. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *fff* (fortississimo). There are also markings for *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score includes several slurs and accents, indicating phrasing and emphasis. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final chord. The page number 293 is in the top left, and the number 7. is in the top right. The number 44 is written at the bottom of the page.



8.

*Con ansiedad* (♩ = 132) N<sup>o</sup> 6

The musical score is written on 14 staves. It begins with the tempo and mood marking "Con ansiedad" and a metronome marking of 132 quarter notes per minute. The piece is numbered "N<sup>o</sup> 6". The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *ff*, *p*, and *sempre ff*. Performance instructions such as *cresc.* and *2da* are present. The score concludes with a final *f* dynamic marking.

Meno MOSSAO (Tristemente)

erac...

Tempo 1<sup>o</sup> (♩ = 132)

con ansiedad

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of ten staves. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include "Meno MOSSAO (Tristemente)" on the second staff, "erac..." on the third staff, "Tempo 1<sup>o</sup> (♩ = 132)" on the sixth staff, and "con ansiedad" on the seventh staff. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign on the tenth staff.

Five empty musical staves, each consisting of five horizontal lines, positioned below the main score.