



***A mi violín corneta: The Stylistic Development of  
Argentine Tango Violinists and the Social  
Acceptance of Tango, 1910–1935***

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the Royal College of Music, London



I certify that this submission is my own unaided work and that I have acknowledged all references to the work of others in the course of the text. I declare that it has been specially written for the doctoral degree (RCM), and that it has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. I declare that this submission complies with the Doctoral Programme Handbook guidelines.

Stephen Meyer

Date: 24 January 2025





## Abstract

This dissertation examines the development of violin performance practice in Argentine tango from 1910 to 1935, a transformative period during which the genre's violin techniques underwent a rapid evolution, followed by standardisation and codification, establishing the foundational techniques and stylistic conventions central to the genre today. This study argues that these changes were inextricably tied to the broader socio-cultural context, as tango transitioned from a marginalized expression of Buenos Aires' lower classes to a celebrated *música nacional*, at a time when Argentina was constructing its national symbols.

The study traces these developments through primary sources, namely newspaper and magazine articles, alongside a practice-informed aural analysis of historical recordings. Chapter One, using the analysis of both European and Argentine periodicals, examines *Tangomania* in Europe (1911–1914), and particularly in Paris, where tango was celebrated as an exotic cultural export. This European fascination reshaped perceptions of the genre's artistic and social value, accelerating its acceptance among Argentina's upper and middle classes. Against this backdrop of shifting social attitudes, tango violin playing evolved rapidly, reflecting the genre's broader process of social integration.

The succeeding chapters are case studies of key violinists, which use primary sources and historical recordings to trace how their innovations shaped the instrument's role in tango ensembles. In addition, a detailed discography has been compiled for each violinist. Early violinists such as Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio, and José Bonano, emerging from a milieu of largely self-taught music making, embodied tango's origins in the lower classes of Buenos Aires. David Roccatagliata, with formal musical training, introduced experimental techniques that expanded the violin's expressive possibilities. Finally, Julio De Caro, representing a new generation of middle-class musicians, brought greater artistic ambition and sophistication to tango music. By situating these musical developments within the cultural and historical dynamics of early 20th-century Argentina and its transnational

context, this study highlights the violin's pivotal role in tango's journey from the margins to mainstream social acceptance.





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## Audiovisual materials

Here, easily accessible links to all recordings cited in this thesis can be found. The name of the orchestra, the piece, the year of recording, as well as the digital link are indicated.

Due to copyright restrictions, the digitalisations of 78 rpm records that I used for my analysis cannot be made publicly available. However, I have compiled a list of publicly accessible YouTube links, except for three Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo recordings (*Para hoy*, *Pica pica*, and *Tallada*), to the same recordings for reference purposes only. These files were digitalised and uploaded by third parties and were not the versions used in the aural analysis presented in this thesis. The recordings I consulted for analysis are listed in the Works Cited, which reflects the sources I had access to at the time of writing. All YouTube links were functioning at the time the list was compiled.

The remaining three recordings can be found on a Google Drive (link below).

### Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía

- *El jagüel* (1914)
  - [https://youtu.be/bKBno42Z3rQ?si=5\\_PuRB1Ay6NcKFqu](https://youtu.be/bKBno42Z3rQ?si=5_PuRB1Ay6NcKFqu)

### Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho”

- *Armenonville* (1912)
  - <https://youtu.be/Mbu-rJKbEOw?si=oa4hwtK31nSufjMH>

### Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica

- *Boedo* (1928)
  - [https://youtu.be/0n3e7cbwYRU?si=\\_kYT1H\\_s83nUFHhR](https://youtu.be/0n3e7cbwYRU?si=_kYT1H_s83nUFHhR)
- *Derecho viejo* (1926)
  - <https://youtu.be/qYn2spVOY48?si=YELKkx6ddxeYJM8X>
- *La rayuela* (1926)
  - [https://youtu.be/19wHs\\_yetuY?si=EoRmiiZSGNa-b6f7](https://youtu.be/19wHs_yetuY?si=EoRmiiZSGNa-b6f7)
- *Mala junta* (1927)
  - <https://youtu.be/gxovabjESGk?si=dr-Jnbj807mUrwYN>
- *Recuerdo* (1926)
  - [https://youtu.be/IDBHumq\\_he4?si=JMq3vjOVHbhNV9t9](https://youtu.be/IDBHumq_he4?si=JMq3vjOVHbhNV9t9)
- *Sentencia* (1926)
  - [https://youtu.be/K\\_xVACvpbT4?si=AM3whLtOC7eVG2jw](https://youtu.be/K_xVACvpbT4?si=AM3whLtOC7eVG2jw)
- *Tierra querida* (1927)
  - <https://youtu.be/rv9Bm1G5sAc?si=plpAWwry5FaNxolz>

### Orquesta Típica De Caro

- *Buen amigo* (1925)
  - <https://youtu.be/PPiS6EHAPzg?si=QxEu7Mp4LFLOjQFF>
- *El monito* (1925)
  - <https://youtu.be/QIB8HApcMLo?si=L709VJ2kw2v-G-tw>
- *Engrupido* (1930)
  - <https://youtu.be/hxUOWFQwC3A?si=qhSTp7s66Luri7wk>

- *Espuma de cabaret* (1926)
  - [https://youtu.be/mO9Qur4U\\_c0?si=SagzREC1QXsyORmn](https://youtu.be/mO9Qur4U_c0?si=SagzREC1QXsyORmn)
- *La cumparsita* (1929)
  - [https://youtu.be/D6DUICC\\_LmM?si=ddvIc78ouEPa5zBi](https://youtu.be/D6DUICC_LmM?si=ddvIc78ouEPa5zBi)
- *Todo Corazón* (1924)
  - <https://youtu.be/DEaD5GOYHCg?si=HZWassEWVfwC6vHf>

### **Orquesta Típica de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán**

- *Don Juan* (1933)
  - <https://youtu.be/frL0EEVRjrA?si=-hcK1YAQjw96zhh1>
- *El entrerriano* (1933)
  - <https://youtu.be/FDU1jgb-IRg?si=RgfCydqvJulUeUQi>

### **Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas**

- *El 14 de Suipacha* (1913/14)
  - [https://youtu.be/f5iH8AMYxxE?si=9WETGSgv\\_HcXeDGe](https://youtu.be/f5iH8AMYxxE?si=9WETGSgv_HcXeDGe)
- *Pabellón de las rosas* (1913)
  - [https://youtu.be/jYvWtycsC5I?si=l1vIix\\_8MrMcLly](https://youtu.be/jYvWtycsC5I?si=l1vIix_8MrMcLly)

### **Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito**

- *La montura* (1912)
  - [https://youtu.be/K\\_6y8v2lq8U?si=HodRofE0-3Ub0Je9](https://youtu.be/K_6y8v2lq8U?si=HodRofE0-3Ub0Je9)
- *La picarona* (1912)
  - <https://youtu.be/6ho4O4oOocY?si=ZgicaxrxaA4u2R97>

### **Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián**

- *Mujer* (1923)
  - [https://youtu.be/JEFIIIMexe\\_A?si=BgbrTeEG6YQr83bA](https://youtu.be/JEFIIIMexe_A?si=BgbrTeEG6YQr83bA)
- *¡No me olvides!* (1923)
  - <https://youtu.be/No6fOXh8xkE?si=UtN3RXJI8No-pa12>
- *Shusheta* (1923)
  - [https://youtu.be/XVV4aLxJvAs?si=uk9\\_VsELc4curmOS](https://youtu.be/XVV4aLxJvAs?si=uk9_VsELc4curmOS)

### **Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo**

- *Elegante papirusa* (1922)
  - [https://youtu.be/kiTHFth\\_DWk?si=ezBesa1M6Ir00rLU](https://youtu.be/kiTHFth_DWk?si=ezBesa1M6Ir00rLU)
- *Siete pelos* (1922)
  - <https://youtu.be/V0G55YAswsI?si=MgBVnw1D4dydw9Sj>

### **Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo**

- *Alma gaucha* (1914)
  - [https://youtu.be/ABkzscWO7pg?si=dZ-\\_GLduohj4pUdT](https://youtu.be/ABkzscWO7pg?si=dZ-_GLduohj4pUdT)
- *La cumparsita* (1916)
  - <https://youtu.be/gPr3V0eIWXw?si=jPyYh3yQOxOwbsmj>
- *Los Guevara* (1914)

- [https://youtu.be/r15HZPyJkw4?si=MfUiu\\_XgBZ\\_ggSp1](https://youtu.be/r15HZPyJkw4?si=MfUiu_XgBZ_ggSp1)
- *Para hoy* (1916)
- *Pica pica* (1916)
- *Tallada* (1913)
  - *Para hoy*, *Pica pica* and *Tallada* cannot be found on YouTube. Instead, they are available here:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Z7g3n551S\\_8k1kAZ8HJBnMlvpdw3k5\\_e?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Z7g3n551S_8k1kAZ8HJBnMlvpdw3k5_e?usp=share_link)

### **Orquesta Típica Select**

- *A la gran muñeca* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/biHML5zMMnY?si=pgWcS4M3ZPN2HA5Z>
- *Color de rosa* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/fschMJp-hFA?si=RaIIozTULyB9Gsqr>
- *Curupayti* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/ACY7762vvTE?si=7uR9U9N5HP4iQvp8>
- *Don Esteban* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/Ns-CW80StLA?si=aZEVafr-Soyb6Duu>
- *Entrada prohibida* (1920)
  - [https://youtu.be/X5Tmg3ZYenM?si=ZszJUn\\_iqEwuaXwn](https://youtu.be/X5Tmg3ZYenM?si=ZszJUn_iqEwuaXwn)
- *Munyinga* (1920)
  - [https://youtu.be/QstCVOnCPSk?si=CRAN4gL1UgJVESZ\\_](https://youtu.be/QstCVOnCPSk?si=CRAN4gL1UgJVESZ_)
- *Nobleza de arrabal* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/viqTdUWXxko?si=i9v1OaYLNwxLQbMC>
- *Nueve puntos* (1920)
  - [https://youtu.be/d2T\\_SrD8UDw?si=qZtI9-x7b83\\_bGz8](https://youtu.be/d2T_SrD8UDw?si=qZtI9-x7b83_bGz8)
- *Pablo* (1920)
  - <https://youtu.be/rZhlJY00U3g?si=ph9A5Z0kAkbC8nVr>

### **Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián**

- *La cumparsita* (1917)
  - [https://youtu.be/\\_LjKbkqZig4?si=UUyo4y1Sbi09eJI2](https://youtu.be/_LjKbkqZig4?si=UUyo4y1Sbi09eJI2)

## **Note on Copyright**

A number of figures in this thesis are under copyright. Here is an overview of my efforts to secure permission to include excerpts from the following materials, grouped by copyright holder, in alphabetical order. All email chains have been saved.

### ***Caras y Caretas*** (Figure 82)

- I contacted the magazine *Caras y Caretas* in November 2024 and in June 2025 by email, as well as via their website. I did not obtain a response.

### **Editorial Crismar Sociedad** (Figure 95; Figure 96)

- I received the contact information of the heirs of Editorial Crismar Sociedad from SADAIC, and contacted them by email. I did not obtain a response.

### **Fondo Nacional de las Artes** (Figure 33; Figure 49; Figure 50; Figure 55; Figure 75)

- I wrote Fondo Nacional de las Artes in November 2024 and June 2025, and did not obtain a response. I also checked with various contacts, who confirmed that I had written the correct email address.

### **Grupo Editorial Record** (Figure 91; Figure 97; Figure 98; Figure 113)

- According to the SADAIC catalog, Editorial Record owns the rights to these works. They responded that the company has never published, nor owned, any of these works. Subsequently, no copyright ownership could be established.

### **Oscar Lucero**, heir of Roberto Firpo (Figure 63; Figure 69; Figure 71; Figure 72)

- The SADAIC provided me with Lucero's email address, but the address doesn't seem to be active. I attempted to contact Lucero multiple times, but received an error message.

### **Universal Music** (Figure 27; Figure 36; Figure 37; Figure 43; Figure 44; Figure 45; Figure 46; Figure 47; Figure 48; Figure 54; Figure 57; Figure 65; Figure 67; Figure 80; Figure 81; Figure 94; Figure 99; Figure 100; Figure 101; Figure 104; Figure 110)

- I contacted Universal Music communications in November 2024, and subsequently to copyright queries and royalty support in May 2025, and the Director of Media Information in June 2025. The person to whom I spoke was unsure where I should direct my query.

### **Warner Chappell** (Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 3; Figure 4; Figure 5; Figure 92; Figure 93)

- I spoke with the Sample & Infringement Management UK office in November 2024, and was asked to provide screenshots of the examples, which I did. In December, I contacted the Warner Chappell Buenos Aires office, but was told I would need to go through the UK office for my queries. I subsequently tried to contact the UK office in January, May and June 2025, without response.

Consequently, following the advice of Peter Linnitt at the Royal College of Music Library, I have shown due diligence.





## **Abbreviations of Orchestra Names**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CJMP   | Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho”                     |
| CCA    | Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía                      |
| JDCOT  | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica               |
| OTDC   | Orquesta Típica De Caro                          |
| OTGVPB | Orquesta Típica de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán |
| OTEA   | Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas                   |
| OTGE   | Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito                  |
| OTJCC  | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián               |
| OTOF   | Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo                  |
| OTRF   | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo                    |
| OTS    | Orquesta Típica Select                           |
| TFTC   | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián                         |



## Glossary of Terms

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>a la parrilla</b>            | ‘On the grill’ <sup>1</sup> ; a form of improvised tango arrangement   |
| <b>afrocriollo</b>              | Afro-Argentine   |
| <b>arrabal<br/>(arrabalero)</b> | The outskirts of a city, or suburb. In this instance, the outskirts of Buenos Aires (the residents who live there)   |
| <b>arrastre</b>                 | ‘Drag’; this is an anticipation of the note either through a portamento, or an appoggiatura; one of the most important forms of rhythmic ornamentation in tango music  |
| <b>bajo fondo</b>               | ‘Low background’; refers to a generally urban and poor demographic   |
| <b>café de verano</b>           | ‘Summer cafés’; also known as <i>restaurantes-recreos</i> , or ‘leisure restaurants’, these were spaces that functioned as restaurants for families during the day and provided musical entertainment in the evening in early twentieth-century Buenos Aires. Perhaps the most famous <i>café de verano</i> was Restaurante 3 de Febrero, better known as <i>lo de Hansen</i> , located in the Bosque de Palermo   |
| <b>canyengue</b>                | A polysemic term that can refer to early tango dancing or to specific musical effects. Both are strongly connected to the Afro-Argentine community. Musically, <i>canyengue</i> or <i>efecto canyengue</i> refers to the percussive noises, accentuations, syncopations, and rhythmic displacements that add groove  |
| <b>casas de baile</b>           | Chic dancing establishments for a well-to-do male public in early twentieth-century Buenos Aires   |
| <b>cepillo</b>                  | ‘Brush’; a type of <i>yeite</i> produced by tilting the stick of the bow towards the bridge and then pulling the bow parallel to the strings, creating a brushing sound  |
| <b>chicharra</b>                | ‘Cicada’; the most well-known <i>yeite</i> on the violin, this rasping noise is made by applying significant bow pressure on the third string of the violin behind the bridge and on the winding of the string   |
| <b>compadrito</b>               | Early twentieth-century urban ruffian or hoodlum   |
| <b>conventillo</b>              | Tenements of the poorer neighbourhoods of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Buenos Aires  |
| <b>contracanto</b>              | Counter melodies   |
| <b>criollo</b>                  | ‘Creole’; originally a term referring to a Spanish descendent born in the Americas, in the Rioplatense region the term refers to both people and things that are homegrown. In the late nineteenth century, the adjective <i>criollo</i> was added to distinguish Argentine creations and adaptations from foreign genres. For example, <i>zarzuela</i> , a Spanish genre, was distinguished from the local adaptation <i>zarzuela criolla</i> . <i>Música criolla</i> describes Argentinian (popular) music |
| <b>época de oro</b>             | ‘Golden Age’; roughly refers to the period of tango from 1935-1955. See Appendix B for more information  |

---

<sup>1</sup> Literal translations appear in inverted commas where appropriate.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>estilo</b>                     | ‘Style’; also, a folkloric genre from the Rioplatense region, generally sung and accompanied by guitar   |
| <b>fraseo</b>                     | ‘Phrasing’; one of the main aspects of interpretational freedom in tango music, <i>fraseo</i> is a way of interpreting melodies in a way that mimics the inflections of <i>Porteño</i> speech. There are several types of <i>fraseos</i> , including <i>fraseo básico</i> , often used in tutti playing, and <i>extendido</i> , only for individual solos  |
| <b>gauchesco (gauchismo)</b>      | A late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Argentine literary movement heroizing the <i>gauchos</i> or cowboys. The <i>gaucho</i> became the principal national symbol at this time  |
| <b>género chico (criollo)</b>     | ‘Little genre’; in popular theatre; <i>género chico criollo</i> denotes Rioplatense genres such as the <i>zarzuelita</i> or <i>zarzuela criolla</i> , the <i>sainete</i> , the <i>grotesco</i> and the <i>gauchesco</i>  |
| <b>golpe de caja</b>              | ‘Slapping the box’; a type of <i>yeite</i> made by hitting or slapping the bout of the instrument.   |
| <b>Guardia Nueva</b>              | ‘New guard’; refers roughly to a historical period (1920-1935) as well as to a performance style; see Appendix B for more information  |
| <b>Guardia Vieja</b>              | ‘Old guard’; refers roughly to a historical period (1880s-late 1910s) as well as to a performance style; see Appendix B for more information   |
| <b>guitarrita</b>                 | ‘Little guitar’; a type of strummed pizzicato reminiscent of the plucking of a guitar  |
| <b>herramientas</b>               | ‘Tools’; stylistic tools in this context   |
| <b>látigo</b>                     | ‘Whip’; this <i>yeite</i> consists of a rapid glissando up to an indeterminate pitch   |
| <b>milonga</b>                    | A polysemic term. Can refer to a place where tango is danced, or to a musical and dance genre. Musically, it is tango’s slightly older cousin, generally written in 2/4 form. There are two main variants, the <i>milonga campera</i> , generally associated with the rural plains of the pampa and performed in a 3+3+2 rhythm, and the <i>milonga ciudadana</i> , an urban form created in the 1930s that resembles a very fast habanera |
| <b>mugre</b>                      | ‘Dirt’; adding clusters, percussive effects and other sounds   |
| <b>música popular</b>             | ‘Popular music’; tango is a form of urban popular music, or <i>música popular urbana</i>   |
| <b>Nota fantasma/nota muteada</b> | ‘Ghost note’; a muted or barely articulated note, which commonly follows long accents  |
| <b>organito</b>                   | ‘Little organs’; Street organs popular in early twentieth-century Buenos Aires   |
| <b>orillas</b>                    | ‘Edge or shore’; the outskirts of the city, a synonym of <i>arrabal</i>  |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>orquesta típica</b> | ‘Typical orchestra’; the primary instrumental tango formation of the twentieth century. The name originated with Orquesta Típica Criolla, who first recorded in 1910, and was applied to most ensembles. Although early <i>orquesta típicas</i> included flute and guitar, the standard <i>orquesta típica</i> from the late 1910s until 1935 included two violins, two bandoneons, piano and double bass. After this period, <i>orquesta típicas</i> expanded to include four to five violins, four bandoneons, piano, double bass, as well as other instruments including viola and cello, depending on the specific ensemble; see Appendix B for more information |
| <b>peringundín</b>     | A bar of ill repute, where it was generally possible to dance with women, in early twentieth century Buenos Aires  |
| <b>porteño</b>         | An inhabitant of Buenos Aires  |
| <b>saltellato</b>      | A form of ricochet, or bouncing bow. From <i>saltar</i> , ‘to jump’  |
| <b>sirena</b>          | ‘Siren’; a type of <i>yeite</i> , a wailing, siren-like sound made with a slow glissando.  |
| <b>strappata</b>       | Generally performed on the double bass, this technique is executed by hitting the strings simultaneously with the bow, using ricochet, and the left hand   |
| <b>tango-canción</b>   | ‘Tango song’; sung tango, as opposed to instrumental tango or <i>tango instrumental</i>  |
| <b>tambor</b>          | ‘Drum’; a type of <i>yeite</i> executed by placing the nail of the third finger of the left hand in between the G and D strings on the violin and then plucking the G string. The sound produced is reminiscent of a drum  |
| <b>violin corneta</b>  | Trumpet violin   |
| <b>yeites</b>          | ‘Licks’ or percussive effects, such as <i>chicharra</i> , <i>tambor</i> , <i>golpe</i> , <i>látigo</i>   |



## Introduction

### **Tango as a Musical Practice and Theoretical Framework**

According to the tango lyricist and scholar Horacio Ferrer, the violin is the only instrument present throughout the entire development of tango, a genre of music and dance that originated in the Río de la Plata region, especially in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Montevideo, Uruguay, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century; as such, the violin has played a crucial role in the stylistic development of tango music.<sup>1</sup> Initially a dance of the *compadritos*, the urban youths who populated the *arrabales* or outskirts of these cities, tango was largely ignored or shunned by the Argentine elite and middle classes until it underwent a process of social acceptance, attaining global fame in the years preceding the First World War and becoming known as a national symbol of Argentina.<sup>2</sup> Social acceptance was directly connected to significant changes in both the dance and the music. Whilst the first musicians performing tango music played portable instruments and provided accompaniment for dancing in the streets of the *arrabales* or in the *casas de baile*, chic dancing establishments for a well-to-do male public, by 1910, tango music began to grow in popularity independently of the dance, aided by the quickly expanding *Porteño* music publication and recording industries, as well as the increasing presence of tango music in the cafés of central Buenos Aires.<sup>3</sup> This expansion was accompanied by a new generation of professional musicians, many of whom were of immigrant origin, who could read music and were trained to execute more technically challenging repertoire.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia y evolución* (Ediciones Continente, 1960/reprint 1999), 62. See Appendix A of this thesis for all original-language citations and extended biographical information. For a discussion of the origins and meanings of the word “tango”, see Carlos Vega, *Estudios para los orígenes del tango argentino* (Instituto de Investigación Musicológica “Carlos Vega,” 2007), 31-36; Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (Vintage Books, 2005); George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 165-70. Although I acknowledge and appreciate the significant contribution of Uruguay and Uruguayans to tango music, my focus is on the development and the reception of tango music in Argentina. See Julia Chindemi and Pablo Vila, “Another Look at the History of Tango: The Intimate Connection of Rural and Urban Music in Argentina at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in *Sound, Image, and the National Imaginary in the Construction of Latin/o American Identities*, ed. Héctor Fernández L’Hoeste and Pablo Vila (Lexington Books, 2018), 39.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1 of this thesis for a more thorough explanation of the *compadrito* and social acceptance in Argentina.

<sup>3</sup> José Gobello, *Breve historia crítica del tango* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1999), 32-36.

<sup>4</sup> Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” in *La historia del tango, vol. 3: La Guardia Vieja* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 297-298. In this thesis, I distinguish *professional* from *amateur* musicians based on two criteria: whether

This enabled a “professionalisation” and led to a diversification of performance practice, at a time when the genre was undergoing a process of stylistic innovation and codification. The evidence of this musical development is preserved on the thousands of recordings made between 1910 and 1935.<sup>5</sup>

This thesis is centred on the development of these stylistic changes on the violin, and on some of the principal violinists responsible for creating and codifying the stylistic practices that have become the foundation of tango performance on the instrument.<sup>6</sup> It spans the period from 1910, the year of the *centenario* and of the first *orquesta típica* recording – the primary instrumental tango formation for much of the twentieth century – to 1935, the end of the *Guardia Nueva*, by which time stylistic practice on the violin was largely codified and standardized.<sup>7</sup> Across four case studies, the thesis probes the interaction between violinists’ playing styles and key changes occurring in Argentine society and culture (1910-1935); my analysis of tango violin playing is thus juxtaposed with an exploration of this larger Argentine context. I have chosen to focus on the contributions of individual violinists rather than solely addressing broader changes in the music as a whole, for several reasons. First, this approach is rooted in the reception history of tango, as well as its historiography; the genre is framed as a history of individual musicians and groups.<sup>8</sup> Second, when I began this project, I wished to discover which violinists were involved in the development and eventual codification of tango violin playing. These violinists were not merely participants in a larger trend – they were active

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they earned their living primarily from music, and whether they had some sort of formal training. Early tango musicians frequently had other professions, such as cobbler or painter, according to Horacio Ferrer; Ferrer, *El tango*, 65. Furthermore, a number of early tango musicians lacked formal training and did not read music, performing *a la parrilla*, or a form of improvised arrangement. See Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 297-298, as well as the discussion of *a la parrilla* playing later in this introduction. See Appendix A for more information.

<sup>5</sup> Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña, 1880-1920* (Editorial Abrazos, 2019), 431.

<sup>6</sup> In this thesis, I use terms such as *development* and *evolution* to describe changes in stylistic conventions over time, particularly the introduction, proliferation and eventual codification of expressive techniques in tango violin performance. These terms are not intended to suggest that earlier forms were artistically inferior, but rather to reflect how the genre transformed as it interacted with the larger socio-historical context of early twentieth-century Argentina.

<sup>7</sup> The *centenario* refers to the one-hundredth anniversary of the *Revolución de Mayo*, and the *Guardia Nueva* to the stylistic period between 1920-1935. For more information on the *orquesta típica* and historical periods of the tango, see Appendix B of this thesis, and Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica: Evolución instrumental del tango* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1966/reprint 1997), 51-53, 68, 81-84, 125-127. See Appendix A for more information about 1935.

<sup>8</sup> See “Tango as a musical practice” (Introduction) for a discussion of tango historiography.



shapers and creators of it. Each of the violinists brought their own background, training (or lack thereof) and unique experiences to tango music, enriching and changing the genre over time. The evidence of these changes is preserved on the hundreds of recordings analysed in preparation of this thesis.

Chapter One, Tangomania and the Social Acceptance of Tango, explores perhaps the most significant socio-cultural aspect influencing the development of tango: its social acceptance amongst the middle and upper classes in early twentieth-century Argentina. Whereas tango dancing and music were largely forbidden in polite society before 1910, tango underwent a massive social transformation through a process known as Tangomania, by which the genre attained global popularity. Popularity abroad, above all in Paris, in many ways the social mecca of the period, led in turn to tango's adoption by the Argentine elite, and, as a result, to the adoption of tango as a national symbol of Argentina. Tangomania coincided with the massive expansion of the Argentine recording industry, and a period in which the major labels, notably Odeon and Victor, began to market tango as *música nacional*. Record labels hired the best musicians in order to make the recordings, in what Sergio Ospina Romero has described as *la economía del talento*: the talent economy.<sup>9</sup> This search for the best musicians, I argue, led to a professionalization and specialization of tango musicians, which in turn led to the rapid development of the music itself.

The three case studies of violinists are as much a study of the development, standardization and codification of tango violin playing as they are a study of social acceptance. Whereas the earliest violinists were societally marginal figures – Ernesto Ponzio, for example, spent years in jail for homicide – Julio De Caro proudly claimed noble heritage, even including a copy of his family's pedigree in his memoirs, *El tango en mis recuerdos*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sergio Ospina Romero, *La conquista discográfica de América Latina (1903-1926)* (Ediciones Gourmet Musical, 2024), 184-188.

<sup>10</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos* (Ediciones Centurión, 1964).

In Chapter Two, I explore three key *Guardia Vieja* tango violinists: Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio and José Bonano.<sup>11</sup> This chapter provides a snapshot of early stylistic practice; the three violinists selected for this chapter all influenced tango performance practice in different ways. Casimiro Alcorta (dates unknown), otherwise known as “el negro Casimiro”, was of Afro-Argentine origin, and is remembered for the percussive, scratching sounds he produced on the instrument.<sup>12</sup> Ernesto Ponzio (1885-1934) or “el pibe Ernesto,” a highly colourful figure associated with *compadritos*, gunfights and bravery, is perhaps the first truly well-known tango violinist; his technique was considered emblematic of the *Guardia Vieja*. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of José “Pepino” Bonano (?-1953), who was the first, and only, violinist in the *Guardia Vieja* to use a trumpet or Stroh violin. While little is known about Bonano’s life, he left behind a legacy of recordings that were at the cutting edge of technological developments of the time.

Chapter Three is dedicated to David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliata (1891-1925), the most emblematic violinist of the period from 1910-1925, and one of the most significant violinists in the history of tango music.<sup>13</sup> Although his contributions to tango are very much overlooked in tango historiography, Roccatagliata influenced present-day performance practice more than any other violinist of the early twentieth- century, according to Horacio Ferrer.<sup>14</sup> His highly distinctive playing exhibited a brilliance and flair not previously heard in tango music, and many of the elements first heard in his playing have survived in tango violin playing today. Roccatagliata can be seen, from both a violinistic and social perspective, as a transitional figure. Violinistically, although he emerged from the practices of the *Guardia Vieja*, he introduced many stylistic techniques, experimenting with them, although never standardizing them, due in part to his early death. Socially, his life reflected many of the tensions

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix B for an overview of historical periods in tango music. Although the term *Guardia Vieja* is complex, because it not only addresses a historical period but stylistic practice, it is generally used to refer to the period from the 1880’s until the late 1910’s.

<sup>12</sup> René Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre* (Centro Editor de América Latina, 1972), 101-102.

<sup>13</sup> Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas de la Guardia Vieja,” in *La historia del tango 3: La Guardia Vieja*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 497; Jorge Novati et. al., *Antología del tango rioplatense: Desde sus comienzos hasta 1920* (Instituto Nacional de Investigación Musicológica “Carlos Vega,” 1980), 134.

<sup>14</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia y evolución*, 62-63.

occurring in early-twentieth century tango: although he performed in many elite venues and dressed famously in a tuxedo, he also battled drug and alcohol addictions, dying (likely) of an overdose at the age of 34.

In Chapter Four, I will discuss Julio De Caro (1899-1980), one of the most influential violinists, composers and orchestra leaders in tango history. De Caro would have a key role in codifying tango performance practice on the violin, a part of what Blas Matamoro refers to as the “enculturation” or full social acceptance of the tango.<sup>15</sup> Violinistically, he greatly expanded the soloistic possibilities of the instrument within the tango orchestra, as well as built upon the lyrical, rhythmical, ornamental and percussive elements introduced by Roccatagliata. Furthermore, he was known for his use of the *violín corneta* or trumpet violin, following in the musical footsteps of José Bonano. However, although De Caro’s contributions to the genre as an orchestral leader and composer are well-documented, his influence on tango violin playing has not received the attention it deserves.<sup>16</sup> De Caro also remained self-conscious about his origins, as well as that of the tango, throughout his career.<sup>17</sup> Benefitting from a middle-class upbringing “with pretensions of status,”<sup>18</sup> and formal musical training as a child, he wished to “elevate” the musical language of tango; he forever remained conscious of tango’s hard-fought battle for social respectability.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, there are various appendices included as part of this thesis. Appendix A is dedicated to supplementary bibliographical material, including quotations in their original language (Spanish or French, depending on the passage). In addition, the titles of archival materials such as periodical

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<sup>15</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango: Tango histórico y sociedad* (Editorial Galerna, 1982), 103.

<sup>16</sup> Some examples include José Gobello, *Breve historia crítica del tango*; Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla...y después* (Manantial, 1999); Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” in *La historia del tango 7: La época Decareana*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 1007-1183.

<sup>17</sup> Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 102. Matamoro even depicts De Caro’s class pretensions in political terms, likening him to the patrician Torquato de Alvear as opposed to the more populist Francisco Canaro’s Hipólito Yrigoyen. This political argument, although rather simplistic as it does not consider the complexities of De Caro’s career and convictions, is beyond the scope of this thesis. For more information about the political situation in 1920s Argentina, see Michael Goebel, *Argentina’s Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History* (Liverpool University Press, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108.

<sup>19</sup> *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942.

articles are included in full in Appendix A, whereas they are only listed by periodical name and date in the thesis itself. Finally, lengthier discussions within certain footnotes are also included. Appendix B provides an overview of the various historical periods of tango music, and especially the temporal and stylistic distinctions between *Guardia Vieja* and *Guardia Nueva*, particularly relevant to my research. Finally, detailed discographies of Ernesto Ponzio, José Bonano, David Roccatagliata, and Julio De Caro (1923-1934) can be found in Appendix C.

### Tango as a musical practice

Much has been written about tango in scholarly literature. Scholarship has focussed on tango dancing;<sup>20</sup> tango's origins;<sup>21</sup> the interaction of tango (dance) with Argentine society;<sup>22</sup> globalization and tango;<sup>23</sup> and the sociological and psychological analysis of tango lyrics.<sup>24</sup> In this section, I will concentrate instead on scholarly literature about tango as a musical practice under four categories: historico-biographical literature;<sup>25</sup> musicological and compositional analysis; performance practice; and literature pertaining to recordings of tango music. Scholarly literature about tango music is a largely recent phenomenon.

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<sup>20</sup> Kathy Davis, *Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World* (New York University Press, 2015); Nicole Nau-Klapwijk, *Tango: Un baile bien porteño* (Ediciones Corregidor, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Juan Álvarez, *Orígenes de la música argentina* (Lightning Source UK Ltd. (reprint) 1908/2020); Andrés Carretero, *El compadrito y el tango* (Ediciones Continente, 1999); Néstor Ortíz Oderigo, *Latitudes africanas del tango*, ed. Norberto Pablo Cirio (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, 2009); Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, "Aspectos ocultos de la identidad nacional: los afroamericanos y el origen del tango," *Ciclos* III, year III, no. 5 (1993): 147-161; Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros* (Librería Hachette, 1926/reprint 1958); Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*.

<sup>22</sup> Adriana Bergero, *Intersecting Tango: Cultural Geographies of Buenos Aires, 1900-1930* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008); Florencia Garramuño, *Primitive Modernities: Tango, Samba and Nation*, trans. Anna Kazumi Stahl (Stanford University Press, 2011); Julio Mafud, *Sociología del tango* (Editorial Américalee, 1966); Roberto Puertas Cruse, *Psicopatología del tango* (Editorial Sophos, 1959); Noemí Ulla, *Tango, rebelión y nostalgia* (Centro Editor de América Latina, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Melissa Fitch, *Global Tangos: Travels in the International Imaginary* (Bucknell University Press, 2015); Chris Goertzen and María Susana Azzi, "Globalization and the Tango," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 31 (1999): 67-76.

<sup>24</sup> Carlos Mina, *Tango: La mezcla milagrosa (1917-1956)* (Editorial Sudamericana, 2017); Javier Campo and Ofelia Flores, *Tangos políticos: El libro de quejas del arrabal* (Ediciones Ciccus, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*; José Gobello, *Breve historia crítica del tango*; José María Otero, *El ABC del tango: Biografías de grandes figuras* (Ediciones Corregidor, 2011)

For many years, the oral tradition of tango music was predominant, which meant that there was a lack of systematic writing as information about specific musicians and stylistic practice was passed on orally, rather than in scholarly or pedagogical writing.<sup>26</sup> In addition, musicologists such as Omar García Brunelli and Andrés Serafini have noted a generation gap in knowledge; although based on an oral tradition for most of its history, tango underwent a period of decline from the 1960s to early 1990s, whereby the direct oral connection was not fully maintained.<sup>27</sup> Since the early 1990s with the resurgence of tango, the emergence of younger generations interested in learning and building upon the music of the past, and the creation of training programs, tango music underwent a process of academic and pedagogic formalization.<sup>28</sup> However, pedagogic and academic discourses are largely separate from one another; performance practice is not often explained from a historical perspective, something that this thesis addresses by considering the developments of performance practice on the violin through the lens of historical and social context.

### *Biographies and Histories*

By far the largest body of scholarship related to tango music consists of general histories and biographies. The latter are mostly written by journalists and do not provide source material or bibliographical information. Perhaps the most widely cited is José Otero's *ABC del tango: Biografías de grandes figuras* (2011), which is a highly detailed collection of individual biographies of some of the key individual musicians in tango history.<sup>29</sup> Although Otero, a journalist and tango dancer, provides valuable information, his explanations of each musician are quite brief. A number of books follow the same format, providing biographical information about famous tango musicians, such as Julio Nudler's *Tango judío: Del ghetto a la milonga*, which discusses the contributions of key Jewish

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<sup>26</sup> Hernán Posetti, *El piano en el tango* (Fondo Nacional de los Artes, 2014), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Omar García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo en el tango," *Zama* year 7, num. 7 (2015), 168; Andrés Serafini, "Yeites de tango: análisis de gestos musicales y técnicas extendidas en el tango para su utilización creativa y pedagógica," *1er Congreso Internacional de Música Popular* (La Plata, Argentina) (October 2016): 343-344.

<sup>28</sup> Serafini, "Yeites," 344.

<sup>29</sup> José María Otero, *ABC del tango*.

tango musicians; “Principales autores e intérpretes,” in the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, vol. 1, an alphabetical encyclopaedia of notable figures in early tango music; and Héctor Bates’s *La historia del tango, tomo II: Los intérpretes* (2006), a compilation of biographical articles written by journalist and author Héctor Bates between 15 December 1934 and 19 October 1935 and compiled in 2006 by the editor Ángel Martín Sandoval.<sup>30</sup> The book was published as part two of *La historia del tango*, a 1936 text written by Bates and his cousin, Luis.<sup>31</sup> Together these tomes are widely cited in tango scholarship as they constitute the first significant attempts to consolidate the history of the tango. Originally published in the *Revista Antena*, “the weekly radio magazine for the home” created by music publisher Julio Korn,<sup>32</sup> these articles provide information about the artists’ personal background and “current” musical plans, each article preceded by a short paragraph from the editor of the book (Ángel Martín Sandoval) providing contextual information. Although providing a revealing glimpse of these artists’ careers as they unfolded, Bates’s articles are a highly unreliable source, according to Lamas and Binda, who excoriate both Héctor and Luis Bates, lamenting their complete lack of scientific-historic training and their tendency to make up information that has since been cited “as fact” in many other sources.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, a significant portion of Lamas and Binda’s book, *El tango en la sociedad porteña 1880-1920*, which uses primary sources to “debunk” theories that have become accepted as part of the narrative of tango history, is dedicated to disproving the Bates’ cousins claims. However, Ema Cibotti seeks to nuance Lamas and Binda’s argument, indicating at least the eloquence of the Bates’ writing.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Julio Nudler, *Tango judío: Del ghetto a la milonga* (Editorial Sudamericana; 1998); “Principales autores e intérpretes,” Jorge Novati et. al., *Antología del tango rioplatense*; Héctor Bates, *La historia del tango, tomo II: Los intérpretes*, ed. Ángel Martín Sandoval (Poesuar, 2006).

<sup>31</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango* (Taller gráfica de la Cía. General Fabril Financiera, 1936).

<sup>32</sup> “Antena,” Red de Historia de los Medios (REHIME), accessed 2 July 2021, <http://www.rehime.com.ar/bases/paginasdecine/index.php/Antena>.

<sup>33</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango*, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Ema Cibotti, “Del encanto al descanto de una élite, en clave de tango,” in *Escritos sobre tango: En el Río de la Plata y en la diáspora*, ed. Teresita Lencina, Omar García Brunelli and Ricardo Salton (Centro’feca Ediciones, 2009), 45.

A body of key texts, frequently labelled as the traditional historiography of tango, does not provide bibliographical information either.<sup>35</sup> As mentioned above, Bates' *La historia del tango* (1936) is the foundational text in tango history,<sup>36</sup> followed closely by a number of oft-cited books, mostly written between the 1960s and the 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Written for aficionados of tango music, these books, with the exception of Ferrer (1960/1999), mostly follow the same format; they present the information chronologically, providing biographies, anecdotes and, in the case of García Jiménez (1965) and Del Priore (1999), photographs of some of the key musicians of tango history.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the other major texts of traditional historiography, Ferrer's book is thematical, discussing the role of tango as *música popular*; immigration; general considerations about the study of history; composers; interpretative styles; and tango lyrics. Ferrer does not claim to be an impartial observer, for his arguments are persuasive and highly opinionated.<sup>39</sup> Ferrer's text is crucial as it is one of the first to address performance practice, in an essay entitled "Los estilos interpretativos."<sup>40</sup> Ferrer explains the different interpretative varieties of the tango, exploring the stylistic particularities of some of the leading musicians of the Guardia Nueva, including Osvaldo Fresedo and Julio De Caro.<sup>41</sup> While hailing De Caro as the most significant innovator in the history of tango music, who united both compositional excellence with a great deal of interpretive skill for the first time, Ferrer also illustrates the role of the arranger, and not just the performer, in the diversification of stylistic practice which emerged in tango music after 1920. As he points out, "progress did not consist, as many suppose, in making tango music more complex, but – which is very different – in making better use of its own elements."<sup>42</sup>

Another key source is Luis Adolfo Sierra's *Historia de la orquesta típica: Evolución instrumental del*

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<sup>35</sup> Traditional historiography in tango music, which refers to several oft-cited authors, such as Ferrer, García Jiménez and Gobello, is identified as such by Marina Cañardo. Marina Cañardo, "Tangos "marginales": imaginario, circulación e interpretación," *Revista Argentina de Musicología* 15-16 (2014-2015): 148.

<sup>36</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, tomo I.

<sup>37</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*; Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*; Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*; Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango: Historia de medio siglo 1880-1930* (Editorial universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1965); Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla*.

<sup>38</sup> Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*.

<sup>39</sup> For example, he excoriates the Eurocentric tastes of the upper classes, calling them a form of "frustrated masturbation." Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 83-96.

<sup>41</sup> The Guardia Nueva generally refers to the period from 1917-1935, although there is no consensus on dates in the literature. See Appendix B for more information on the historical periods of the tango.

<sup>42</sup> Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 91.

*tango* (1966/reprint 1997), which remains the most influential historical text on instrumental tango.<sup>43</sup> Sierra's book presents an invaluable, if partial and highly personal, analysis of the stylistic evolution of tango from its origins until the 1960s. Not only does he discuss the individual musicians who were instrumental in these musical changes, as well as the stylistic demarcations of each of the major tango orchestras, he specifically addresses developments that took place on each instrument, including the violin. As such, Sierra's book, and his opinions, can be seen as a thought-provoking starting point for further research, useful for the quantity of evidence provided, but challenging because of Sierra's views.

A more critical body of historical scholarship has emerged in the past twenty years.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the most conclusive source, mentioned above, is Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda's *El tango en la sociedad porteña 1880-1920* (2019), which uses primary source materials to discuss a number of aspects surrounding the first forty years of tango history; although there are many discussions of tango music, the book is primarily related to the relationship between tango and Argentine society.<sup>45</sup> Other scholars focussing on historical aspects of tango music include musicologist Marina Cañardo, who has worked on the dissemination of tango scores and recordings to indicate the spread of tango both across classes as well as globally (see Chapter 1 of this thesis);<sup>46</sup> Ramón Pelinski, a prominent ethnomusicologist who studies the relationship between tango music, the larger diaspora and globalization;<sup>47</sup> Ema Cibotti, who has examined the social and class acceptance of tango music,

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<sup>43</sup> Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*.

<sup>44</sup> Most historical scholarship overlaps with musicological analysis, so I will discuss those sources in the latter section.

<sup>45</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango*, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Cañardo, "Tangos 'marginales'."

<sup>47</sup> Ramón Pelinski, *Tango Nomade: Etudes sur le Tango Transculturel*, trans. Pierre Monette (Les Editions Triptyque, 1995); Ramón Pelinski, "Tango nómade – Una metáfora de la globalización," in *Escritos sobre tango: En el Río de la Plata y en la diáspora*, ed. Teresita Lencina, Omar García Brunelli and Ricardo Salton (Centro'feca Ediciones).



notably in the middle classes;<sup>48</sup> and Yuiko Asaba, who studies tango and transculturality, with a focus on Japan.<sup>49</sup>

### *Musicological Scholarship*

The first academic writing on tango music can be traced to ethnomusicologist Carlos Vega, referred to as the father of Argentine musicology, who was highly connected to the *Americanismo* movement, a framework for understanding South American music from the perspective of South America originally inspired by the German musicologist Francisco Curt Lange, creator of the *Boletín Latinoamericano de Música* (1935-1946).<sup>50</sup> Juan Pablo González notes that Vega's novel approach, in which he explored both the historical and ethnographic dimensions of musical genres, as well as the interactions between them, would have a major impact on Latin-American musicology.<sup>51</sup> Although Vega's primary focus was on folkloric dances, he wrote an invaluable book on tango music, but died before finishing it. The different chapters were subsequently compiled by a group of scholars working at the Instituto de Investigación Musicológica "Carlos Vega," and published as *Estudios para los orígenes del tango* (2007) nearly forty years after Vega's death.<sup>52</sup> Exhaustively researched but unfortunately unfinished and rather disorganized, the book presents Vega's opinions on the origins and ancestors of tango. Vega would inspire generations of musicologists in Argentina, and scholarship on tango music emerged much more prominently in the 1980s and 1990s with scholars such as Marcela Hidalgo, Ricardo Salton and Omar García Brunelli, working within the Instituto Nacional de Investigación Musicológica "Carlos Vega," founded shortly after Vega's death in 1966 as

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<sup>48</sup> Cibotti, "Del encanto"; Ema Cibotti, "El tango argentino como genuina expresión de las clases medias," in *Escritos sobre tango, volumen 2: Cultura rioplatense, Patrimonio de la humanidad*, ed. Teresita Lencina (Centro'feca Ediciones, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Yuiko Asaba, "Tango, Emotion, and Transculturality in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries," in *The Cambridge Companion to Tango*, ed. Kristin Wendland and Kacey Link (Cambridge University Press, 2024). Her book on tango in Japan is forthcoming: *Tango in Japan: Cosmopolitanism beyond the West* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2025).

<sup>50</sup> Juan Pablo González, *Thinking about Music from Latin America*, trans. Nancy Morris (Lexington Books, 2018), 7-8.

<sup>51</sup> Juan Pablo González, *Thinking About Music*, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Vega, *Estudios*.

a research centre for Argentine musicology.<sup>53</sup> One of the first major projects of the Instituto, and one of the first academic sources about tango music, was the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, first published in 1980; the *Antología* remains a significant reference work.<sup>54</sup> Today, Omar García Brunelli, still connected to the Instituto, is one of the most prolific tango music scholars. Interested in the stylistic developments of tango music (see my discussion of performance practice scholarship below), García Brunelli has especially explored the connections between specific tango musicians, stylistic developments and a larger historical context, such as his 2016 article exploring the connections between the financial crisis of 1930 and stylistic changes the tangos of the *Guardia Nueva*.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, García Brunelli is the author of key reference articles about tango music, including the entries in the *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, and the *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*, the latter co-authored with Pablo Kohan and Laureano Fernández.<sup>56</sup>

Afro-Argentine musicians' and composers' contributions in tango music have recently attracted much musicological attention. Pablo Mitilineos (2016) has shown the connections between dances and music of the Afro-Argentine community and rhythmic patterns as well as a number of more technical stylistic elements (such as the use of *arrastres* and percussion) in the tango music of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.<sup>57</sup> His explorations of Julio De Caro, focussed upon the first double bass player of De Caro's sextet, the *Afrocriollo* Leopoldo Thompson, explains the crucial link between the music of the Guardia Nueva and the *Afrocriollo* community. Likewise, Norberto Pablo Cirio (2006; 2010) takes a

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<sup>53</sup> "Institucional – Historia," Instituto de Investigación Musicológica "Carlos Vega," accessed 7 December 2024, [https://iimecv.net.ar/institucional\\_historia.php](https://iimecv.net.ar/institucional_historia.php).

<sup>54</sup> Jorge Novati, ed., *Antología del tango rioplatense*.

<sup>55</sup> Omar García Brunelli, "La transición estilística del tango luego de la crisis de 1930," *XXII Conferencia de la Asociación Argentina de Musicología* (2016).

<sup>56</sup> Omar García Brunelli, "Tango," *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World Vol 9. Genres: Caribbean and Latin America* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014); Pablo Kohan, Omar García Brunelli, et al., "Tango," in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*, vol. 10, ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio, Victoria Eli Rodríguez and Benjamín Yépez Chamorro (Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2002), 142–154.

<sup>57</sup> Pablo Mitilineos, "Al son de la clave: El 3+3+2 en el tango, las décadas del 20, 30 y 40," *Clang* no 4 (April 2016): 55-68.

more historiographic approach, exploring the presence of Afro-Argentines in lyrics, on recordings and their influence on tango music as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

Other musicologists have focussed more on the compositional aspects of tango. For example, Pablo Kohan (2019) compares several of the compositional styles of the 1920s, including those of Juan Carlos Cobián (1896-1953), Enrique Delfino (1895-1967), and the lyrics and music of Enrique Discépolo (1901-1951), although he does not address one of the key innovators of the time: Julio De Caro.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, his book explores the ways in which these composers constructed both their compositions and their arrangements. Likewise, Bárbara Varassi Pega (2020) has analysed the compositional output of four prominent tango composers: Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), Horacio Salgán (1916-2016), Osvaldo Pugliese (1905-1995) and Gustavo Beytelmann (1945--). Varassi Pega's work provides valuable insight not only into the compositional aspects of these composers, but has larger implications for the study of tango composition as a whole.<sup>60</sup> Finally, two North American scholars, Link and Wendland (2016), present the only non-Argentine work in this literature review.<sup>61</sup> Using a chronological approach, Link and Wendland provide a historical and musicological analysis not only of compositional specificities, but also of stylistic practice, and as such their book is a valuable compendium of instrumental tango from 1932 to today. Moreover, it situates tango music within a larger Argentine social, historical and cultural context, albeit briefly. However, the book can be seen as an excellent introduction to each of these musicians and orchestras, rather than a thorough investigation.

### *Performance Practice in Tango Music*

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<sup>58</sup> Norberto Pablo Cirio, "La presencia del negro en grabaciones de tango y géneros afines," *Temas de patrimonio cultural 16: Buenos Aires negra. Identidad y cultura*, ed. Leticia Maronese (Preservación del Patrimonio Histórico Cultural de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2006): 25-59; Norberto Pablo Cirio, "La historia negra del tango. Todo tiene su "historia negra", pero de ésta estamos orgullosos," *Revista de Historia Bonaerense* 36 (2010): 97-107.

<sup>59</sup> Pablo Kohan, *El ADN del tango: Estudios sobre los estilos compositivos (1920-1935)* (Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2019).

<sup>60</sup> Bárbara Varassi Pega, *The Art of Tango* (Routledge, 2020).

<sup>61</sup> Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Although there is often significant overlap between musicological analysis of compositional styles and performance practice in the literature, few musicological sources exclusively address performance practice. There is, however, a much more significant body of pedagogical literature. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the oral tradition, the generation gap, and the desire of younger generations to approach tango music systematically. As such, in the past twenty years, a series of pedagogical texts have emerged with the goal of codifying the compositional and interpretative language of tango.<sup>62</sup> These manuals have a wide audience not only in Argentina but across the globe. In fact, all of them are available in English as well as Spanish, and the six books comprising the *Método de Tango* series, “a fundamental method for playing tango music,”<sup>63</sup> are bilingual, and thus intended for an international audience. Although a valuable contribution to tango music, these sources do not aspire to present this information from a historical or scholarly perspective. In fact, these manuals distinguish between *herramientas* (the stylistic/technical tools needed to execute the music), which are presented practically rather than historically, and *estilos* (the fundamental styles of tango orchestras), which are discussed historically.<sup>64</sup> All of these manuals include a series of musical examples and analysis, and, with the exception of Peralta (2015), a collection of audio and/or video recordings illustrating these examples practically. While Salgán (2001) and Peralta (2015) are more targeted towards composing and arranging tangos, the *Método de Tango* series are designed primarily for performance practice on individual instruments. As such, my primary focus will be on Gallo (2011), which addresses the violin in tango music. One of the most well-known tango violinists and composers currently active, Ramiro Gallo compiled an extremely thorough practical manual explaining the principal stylistic tools of

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<sup>62</sup> Pedagogical texts include Horacio Salgán, *Tango Course*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Horacio Salgán, 2001); Julián Peralta, *The Tango Orchestra: Fundamental Concepts and Techniques*, trans Morgan Luker, (Ediciones Musicales del Puerto (2015); Posetti, 2014; Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango* (G. Ricordi & Co., 2011); Paulina Fain, *La flauta en el tango* (G. Ricordi & Co, 2010); Ignacio Varchausky, *El contrabajo en el tango* (Ediciones Tango sin fin, 2018); Sebastián Henríquez, *La guitarra en el tango* (Ediciones Tango sin fin, 2018); Eva Wolff, *El bandoneón en el tango* (Ediciones Tango Sin Fin, 2018); Paulina Fain, *Cuaderno de estudio: Herramientas fundamentales del tango* (Tango Sin Fin, 2019).

<sup>63</sup> Fain, *La flauta*, 2010; Gallo, *El violín*, 2011; Posetti, *El piano*, 2014; Varchausky, *El contrabajo*, 2018; Hernández, *La guitarra*, 2018; Wolff, *El bandoneón*, 2018; Fain, *Cuaderno de estudio*, 2019.

<sup>64</sup> For example, in the *Método de tango* books, eight pages are dedicated to the *estilos* of the great tango orchestras.

tango violin playing, including melodic, rhythmical, ornamental and percussive elements, as well as musical examples, practical exercises in order to execute them more effectively, and original compositions which combine these elements. Akin to similar treatises on technical aspects of the violin in classical music, such as Lucien Capet's *Technique Supérieure de l'Archet* (1916), Ivan Galamian and Frederick Neumann's *Contemporary Violin Technique* (1966) or Simon Fischer's *The Violin Lesson: A Manual for Teaching and Self-Teaching the Violin* (2013), this work is a significant contribution to, and could even be considered the foundational practical text of, tango performance on the violin because these elements have been collected, organized and analysed in great detail for the first time.<sup>65</sup> In particular, Gallo highlights the significant differences between written notation and tango music performance, one of the key aspects of the tango performance tradition and something not emphasized in earlier manuals such as that by Salgán (2001).<sup>66</sup> I will discuss these discrepancies in more detail in my analysis of tango scores and performance. However, despite occasional mention of violinists and prominent recordings throughout the book as well as a very brief overview of the history of the violin in tango, Gallo does not emphasize the connection between specific violinists and stylistic elements, nor does he situate them within a broader historical or cultural context.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to such pedagogical materials, there is also a growing body of literature dedicated to tango performance practice. Only one text, which could not be considered scholarship, however, specifically focusses on the violin: "El violín en el tango," an undated, thirty-four page pamphlet published by the Club de la Guardia Nueva, which attempts to provide not just biographical material, but a stylistic analysis of some of the most prominent violinists of the time instead.<sup>68</sup> The pamphlet reveals an insightful analysis of the playing styles of some key violinists, such as Julio De Caro, Raúl Kaplún

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<sup>65</sup> Lucien Capet, *Technique Supérieure de l'Archet pour Violon* (Editions Salabert, 1916/2001); Ivan Galamian and Frederick Neumann, *Contemporary Violin Technique* (ECS Publishing, 1966); Simon Fischer, *The Violin Lesson: A Manual for Teaching and Self-Teaching the Violin* (Edition Peters, 2013).

<sup>66</sup> Gallo, *El violín*, 16; Salgán, *Tango Course*, 2001. All of the *Método de tango* books emphasize the differences between written notation and interpretation, but my focus here is on the violin and Gallo (2011).

<sup>67</sup> Gallo's intended public is made up of violinists who would like to learn how to play tango music, not those interested in learning more about the historical tradition.

<sup>68</sup> Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, "El violín en el tango," *Cuadernos de Tanguando* 3 (El Club de la Guardia Nueva, n.d.).

and Elvino Vardaro, as well as the stylistic innovations they introduced and, crucially, how they influenced each other. Although of limited use because of its brevity and lack of publication date, it perhaps comes closer than any other source to an exploration of the key violinists in tango history. Musicological scholarship specifically focussed on performance practice is far more recent, having emerged in the past twenty years. Link and Wendland (2016) and Mitilineos (2016), address specific aspects of individual stylistic practice as well as technical elements, although this is not their primary focus.<sup>69</sup> A number of articles do focus on specific techniques. For example, two key articles explore *fraseo*, Pelinski (2000) and García Brunelli (2015).<sup>70</sup> Pelinski's article defines *fraseo*, using a textual analysis of the tango *Sur* to explain *fraseo* in sung tangos, while García Brunelli builds upon Pelinski's article, specifically focussing on *fraseo* within instrumental tango and briefly reflecting on how the usage of *fraseo* has changed throughout tango history. Both are valuable contributions to the discussion of *fraseo*, but can be further extended by focussing specifically on the violin, and its relationship with vocal phrasing. In another article, Serafini (2016), gives a brief overview of the *yeites* of tango – the specific effects, or “licks,” executed by instruments such as the violin – another key interpretational tool.<sup>71</sup> However, this article only gives the briefest introduction to these effects, and as such they need further investigation. Finally, García Brunelli (2016) has shown the connections between certain aspects of performance practice – notably the introduction of new innovations, changes in instrumentation, and changes in tempi – and the economic crisis of 1930, thus connecting performance practice to a wider socio-economic context.<sup>72</sup> Influenced by García Brunelli's contextual approach in this brief article, my own research explores the connections between stylistic developments and historical, cultural and social factors.

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<sup>69</sup> The distinction between *herramienta* and *estilo*, noted in the pedagogical literature, is not reflective of musicological scholarship as a whole. However, literature focussing on specific tools, such as *fraseo* and *yeites*, is limited.

<sup>70</sup> Ramón Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” in *Invitación a la Etnomusicología: Quince fragmentos y un tango* (Ediciones Akal, 2000): 26-42; García Brunelli, “La cuestión del fraseo.”

<sup>71</sup> Serafini, “Yeites,” 2016. Link and Wendland translate *yeite* as “licks.” Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 27.

<sup>72</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición estilística del tango.”

### *Recordings of Tango Music*

The final body of relevant scholarship is related to recordings of tango music. Cañardo (2017) provides an in-depth analysis of the recording industry (1919-1930), exploring aspects such as the transnational nature of the recording companies, marketing in Argentina and abroad, public reception, and the specialisation and professionalisation of tango musicians during this time period.<sup>73</sup> As such, Cañardo's insightful and extensively researched discussion is a vital contribution to scholarship about the Argentine recording industry, although her discussions of the violin, and performance practice, are limited. Nonetheless, Cañardo does explore the recording career of certain violinists, such as Julio De Caro, with a particular emphasis on his *violin corneta* or trumpet violin, the hero worship culture of the recording industry, as well as some of the technological challenges of recording instruments such as the violin at the time and how that influenced stylistic practice.<sup>74</sup> In addition, she probes the roles of Max Glücksmann and Francisco Canaro, two pioneer empresarios of the recording industry, in connection with marketing tango music and disseminating it to a broader public. While Cañardo limits her discussions to the recording industry, a key source, Karush (2012) addresses the radio industry, which would also have a significant impact on the development and reception of tango music.<sup>75</sup> Karush (2012) explores the development of the radio and film industries from 1920-1946, mapping these central aspects of the Argentine culture industry onto key economic, political and social developments in Argentine history. Although tango music, and performance, are perhaps not the key concerns of the book, Karush nonetheless provides an extensive discussion of the mass marketing of tango music, particularly in conjunction with key musicians such as Julio De Caro and the reception of his music, and empresarios such as Max Glücksmann, perhaps the most powerful figure in the Argentine recording, radio *and* cinema industries of the time.<sup>76</sup> Finally, García Brunelli (2010), provides an excellent if brief survey of the discography of tango music, examining the key

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<sup>73</sup> Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas: Comienzos de la industria discográfica en la Argentina (1919-1930)* (Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2017).

<sup>74</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 61-65; 80-83.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946* (Duke University Press, 2012); Andrea Matallana, *Locos por la radio: Una historia social de la radiofonía en la Argentina, 1923-1957* (Promoteo Libros, 2006).

<sup>76</sup> Karush, *Culture of Class*, on Julio De Caro (143-150); on Max Glücksmann (45-47).

recordings of some of the most influential and prominent individuals and ensembles throughout the genre's history.<sup>77</sup> García Brunelli's book intends to provide a concise introduction of the vast discography of the genre, including bibliographical indications; as such, he does not delve into stylistic concerns or a larger socio-historical context, as he has in other sources.<sup>78</sup>

A number of sources provide compelling methodological models for recording analysis. In particular, two sources consider historical, social and cultural influences on performance practice. The first, García Brunelli (2013), explores a few aspects of the personal style of Julio De Caro through the use of transcription and analysis of recordings, and then situating these aspects in historical context.<sup>79</sup> Another study, that of Eva Moreda Rodríguez (2020), employs the analysis of historical recordings to reconstruct vocal performance techniques in early twentieth century *zarzuela* music.<sup>80</sup> Moreda Rodríguez explores these performance techniques within the context of an exploration of the early days of the recording industry in Spain, and explores the extent to which these recordings can be considered traces of live performance techniques. Beyond these models, there are many different empirical methods that can be used to analyse recordings; sources such as Eric Clarke (2004), Nicholas Cook (2009) and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2009), provide valuable potential methodologies for the study of recordings.<sup>81</sup> Various techniques include close listening, which involves taking careful notes, coloured annotations, and organized comments in the form of Excel charts; tempo mapping; and spectral analysis, to study timbre, the frequency of sounding notes, or the speed of vibrato.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Omar García Brunelli, *Discografía básica del tango: Su historia a través de las grabaciones (1905-2010)* (Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> See García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo"; "La transición estilística."

<sup>79</sup> Omar García Brunelli, "Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro y proyección en el género," in *Músicas populares vol. II: Aproximaciones teóricas, metodológicas y analíticas en la musicología argentina*, ed. Federico Sammartino and Héctor Rubio (Buena Vista Ediciones, 2013).

<sup>80</sup> Eva Moreda Rodríguez, "Reconstructing Zarzuela Performance Practices ca. 1900: Wax Cylinder and Gramophone Disc Recordings of *Gigantes* and *Cabezudos*," *The Journal of Musicology* 37, no. 4 (2020): 459-487.

<sup>81</sup> Eric Clarke, "Empirical Methods in the Study of Performance," in *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects*, ed. Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook (Oxford University Press, 2004), 77-102; Nicholas Cook, "Methods for Analysing Recordings," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge University Press: 2009); Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performances* (CHARM, 2009).

<sup>82</sup> Although I discuss my methodological choices later in the chapter, I particularly made use of Excel documents, where I took detailed notes about each piece, making particular note of important stylistic elements.



Looking at the intended purpose and public of different types of tango music scholarship, it is clear that these materials have provided a valuable contribution to the systematic codification of the musical language of tango, focussing on specific interpretational aspects of different instruments such as the violin, or the contributions and innovations of key performers, arrangers and composers. Pedagogical literature tends to separate these aspects, focussing primarily on the practical tools of interpretation, rather than on the playing styles of specific musicians. In addition, with the exception of Pelinski (2000); García Brunelli (2010; 2015; 2016), Link and Wendland (2016), and Mitilineos (2016), tango music scholarship does not, as a whole, situate stylistic practice within historical, cultural or social context.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, none of these sources present a systematic overview of the development of stylistic practice in tango music on the violin. These aspects should be integrated and historically situated within a discussion of stylistic practice, because these tools were introduced by specific musicians and orchestras during a particularly tumultuous period in Argentine history; by exploring those connections in this thesis, I will provide new insight on how performance practice on the violin developed and was codified.

#### *Primary Sources: Periodicals in Argentina, 1910-1935*

Primary source materials reveal a massive change in attitudes towards tango music and dance. In the early twentieth century, there was little press coverage about tango, except for a few negative articles. However, as time went on, there was a massive expansion in both press coverage and advertising materials in publications aimed at a middle- and upper-class public, in what can be understood as an indication of the growing social acceptance of the genre. Another explanation for this increase in press coverage was the quickly expanding number of periodicals dedicated to leisure activities in early twentieth-century Argentina. The most famous periodicals of the time, *Caras y Caretas*, *Fray*

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These notes served as a guideline for the subsequent transcriptions I made, which also include numerous score annotations.

<sup>83</sup> Pelinski, “Decir el tango”; García Brunelli, “La cuestión del fraseo”; García Brunelli, “La transición estilística”; Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*; Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave.”

*Mocho* and *PBT*, were weekly variety magazines including humour, caricatures, photographs, and advertisements, a highly successful formula at the time.<sup>84</sup> By far, *Caras y Caretas* was the most influential, being the most widely circulated weekly periodical in early twentieth-century Argentina.<sup>85</sup> Although circulation of the magazine ended in 1941, it enjoyed revivals in 1952, 1982, has been published again since 2005, and is a significant publication in Argentina today.<sup>86</sup> In the early twentieth century, *Caras y Caretas* enjoyed an elite readership, largely due to the presence of society pages in the magazine complete with photos, which allowed for a more vivid portrait of *Porteño* high society than other periodicals of the time, such as *La Nación* and *La Prensa*.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, the magazine attracted a growing middle-class, domestic, and feminine audience, reflective of the economic prosperity of early twentieth-century Argentina.<sup>88</sup> According to Ezequiel Adamovsky and Valeria Arza, there is no better publication to study the Argentine middle classes of the time.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, the low price of *Caras y Caretas* (\$0.20 for many years) meant that the publication was affordable to both middle and working classes.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, advertising in these periodicals would have a strong influence on the overall social acceptance of tango, in particular with the emergence of the recording industry in the 1910s and 1920s.

Although generalized publications such as *Caras y Caretas* characterized the early twentieth century, the 1920s was marked by the emergence of press specialized in popular music, such as *La Canción Moderna*, *Sintonía* and *Radiolandia*. According to Andrea Matallana, these magazines were crucial vectors of cultural consumption, vital in “disseminating and publishing a musical style”.<sup>91</sup> The

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Ana Moraña, “La propaganda, la moda y el consumo en la revista *Caras y Caretas* (Argentina, 1898-1910),” *Estudios* 16, no. 32 (July-December 2008): 251.

<sup>85</sup> Ezequiel Adamovsky and Valeria Arza, “Para una historia del concepto de “clase media”: Un modelo cuantitativo aplicado a la revista *Caras y Caretas*, 1989-1939 (y algunas consideraciones para el debate),” *Desarrollo Económico* 51, no. 204 (January-March 2012): 454; Leandro Agustín Losada, “Convenciones y estilos de vida. La élite social de la Argentina de Entreguerras en las crónicas sociales de la revista *Caras y Caretas* (1917-1939),” *Social and Education History* 2, no. 2 (June 2013): 155.

<sup>86</sup> *La Nación*, 28 May 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Losada, “Convenciones,” 155-156.

<sup>88</sup> Moraña, “La propaganda,” 252.

<sup>89</sup> Adamovsky and Arza, “Para una historia,” 454.

<sup>90</sup> Moraña, “La propaganda,” 249.

<sup>91</sup> Andrea Matallana, *Qué saben los pitucos: La experiencia del tango entre 1910 y 1940* (Prometeo Libros, 2008), 133.

magazines provided not only biographical information about the artists, including a great deal of photo material, but they also featured interviews, scores, lyrics, and advertisements about upcoming concerts, new albums, and radio appearances. They coincided with the emergence, and subsequent expansion of the Argentine middle-classes, who had more money to spend on leisure activities, such as music.<sup>92</sup>

Conversely, one publication could be described as an outlier, because it addressed a more working-class public: *Crítica*.<sup>93</sup> Founded in 1913, *Crítica* was one of the most influential Argentine periodicals, known for sensationalism and crime reports, including the *crónicas* of author Roberto Arlt. Influential writer Manuel Gálvez would later excoriate the magazine as addressing only the lower classes – “with its *tanguero* and *arrabalero* sentimentalism”.<sup>94</sup> Two articles of note, a 1913 article penned by a certain “Viejo Tanguero”, which attacks the Eurocentric tastes of the Argentine elite at the height of Tangomania, and a 1915 article discussing tango’s place in *Porteño* society, reveal tensions connected to the social ascension of the genre.<sup>95</sup>

### **Theoretical framework: What is the nature of tango music?**

Despite the process of pedagogical and scholarly formalization in the last thirty years, noted earlier in this introduction, a systematic framework for discussing and analysing tango performance practice

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<sup>92</sup> When exactly the Argentine middle-class developed is subject to debate. Ezequiel Adamovsky argues that Argentine class structure was largely binary before the middle-classes emerged in 1919, as a result of political and social changes such as: Yrigoyen’s election in 1916; the University Reform of 1918; and the *semana trágica* of 1919. However, other scholars, such as Kristen McCleary and Ema Cibotti, argue that the middle-classes had emerged earlier, alongside the massive expansion of leisure-related activities such as music and theatre, largely supported by the Argentine middle classes, who had increasing economic power and disposable income. See Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de la clase media argentina: Apogeo y decadencia de una ilusión (1919-2003)* (Crítica, 2019); Kristen McCleary, *Staging Buenos Aires: Theater, Society, Politics in Argentina, 1860-1920* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2024), 141-166; Ema Cibotti, “El tango argentino como genuina expresión de las clases medias.”

<sup>93</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Sylvia Sáitta, *Regueros de tinta: El diario Crítica en la década de 1920* (Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2013), 11.

<sup>95</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913; *Crítica*, 18 July 1915.

has not yet emerged. It is therefore helpful to consider certain theoretical discussions taken from classical music scholarship, as well as popular music, in order to situate and demarcate tango music performance. My intention is not to enter the vast scholarly debates of these academic disciplines, but instead to comment on their intersection with tango music.

Within Argentina, tango has always been considered a form of popular music, and more specifically *música popular urbana*, as a genre that developed within Buenos Aires and that was both shaped and disseminated by mass media, most notably by the recording and radio industries.<sup>96</sup> However, tango music intersects very closely with that of the Western Classical Tradition (WCT), perhaps much more closely than any other form of popular music.<sup>97</sup> Following the professionalization of tango musicians that occurred alongside the expanding recording industry, many tango musicians were (and remain) classically trained, leading to a cross-fertilization of performance practices that would strongly influence the development of tango music. Furthermore, tango music is harmonically, melodically and structurally very close to the WCT. It is therefore crucial to engage with both WCT-based and popular frameworks in order to identify and situate the position of tango music. However, tango music, although connected to the WCT, is distinct, and cannot only be understood uniquely through that lens; Richard Middleton reminds us that there is a strong WCT-bias in musicological scholarship, pointing out that the structures and vocabularies, as well as the emphasis on specific forms of notation rather than others, of traditional musicology are inadequate to address popular genres.<sup>98</sup>

One major aspect in which tango differs from the WCT is the work-concept, subject of a large body of scholarship. For the past two hundred years, so scholars have argued, the WCT has been more or less governed by a canon of musical works.<sup>99</sup> While Lydia Goehr describes the musical work within

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<sup>96</sup> Marcela Hildago, Omar García Brunelli and Ricardo Salton, “Una aproximación al estudio de la música popular urbana,” *Revista del Instituto de Investigación Musicológica “Carlos Vega”* 5 (1982): 70-71.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Talbot, “Introduction,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Open University Press, 1990), 104-106.

<sup>99</sup> Michael Talbot, “Introduction,” 6. Also, see Simon Frith, “The Industrialization of Popular Music,” in *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Routledge, 2016/original article 1987).

WCT as the intersection of the product of a composer, written score and performance,<sup>100</sup> Michael Talbot defines the work as one that 1) has a fixed beginning and end, or in other words, is discrete, 2) is reproducible, either as a text or sound, and 3) is ascribable to a specific author.<sup>101</sup> Faithfulness to the musical work, otherwise known as *Werktreue*, became a regulatory concept within WCT performance by the early nineteenth century.<sup>102</sup> By this time, according to Goehr, WCT music was elevated to a fine art, leading to a need for artefacts – products – worthy of contemplation as artistic objects; this led to the elevation of the composer, no longer regarded as simply a craftsman or practitioner, but as a genius, to allay the idea that the work had been created by human hands.<sup>103</sup> Because the composer was assigned god-like status, *Werktreue* was tantamount to carrying out the intentions of the composer, something Richard Taruskin disavows as unknowable and undesirable, referring to the phenomenon as “cheating at Telephone.”<sup>104</sup> The need for artefacts led to the reification of the musical work.<sup>105</sup> One problem was that these works, though reified, were not tangible, leading to the elevation of the score, the only physical, permanent depiction of the musical work, before recordings. Remaining true to the work, and by extension the score, became the key task of the performer. Thus, *Texttreue*, or being faithful to the musical text, became synonymous with *Werktreue* in the WCT.<sup>106</sup> However, tango music, while not entirely alien to the work-concept, is far more flexible. In this sense, it resembles other forms of popular music.<sup>107</sup> Four aspects of tango music are relevant to this discussion in particular: 1) the oral tradition; 2) the written score (including the notion of authorship in tango music and the relationship between composer, arranger, and score); 3) performance practice; 4) recordings as a record of stylistic practice.

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<sup>100</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 20. Goehr’s central argument is that the musical work became a regulatory concept after 1800; before 1800, music was primarily defined by its social, or extra-musical function.

<sup>101</sup> Talbot, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>102</sup> Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 231.

<sup>103</sup> Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 152.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 184.

<sup>105</sup> Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 174.

<sup>106</sup> Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 11; 71-72.

<sup>107</sup> Talbot, “Introduction,” 5.

## Oral Tradition

Early tango musicians, as in, those present in the Guardia Vieja (1880-early 1900s), were largely players of portable instruments, who did not read music.<sup>108</sup> The music was thus transmitted aurally/orally from musician to musician. The music was often improvisatory in nature, with the musicians playing “*a la parrilla*”, a tradition of tango music performance that still survives today, although it is no longer standard practice within tango music.<sup>109</sup> *A la parrilla* is not notated, but instead a form of spontaneous performance. Although these early tango musicians played on the street, in *peringundines* (café-restaurants of ill repute), or in *casas de baile*, the nature of tango musicians began to change when tango entered cafés, and the music was listened to independently from the dance (see: Chapter 1 on the social acceptance of tango).<sup>110</sup> According to José Gobello, cafés were the first venues for professional tango musicians.<sup>111</sup> While some of the first professional musicians such as Manuel Campoamor and Agustín Bardi read music poorly and often had to dictate music to someone musically literate, others, such as violinist Francisco Canaro, had musical training, could read music, and could execute more sophisticated, technically challenging pieces.<sup>112</sup> As such, tango music became increasingly complex, and many tango ensembles began to perform with sheet music.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the level of detail in these scores changed as the arrangements became more complex. According to Omar García Brunelli, although the first *orquesta típica* interpretations were quite rudimentary, and the musicians often made arrangement decisions during rehearsal, and then later performed either from memory or using a piano reduction, the use of more fully noted sheet

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<sup>108</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 39.

<sup>109</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 43. *A la parrilla* playing, or “on the grill,” is a type of loosely improvised arrangement that emerged in the Guardia Vieja. By the 1910s and the advent of the recording industry, most tango musicians began to play from sheet music, with fully written out arrangements.

<sup>110</sup> León Benarós, “El tango y los lugares y casas de baile,” in *La Historia del tango, vol 2: Primera época* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1999), 223-4; Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 321; Vega, *Estudios*, 118.

<sup>111</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 32.

<sup>112</sup> Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 298. Pesce indicates that while some early tango musicians could not read music and relied on copyists to whom they would dictate melodies, others had formal musical training.

<sup>113</sup> Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 438.

music became more common by the 1920s, with the advent of complex ensembles such as that of Julio De Caro performing increasingly elaborate compositions and arrangements.<sup>114</sup>

### *The Written Score, Composer, and Arranger*

Three main types of sheet music, or scores, exist in tango music: published scores, arrangements, and transcriptions. Scores allowed for a certain degree of reproducibility; as Omar García Brunelli has shown, different musicians recorded similar arrangements with the same instrumentation by 1920, indicating the presence of some sort of written notation.<sup>115</sup> However, the relationship between the written score, authorship and performer is complex.

*Tangos criollos para piano* were the first initial body of scores defined as tango music, emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These scores, such as M. J. Tornquist's *El maco*, published in *Caras y caretas* on 15 August 1903, are the first scores ascribable to a specific composer and the earliest references of tango as a musical composition, rather than an improvisational or *a la parrilla* performance.<sup>116</sup> As such, to return to Talbot's definition, they would seem to fulfil all of the qualities of a musical work, being discrete, reproducible and the work of one author.<sup>117</sup> However, for consumers of tango music, the performed music was the primary reference, and not the published score, which was only a simplified variant or arrangement of an already extant performance. In this sense, tango scores were similar to those of popular (North American) genres such as ragtime, dance music and Tin Pan Alley ballads. According to Richard Middleton, sheet music – for voice and piano, or just piano (such as *El maco*) – was usually a form of “spin-off” from the original performance, and the performers were much more well-known by the public than the composers.<sup>118</sup> Mark Katz indicates a similar trend in jazz music, where, “the performance is the primary text, while the score is merely an

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<sup>114</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la guardia vieja a la guardia nueva en el tango,” *Jornadas de lenguaje, literatura y tango* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Nacional, 2016): 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> García Brunelli, “La transición de la guardia vieja,” 5-6.

<sup>116</sup> Miguel Tornquist, “El maco,” *Caras y Caretas*, 15 August 1903.

<sup>117</sup> Talbot, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>118</sup> Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 106.

interpretation.”<sup>119</sup> Therefore, the published version was not generally reflective of the performed version – or versions – known to the public, which could differ significantly in structure, instrumentation, and style. As such, we might find ourselves asking *who* the author is. If the performer – and their performed version – was more well-known to the public than the composer, can we really say that the “author” is the same as the original composer? What about the performer, orchestra leader, or group of performers that created the tango’s identity? The arranger? Or, in the case of recordings, the record label, production studio, or sound engineer that made the recording?<sup>120</sup> Indeed, in many forms of popular music, including tango, the “original” author is in the background, far less recognized or credited, at least in the public imagination, than whoever made the piece of music famous to begin with.<sup>121</sup> In that sense, a study of recorded performance, as well as the idiosyncrasies of individual performance practices, is even more relevant than in *Werktreue*- and *Texttreue*-bound genres.

Published tango scores generally provide an indication of melodic and rhythmic motifs, harmony, and structure. These scores were designed for domestic use – a key element in the social acceptance of tango that occurred in the early twentieth century<sup>122</sup> – or as providing the basic musical elements for arrangements, which I will address in the next section. Piano reductions, or piano-and-voice reductions, remained the principal type of published tango scores until the 1940s and 1950s, when some of the major music publishing houses began to publish some (more) complete arrangements for *orquesta típica*.<sup>123</sup> Figure 1 shows a printed score from the tango *El abrojoito*, first written in 1925 by the double bass player Luis Bernstein, brother of Arturo “El Alemán” Bernstein, a well-known

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<sup>119</sup> Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology has Changed Music* (University of California Press, 2010), 88.

<sup>120</sup> Talbot, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>121</sup> David Horn, “Some Thoughts on the Work in Popular Music,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool University Press, 2000), 22.

<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 1 of this thesis for a more ample discussion. Also, see Cañardo, “Tangos ‘marginales’” and Cibotti, “El tango argentino,” for a discussion of the role of musical scores in the social acceptance of tango music.

<sup>123</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 67.



bandoneon player of the time.<sup>124</sup> While the published score, for piano, presents the basic elements of the tango, there are no known recordings of the score as published; however, well-known arrangements include those recorded by Julio De Caro (1925), Osvaldo Pugliese (1946), Alberto Moran (1958) and the Quinteto Real (1964).<sup>125</sup>



Figure 1 Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco (Editorial B. Iadarola, 1925)

Since the 1920s, the arrangement has been the principal form of expression in tango music.<sup>126</sup> In fact, many tango arrangements are more famous than the original compositions themselves, so famous that they are seen as the “definitive” versions. For example, Osvaldo Pugliese’s arrangement of *A Evaristo Carriego* is much more well-known than the original composition by Eduardo Rovira. On the other hand, some tangos, such as *La cumparsita* (E. Matos Rodríguez) and *El choclo* (Ángel Villoldo), have inspired hundreds, if not thousands of different arrangements. Simply put, arrangements are the reworking of musical composition into a different version, often with structural, melodic and

<sup>124</sup> Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco (Editorial B. Iadarola, 1925). “El abrojoito,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 4 July 2021, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/1455/El-abrojoito/>.

<sup>125</sup> “El abrojoito,” *El Recodo Tango*, accessed 4 July 2021, <https://www.el-recodo.com/music?lang=en&S=el+abrojoito>.

<sup>126</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 122.

rhythmical changes. Common within classical music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,<sup>127</sup> arrangements became a dominant format in popular music in the early-to-mid twentieth centuries. According to Simon Frith, the preponderance of the arrangement in popular music is directly related to the recording industry, because record companies often issued a number of versions or arrangements of the same piece, which had generally already attained popularity on the stage or the dancefloor.<sup>128</sup> After all, the main recording companies present in Argentina, especially Odeon and Victor but also smaller companies such as Brunswick, were all global enterprises, and the same recording trends were thus present in various global markets. One such example of multiple arrangements was the famous Enrique Santos Discépolo tango *Yira, yira*, released simultaneously in 1930 by Max Glücksmann in five different versions recorded by exclusive Nacional-Odeon artists: those of Carlos Gardel, Orquesta típica Francisco Canaro, Ignacio Corsini, Ada Falcón and Sofía Bozán. A piano-voice reduction of the score, complete with lyrics and featuring photographs of some of the artists who had already recorded this tango (notably Carlos Gardel and Sofía Bozán), was published in the Spanish magazine *Crónica* on 15 November 1931.<sup>129</sup> This was not only a way of marketing the tango *Yira, yira* itself, but also highlighted the interpretative varieties of the artists, as well as the increasing sophistication of arrangement techniques.<sup>130</sup>

Arrangements in tango music are inherently flexible, in that they do not truly have a fixed beginning and end, to return to Michael Talbot's definition of the musical work.<sup>131</sup> By flexible, I mean that they can be modified, their structure and key changed, introductions added, sections removed, harmonies substituted, special effects added, instrumentation altered. In that sense, they are much more than adaptations of original works, as they are instead re-composed, transformed according to the wishes

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<sup>127</sup> José Bowen, "The History of Remembered Innovation: Tradition and Its Role in the Relationship between Musical Works and Their Performances," *The Journal of Musicology* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 150.

<sup>128</sup> Simon Frith, "The Industrialization of Popular Music," 98.

<sup>129</sup> *Crónica*, 15 November 1931.

<sup>130</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 65.

<sup>131</sup> Talbot, "Introduction," 3.

of the arranger.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, there was (and is, because this is still largely true today) no standardised notation for details such as articulation, accents, or demarcating the differences between rhythmic and melodic passages – key aspects of tango performance practice – and as such, a wide variety can be observed; details are at the discretion of the arranger or composer; indeed, Janine Krüger argues that the arrangement is an expression of each ensemble’s interpretative individuality.<sup>133</sup> Most tango arrangements are unpublished, as it was and remains customary for each ensemble to make their own, proprietary, arrangements, a practice that appeared alongside the emergence of professional musicians by 1920, who began to introduce their own stylistic elements into tango music.<sup>134</sup> These arrangements express the individual artistic “flavour” of these groups, while also including key elements from the original version of the piece that make it recognizable (rhythmic motifs, melodic patterns, harmonies and major structures).<sup>135</sup> However, even if these arrangements were not published, the orchestration and instrumentation was increasingly complex, and the musicians performed with some form of sheet music, as indicated earlier.<sup>136</sup> The stylistic diversification and innovation in the arrangements of the major *orquestas típicas* had more than just artistic motives, according to Omar García Brunelli: the economic crisis of 1930 caused the orchestras to struggle and compete between each other to regain their public, adding stylistic innovations in order to appeal to new audiences.<sup>137</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, in the 1940s and 1950s, some major publishers such as Julio Korn began to publish more thoroughly orchestrated tango arrangements for *orquesta típica*.<sup>138</sup> These published arrangements look quite similar to the type of score an *orquesta típica* might use in performance today, although they vary in levels of detail.<sup>139</sup> In

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<sup>132</sup> In this sense, the arrangement, or the *arreglo*, is much more like jazz music, than the *Bearbeitungen* or adaptations/score reductions that might be found in the WCT. See: Malcolm Boyd, “Arrangement,” *New Grove Online*, accessed 28 July 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.01332>.

<sup>133</sup> Posetti, *El piano*, 20.

<sup>134</sup> Jessica Quiñones, “Tango like a *Tanguero*: Five little tips to help a classical flute player perform tango music,” *Flute* (June 2011): 3.

<sup>135</sup> Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 39; Janine Krüger, “Das Arrangement im argentinischen Tango: Drei Annäherungsperspektiven,” *Die Musikforschung* 65, no. 1 (2012): 84-93.

<sup>136</sup> García Brunelli, “La transición de la guardia vieja,” 5-6.

<sup>137</sup> García Brunelli, “La transición estilística,” 327-328.

<sup>138</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 67.

<sup>139</sup> Although a number of *orquesta típica* arrangements were published in the 1940s and 1950s, they are exceedingly difficult to locate today.

fact, they could easily have been used by the *orquestas típicas* of the time, and interpreted according to the stylistic conventions of the genre. However, they were not used as materials for performance, because of the distinct identity of each of the major tango orchestras and their proprietary arrangements.

In Figure 2 and Figure 3, we see a published *orquesta típica* arrangement, that of Julián Plaza's orchestration of *El Abrojoito*, published in 1952.<sup>140</sup> In this arrangement, which has not been recorded to my knowledge, a high level of detail is provided, including accents, dynamics, and expressive slurs.<sup>141</sup> I have included the first few measures of the violin 1 and piano parts, revealing a version of *El Abrojoito* that is much more complex, and sophisticated, than the published piano score.



Figure 2 Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco, published arrangement of Julián Plaza (Editorial Julio Korn S.R.L, 1952), violin 1+4 part

<sup>140</sup> Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco and arrangement by Julián Plaza (Buenos Aires: Editorial Julio Korn S.R.L, 1952). Unfortunately, no full score is provided, only individual parts (violin 1/4, 2, 3; viola; cello; bandoneon 1, 2, 3; piano; double bass).

<sup>141</sup> I conducted an informal survey of recordings of *El abrojoito* including those of the orchestras of Julio De Caro (1925), Osvaldo Pugliese (1947), Alberto Moran (1958), Fulvio Salamanca (1968) and smaller formations such as Troilo-Grelo Cuarteto (1955), and all differ from the published arrangement.



Figure 3 Luis Bernstein, *El abrojo*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco, published arrangement of Julián Plaza (Editorial Julio Korn S.R.L, 1952), piano part

Locating arrangements – published or unpublished – is challenging. Virtually all scores available digitally are piano reductions rather than arrangements.<sup>142</sup>

Due to the scarcity of published material, a new type of score found a place in tango performance: the transcription.<sup>143</sup> While in other genres of music, most notably jazz, the transcription is a method primarily used in the analysis of performance, and not performance itself, tango transcriptions are common for both performance *and* for analysis.<sup>144</sup> Transcriptions did not replace the tradition of arranging in tango music, but instead offered an alternative variety of performance that has emerged in the past thirty years. Interested in preserving and studying the stylistic developments, and arrangements, of the great tango orchestras, particularly those of the *época de oro* of tango music (1935-1955; see appendix B of this document for more information), training programs such as Escuela de Música Popular de Avellaneda (1986), Rotterdam Conservatory (1993) and Orquesta Escuela de Tango Emilio Balcarce (2000), began to transcribe these arrangements from historical

<sup>142</sup> Todo Tango, accessed 29 October 2024, <https://www.todotango.com>; “Colecciones Digitales,” Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno, accessed 25 June 2021, <https://catalogo.bn.gov.ar>.

<sup>143</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 78; Serafini, “Yeites,” 343-344.

<sup>144</sup> Thomas Owens, “Analysing Jazz,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (Cambridge University Press 1987; 2016).

recordings for both pedagogical and performance purposes. Furthermore, ensembles such as Orquesta Típica Pichuco, which recreates the music of Aníbal Troilo, or Sónico, dedicated to resurrecting the largely forgotten repertoire of Eduardo Rovira, base their artistic practices upon detailed transcriptions for performance.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the transcription provided the ideal means for performers who wanted to learn to play tango music on other continents, notably Europe and North America, who could find recordings but not published scores, due to their scarcity.<sup>146</sup>

There are many advantages to working with transcriptions. Noting the prevalence of score-based analysis in WCT-based studies, Nicholas Cook cautions that it might cause the listener not to consider aspects of performance that cannot easily be notated.<sup>147</sup> Unlike using a pre-extant score for analysis, a transcription allows the listener to take note of all aspects of a recorded performance, and to think about how those details might be notated, which can change their perception of the recording. However, there are limitations in both making and using transcriptions. One problem is, as Nicholas Cook indicates, a number of stylistic aspects cannot be easily notated. Another limitation is that transcriptions rely on the perception of the transcriber, often working with recordings of very poor sound quality. In that sense, a transcription can be considered something ontologically distinct from recorded performance in that it, at best, represents a very good approximation of what was recorded. Finally, transcribing can be an extremely laborious and time-consuming process, due to the challenges evoked here.

A distinction can be made between transcriptions for performance and for analysis. Transcriptions for performance resemble the published arrangement of *El Abrojo*, cited above, in that the notation, while detailed, relies on the *Gestalt* of the performer for certain stylistic elements. However, they must be distinguished from the jazz lead sheet, which, according to José Bowen, is a sort of summary

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<sup>145</sup> “Orquesta Típica Pichuco,” Facebook, accessed 7 December 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/otpichuco/>; “About us,” Sónico, accessed 7 December 2024, <https://sonicomania.com/about-us/>.

<sup>146</sup> Gallo notes modern tango has the advantage that fully orchestrated and detailed scores are available. Gallo, *El violín*, 16. However, to study earlier periods producing transcriptions is necessary.

<sup>147</sup> Nicholas Cook, “Methods for Analysing Recordings.”

of different theoretical performances that avoids specific instances of interpretation; in jazz music, these are not generally used for performance, but instead as a sort of short-cut for learning a particular piece.<sup>148</sup> Instead, the tango transcription for performance is generally made from one recording, and is a very common type of tango score today. Figure 4 shows a transcription for performance of Leopoldo Federico's trio arrangement of *El Abrojoito* (1978), made by Lysandre Donoso.<sup>149</sup>

The image displays a musical score for the tango piece 'El Abrojoito'. The score is arranged for a trio and includes parts for Bandoneón, Piano, Contrabajo, Bndn. (Bandoneón), Pno. (Piano), and Cb. (Contrabajo). The music is written in 4/4 time and the key of D major. The Bandoneón part features a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The Piano part includes a complex melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The Contrabajo part provides a steady bass line. The Bndn. part features a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The Pno. part includes a complex melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The Cb. part provides a steady bass line. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mf, piz.), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (pizz.).

Figure 4 Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco, unpublished arrangement by Leopoldo Federico<sup>150</sup>

The second type of transcription is for analysis purposes; these attempt to notate every detail heard in the recording. These are similar to the types of transcription that can be found in jazz music, which José Bowen describes as a sort of “musical snapshot.”<sup>151</sup> Transcriptions for analysis are generally far more complex, and as such are not practical for performance purposes. This transcription I made of

<sup>148</sup> Bowen, “The History,” 159-160.

<sup>149</sup> Luis Bernstein, *El abrojoito*, lyrics by J. Fernández Blanco, arrangement of Leopoldo Federico, transcription by Lysandre Donoso, unpublished. Transcribed from Leopoldo Federico, *El abrojoito*, track 2 on *Homenaje al amigo*, Music Hall 13192, 1978.

<sup>150</sup> Transcription for performance from Leopoldo Federico, *El abrojoito*, track 2 on *Homenaje al amigo*, Music Hall 13192, 1978, by Lysandre Donoso, used with permission.

<sup>151</sup> Bowen, “The History,” 159.

four different recordings of Astor Piazzolla's *Adiós Nonino*<sup>152</sup> (Figure 5) illustrates the difference between the two types.<sup>153</sup> In the first staff, there is a simplified notation for performance purposes, which presents the melody in an easily legible manner; the performer has the freedom to interpret according to stylistic convention (see: Performance practice). However, in the staves marked Bajour 61, Bajour 60, Vardaro and Agri, we see transcriptions made of four recordings of the same arrangement by different violinists (two recordings of Szymisia Bajour; Elvino Vardaro; and Antonio Agri), with particular attention towards timing and ornamentation, the parameters I selected to analyse when making these transcriptions.

Figure 5 Astor Piazzolla, *Adiós Nonino*, transcription for analysis<sup>154</sup>

In this section, I have attempted to show the different types of scores used by tango musicians for performance (and analysis, in the case of certain transcriptions). These transcriptions have particular

<sup>152</sup> *Adiós Nonino* is scored for quintet (violin, bandoneon, electric guitar, piano and double bass). The double bass part is indicated here to provide rhythmic structure. See the original published score, Astor Piazzolla, *Adiós Nonino* (A. Pagani s.r.l. Edizioni Musicali, 1977).

<sup>153</sup> Stephen Meyer, "The Solo Violin in Astor Piazzolla's Tango: A Comparative Study" (Master's diss., Codarts Rotterdam, 2016), 41.

<sup>154</sup> Transcriptions made from the albums *Piazzolla interpreta a Piazzolla*, track 1 (Bajour 61); *Adiós Nonino*, track 1 (Bajour 60); *Piazzolla ensayos*, track 10 (Vardaro); *Introducción al Ángel*, track 5 (Agri).



implications for this study, as I will transcribe relevant passages from recordings as part of the musical analysis, rather than annotating published scores. As published tango scores were generally by-products of performance, available to the public as an alternative to, or as promotion for, the “main” event, they never attained the predominance, or the sanctity, of the written score within the WCT. Furthermore, due to the flexible nature of the arrangement – the prevailing format of tango music since the 1920s – the idea of being faithful, in the sense of dutiful interpretation, not in the sense of respect for the piece and its initial creator, to the original tango composition is not reflective of the genre. While, as Lydia Goehr argues, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, transcriptions, orchestrations and arrangements emerged within the WCT as derivative compositions, in tango music, they form the basis for preserving tradition.<sup>155</sup>

### *Performance Practice in Tango Music*

To “remain true to the style” – in other words, to perform according to certain stylistic conventions that are considered part of a tradition of tango music performance and composition – has always been one of the essential aspects of tango music.<sup>156</sup> These conventions – rhythmical, melodic, ornamental, percussive – were largely established and consolidated by 1935, the end date of this study. Stylistic fidelity is often referred to as authenticity; for example, Horacio Salgán stresses distinguishing between authentic tango and experimentations made upon it from outside of that tradition.<sup>157</sup> For the first seventy years of tango’s development, stylistic authenticity was largely based on an aural/oral tradition passed from musician to musician.<sup>158</sup> That is, until the advent of training programs and pedagogical manuals, discussed earlier in this chapter, which were designed to systematise and organise stylistic practice and make it accessible to a larger, more global public. Authenticity in tango music has two sides. On the one hand, it emphasises an understanding of one’s position within the

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<sup>155</sup> Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 221-222.

<sup>156</sup> Andrea Marsili, “Reflexión sobre la noción de la autenticidad en el tango rioplatense,” *Calle 14 7*, no. 10 (2013): 101.

<sup>157</sup> Salgán, *Tango Course*, 31.

<sup>158</sup> Serafini, “Yeites,” 344.

tango tradition, and thus a knowledge of the key musicians and orchestras that have formed the tradition. This knowledge could be considered historical in nature, involving, at least today, listening to and studying recordings of influential ensembles and performers. On the other hand, authenticity also encompasses the stylistic elements that are part of the *Gestalt* of the tango musician. This knowledge is generally attained practically, rather than historically. As such, it could be considered similar to Richard Taruskin's formulation of "authentic performance" as "knowing what you mean and whence comes that knowledge" – "knowing what you mean" involving a knowledge of the specific elements of tango performance, and "whence comes that knowledge" indicating an understanding of the historical tradition.<sup>159</sup> However, there is no consensus as to what actually constitutes the tango music tradition. As Andrea Marsili notes, authenticity is often used as an exclusionary mechanism within tango music.<sup>160</sup> Throughout the history of tango, critics have always sought to reject stylistic changes to tango music as inauthentic, ranging from the transition from 2/4 to 4/8 (the movement from habanera rhythm to *marcato* in 4) that occurred in the 1910s, to the stylistic innovations of the Guardia Nueva (1920s) and later to the iconoclastic music of Astor Piazzolla.<sup>161</sup>

The term *authenticity* – although the usage of the term is different than in tango music – can be considered contentious within WCT-based scholarship, especially with regards to the Historically Informed Performance (HIP) movement. While Richard Taruskin famously critiqued the idea of *authenticity*, arguing that HIP simply exchanged one dogma for another, under the label "authentic," John Butt has nuanced many of Taruskin's more polemical views, proposing a useful paradigm for the justification of historically-informed performance. Distinguishing between two non-ranked areas of investigation, active intention (specific decisions made by a composer) and passive intention (relevant contextual factors not necessarily within the composer's control), Butt holds that uncovering "passive intention," or culturally, historically and situationally-conditioned traditions, are the primary

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<sup>159</sup> Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 67.

<sup>160</sup> Marsili, "Reflexión," 101.

<sup>161</sup> The first such article claiming that tango dance was no longer reflective of that of the past appeared in the periodical *Caras y Caretas* in 1903; whereas the first claiming that tango music was no longer tango appeared in *Crítica* in 1913. *Caras y Caretas*, 7 February 1903; *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

justification for studying historical context.<sup>162</sup> In this formulation, instead of claiming historical authenticity or absolute fidelity to the intentions of the composer, we can instead accept that interpretation is a series of personal choices and use historical knowledge to attain more interpretational conviction.

One of the most significant aspects of tango performance is the degree of interpretational freedom allowed, or in other words, the differences between what is written on the page and what is or can be performed. In comparison with a *Werktreue* or *Texttreue* approach, where the performer's task is above all to execute what is written on the page in accordance with what they believe to be the intentions of the composer (something that Nicholas Cook refers to as the "page-to-stage" approach), the tango performer is generally encouraged by the tango tradition to search for an individualised interpretation.<sup>163</sup> Of course, this interpretation is conditioned by an understanding of tango tradition, or *authenticity*, as mentioned above, in particular an awareness of key orchestras and musicians that have influenced tango music. However, a distinction should be made between interpretational freedom and improvisation, which, as described in my discussion of sheet music, is not a key feature of tango music. There is no scholarly consensus as to the distinction between improvisation and interpretation, with some scholars such as Carol Gould, Kenneth Keaton and José Bowen arguing that *all* musical performance interpretation requires some type of improvisation.<sup>164</sup> While attentive to such arguments, however, in my own use of the term 'improvisation', I refer to free improvisation in jazz music. Growing out of an oral tradition, whereby jazz musicians learned primarily by ear, the first such improvisations originated with soloists such as Louis Armstrong, who introduced lengthier solo material and improvised melodies, and by 1930, improvisation became a defining feature of the genre.<sup>165</sup> In tango music, on the other hand, improvisational freedom is not based on free

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<sup>162</sup> Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 71; John Butt, *Playing with History* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 89-90.

<sup>163</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.

<sup>164</sup> Carol S. Gould and Kenneth Keaton, "The Essential Role of Improvisation in Musical Performance," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 58, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 143; Bowen, 1993.

<sup>165</sup> Ingrid Monson, "Jazz Improvisation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

improvisation, but has an underlying rhythmical structure. One of the main aspects of interpretational freedom in tango is *fraseo*, which can be described as the “gum” of tango<sup>166</sup> or the art of “speaking” the music.<sup>167</sup> Undoubtedly one of the most distinctive features of tango, *fraseo* is, according to Ramón Pelinski, a way of interpreting melodies that mimics the inflections of *porteño* speech.<sup>168</sup> Developed from *tango-canción*, and especially from the singer Carlos Gardel, *fraseo* became a feature in instrumental tango by around 1920 as a way of adding expression to the music.<sup>169</sup> There are two essential types of *fraseos*: *básico*, often used in tutti playing, and *extendido*, only for individual solos.<sup>170</sup> In tango scores, these passages are generally notated with simple rhythms, such as even quavers; it is part of the *Gestalt* of the tango player, passed down by aural/oral tradition, to understand how and where to employ these *fraseos*.<sup>171</sup>

#### *Recordings as a Record of Stylistic Practice*

Recording analysis is an essential part of this project, because tango music developed alongside, and was shaped by, the recording industry, which was active in Argentina from the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>172</sup> Like other forms of popular music, tango music developed alongside the record, and thus has a symbiotic relationship with it. From a methodological perspective, recordings are the clearest way of studying historical records of musical performance, allowing us to track changes in performance over time.<sup>173</sup> One of the biggest challenges of the HIP movement, noted earlier, is that the vast majority of historically-informed performance research is focussed on historical periods of which there are no audible traces.<sup>174</sup> The recording, on the other hand, offers exactly that: an audible

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<sup>166</sup> Faín, *La flauta*, 27.

<sup>167</sup> Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 38.

<sup>168</sup> Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 30.

<sup>169</sup> García Brunelli “La cuestión del fraseo,” 167.

<sup>170</sup> Gallo, *El violín*, 58-69.

<sup>171</sup> García Brunelli, “La cuestión del fraseo,” 163.

<sup>172</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*.

<sup>173</sup> Nicholas Cook, “Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance,” *Music Theory Online* 7, no. 2 (2001): 7; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, “Recordings and Histories of Performance Style,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>174</sup> Over the past twenty years there has been an emerging body of scholarship dedicated to recording analysis of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century HIP. Some examples include Sigurd Slåttembrekk and Tony Harrison, “Historically Informed Performances,” *Chasing the Butterfly: Recreating Grieg’s 1903 Recordings and*

trace of performance practice which can be studied, on the condition that we understand the nature of recordings, how they are made, what they represent, and how they are ontologically distinct from the performance itself.<sup>175</sup> These include a knowledge of the extreme conditions in which the recordings were made, the unfamiliarity of the process for many of the artists which led to anxiety and nervousness, spatial issues in the recording studio due to the difficulties in capturing certain instruments and frequencies on recording, a knowledge of the marketing and promotion of recordings, as well as an idea of the technological changes, and limitations, of the recording process.<sup>176</sup> Part of using recordings for analysis requires an understanding of what one can expect to hear in different periods of recording. While recordings from the acoustic period (from 1900 until the invention of the microphone in 1926) preserve single, unedited takes, there is no way to know at what speed the recordings were made (the speed of 78 rpm records can be manipulated), and pitch and timbre are not fully representative of what was performed live. Likewise, there were serious frequency limitations, leading to the rescoring of pieces (higher stringed instruments were often replaced by woodwinds, Strah or trumpet violins, and lower stringed instruments by the tuba), as well as space limitations – each 78 rpm record side was a maximum of four minutes.<sup>177</sup> The electrical era of 78s, from 1926 on provides more information about timbre, scorings and balance. According to Nicholas Cook, in this period studio recordings most closely resembled live performance.<sup>178</sup>

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*Beyond...* (2008) <http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no>; Aleks Kolkowski, Duncan Miller and Amy Blier-Carruthers, “The Art and Science of Acoustic Recording: Re-enacting Arthur Nikisch and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra’s landmark 1913 recording of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony,” *Communications (Science Museum Group Journal)* (2015): 1-46.

<sup>175</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, 3.1; Although recordings provide a record of performance practice, recordings and performance are not identical. Recordings do not simply capture a frozen moment in time. See Dorottya Fabian, “Classical Sound Recordings and Live Performances: Artistic and Analytical Perspectives,” in *Philosophical Reflections on Sound Recordings* ed. Mine Doğantan-Dack (Middlesex University Press, 2008), 236.

<sup>176</sup> Tim Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (Yale University Press, 2000); Katz, *Capturing Sound*; Amy Blier-Carruthers, “The Performer’s Place in the Process and Product of Recording,” presented at the CMPCP Performance Studies Network International Conference at University of Cambridge, 6 April 2013.

<sup>177</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, 3.1.25; Cook, “Between Process and Product,” 6.

<sup>178</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 141.

According to Lamas and Binda, more than 16,000 tango recordings were made between 1902 and 1950 alone, which provide a vast documentation of the genre's development.<sup>179</sup> Due to the presence of international recording companies such as Odeon and Victor in Argentina, and, after the first World War, the opening of record producing factories in Buenos Aires, Argentina became a key market for records.<sup>180</sup> This period coincided with tango's emergence as a national symbol of Argentina (see Chapter 1 of this thesis), and, due to the influence of recording empresarios such as Max Glücksmann, exclusive Argentinian agent of Odeon and creator of record labels Doble Nacional, Disco Nacional and Nacional Odeon, tango recordings were marketed and disseminated as *música nacional*.<sup>181</sup> Both Odeon and Victor, the primary rival of Odeon at the time, focussed on the production of popular music in Argentina, as the duty of the local agents was simultaneously to market "serious" music, classical records, made by the mother company in Europe or in North America, and also to cater to local tastes with locally produced music.<sup>182</sup> Odeon and Victor, however, pursued different marketing strategies, as Victor focussed on a common Latin American identity, blurring the national identities of individual countries, whereas Odeon instead focussed on individual markets, and *música nacional*.<sup>183</sup> Finally, in tango music, a division can be seen between the output of these companies: Odeon built up an *elenco de estrellas* or a stable of stars such as Carlos Gardel, Francisco Canaro and Roberto Firpo, focussing on traditional tango music. On the other hand, Victor employed the more daring ensembles of the *Guardia Nueva*, such as those of Julio De Caro and Juan Carlos Cobián.

Tango music recordings share many similarities with developments in other types of popular music. First seen as a novelty, and then as a marketing device for the sale of published music, the recording contributed largely to the reification of popular music by producing concrete artefacts in the form of

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<sup>179</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango*, 431.

<sup>180</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 14.

<sup>181</sup> Mollie Lewis Nouwen, *Oy, My Buenos Aires: Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity* (University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 54.

<sup>182</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 150.

<sup>183</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas*, 59.

the record.<sup>184</sup> Thus, the recording, and not the score, would become the foundation of popular music. Furthermore, the recording allowed for the global dissemination of popular genres such as tango and jazz, removing them from their social and cultural context, but providing access to listeners who otherwise would never have been exposed to such music.<sup>185</sup> But the record industry did more than just disseminate recordings; it had a key role in shaping the actual development of the music. For example, from the early 1900s until the 1920s, most discs were limited to two minutes per side, and from the 1920s until 1948, discs were limited to 4.5 minutes, or two-three minutes on a 10" disc.<sup>186</sup> The standard length of three minutes for tangos, as in many popular music genres, is intimately connected with disc time limitations.<sup>187</sup> As popular music was undergoing a process of codification alongside the emergence of the recording industry, several innovations introduced to overcome technical limitations came to be identified with the music itself. For example, the "slapping" pizzicatos of the double bass in early recorded jazz music was introduced because of the limited audibility of low frequencies.<sup>188</sup> Likewise, string players, such as Julio De Caro, performed on Stroh violins or *violín corneta* (a type of amplified violin, with a horn, that increased their sound) and this sound would become a distinctive part of De Caro's individual style.<sup>189</sup>

### Methodological Reflections

This thesis traces the development of tango violin performance in Argentina from 1910-1935, examining how performance practice developed within a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment. Its methodology centres on two complementary strands: detailed aural analysis of historical recordings and the systematic study of archival materials from the period. By combining

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<sup>184</sup> Horn, "Some thoughts," 31-32.

<sup>185</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 82.

<sup>186</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music*, 6.

<sup>187</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 36-40.

<sup>188</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 91.

<sup>189</sup> Alison Rabinovici, "Augustus Stroh's Phonographic Violin. A Journey: Victorian London, Australia, Transylvania," *The Galpin Society Journal* 58 (May 2005): 100-123, 220-224.

these approaches, the study aims to bridge the gap between pedagogical and musicological literature by providing a historically grounded, performance-focused analysis of tango violin playing.

Analysing recordings in chronological order allows for close tracking of stylistic developments, while primary sources shed light on how these changes were perceived and contextualised at the time. By integrating these methods, I have examined the development of the sound of the violin as a core instrument of the *orquesta típica*, revealing how these violinists created, experimented with, and later standardised a rapidly changing musical genre, one that was in the process of negotiating its place both within Argentina and globally as *música nacional*.

### *Selection of Violinists*

While many violinists made meaningful contributions to tango's development, this thesis focusses on five whose artistic output and historical significance justify in-depth case studies. Each of them played a distinct role in shaping tango violin performance during the foundational period of 1910 to 1935. By framing these changes as a history of individuals, I focus on the influence of these violinists on the larger role of the violin within the *orquesta típica*, using the aural evidence gleaned from their recordings to track specific lyrical, rhythmical, ornamental and percussive elements from the moments when they were first captured on record until the point at which they were systematised and codified. In particular, I take this approach because I am interested in understanding more about the individuals who were responsible for introducing and expanding these techniques.

The violinists studied as part of Chapter 2, Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio, and José Bonano, are chosen because they are known to have influenced tango performance practice on the violin in specific ways. They were not the only tango violinists performing during this early period; others include Carlos Posadas (1874-1918), who had studied with his brother Manuel, a pupil of the famous Belgian violinist and pedagogue Eugène Ysayë. Although Posadas performed in many cafés, he was primarily known as a composer, writing famous tangos such as *Jagüel*, *La llorona*, and *El taita* before



his death in 1918.<sup>190</sup> Another is Vicente Pepe (dates unknown), an Italian violinist who performed in many early nineteenth-century ensembles, most notably that of Arturo ‘el Alemán Bernstein’.<sup>191</sup>

Conversely, Alcorta, an Afro-Argentine violinist active in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, is widely remembered for his percussive techniques, and serves as a symbolic point of origin for early tango violin practices. Ponzio, emblematic of the *Guardia Vieja*, was both a prolific composer and a legendary performer whose rough-edged style can be considered representative of early tango aesthetics; notably, his prolific use of different types of pizzicato is frequently heralded as one of the first traces of individuality in tango violin performance. Finally, José Bonano stands out for his use of the *violín corneta*, more than a decade before it would be adopted by Julio De Caro, as well as his contributions to lyrical expression in tango music.

David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliata, although described as the *máximo violinista del tango* or greatest tango violinist, has not hitherto been studied in detail, and is thus an ideal choice for this thesis.<sup>192</sup> His playing forms a bridge between the early and modern eras, the *Guardia Vieja* and the *Guardia Nueva*. Presenting clear traces of formal training, his playing retains stylistic ties to the *Guardia Vieja* while experimenting with and incorporating many new techniques that would later become integrated into tango violin technique as it is performed today. In fact, his playing had a more transformative effect on tango violin performance practice than perhaps any other violinist. Nonetheless, he was not the only important violinist performing during this time period. For example, Agesilao Ferrazzano was a prominent violinist most well-known for his role as the second violinist of Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo. I discuss his playing in conjunction with Roccatagliata’s as part of Chapter 3. Furthermore, another key violinist from the period was Francisco Canaro, although his contributions to tango pertain less to performance practice on the violin, and more to his role as an impresario, orchestral

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<sup>190</sup> Pepe and Casto, “El violín en el tango,” 15; Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas de la Guardia Vieja,” 411-417.

<sup>191</sup> Juan Silbido, “Arturo Bernstein,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 30 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/635/Arturo-Bernstein/>.

<sup>192</sup> Jorge Novati et al., *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 134.

leader, and defender of intellectual property rights for musicians, as president of the Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores de Música (SADAIC).<sup>193</sup>

Finally, Julio De Caro is undoubtedly one of the most famous, and researched, tango musicians of all time; however, until now, his violin playing has not received the scholarly attention that it so richly deserves. De Caro's role as a systematic codifier of tango violin practice greatly expanded the soloistic potential of the instrument, and shaped a tango aesthetic that would greatly influence subsequent generations.

#### *Recordings Accessed and Analytical Method*

Collating the recordings analysed in Chapters 2 (early violinists), 3 (David 'Tito' Roccatagliata) and 4 (Julio De Caro) was an essential part of the research process. A key initial step for each chapter was to compile discographies for each violinist. Julio De Caro's discography is well-documented, through sources such as Nicolás Lefcovich's *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*.<sup>194</sup> In contrast, Casimiro Alcorta is not known to have recorded, and Ernesto Ponzio's only known recordings are those made as part of the 1933 film *¡Tango!*, in which Ponzio performed four pieces together with the Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán.<sup>195</sup> José Bonano is only known to have recorded with two orchestras: Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" (1912-1913), and Cuarteto Típico Criollo la Armonía (1914).<sup>196</sup> The discography of David 'Tito' Roccatagliata is far more complex because of the large variety of ensembles in which he played, as well as the frequent changes in musicians across recordings.

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<sup>193</sup> Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias: Mis bodas de oro con el tango* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1999).

<sup>194</sup> Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro* (S. Nicolás Lefcovich, 1997).

<sup>195</sup> Fúyete Querido, "Músicos fundamentales del tango: El pibe Ernesto," *Estudios de tango* 4 (July-August 1971): 147.

<sup>196</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional (1902-1926)* (unpublished manuscript, n.d), 77-80, 91, 134; Jorge Novati et al., *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 115, 127.

Creating accurate discographies for violinists such as Roccatagliata involves navigating multiple challenges, largely due to inconsistent documentation. For example, record labels of the time, with the exception of Victor, did not keep records of who was performing on which album and many times the same formation would record on different labels with different names (and at least some of the same musicians).<sup>197</sup> Unfortunately, even Victor did not always record the names of the individual musicians, nor list them correctly. Nonetheless, Victor's ledgers, as preserved in the Discography of American Historical Recordings, are a vital source of information.<sup>198</sup> Other relevant sources include Enrique Binda's *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional (1902-1926)*, which provides a comprehensive overview of discographic activity in early twentieth-century Argentina; and Marina Cañardo's *Fábricas de músicas: Comienzos de la industria discográfica en la Argentina (1919-1930)*.<sup>199</sup> Despite these excellent sources, significant gaps remained. For instance, I could not confirm whether Casimiro Alcorta recorded at all, despite René Briand's suggestion that he recorded *La Yapa* on wax cylinder; furthermore, the discographies of José Bonano and Roccatagliata remain incomplete.<sup>200</sup> Despite this, I was able to analyse 115 recordings of Roccatagliata and Bonano, and access the complete known discographies of Ernesto Ponzio and Julio De Caro.

Once I had created discographies of each violinist, I located recordings from multiple sources. The Instituto de Investigación Musicológica Carlos Vega in Buenos Aires digitalised nearly one hundred recordings at my request, including many from the orchestras of Roberto Firpo, Eduardo Arolas, and Genaro Espósito. From the collector Enrique Binda, an expert in early twentieth-century tango, I received many recordings of the orchestras of Osvaldo Fresedo and Roberto Firpo. The remainder of the recordings, including those of Orquesta Típica Select, Juan Carlos Cobián, and Julio De Caro,

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<sup>197</sup> Enrique Binda, "Las orquestas típicas y el disco, 1910-1912," *Todo Tango*, accessed 29 November 2023, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/360/Las-orquestas-tipicas-y-el-disco-1910-1912/>.

<sup>198</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/>.

<sup>199</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*; Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*.

<sup>200</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 104.

were found on the website *El tango y sus invitados*, a massive repository of tango recordings from the earliest tangos until the present day, as well as the *Discography of American Historical Recordings*.<sup>201</sup>

This performance-based analysis of these recordings thus constitutes a significant contribution to the scholarship of tango, including tango history and the performance study of tango music, which has primarily been studied through an ahistorical lens previously. To my knowledge, the performance practice of these violinists has never been studied in detail, and the recordings are our primary source of evidence. As Omar García Brunelli told me in a recent conversation, referring to my methodology, “That’s how it is done. You have to listen to everything, and the recordings speak for themselves.”<sup>202</sup>

A brief overview of my analytical method is, however, necessary. Essentially, the analysis was bottom-up, empirical in nature and aurally-based, informed by my practice-based knowledge as a tango violinist.<sup>203</sup> In particular, the analysis took the shape of close listening in chronological order, similar to a concept that Morgan Luker refers to as matrix listening, taking careful notes on specific parameters, and then organizing them in Excel.<sup>204</sup> First, I organized the recordings in chronological order, compiling a discography for each violinist. Then, I kept track of how many recordings I had access to, per violinist (0 recordings of Alcorta, 3 of Ponzio, 14 of Bonano, 114 of Roccatagliata and 360 of De Caro). The case studies on Roccatagliata and De Caro were then organized according to the themes that the material itself suggested: lyrical techniques, rhythmical techniques, ornamentation and

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<sup>201</sup> *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 29 October 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/>; *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/>.

<sup>202</sup> Personal communication with Omar García Brunelli, 4 September 2024.

<sup>203</sup> By bottom-up, I mean an analysis that begins with a focus on specific parameters, and draw conclusions based on the empirical analysis of these parameters, instead of a top-down analysis, which would test a hypothesis by seeing how the data fits into the pattern. For a more detailed explanation of bottom-up and top-down analyses, see Aaron Williamson et al., *Performing Music Research: Methods in Music Education, Psychology and Performance Science* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 17.

<sup>204</sup> Luker argues that matrix listening, or listening in order of the matrix numbers, can reveal many aspects of a recording: the process, the circumstances surrounding the recording, and the materiality of the records themselves. I found this model to be highly useful in that it provided me a way in which to understand the techniques explored in this thesis as they were first recorded, as well as crucial information about the recording studio, the ways in which the recordings were made, and how the musicians might have interacted. See Morgan Luker, “Ángel Villoldo and Early Sound Recordings,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Tango*, ed. Kristen Wendland and Kacey Link (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 50-66.

percussion. I proceeded to analyse my notes on the music, generated through these broad themes, in more detail so as to probe and identify the presence of key techniques or stylistic devices. I then also selected representative passages for transcription. In order to make these transcriptions, I used the program *Anytune*, software that allows for modifying the speed and pitch of recordings, and isolating certain frequencies, as well as the program *Sibelius* in order to notate the transcriptions.<sup>205</sup>

Transcriptions were made for analytical purposes, detailing each of the techniques mentioned above. These transcriptions were accompanied by a discussion, detailed in the case studies of this thesis, of the different techniques involved. As Richard Middleton has argued, there is frequently a discrepancy between score notation and performance practice, especially in popular music; a discussion-based analysis is thus essential to my arguments.<sup>206</sup>

Aural analysis was complex due to the poor sound quality of many early recordings and issues such as inconsistent recording speeds during the acoustic era, which influenced pitch and timbre when the records are played at 78 rpm.<sup>207</sup> I used the sound of open violin strings as acoustic anchors to determine appropriate key. Furthermore, while I had initially hoped to use analytical tools like Sonic Visualiser in order to create spectrograms of vibrato and portamento, the programmes proved inadequate for isolating frequencies in these recordings, requiring manual transcriptions.

My years of experience as a tango violinist and pedagogue have been invaluable in creating accurate and nuanced transcriptions; I was able to interpret and notate subtle, or at times barely audible, stylistic elements that might otherwise be challenging to discern. This was possible only through the combination of aural perception and a deep technical and haptic knowledge of how a violinist can produce such sounds. Second, determining the roles of individual violinists in certain ensembles, notably that of Roberto Firpo, especially when two violins were present, was also difficult. By

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<sup>205</sup> Nick Grant, *Anytune*, Mac OS, vers. 2.5.2, 2024; Ben Finn and Jonathan Finn, *Sibelius*, Mac OS, vers. 2024.10, 2024.

<sup>206</sup> Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 105-106.

<sup>207</sup> Enrique Binda and Omar García Brunelli, “El problema de la velocidad de los discos de 78 rpm. Su incidencia en la historia estética del tango,” *Revista Argentina de Musicología* 15-16 (2014-2015): 46.

comparing what was written about his playing in secondary source materials (based at times on a lineage of eyewitness accounts) to the aural evidence in recordings, I determined that Roccatagliata generally played short-articulated rhythmical melodies in this orchestra, while the second violinist's role could be characterized by the presence of languid counter melodies.

### *Archival Materials and Realities*

A central methodological feature of this thesis is its extensive use of archival materials. In Chapter 1, I use periodicals to reassess existing narratives about tango's social acceptance and its adoption as a national symbol. In subsequent chapters, archival press coverage helps illuminate how these violinists were received and understood in their time. By cataloguing over three thousand articles across Argentine, and international, publications, I was able to develop a greater understanding of the reception history of the genre, the types of customers who were buying recordings after seeing advertisements in specific periodicals, and learn more about the types of publications discussing tango musicians. This search allowed me to connect the personal artistry of the individual musicians to broader cultural and historical trends.

While the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected the early stages of research, I was able to find many unexpected materials by consulting many different archives. Access to certain materials through online archives shaped the direction of my research and led to specific methodological choices, such as the focus on archival periodicals. These have helped me explore the role of the media in the social acceptance of tango. This focus becomes especially prominent in Chapter 1, where I explored how Tangomania and the global reception of tango influenced its adoption as a symbol of Argentine identity, and by extension led to significant musical changes in the genre.

With Argentina's borders closed from March 2020 to late 2021, I was unable to travel to Buenos Aires until April 2022. Therefore, initial research was conducted online or with materials in my personal collection. During this time, online periodical archives such as *Gallica* (Bibliothèque

National de France), *Hemeroteca Digital* (Biblioteca Nacional de España), AHIRA (Archivo Histórico de Revistas Argentinas), and the British Library’s Latin America Newspaper Series proved invaluable.<sup>208</sup> While I conducted three research trips to Buenos Aires (April 2022, July- August 2022, and February-March 2023) and to the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut in Berlin (June 2023), access to physical archives was not without challenges.<sup>209</sup> No single library maintains a complete collection of periodicals such as *Sintonía*, *La Canción Moderna* or *Radiolandia*, requiring piecemeal research across multiple institutions. Additionally, unforeseen closures, such as the Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno’s shutdown due to flooding in July 2022, further complicated access to materials. Accessing scores required a lot of careful consideration. As mentioned in the introduction, most orchestras created their own arrangements, which were not intended for public sale. While digital archives such as Todo Tango and the Instituto de Investigación Musicológica “Carlos Vega”, as well as libraries such as the Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno, allowed for access to some original piano scores, the majority of pieces analysed required manual transcription from recordings.<sup>210</sup> Fortunately, my considerable experience as a transcriber of early twentieth-century recordings, as well as my haptic knowledge of tango violin playing, allowed me to undertake the bottom-up recording analysis essential to my case studies.

## Conclusion

In her tango *El corazón de tu violín*, Eladia Blázquez sings:

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Me envuelve con un tul       | The blue note of your violin                              |
| La nota azul de tu violín;   | Wraps me in a veil of tulle:                              |
| Me vuelve inmaterial         | It makes me immaterial                                    |
| Y siento igual tu mundo afín | And I feel in tune with your kindred world <sup>211</sup> |

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<sup>208</sup> See Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>210</sup> Todo Tango, accessed 29 October 2024, <https://todotango.com/>; Instituto de Investigación Musicológica “Carlos Vega,” “Archivos: Música Popular, Folklórica e Indígena,” accessed 14 October 2024, [https://iimev.net.ar/archivo\\_popular.php](https://iimev.net.ar/archivo_popular.php).

<sup>211</sup> Eladia Blázquez, *El corazón de tu violín*, Todo Tango, accessed 31 December 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/4001/El-corazon-de-tu-violin/>.

As the lyrics suggest, the violin in tango does more than provide melody – it envelops, transforms and connects. It is, and always has been, the central instrument of tango music. This thesis, rooted in the contributions of key tango violinists, seeks to illuminate how their personal artistry is intimately connected to tango's development. By focussing on their creative agency and the socio-cultural forces that shaped their music, I illuminate the nuanced relationship between individual expression and collective tradition. This exploration underscores the violin's role as a symbol of tango's transformation, reflecting the genre's complex journey through early twentieth-century Argentine society.



## **Chapter One**

### **Tangomania in Paris (1911-1914) and the Consolidation of Tango as a National Symbol of Argentina**

#### **Introduction**

From 1911 until 1914 tango enjoyed a *succès de scandale* in Paris, establishing itself as the darling of Parisian high society. Exotic, lascivious, controversial, the tango became an obsession, known as “Tangomania”: dance competitions, afternoon tea dances, and tango professors proliferated. The sudden omnipresence of tango was surprising to the sizeable Argentine community in Paris, for whom it was not socially respectable, but rather something indecent; the Argentine writer Leopoldo Lugones famously labelled it “that reptile from the brothel” in 1916.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, the great acclaim of tango led many of these Parisian Argentines – as well as the numerous Argentine visitors to Paris, many of whom were members of the élite – to adopt the dance as part of their cultural heritage. Likewise, newspaper reports from the time indicate that the Eurocentric Argentine elite, both at home and abroad, followed the Parisian reception of their “native” dance and music closely; tango, alongside frozen meat and wheat, had become Argentina’s most famous export, a powerful symbol of Argentine identity abroad.<sup>2</sup>

Though it is universally agreed that the pre-World War One Parisian *séjour* was an influential chapter in increased visibility of tango, some recent scholarship has been quite critical of what is viewed as the “traditional narrative” of tango history. According to this account, from 1880-1910 tango was a product of the brothels, or at the very least restricted to the lower-class outskirts of Buenos Aires, before travelling to Paris, where it underwent a rags-to-riches makeover, its lewd and lascivious

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Tomás De Lara and Inés Leonilda Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango en la literatura Argentina* (Educaciones Culturales Argentinas, 1961), 221.

<sup>2</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.

character transformed – *adecentado*, made decent – into something refined and elegant.<sup>3</sup> After reaching an *apogée* of popularity within the highest echelons of Parisian society, so the story goes, tango was welcomed by the Argentine elite, following a dance competition given by the baron Antonio de Marchi at the Palais de Glace in 1912 or 1913.<sup>4</sup> Again, according to this traditional narrative, Argentine high society largely welcomed tango as a national symbol of Argentina abroad, only after the dance had achieved wide-spread acclaim in the world’s cultural capitals, including London, New York, and especially Paris. However, the scholars who reject this narrative provide compelling evidence to show that Paris was not the primary ingredient which led to the social acceptance of tango. At times this evidence can be forceful and overstated; Maria Carozzi even blames English-language scholarship for its fundamental role in disseminating what she refers to as a *guión* or screenplay.<sup>5</sup> To name a few examples, Ema Cibotti points to the presence of public dance events, indicating that the tango was not relegated to the brothel,<sup>6</sup> and Marina Cañardo makes a similar argument about the circulation of scores and recordings.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda draw upon primary sources in their authoritative book *El tango en la sociedad porteña, 1880-1920*, to show that tango was never limited to the lower ranks of society, despite its lower-class origins.<sup>8</sup> For these authors, the process of social acceptance was less connected with the Argentine elite, and more with a growing middle class audience, introduced to tango through the genre’s increased presence in cafés, as well as the emergent publishing and recording industries, evidence of which precedes Parisian Tangomania. However, analysis of primary sources from the time, including

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<sup>3</sup> Criticism of the ‘rags-to-riches’ narrative of the tango is not new; in his 1950 essay “A History of the Tango,” Borges disparages this version of the story. (Jorge Luis Borges, *Evaristo Carriego*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (E. P. Dutton, 1984), 131-132). However, Borges mostly took issue with the idea that tango originated in the low-class outskirts; for him, tango originated in the brothels. As evidence, he points to the high cost of the instruments (piano, violin, flute, bandoneon), unaffordable for the street musicians of lower-class neighbourhoods. Current scholarship is keen to show that tango was neither a product of the brothels, nor was it rejected by elites prior to its supposed social transformation.

<sup>4</sup> Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña, 1880-1920*, 270. Lamas and Binda explain that there is no evidence of the 1912 event mentioned in Bates’ book, but that there was a 1913 event, that according to *La Nación* “seemed to signify the consecration of tango by the uppermost elites of society”.

<sup>5</sup> María Julia Carozzi, “Europa y la transformación del tango: escenas de una narrativa ritualizada,” *El oído pensante* 7, no. 2 (August 2019): 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ema Cibotti, “Del encanto al descanto de una élite, en clave de tango,” 45.

<sup>7</sup> Marina Cañardo, “Tango ‘marginales’: imaginario, circulación e interpretación,” 148.

<sup>8</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 266.

both French and Argentine periodicals and literature, indicates the crucial role of Tangomania in the acceptance and dissemination of tango, first by the Argentine elite, and then by the middle class. Until embraced by Parisian and Europe high society in the years preceding the first World War, Argentine upper *and* middle classes remained largely indifferent to tango, and it was indeed largely relegated to the outskirts of Buenos Aires. In the following, I investigate the Parisian Tangomania's contribution to the social acceptance of tango in Argentina, and to the consolidation of tango as a national symbol.

### **Press coverage: methodology and background**

In this chapter, I have analysed Argentine and French press coverage of tango music, with a focus on the height of Tangomania, (1911-1914), and the years around this (1907-1916).

#### *Argentine Sources*

In order to locate Argentine primary sources from 1911-1914, I undertook three different types of archival work: uncovering primary sources reproduced within secondary sources, accessing sources available digitally, and locating materials in libraries in Buenos Aires. Initially, I discovered articles from periodicals reproduced in their entirety in sources such as those of Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña, 1880-1920*, and Tomás De Lara and Inés Leonilda Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango en la literatura argentina*, which compile primary source material taken from Argentine journalism and literature.<sup>9</sup> Second, I was able to locate complete archives of two Argentine periodicals, namely *Caras y Caretas* (1907-1916), available through the Hemeroteca Digital of the Biblioteca nacional de España, and *Fray Mocho* (1912-1916), available on the digital archive of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut.<sup>10</sup> Finally, during archival work in Buenos Aires, I was able to access *Fray Mocho*, *PBT*, *Crítica* and *ABC*, amongst others.

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<sup>9</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*; De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango*.

<sup>10</sup> "Hemeroteca Digital," Biblioteca nacional de España, accessed 23 June 2021, <http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/>; "Cultural Magazines of Latin America," Ibero-

Table 1 indicates the mentions of the word “tango” in Argentine press, separated per periodical and per year (1907-1916). Figure 6 shows the total number of mentions of the word per year, graphically. While the sample of Argentine periodicals is more limited than that of French sources and thus cannot be considered fully representative, it nonetheless reveals a clear trend. Mentions of “tango” were rare in the years preceding the Tangomania phenomenon (1911–1914), but press coverage increased markedly during the peak years of Tangomania, only to drop again afterwards, if not as much as pre-Tangomania levels. As shown in Figure 6, references to tango surged in 1913 and reached a particular high point in 1914, suggesting a growing domestic interest that coincided with tango’s international success, especially in Paris.

| Newspaper                             | 1907 | 1908 | 1909 | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <i>ABC</i>                            | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Caras y Caretas</i>                | 11   | 13   | 6    | 8    | 9    | 30   | 58   | 75   | 25   | 23   |
| <i>Crítica</i>                        | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| <i>Fray Mocho (1911-1916)</i>         | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 17   | 9    | 3    | 1    |
| <i>PBT (1910-1916)</i>                | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 5    | 8    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>El Mundo Argentino (1911-1914)</i> | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 0    | 0    |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                         | 11   | 13   | 6    | 9    | 13   | 36   | 83   | 96   | 29   | 24   |

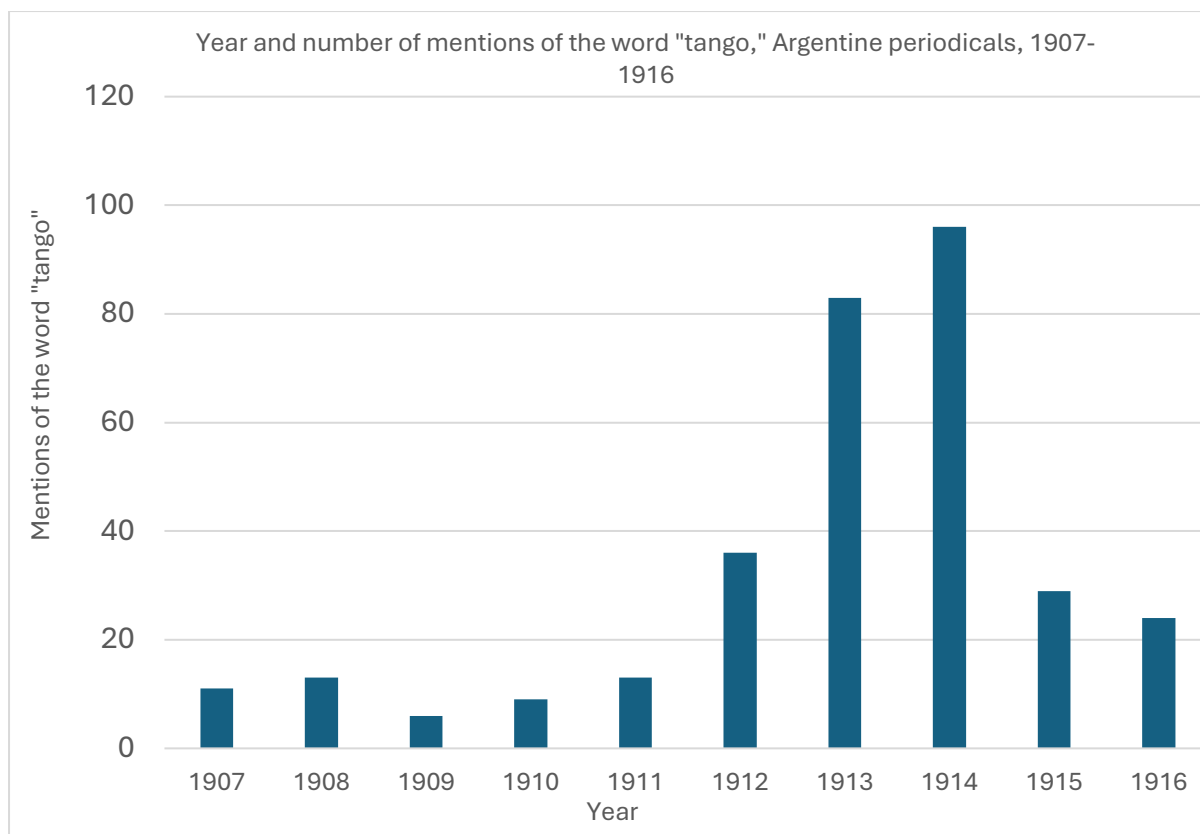
Table 1 Argentine press coverage, 1907-1916. Sources: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut; Biblioteca Nacional de España; Biblioteca Nacional del Congreso de la Nación

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, these periodicals were marketed to different socio-economic demographics. Notably, *Caras y Caretas*, the publication with the largest number of mentions of the word “tango,” had a middle- and upper-class readership; conversely, *Crítica* was primarily a working-class publication.<sup>11</sup>

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Amerikanisches Institut, accessed 23 June 2021, [https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/collections/lateinamerikanische-kulturzeitschriften/-/DC%3Alateinamerikanischekulturzeitschriften%3Atrue/1/SORT\\_TITLE/MD\\_PLACEPUBLISHED%3ABuenos+Aires/](https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/collections/lateinamerikanische-kulturzeitschriften/-/DC%3Alateinamerikanischekulturzeitschriften%3Atrue/1/SORT_TITLE/MD_PLACEPUBLISHED%3ABuenos+Aires/).

<sup>11</sup> Losada, “Convenciones,” 155-156; Sylvia Saïtta, *Regueros de tinta: El diario Crítica en la década de 1920*.



*Figure 6 Mentions of "tango" per year, Argentine press, 1907-1916. Sources: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut; Biblioteca Nacional de España; Biblioteca Nacional del Congreso de la Nación*

### *French Sources*

All French newspapers were sourced from Gallica, the digital archive database of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France ([gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr)). In total, I looked at 35 French newspapers, and 16,420 articles mentioning tango across a ten-year period (Table 2, which shows the number of press mentions per periodical and per year, and Figure 7, which illustrates the total number of mentions per year graphically).

Clearly, tango was much more present in these periodicals during the years of Tangomania (1911-1914). Following a similar trend to that seen in my analysis of Argentine periodicals (see Table 1 and Figure 6), there was a particular surge in 1913 and 1914; by 1915, with the outbreak of the first World War, there was much less press coverage of tango. This sharp increase during the peak of

Tangomania, especially in 1913-1914, underscores the genre's remarkable cultural penetration in France during these years, a level of exposure that would later influence its legitimization and adoption as a national symbol in Argentina.

| Newspaper   | 1907 | 1908 | 1909 | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <i>L'Action Française</i>                               | 0    | 2    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 10   | 192  | 62   | 1    | 0    |
| <i>L'Aurore</i>   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 9    | 11   | 241  | 231  | 0    | 0    |
| <i>L'Auto-vélo</i>                                      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 59   | 74   | 1    | 1    |
| <i>La Charente</i>                                      | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 16   | 0    | 5    | 2    |
| <i>Comœdia</i>  | 0    | 3    | 4    | 14   | 25   | 39   | 624  | 509  | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Le Constitutionnel</i>                               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 8    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Le Cri du Peuple</i>                                 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>La Croix</i>   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 20   | 36   | 4    | 3    |
| <i>Elegancias</i>                                       | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Excelsior</i>  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 46   | 46   | 394  | 438  | 19   | 27   |
| <i>Le Figaro</i>  | 3    | 2    | 5    | 5    | 19   | 32   | 618  | 461  | 16   | 11   |
| <i>Le Gaulois</i>                                       | 0    | 0    | 3    | 1    | 20   | 31   | 426  | 266  | 19   | 13   |
| <i>Gil Blas</i>   | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 18   | 26   | 594  | 425  | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Grand Écho du Nord</i>                               | 0    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 65   | 47   | 0    | 0    |
| <i>L'Homme Libre (1913-)</i>                            | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 135  | 126  | 1    | 2    |
| <i>L'Humanité</i>                                       | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 84   | 78   | 6    | 9    |
| <i>L'Intransigeant</i>                                  | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 5    | 21   | 404  | 389  | 14   | 12   |
| <i>Le Journal</i>                                       | 2    | 4    | 4    | 7    | 27   | 33   | 606  | 567  | 25   | 14   |
| <i>Journal des Débats<br/>Politiques et Littéraires</i> | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 15   | 85   | 78   | 6    | 3    |
| <i>La Lanterne</i>                                      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 10   | 9    | 302  | 304  | 5    | 4    |
| <i>La Liberté</i>                                       | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 29   | 38   | 693  | 649  | 25   | 23   |
| <i>Le Matin</i>   | 1    | 1    | 1    | 3    | 6    | 18   | 485  | 424  | 11   | 16   |
| <i>L'Ouest-Éclair</i>                                   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 18   | 13   | 2    | 2    |
| <i>Paris Midi</i>                                       | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 14   | 25   | 342  | 349  | 12   | 15   |
| <i>Le Petit Journal</i>                                 | 0    | 1    | 0    | 3    | 4    | 13   | 197  | 235  | 5    | 9    |
| <i>Le Petit Parisien</i>                                | 0    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 7    | 272  | 277  | 45   | 10   |
| <i>La Petite Presse</i>                                 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 1    | 23   | 7    | 0    | 0    |
| <i>La Presse</i>  | 1    | 2    | 0    | 2    | 10   | 14   | 401  | 352  | 1    | 10   |
| <i>Le Radical</i>                                       | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 7    | 12   | 335  | 291  | 1    | 0    |
| <i>Le Rappel</i>  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 3    | 114  | 116  | 7    | 4    |
| <i>Le Temps</i>   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 4    | 14   | 217  | 175  | 17   | 4    |
| <i>L'Univers</i>  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 22   | 16   | 0    | 0    |
| <i>La Vie Parisienne</i>                                | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 18   | 82   | 51   | 20   | 14   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | 10   | 25   | 26   | 44   | 268  | 442  | 8075 | 7054 | 268  | 208  |

Table 2 French press coverage, 1907-1916. Source: *gallica.bnf.fr*

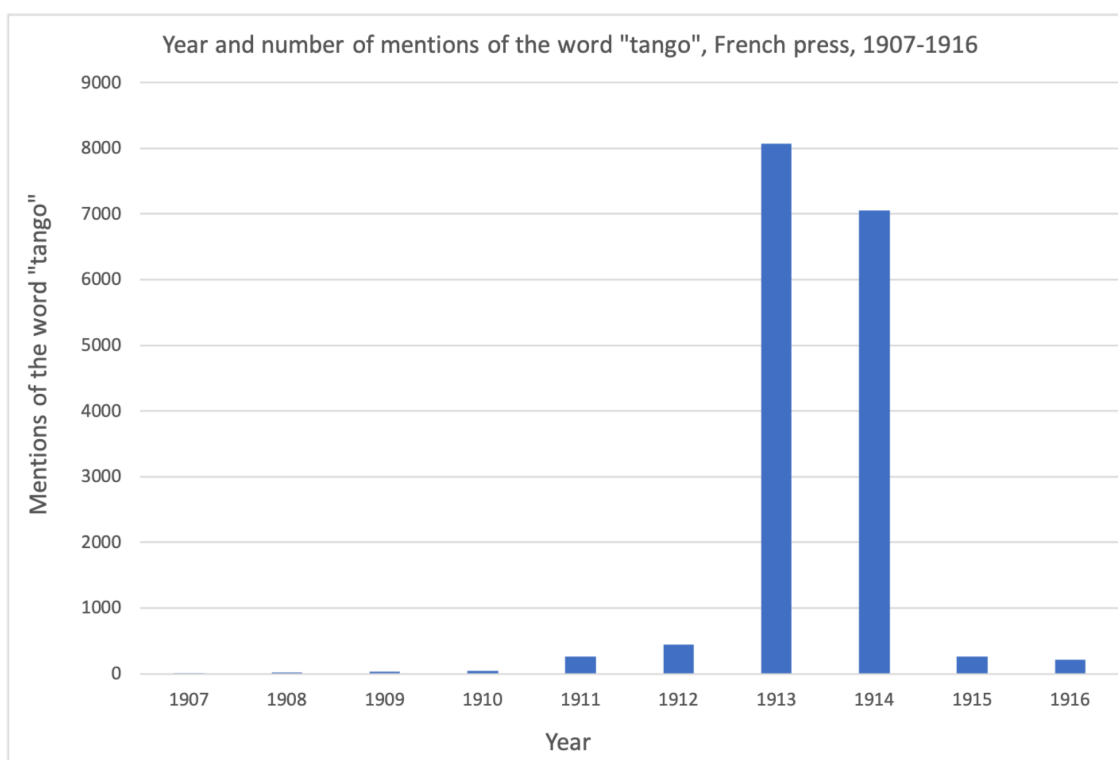


Figure 7 Mentions of "tango" per year, French press, 1907-1916. Source: *gallica.bnf.fr*

Although not an exhaustive list of journalistic sources, this constitutes a representative sample of the French press coverage of the period. Publications included cover a spectrum of political viewpoints, ranging from conservative (*l'Action Française*) to socialist (*l'Humanité*; *l'Aurore*); religious viewpoints, especially catholic (*La Croix*; *l'Univers*) or anticlerical (*La Lanterne*; *le Petit Parisien*); social classes, including high society publications (*Le Gaulois*; *l'Excelsior*; *Femina*; *Elegancias*); or were specialist publications dedicated to cultural events (*Comœdia*; *La Vie Parisienne*).<sup>12</sup> There doesn't seem to be a correlation between political stance and the number of mentions of the word "tango," however, as the genre seems to have been discussed and advertised in a great variety of periodicals.

<sup>12</sup> "Les principaux quotidiens," Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed 23 June 2021, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/presse-et-revues/les-principaux-quotidiens>.

## Tango in Argentina, pre-Tangomania

Before 1911, tango is generally not well documented, but the popular theatre is a notable exception. In the 1860s, the popular Spanish theatrical genre *zarzuela* arrived in the Río de la Plata region, bringing along with it the tango *español* or *andaluz*, a lyric genre that had become popular in Spain, between 1855-1875.<sup>13</sup> As *zarzuela* attained popularity in the region, it underwent a process of *Argentinización*, local *zarzuela* becoming known as *zarzuela criolla*, where the adjective *criollo/a* was added to distinguish local adaptations from foreign genres as a way of labelling something as Argentine: “foreign mould, local product,”<sup>14</sup> as the saying goes. By the 1880s, the theatre genre began to split into two: the *zarzuela grande*, more similar to opera, and the *zarzuelita* or *pequeña zarzuela criolla*, a more plebian form of the genre designed to appeal to a more working-class audience. As such, the *género chico* and the tango had a similar public: the *clases populares*, the common people of the Río de la Plata.<sup>15</sup> The *zarzuelita* was part of the emerging *género chico criollo*, popular theatre encompassing other categories of plays targeted at a working-class public, including the *sainete*, the *grotesco*, and the *gauchesco*. It is within the context of the *género chico criollo* that the first Argentine tangos, initially known as *tangos criollos* to distinguish themselves from *tangos españoles* or *andaluces*, are mentioned in written sources, according to the Argentine musicologist Carlos Vega.<sup>16</sup> I will discuss printed scores in more detail later in this chapter, but *tangos criollos para piano* were published and marketed as a new genre in the early twentieth century. One of the first key tangos, Rosendo Mendizábal’s *El entrerriano*, was published in 1897.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Carlos Vega, *Estudios para los orígenes*, 89.

<sup>14</sup> Quote of Carlos Vega, in Kasey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music*, 9. Whereas in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, *criollo* was used in the Spanish American colonies to refer to anyone born in the New World, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the region of the Río de la Plata, the meaning had changed. See José Juan Arrom, “Criollo: Definición y matices de un concepto,” *Hispania* 34, no. 2 (May 1951): 174-175.

<sup>15</sup> Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 54.

<sup>16</sup> Vega, *Estudios*, 100.

<sup>17</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 24.



In my analysis of primary sources written during the period from 1890 – the first time the word “tango” appeared in the *gauchesco* play *Julián Giménez* by Abdón Aróstegui – until 1911, when the first discussions of tango in Paris were published in Argentina, I draw upon examples from the *género chico*, as well as from press coverage of the time. These sources reveal a few major themes: tango as an African dance; tango as *música criolla* (or not); tango as a product of the lower-class neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires, in particular the *orillas*, the outskirts; tango and prostitution; and finally, the pre-Tangomania social acceptance of the tango amongst some of the Argentine elites.

A number of the initial references to tango were as a “baile de negros” or a black dance. Two such examples come from, or refer to, the *género chico criollo*. For example, in Aróstegui’s *Julián Giménez*, the characters sing a tango mocking “black pronunciation” – replacing the *r* in each word with an *l*:

Una negla  
y un neglito  
se pusieron  
a bailá  
el tanguito  
más bonito  
que se puele  
imaginá.

A black woman  
and a little black man  
started  
dancing  
the prettiest  
little tango  
that one can  
imagine.<sup>18</sup>

Another example comes from a 1901 article in *El País*, lamenting the presence of a danced tango in a *zarzuela criolla*: “today there isn’t a single penpusher of the genre [zarzuela] that does not insert in his works the extremely vulgar and inelegant black dance.”<sup>19</sup>

A third example connects the purported black origins of the tango to the concept of tango as *música criolla*. In his *Orígenes de la música argentina*, published in 1908, fervent anti-Nationalist author

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango*, 194.

<sup>19</sup> *El País*, 26 July 1901. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 124.

Juan Álvarez wrote that, despite the very small African population in Argentina in the early twentieth century, their musical legacy, including the tango, was a great one:

It is curious how the music of the Africans has left us traces deeper than their blood. Today there are almost no black people, but their *zambas* and *milongas*, *habaneras* and *tangos* still ring out, and the latter have turned out to be the most furiously *criollo* music known at the moment.<sup>20</sup>

Álvarez clearly refers to the African origins of the tango. However, his comments about the *criollo* qualities of tango music are revealing and must be explained within the context of rising Argentine nationalism in the years leading up to the 1910 *centenario*, the one hundredth anniversary of the 1810 *Revolución de Mayo*. In this period, largely in reaction to the mass immigration from Europe which had begun around 1870, Argentina was searching for its national identity, or *ser nacional*. As one disgruntled inhabitant expressed, “even the flowers are becoming foreign.”<sup>21</sup> Fears about mass immigration contributed to the rise of cultural nationalism, in particular groups such as the *Liga Patriótica Nacional* and through writers such as Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez, who were deeply concerned with what they called *Argentinidad*, or Argentina’s fundamental character.<sup>22</sup> In the face of such anxiety, these nationalists began to emphasize certain rural symbols, in particular the *ombú* tree and the gaucho, as representations of national identity.<sup>23</sup> The rural interior of Argentina was considered to be less tainted than Buenos Aires, where the newly arrived immigrant population was primarily concentrated. The *ombú* tree and the gaucho could be manipulated as symbols for political and cultural purposes; in other words, they could “counter whatever appeared European and ‘foreign’.”<sup>24</sup> Juan Álvarez’s *Orígenes de la música argentina* is in fact a rejection of these nationalist

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<sup>20</sup> Juan Álvarez, *Orígenes de la música argentina*, 76. By 1906, there were few black people in Argentina for a variety of reasons, including: many deaths among the soldiers of the War of the Triple Alliance; the subsequent decline of the black male population, leading to many Afro-Argentine women to have children with white men; the 1871 yellow fever outbreak in San Telmo, then known as Montserrat; high death rates and low birth rates among the African population; declining birth rates and high death rates; and underrepresentation of Afro-Argentines on the census. See George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 5-6; 77.

<sup>21</sup> Quote of Felix Luna. Quoted in Donald S. Castro, “The Sainete Porteño, 1890-1935: The Image of Jews in the Argentine Popular Theater,” *Studies in Latin American and Popular Culture* 21 (2002): 30.

<sup>22</sup> Castro, “The Sainete Porteño,” 30; Jean Delaney, “Imagining *El Ser Argentino*: Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Argentina,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, issue 03 (August 2002): 625.

<sup>23</sup> Mollie Lewis Nouwen, *Oy, My Buenos Aires*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Ana Cara-Walker, “Cocoliche: The Art of Assimilation and Dissimulation among Italians and Argentines,” *Latin American Research Review* 22, no. 3 (1987): 41.

terms; at the outset he labels his book an “attack on *gauchismo*.”<sup>25</sup> for him, the notion of criollo music is in fact a fabrication, a “hodgepodge of the already extant.”<sup>26</sup> Álvarez found it ironic that tango, which had acquired the label *criollo* around the turn of the century, would be labelled as such, given its African origins.<sup>27</sup>

However, Álvarez was not the only writer to question tango’s position as *música criolla*. A 1907 article in the periodical *La Argentina* rather forcefully makes the point that tango was not national music, nor had it ever been *música criolla*: “Tango is not traditional music, it has never been *música criolla*. The classic *vigüela* of the legendary gaucho was never desecrated by tango in this country.”<sup>28</sup> The debate about whether or not tango was a national music, a national symbol of Argentina, would be pivotal as tango became popular, and universally known as Argentine, in Europe.

More than allusions to the African origins of tango, or discussions of tango’s identity as *música criolla*, perhaps the most common reference to tango was that it was a product of the *arrabales* or the *orillas*, the lower-class neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city. Such neighbourhoods included Corrales Viejos, Barracas and La Boca.<sup>29</sup> Although the term *orilla* in itself is quite vague, George Reid Andrews indicates that it and *orillero*, the resident population, were primarily used at the time to refer to the lower classes, or “the inhabitants of Buenos Aires’s demimonde.”<sup>30</sup> A central figure in these articles is the *compadrito*, identified in secondary literature as a “neighbourhood tough,”<sup>31</sup> an “urban hoodlum figure,”<sup>32</sup> or as “young men of poor background....easily identifiable by their contemporaries from their standard attire: slouch hat, loosely-knotted silk handkerchief, knife discreetly tucked into belt, high-heeled boots.”<sup>33</sup> According to José Gobello, citing a 1902 *Caras y*

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<sup>25</sup> Álvarez, *Orígenes*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Álvarez, *Orígenes*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> Álvarez, *Orígenes*, 76. The first published tangos were in fact known as *tangos criollos*.

<sup>28</sup> *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 166.

<sup>29</sup> Simon Collier, “The Popular Roots of the Argentine Tango,” *History Workshop Journal* issue 34 (1992): 94.

<sup>30</sup> Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines*, 166.

<sup>31</sup> James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (Oxford University Press, 1974), 229.

<sup>32</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Collier, “The Popular Roots,” 94-95.

*Caretas* article, they were the fathers of tango dancing, imitating the dances of the *Afrocriollo* community.<sup>34</sup>

One of the first large articles about tango in the Argentine press appeared in *Caras y Caretas* on 7 February 1903, in which the author, Sargento Pita, describes the gritty, lower-class origins of the tango, “cultivated by the criollo *compadrito* and the *acriollado* Italians of la Boca”. According to Pita, the tango, having been formed by merging the habanera and the milonga, was created by *compadritos* in the outskirts of Buenos Aires; the author then continues to say that the dance had spread to the *conventillos*, the tenements of the poorer neighbourhoods of more central Buenos Aires, where lower class Argentines and recent immigrants would congregate.<sup>35</sup> Presumably, by 1903, the *compadrito* was already a thing of the past; in fact, the author expresses nostalgia for them, lamenting the loss of the “colourful” early days of ill-repute, and expressing concern that the tango danced in the *conventillos* was already different from that of the earliest days.<sup>36</sup> Pita mentions the recent social glory – in Paris – of the cakewalk, which he refers to as the American equivalent of tango or “*el tango de los yanquis*”, and questions whether the same could not occur with (Argentine) tango in order to preserve the dance.<sup>37</sup> Had Pita written ten years later, his article may have been quite different.

The *compadritos* frequently mixed with pimps and prostitutes in the *peringundines*, bars of questionable reputation where it was possible to dance with women. Though tango was not a product of the *peringundines* itself, it was danced in them, according to José Sebastián Tallón in his

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<sup>34</sup> José Gobello, *Breve historia*, 12. The article in question is published in *Caras y Caretas*, 15 February 1902. Carlos Vega disagrees with Gobello on this point; according to Vega, identifying *compadritos* as the only early dancers of tango is part of an “inexact and willing general belief”. Vega instead believed that male dancers of all classes created tango dancing. Vega, *Estudios*, 120-1.

<sup>35</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 7 February 1903. George Reid Andrews specifies that while *conventillos* first housed Afro-Argentines in some of the poorest neighbourhoods such as Monserrat by the 1870s the population was primarily comprised of European immigrants. See Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines*, 80.

<sup>36</sup> José Sebastián Tallón also mentions the emergence of different types of tango dancing: the more scandalous variety danced by the *compadrito* and the version danced in the working-class *conventillo*, which was a more respectable form of the dance more closely related to the tango as it is danced today. See José Sebastián Tallón, *El tango en sus etapas de música prohibida* (Cuadernos del Instituto Amigos del Libro Argentino, 1959), chapter 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 7 February 1903.

controversial *El tango en sus etapas de música prohibida*, published posthumously. Tallón, who claims to have experienced the early days of tango first-hand, writes that the musicians and dancers were often involved in prostitution: “a good number of the musicians and dancers were themselves pimps and *compadritos*.”<sup>38</sup> However, this assertion must be nuanced; many of Tallón’s claims are refuted by tango scholars such as Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, who insist that Tallón, an influential children’s writer, was more interested in creating an entertaining narrative than a factual account.<sup>39</sup> For Lamas and Binda, while it is certainly plausible that tango was danced in the *peringundines*, the primary source material they uncovered does not clearly specify exactly which type of repertoire was preferred in such places.<sup>40</sup>

Nonetheless, the association of tango, prostitution and the *compadrito* is present in the literature of the time. In 1902, Ernesto Quesada – a well-known writer associated with historical revisionism – included a poem in his essay “El criollismo en la literatura argentina”, which he identified as being part of a new genre: suburban *criollos*, of which the *compadrito*, associated with the outskirts of Buenos Aires, was a key example. The poem, from J. López Franco, was called “Los canfinfleros” or “The pimps”:

Soy el mozo canfinflero  
Que camina con finura  
Y baila con quebradura  
Cuando tiene que bailar ...  
Y el que miran los otarios  
Con una envidia canina  
Cuando me ven con la mina  
Que la saco a pasear...

I’m the pimp waiter  
Who walks with finesse  
And dances the tango  
When it is necessary to dance  
And the one who looks at the idiots  
With a canine envy  
When they see me with the prostitute  
That I take for a walk..<sup>41</sup>

The poem, replete with lunfardo, or what Borges called “arrabalero” in his *Evaristo Carriego* – words like *canfinflero*, *otarios*, *la mina* – is certainly not evocative of the upper classes.<sup>42</sup> Instead, lunfardo is

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<sup>38</sup> Tallón, *El tango*, chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 273.

<sup>40</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 54.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango*, 198. “Bailar con quebradura” was, in the early days, often a description of the tango, “quebradas” or stops being a common feature of tango before 1917.

<sup>42</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Evaristo Carriego*. The lower-class outskirts of Buenos Aires were often referred to as the *arrabales*.

more representative of the environment in which tango was created: that of the urban poor, which consisted of a large immigrant population, intermingled with the *criollo* lower classes. In this poem, the pimp – the *canfinflero* – takes his woman, his *mina*, out for a walk, as if he were walking a dog. These were the people associated with tango in 1902. Colourful, decidedly lively, most certainly denizens of the lower classes, not members of the elite.

On the other hand, exposure to tango by the Argentine elite can be found in the Carnival balls of the early 1900s. A period in which social mores were typically more relaxed, Carnival, and the dances celebrating Carnival, included members of all social classes. A 1904 article in *El País* refers to tango's presence in the Carnival ball of the Opera theatre, which was known as the most aristocratic theatre in Buenos Aires at the time: "as in the previous dance events, the tango was the favourite dance of the crowd that attended last night." In the following edition, again writing about the Opera, the journalist goes on to write, "The 'tango'...was danced with ease by our elegant youth..."<sup>43</sup>

However, the acceptance of tango by the Argentine elite was far from generalized at this time, as can be shown by a few articles appearing in elite publications. These critics acknowledge the growing popularity of tango amongst the *clases pudientes* – the influential, well-to-do classes – expressing alarm that a lascivious, low-class dance had left the *orillas*, where it belonged, according to them. For example, the 1907 article in *La Argentina*, which discussed whether tango was *música criolla*, also condemns the "musical epidemic" that had spread across Buenos Aires: "the tango has not only infected national places, but also locations frequented by a predominantly foreign element... Tango has corrupted the taste of the public, and the taste of the public has corrupted the production of composers."<sup>44</sup> Another 1910 article in *La Nación*, once again discussing the annual Carnival balls at the Opera, criticizes elite dancers for wanting to appropriate something that should remain the province of the low classes: "[the elite] should abandon the tango to those who have by birth right the power to dance it or at least not to abuse it... To Caesar what belongs to Caesar and tango to the

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<sup>43</sup> *El País*, 21 and 22 February 1904. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 134.

<sup>44</sup> *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 165.

*orillero*.”<sup>45</sup> So while there is evidence that tango was beginning to enter the dances of the upper classes, there was still opposition to this practice in 1910, just before tango became the darling of the Parisian *haute société*.

Before Tangomania, there were two other ways that tango reached a variety of social classes but especially the more affluent echelons of society: sheet music and recordings.<sup>46</sup> At the turn of the century, the music publishing industry was rapidly expanding in Buenos Aires, with a huge number of publishing houses opening by 1905, including Breyer Hermanos, Juan Balerio, A. Carrano, and Luis Filardi, just to name a few.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Buenos Aires was, according to Ema Cibotti, unique in that a significant portion of the population was musically literate; at this time, there were about 500,000 musical scores in Buenos Aires as well as music schools, both public and private.<sup>48</sup> Sheet music would thus prove to be a powerful marketing tool. As Marina Cañardo asserts, the presence of published tango music – destined for a music-reading, educated public – in the first decade of the twentieth century indicates that tango could not have been strictly confined to the lower-class outskirts of Buenos Aires at the time.<sup>49</sup> In fact, during the decade 1900-1910, more than 1000 editions of tango music were published in Buenos Aires.<sup>50</sup> The first tangos were published as *tango criollo para piano*, introduced by music publishers as a novel genre in order to sell more sheet music.<sup>51</sup> According to Rubén Pesce, published tango scores were one of the leading diffusion mechanisms of the genre, not only providing access to different musical groups such as bands and orchestras, but also entering the *porteño* home.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, tango scores were advertised or discussed in periodicals such as

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<sup>45</sup> *La Nación*, 6 February 1910.

<sup>46</sup> Sheet music is how the tango initially travelled to Paris; the scores of early tangos “El Choclo” and “La Morocha” made their way across the Atlantic to Paris in 1906. Nardo Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires: Un Siècle de Tango*. (Éditions du Félin, 2004), 54.

<sup>47</sup> Ricardo García Blaya, “Las casas editoras de partituras de tango,” Todo Tango, accessed 5 March 2021, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/345/Las-casas-editoras-de-partituras-de-tango-1%c2%aa-parte/>.

<sup>48</sup> Ema Cibotti, “El tango argentino como genuina expresión de las clases medias,” 99.

<sup>49</sup> Cañardo, “Tangos ‘marginales’,” 149.

<sup>50</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 207.

<sup>51</sup> Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 144-145.

<sup>52</sup> Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 300.

*Caras y Caretas* and *El hogar*.<sup>53</sup> Some examples include Miguel Tornquist's "El maco" and "El batarás", published as *tangos criollos* in *Caras y Caretas* on 15 August 1903 and 6 February 1904, respectively.<sup>54</sup>

Following the popularity of published tangos in Buenos Aires in the early years of the twentieth century, recording companies saw the potential for marketing tango recordings: "The disc industry had become a great business at the same period in which tango began to assert itself in [Buenos Aires]... Tango had become a potentially marketable product."<sup>55</sup> While the first tangos were recorded on wax cylinder under the name "repertorio criollo" by the record company Royal, a local affiliate of Zonophone,<sup>56</sup> the first widely-known tangos, including "El Porteño" and "La Morocha", were recorded by Flora Gobbi on the Victor label in the United States in 1906.<sup>57</sup> Shortly after, Gobbi and her husband travelled to Paris, where they made a number of recordings for the upper class *Porteño* department store Gath & Chaves in 1907 and 1908; these are some of the most significant early tango recordings.<sup>58</sup> Marketed in Argentina and in Uruguay, these recordings were made before tango had attained popularity in Europe, where they were not promoted. Instead, the record companies, and Gath y Chaves, were interested in expanding an already-established market for tango in the Río de la Plata region.<sup>59</sup> In addition, they were destined for a well-to-do public. As Donald Castro indicates, "a worker's salary was such that throughout the 1920s both records and record players were luxuries far beyond their means. Thus, the middle and upper classes were the chief beneficiaries of the record

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<sup>53</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912; Silvina Luz Mansilla, "El Hogar. Relevamiento y sistematización de contenidos musicales publicados en el quinquenio 1920-1924," *Boletín de la Asociación Argentina de Musicología* 29, no. 71 (Autumn 2016): 22.

<sup>54</sup> Miguel Tornquist, "El maco," *Caras y Caretas*, 15 August 1903; Miguel Tornquist, "El batarás," *Caras y Caretas*, 6 February 1904.

<sup>55</sup> Pesce, "La Guardia Vieja," 330.

<sup>56</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 430; Enrique Binda, "Pioneras de la fonografía nacional," *Todo Tango*, accessed 30 June 2021, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/410/Pioneras-de-la-fonografia-nacional/>.

<sup>57</sup> Rubén Pesce, "La historia de 'La morocha'," in *La historia del tango, vol. 3: La Guardia Vieja*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 382.

<sup>58</sup> Pesce, "La Guardia Vieja," 328.

<sup>59</sup> Rafael Mandressi and Heloise Finch-Boyer, "Dancing with 'le Sexe'. Eroticism and Exoticism in the Parisian Reception of Tango (1907-1914)," *Clio. Women, Gender, History* no. 46 (2017): 87.



industry's entertainment value.”<sup>60</sup> The international market for tango recordings, especially large from the 1920's on, had not yet been created.

### **Paris: the cultural capital of the nineteenth and early twentieth century**

Although Paris was not the only place where tango became popular in the second decade of the twentieth century – by 1914, tango was also wildly popular in Berlin, London, Rome, and New York – it was the French capital that captured the attention of the Argentine public. Indeed, in many ways, Paris was the global cultural capital of the period from 1870-1914; its architecture, literature and music influencing cultural development throughout the world.<sup>61</sup> In the period from 1880-1920, the period in which Buenos Aires was transformed from the *gran aldea*, the big village, to a cosmopolitan and sophisticated world city, Paris was the primary model, intellectually, culturally, and architecturally.<sup>62</sup> In this time period, Buenos Aires was referred to as the Paris of South America; its writers were largely inspired by the French intellectual tradition; grand buildings along avenues such as Avenida de Mayo were constructed *à la hausmannienne*.<sup>63</sup> It was within this context of Parisian cultural hegemony that tango travelled abroad in the early twentieth century.

Paris was more than just the cultural capital of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it was also the world capital of pleasure.<sup>64</sup> Cabarets, dance revues, café-concerts, dance-halls, guinguettes, public and private balls: Paris was renowned for the quality – and quantity – of its *lieux de plaisir*.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Donald S. Castro, “The Massification of the Tango: The Electronic Media, the Popular Theatre, and the Cabaret from Contursi to Perón, 1917-1955,” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 18 (1999): 94.

<sup>61</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century, Exposé of 1939,” in *The Arcades Project* (Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 14. Benjamin wrote about the nineteenth century; Eric Hobsbawm describes the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the “long century”, lasting until the outbreak of the first World War; see Hobsbawm's book *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (Hachette UK, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Scobie, *Buenos Aires*, 129-132.

<sup>63</sup> For a discussion of the influences of French intellectual thought on the Argentine national literary tradition, see José Luis Borges, “El escritor argentino y la tradición,” *Sur* 232 (1955): 1-8.

<sup>64</sup> Marta Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Westview Press, 1995), 100.

<sup>65</sup> See Derek B. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris and Vienna* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 38-58.

And no neighbourhood was more representative of pleasure than Montmartre, which had been associated with Parisian nightlife since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Montmartre became intimately associated with tango in the early twentieth century. By 1900, lower Montmartre was at the heart of Parisian nightlife, reaching a climax in the years between 1906 and 1913. The neighbourhood's predominantly working-class population interacted with artists, writers and musicians attracted by the low rents, as well as the various entertainment options on offer. In addition, the seediness of the area had its own appeal to the upper ranks of society; the "Montmartre du plaisir et du crime" made the area intriguing to all social classes.<sup>66</sup> Montmartre's reputation as a centre for pleasure and social voyeurism would become key elements of the success of tango, which was danced in the neighbourhood in the years after 1906. By the time the war broke out, the heyday was over, cultural activity moving to other areas of the city such as Montparnasse.<sup>67</sup>

### **The arrival of tango in Paris**

While it is not known exactly when tango was first danced in Montmartre, we do know that tango sheet music arrived in Paris from Buenos Aires in 1906. In that year, the boat *Sarmiento* brought the published scores of Enrique Saborido's "La Morocha" and Angel Villodo's "El Choclo" to Marseille, France; the scores then made their way to Paris, likely to the brothels of Montmartre.<sup>68</sup> According to scholars Ana Sebastián and Luis Labraña, sailors, pimps involved in the white slave trade, and cocaine smugglers, all of whom travelled between Buenos Aires and France, undoubtedly brought the scores to Parisian brothels.<sup>69</sup> Other scores were brought around the same time to Paris by Pierre Baetz,

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<sup>66</sup> Nicholas Hewitt, "Shifting Cultural Centres in Twentieth-century Paris," in *Parisian Fields*, ed. Michael Sheringham (Reaktion Books, 1996), 33.

<sup>67</sup> Hewitt, "Shifting Cultural Centres," 35.

<sup>68</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Ana Sebastián and Luis Labraña, *De Geschiedenis van de Tango* (Uitgeverij de Geus, 1990), 26.

Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence to support this assertion, and Sebastián and Labraña do not cite any sources. However, French pimps were heavily involved in the white slave trade between Europe and Buenos Aires, and there is evidence of drug use in Porteño brothels, so it is plausible. For more information about prostitution in Buenos Aires, see Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires* (University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

a French violinist on the ocean line Le Havre-Buenos Aires, who opened a still-extant music publishing company, later named Editions Universelles.

Mentioned earlier, the first tango musicians to travel to Paris, the Uruguayan Alfredo Gobbi and his Chilean wife Flora arrived in 1907. As we have seen, these musicians did not travel to Paris to perform; they went to record, sent by the upper-class *Porteño* department store Gath y Chaves.<sup>70</sup> They remained in Paris until 1914 before returning to Buenos Aires, and their son Alfredo, who was born in Paris in 1912, would become one of the most legendary figures of tango in the 1940s. The Gobbi's time in Paris played a significant part in the history of the tango for two main reasons: recording, as I mentioned, and sheet music publishing. By 1910, Alfredo Gobbi (père) had become a sheet music publisher, first for the Editions Salabert, and then for his own publishing company, located on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, not far from Montmartre.<sup>71</sup> These published works included numerous tangos, such as *Paris-Londres*.<sup>72</sup>

### **Pre-Tangomania: tango as a dance performed on stage**

Despite the presence of sheet music and recordings in Paris in the early twentieth century, tango attained popularity – burgeoning into Tangomania by 1913 – as a dance form. Before the advent of the tango-canción and the rise to stardom of Carlos Gardel in 1917 – heralding a new period in which tango music became increasingly sophisticated – tango music was intended for dancing. In fact, nearly one hundred percent of the press coverage I reviewed in the period preceding World War I was dedicated to tango as a dance form. Though the first scores and recordings were present in Paris by 1906-1907, an analysis of French media coverage indicates that the popularity of tango emerged in

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<sup>70</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 55. The fact that these tangos were recorded for a department store favoured by the Argentine upper classes indicates that there was already a market for them by this time (1907). See Cañardo, “Tangos ‘marginales’,” 50-51.

<sup>71</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 56.

Paris in 1911, and peaked in 1913 and early 1914, in the months before war broke out. The first coverage of Argentine tango began to appear in late 1910/early 1911 and was solely focussed on tango danced on stage; the social dance craze would come later. Before late 1910, there was little mention of tango in French newspapers, only a few short articles here and there about “tango andaluz” or “tango espagnol”. Tango andaluz or español was, as we have already seen, associated with the zarzuela, popular in Spain and in Argentina throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tango was identified as Argentine for the first time in a French newspaper in September 1910, and even then, the article was about a dance performance in Brussels, not Paris. However, the description of tango is significant, for it mentions the erotic connotations of the dance: “Miss Meg Stilson, who first revealed to us a voluptuous Argentine tango that will be forbidden to audience members younger than 15 years old, then [performed] a “red dance” of Ambrosini, during which her agile partner Albert Brouette throws her on the ground, crushes her... Ask if women are treated as they deserve!”<sup>73</sup> That the tango was followed by a “red dance,” or “danse rouge” is revelatory, because the author is referring to the *apache* dance, a Parisian sibling of the tango.

Tango was described as a “*création américaine et apachesque*” in a 1912 *La Vie Parisienne* article, and indeed the two dances were, at least in the initial period of tango’s popularity in Paris, linked in several ways.<sup>74</sup> First of all, the creator and primary star of the *apache* was Mistinguett, the dance revue star of the Montmartre-based Théâtre des Variétés, who first performed the dance together with the Parisian dancer Max Dearly in 1908. Mistinguett also played a crucial role in presenting tango to the Parisian public in 1911. Also known “*la valse chaloupée*”, or the “swaying waltz”, the dance was named after the *apaches*, gangs of hooligans who roved the streets in neighbourhoods such as Montmartre and Belleville, in the early twentieth century: “These hooligans were mostly young men, who swaggered with an arrogant pride, dressed distinctively and were ‘handy with a knife’.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Comœdia*, 19 September 1910.

<sup>74</sup> *La Vie Parisienne*, 22 June 1912.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Powers, “The hidden story of the Apache dance: appearances can be misleading,” accessed 1 June 2021, <http://socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/Apache1.htm>.

Reminiscent of the *compadritos* of Buenos Aires – indeed, Nardo Zalko refers to them as the ancestors of the *Porteño compadritos* – these ne’er-do-wells from the Parisian outskirts were frequently involved with robberies, prostitution, and petty crime.<sup>76</sup> Zalko is correct that the *apaches* and the *compadritos* were very similar in nature, but he is incorrect that French *apaches* were ancestors; they were contemporaries, both part of the urban fabric of Paris and Buenos Aires, respectively, in the early twentieth century.

Nonetheless, a strong connection would appear between the *apaches* of Paris and Buenos Aires. While the tango had travelled to Paris in 1906, by 1912, *apache* had become a popular term in Buenos Aires. An article appeared in the Argentine magazine *Fray Mocho* on 17 May 1912: “Apaches? Do they exist in Buenos Aires? Loads. Little by little they arrive. Slowly they introduce their barbaric customs in our city. Some bring, from France, their women. Others conquer women here.”<sup>77</sup> Likely connected to the Parisian dance, *apache* quickly became a popular title for pieces of music in Buenos Aires; however, unlike its Parisian counterpart, the scores published in Buenos Aires under the name *apache* were tangos. Between 1912 and 1914, a number of tangos appeared: “El apache”, “El apache porteño”, “El rey de los apaches”, “Apache uruguayo”, “El apache oriental”, “El apache argentino”.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, the sexual nature of both dances greatly contributed to their popularity. Though the tango was surely not as extreme in nature, both the apache and the staged version of the tango – as that 1910 *Comœdia* article about tango in Brussels indicates – formed a part of what Rafael Mandressi refers to as the “highly sexualized nature” of pre- World War I stage dances.<sup>79</sup> The voluptuousness of these dances was exaggerated, emphasizing erotic connotations in order to give the public a *frisson* of

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<sup>76</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 47.

<sup>77</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912. The article also refers to the widespread association of French apaches – and French women, highly prized as prostitutes – with the white slave trade. Another word, besides *canfinflero*, for pimp in early twentieth century Buenos Aires was a French word: *souteneur*. See Guy, *Sex and Danger*, 114-115.

<sup>78</sup> Roberto Selles, “El apache argentino – Un tango piel roja,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 10 June 2020, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/272/El-apache-argentino-Un-tango-piel-roja-El-apache-argentino/>

<sup>79</sup> Mandressi, “Dancing with ‘le Sexe’,” 84.

excitement: “scandalous dances were staged in a further scandalized way, and were simultaneously tamed of scandalous features for the purposes of social dancing.”<sup>80</sup> Created with *apaches* – the Parisian *compadritos* – in mind, the apache dance was unusually violent and sexually explicit: “The dance shows a couple from the outskirts: a bad boy, an ‘apache’ as we say, and his moll. The man dominates, and the woman takes (only the blows)... And the waltz ends with a nasty correction that the Jules inflicts upon his Julie, still in love with him.”<sup>81</sup> This dance took on a “highly exaggerated form... where a squalid-looking prostitute dressed in rags would fight for her life in the arms of a violent pimp-aggressor...”<sup>82</sup> The tango, at least the version performed in the dance hall – even borrowed some apache dance steps. These steps, if they did not reflect the violence of the *apache*, did reinforce the sexualized character of stage tango.

### **Tangomania: Paris goes crazy for tango**

As mentioned earlier, the stage version of the tango performed in Paris was the first to receive press coverage. Several months after the *Comœdia* article about tango in Brussels appeared, tango began to be advertised in French newspapers as the “new dance,” the new fashion of the year. Mistinguett, the erstwhile Montmartre-based dance hall star of the apache, appeared as the new star of the tango in an article from January 1911:

It’s the new dance... the tango [...] Will the tango be the new craze of this season in Paris? The famous Spanish (sic) dance is, it seems, adapted to Parisian taste, and fans of the waltz should find there the pleasure of novelty. Mlle Mistinguett, the amusing artist, and M. Robert, agreed to present it.<sup>83</sup>

Again, one month later in February 1911: “A new dance: the tango, imported from South America and danced by Mlle Mistinguett.”<sup>84</sup> However, by early 1911, tango was still very much a product of the stage, an exotic and erotic dance enjoyed by visitors to dance halls and theatres. Despite the initial

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<sup>80</sup> Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy*, 98.

<sup>81</sup> Elizabeth Coquart and Philippe Huet, *Mistinguett: La Reine des Années Folles* (Albin Michel, 1996), 65.

<sup>82</sup> Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy*, 111.

<sup>83</sup> *L’Excelsior*, 26 January 1911.

<sup>84</sup> *Comœdia*, 27 February 1911.

association of tango with the dance hall and the socially dubious apache dance, tango would very quickly become the darling of the Parisian elite, the *tout-Paris mondain*. How did this rapid social transformation take place? Social dancing – dance competitions, the ballroom, and the creation of *thé-dansants*, afternoon tea dances, which would be all the rage in 1913 and early 1914 (aptly named *thé-tango*, *champagne-tango*, *tango-mondain*, etc.) – would be the key element of tango’s new-found popularity amongst the highest echelons of Parisian society. In addition, the rise in popularity of the *professeur de danse* amongst the ladies of high society, as well as the appearance of several dance manuals in 1913-14, would contribute to the immense popularity of the tango.

Though it is virtually impossible to pinpoint the very first social dance event in which tango was danced in Paris – depending on the source, tango could have been danced as early as 1905 in the salons of the Rothschilds, or could have been first presented a few years later by Argentine writer Ricardo Güiraldes in the salons of Madame Jean de Rezske – what can be confirmed through primary source material is that tango had become a rather exhilarating part of the Parisian social calendar by mid-1911.<sup>85</sup> The introduction of tango to the Parisian social scene would also have a direct effect on media coverage: while tango was barely discussed in French newspapers and magazines before 1911, from 1911 to 1914, coverage exploded, peaking in 1913. According to Remi Hess, this increase in attention was directly related to tango’s new presence in the ballroom: “[the tango] earned a new audience every week. It was subversion. As long as it was presented like an exotic dance, an ethnographic curiosity, [tango] did not provoke a reaction. But its introduction to society balls ... would revolutionize society.”<sup>86</sup>

The first major social event widely discussed in the French press was the Concours de Tango et de Danses Nouvelles de *l’Excelsior* (The *Excelsior* Tango and New Dance Competition), held on 26 May

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<sup>85</sup> The 1905 Rothschild salon date is mentioned in a number of sources, including Rémi Hess, *Le tango* (Presses universitaires de France, 1996), 35. Güiraldes and Mme de Rezske are mentioned in Mandressi, “Dancing with ‘le sexe’,” 88 and Zalko *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 58. However, there does not seem to be proof of these events.

<sup>86</sup> Hess, *Le tango*, 36.

1911 at the Théâtre Femina, located on the Champs-Élysées and hosted by the magazine *Femina*. Prior to this point, tango had been more associated with Montmartre; now tango had arrived on Paris's grandest avenue. While dance competitions popular amongst the elite were not exactly new in Paris – Camille de Rhynal had organized the first “world dance championship” in 1909<sup>87</sup> – the goal of this competition was made immediately clear:

Our readers already know that we want to give the tango, recently arrived from the Americas, and other new dances the Parisian consecration that they have been missing out on, by creating a competition that permits us to compare all of these dances and to judge those who dance them the best.<sup>88</sup>

Initial publicity of the event appeared in late March 1911 – incidentally, on 24 April 1911 the name of the competition was changed from “Concours de danses nouvelles” to “Concours de tango et de danses nouvelles”<sup>89</sup> – involved Mistinguett, who was invited to participate. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the event was the jury composition, made up of the most influential social names of the day: “Mme la princesse Lucien Murat, le prince de Léon, Mme la vicomtesse de Riancey, baron Henri de Bermingham, comte de Pradère, MM André de Fouquières, Rodolphe Berger Fritsch Estrangin et Carlos Garcia Mansilla, comte de Rougement”. The audience presence was just as impressive: “Princesse Radziwiil, grand-duc de Leuchtenberg, comtesse Nostitz, l’ambassadeur d’Allemagne, comtesse de Rougment, prince de La Tour d’Auvergne, baronne A. de Neuflize, comtesse de Lubersac, comte Jean de Castellane, comte Jacques d’Aramon...”<sup>90</sup> Tango had well and truly arrived among the upper classes.

After the dance competition, tango was the talk of Paris. Other large events followed in elite Parisian institutions, including at the Bal Tabarin, one of the most illustrious balls of Montmartre, where a “Concours de tango” was held in August 1911; multiple newspapers announced that the competition had been an “unprecedented success”.<sup>91</sup> Or yet another series of events at the Jardin de Paris, “for the

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<sup>87</sup> Christophe Apprill, *Le tango argentin en France* (Anthropos, 1998), 37.

<sup>88</sup> *L'Excelsior*, 2 May 1911.

<sup>89</sup> *L'Excelsior*, 24 April 1911.

<sup>90</sup> *L'Excelsior*, 28 May 1911.

<sup>91</sup> *Comœdia*, 24 August 1911; *L'Aurore*, 24 August 1911.



great pleasure of all Parisian and foreign notables, who, each evening, meet at the beautiful establishment on the Champs-Élysées.”<sup>92</sup> Suddenly, a significant portion of the Parisian elite had learned to dance tango, a dance that had only fairly recently appeared. By early 1912, articles abounded about dance professors, the new fashion amongst the elite. Suddenly, *le tout-Paris* fought over elite dance professors, many of whom had participated in, or won illustrious dance competitions: Mistinguett, Camille de Rhynal, Luis Bayo (winner of the *Excelsior* dance competition)...: “all the *salons* fight over the same tango professors, each one more concerned with becoming more daring than the rest.”<sup>93</sup> Or as *Femina* wrote in early 1913: “the tango professor is the king of the day. It is a French tradition to give dance professors an exceptional position.”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the fame of tango professors in Paris – many of whom were, or at least claimed to be, Argentine – and the financial success that went along with that fame, did not go unnoticed by the Argentine press of the time. On 28 March 1913, an article was published in *Fray Mocho* about the popularity of tango in Paris, and famous dancers such as Bernabé Simara, known as “el rey del tango”:

He receives 1200 francs a month as a teacher at the Academie Rhynal, the best-known in Paris, where he works for two hours a day; 30 or 40 francs in the Restaurant Abbaye for each soirée, not counting tips that sometimes add up to more than his salary, and then, dinners, champagne and the sea... See if the profession is enviable or not.<sup>95</sup>

The tango professor, a very lucrative position, was thus a crucial link between the elite and tango.

Tango was all the rage by late 1912. But with great popularity also came great opposition, the so-called “guerre du tango” or the tango war which centred primarily on one major aspect: was the tango socially acceptable?

We have already seen that the early days of tango dancing in Paris were quite risqué, and certain more conservative sectors of the population believed that the dance should be forbidden. In the press, the

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<sup>92</sup> *Comœdia*, 23 August 1911.

<sup>93</sup> *La Vie Parisienne*, 10 February 1912.

<sup>94</sup> *Femina*, 15 April 1913.

<sup>95</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 28 March 1913.

first opposition was reported in August 1912; the International Academy of Dance Authors, Masters and Professors announced that tango was not a dance, but decadence: “No more tango... it isn’t proper. It isn’t gracious.”<sup>96</sup> By early 1913, in a now legendary series of articles about the tango, André de Fouquières wrote of the tango:

The principle is this: any dance is liable to have a double interpretation: a vulgar interpretation, and then it takes refuge in the cabarets of Montmartre or similar places, and a distinguished, harmonious interpretation, in keeping with the rules of polite society. The simple waltz can become a disgusting dance in some balls of Grenelle or Montrouge: the “tango” is one of the prettiest things that I can dream of, when it is danced, with good measure, as I see it danced every day in the salons that I attend.<sup>97</sup>

That seemed to be the crux of the matter: there were two types of tango, for de Fouquières, the vulgar kind danced in lower class neighbourhoods such as Montmartre (and by extension, Grenelle and Montrouge), or the beautiful, elegant sort danced by “polite society”. But was the dance vulgar in Argentina, or had it been changed upon arrival in France? De Fouquières was quite clear on this matter in his next article, on 2 February 1913:

The tango is the dance of the (in)famous gauchos... these rough men obviously cannot be satisfied with the precious manners of our salons.... The tango is not a dance that can be imported directly. It must undergo a thorough search upon arrival at customs, and it is necessary to change it radically.<sup>98</sup>

While De Fouquières was mistaken – the tango was not a dance of the gauchos, but an urban dance – his descriptions reflected the Parisian desire to make tango more decent, to refine it, for it to be *de bon ton* in the salons of the Parisian elite.

Several months later, the Parisian caricaturist Sem wrote a series of articles condemning the tango, entitled *Les possédées*, or “The Possessed”. For him, tango was a disease, an unhealthy addiction. For Sem, the tango was not decent:

This neurosis has made terrible progress. By a lightning march, it has spread across Paris, invaded the salons, theatres, bars, nightclubs, grand hotels and taverns. There are tea-tangos, tango exhibitions, tango conferences. Half of Paris rubs against the other. The whole city has erupted: it has tango under its skin.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *L’Excelsior*, 26 August 1912.

<sup>97</sup> *Femina*, 15 January 1913.

<sup>98</sup> *Femina*, 2 February 1913.

<sup>99</sup> *Le Journal*, 23 April 1913.

And from the next article in the series: “And when it crosses the ocean, you will no longer recognize it, beautiful ladies of Buenos Aires, your tango de las ranas. You will get it back packaged in the graces of Paris, perfumed, wavy, in an adorable chiffonade, an item from the rue de la Paix.”<sup>100</sup>

Sem, much like André de Fouquières, suggested that tango had been modified in Paris, had been made chic, elegant, and decent in comparison to the tango of Buenos Aires. However, unlike de Fouquières, for Sem this was not a positive development. Sem condemned the obsession that Parisian society had for the dance, which had, according to him, possessed the soul of those who danced it.

In the summer of 1913, the tango craze only grew amongst the Parisian elites. It was the summer of the *thé dansant*, the afternoon *thés-tango* that were the “rendez-vous du tout-Paris élégant.”<sup>101</sup> *Thé-tango* at Camille de Rhynal’s Magic-city, *Tango-mondain* at the Américain-Biograph, *thé-tango* at the Jardin de Paris, *tango champagne* at the Olympia – “that will never stop being the place to be for the socialites of tout-Paris”<sup>102</sup> – the amount of elite tango-themed social dances was astounding. Paris had become *tangoville*; a term coined by Sem in August 1913. According to him, tango was now everywhere: “wherever the Parisians travel, they bring the tango disease with them...”<sup>103</sup> It was the summer of *tangomanie* or Tangomania, another term coined in July 1913. As the magazine *Femina* indicated:

What is special about the tango is, and we must have the courage to say this, ... with a bit of legitimate concern... its obsessive character. Everyone has his own opinion about tango, or, if not, pretends to have an opinion. ... Tangomania appears with all of the main characteristics of a gentle disease, of course, but an incurable one.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *Le Journal*, 10 May 1913.

<sup>101</sup> *Comœdia*, 11 May 1913.

<sup>102</sup> *Comœdia*, 12 July 1913.

<sup>103</sup> *L’Illustration*, 16 August 1913.

<sup>104</sup> *Femina*, 15 July 1913.

Despite the growing criticism, the popularity of tango showed no signs of waning. Until this point, the overwhelming majority of press coverage was positive, or focussed on the “obsessive” nature of tango.

By late 1913, things began to change. Jean Richepin, the famous writer and member of the *Académie française*, chose to give a speech about the tango at the Académie in late October 1913. Widely covered by both French and Argentine press, the event was both lauded and derided. The subject matter was considered controversial, for Richepin chose a frivolous subject – dance – and a foreign one at that. Richepin nonetheless treated the matter with gravitas, identifying the three principal objections to the tango: a) the foreign origin of the tango, b) its popular origin, and c) its improper character.<sup>105</sup> He went through each objection, explaining why they were baseless: a) other foreign dances were popular in Paris, without much objection, such as the waltz, the polka, the scottiche, the boston; b) its popular origin: almost all dances had rustic origins, like the gavotte, the minuet and the bourrée; c) its improper character: “the improper character of a dance is only ever to be attributed to the dancers”. In short, he explained to the illustrious audience that tango was an elegant dance, something to admire and respect.

Despite Richepin’s defence of the tango – and its entrance in a hallowed institution like the *Académie française* – the tango was considered more and more controversial. The Catholic church began to forbid the tango, one diocese at a time: Verdun, Châlons, Sens, Poitiers, Nancy, Dijon, Angers, Moulins, Reims and especially Paris, where the Bishop announced that tango was both lascivious and morally offensive in early 1914.<sup>106</sup> In fact, the French catholic church wrote to the Vatican, asking the pope which penitence to assign to people who had sinned by dancing the tango. In late January 1914, the Vatican indeed decided that tango was obscene, with Cardinal Calivari publishing in the *Osservatore romano* that tango was not to be danced. The pope, according to many newspaper reports

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<sup>105</sup> *L’Excelsior*, 26 October 1913.

<sup>106</sup> *L’Humanité*, 10 January 1914.

of the time, recommended that an older dance, the furlana, be danced instead of tango.<sup>107</sup> While the furlana never took off in popularity, and tango remained popular in Paris, there was a sensation that tango's popularity was beginning to wane. On 1 September 1914, World War I broke out, putting an end to three years of Tangomania in Paris. While tango would again attain popularity in Paris after the war, never again would it know the Tangomania that had marked the years between 1911 and 1914.

### **Argentine reaction to Tangomania**

The Argentinian press reacted to the popularity of tango in Paris, and to the French press coverage of the phenomenon, with surprise that tango had become synonymous with Argentina abroad. In fact, the majority of Argentine articles about the success of tango abroad between 1911 and 1914 expressed similar thoughts. The first such article was published in December 1911 in *El Hogar*: "El tango argentino en Paris". The article discusses how tango had arrived in the elite salons of Paris, whereas in Buenos Aires that process of social acceptance had not yet occurred:

The fashionable dance of the moment is the Argentine tango, which is danced as much as the waltz. As can be seen, the aristocratic salons of the great capital enthusiastically welcome a dance that here, due to its bad reputation, is not even named in salons, where national dances have never enjoyed any favour. Will Paris, who imposes so much, end up making the tango socially acceptable in our good society?<sup>108</sup>

The tone of the article is optimistic though, the author wondering if tango would eventually receive the same treatment in Buenos Aires as in Paris, despite its less than stellar reputation.

Following the events in Paris closely, *El mundo argentino* published a highly critical article in early 1912. Entitled "His majesty the tango," the article expresses dismay that such a vulgar, 'pornographic' dance from the low-class suburbs of Buenos Aires, could be so celebrated in Paris, whereas Argentine dances, or dances accepted as such, are ignored. Indeed, the author and Galician

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<sup>107</sup> *L'Aurore*, 6 February 1914.

<sup>108</sup> *El Hogar*, 20 December 1911. Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, 208.

immigrant Nicasio Pajares – himself very sensitive to the topic of national identity – refutes the notion that tango could ever be considered Argentine:

Argentine tango is in fashion in Paris; Argentine tango has deserved the poetic consecration of famous bards and the praises, in prose, of distinguished writers, and the enthusiastic drumming of notable journalists. Besides, the Argentine tango ... is Argentine, they say ... Above “el pericón,” a naive and graceful dance, picturesque, truly beautiful and genuinely national; above “el gato” and the “malambo” is the tango; it reigns and dominates; it is a great tyrant, especially since it has become fashionable in Paris ... It is grossly pornographic, and it is not even a representative dance. Tango is a hybrid product, a degeneration of the suburb. It is not a dance of national tradition and spirit: it does not have a national soul ... Tango is not a national popular dance, it is from Buenos Aires, and not even in absolute terms: it is, as it is said, from the suburbs.<sup>109</sup>

Although he does admit that some Argentines, as well as himself, had the stupidity of dancing tango in carnival dances at theatres such as the Opera (mentioned earlier), he regrets such choices bitterly given the consecration of tango in Paris:

But although it may be painful for us, we must confess that several times we have been ... perceived during carnival nights at the Opera, Apollo and Victoria balls. In short: that we have committed the idiocy of paying homage to the current tyrant, to His Majesty El Tango.<sup>110</sup>

The success of tango in Paris continued to be noticed by the Argentine press; a few months later, *Caras y Caretas* published an article entitled “The success of tango”. Noting, perhaps with a hint of irony, the tendency for Argentina to export raw materials and then import finished products from Europe, the author, Goyo Cuello, discusses the extent to which tango, and Argentina, have become fashionable abroad:

It is already more than grain and live or frozen cattle that our country exports to Europe, we also have the luxury of importing customs. The tango, the dance from the outskirts, has had the honours of becoming fashionable in the European salons.... Argentina has become fashionable, and more than the wealth we export from our soil, we owe this popularity to that popular dance, that we had almost forgotten about... Tango is triumphant, relives, is fashionable; Paris and London have celebrated it. In order to dance it, well, maybe with the course of time, it will return to us from Europe like leather and wool “made in Germany.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *El Mundo Argentino*, 20 March 1912.

<sup>110</sup> *El Mundo Argentino*, 20 March 1912.

<sup>111</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.

Cuello confirms that the success of tango in Argentina began with the music publishing industry, only to be accelerated by tango's popularity in Europe:

The great success of tango among us [Argentines] is evidenced by the fact that music publishing houses publish them in preference to other compositions, and some have sold millions of copies, and now more, since tango has become an export item. Just for Paris and London, a few thousand copies go out by mail, since it seems that this Argentine dance is becoming more widespread every day.<sup>112</sup>

By 1913, tango had also become a success in Buenos Aires. A new market emerged: tango lessons for the upper classes, many of whom hoped to travel to Europe. Curiously, the best way to achieve social acceptance in Europe was now to learn tango in Buenos Aires! Like Margarita, a character from Enrique García Velloso's play *El tango en París*, said, "to be a tango dancer in Paris is more than being a diplomat or ambassador."<sup>113</sup> In August 1913, *Caras y Caretas* published an article, signed only with the author's initials (RIZ), about tango academies. It seems that the author's purpose was to advertise a specific academy:

Since tango has become fashionable in London, Paris and New York, we who didn't know the value of that dance and thought of it as a by-product of *compadritos* and other people from the *orillas*, have hastened to dignify it and give it the honours of aristocratic dance so that it can appear with dignity in the salons. Mr. Carlos Herrera, doctor in tangology as he has been able to publicly demonstrate ... took with all zeal the delicate task of polishing the tango and for that purpose, he created an academy in which, using a theoretical-practical method of his invention, the clumsiest dancer can learn to dance with *quebradas*, *contoneos* and flowery steps in just a few lessons... The best clients are those who are on the eve of embarking on a trip to Paris, because they know that to be Argentine abroad means dancing tango to the admiration of the night owls who attend the cabarets.<sup>114</sup>

June 1913 was also the date of the mythical dance salon of Antonio de Marchi at the Palais de Glace, the event in which tango, as we have already seen, according to the traditional historical narrative of the tango, was finally accepted in high society Argentina. While critics such as Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda have questioned the relevance of that specific date, citing as evidence a rather cantankerous article in *La Nación*, effectively bashing the event ("Tango belongs to an inferior class and to a promiscuous transition... The fact that the tango has returned triumphant from Paris isn't a

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<sup>112</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango*, 210.

<sup>114</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 9 August 1913.

reason for us to adopt it like the latest word in fashion and good manners”<sup>115</sup>), the presence of dance schools for well-to-do customers indicates that the process of social acceptance was in motion, due in large part to the popularity of tango in Paris.

The increasing visibility of tango abroad, and social acceptance at home, led to criticism from both ends of the *Porteño* social spectrum. In September 1913, new – but soon-to-be highly influential – working-class publication *Crítica* published a curious article penned by the author “Viejo Tanguero”, in which the author claims to tell the “true” story of tango’s development and condemns its recent European transformation.<sup>116</sup> Viejo Tanguero tells a picaresque tale of the origins of tango, whereby the dance was created by accident in the *bajo fondo* of the outskirts of Buenos Aires, in the days of bravery, knife fights, and *peringundines*. Nothing is known about the author of this article. More significant than the author’s version of tango’s origins is his – that is, if he can be supposed to be a man – reason for writing the article: reacting to a *concurso de tango* at the Palace Theatre destined to an elite public, he writes of tango’s recent return from Europe dressed in (fake) finery: “This is the true story of the dance that has just re-emerged into public life, adorned with tinsel of tissue paper, to cross the Atlantic, impose itself abroad and then return to the homeland with purple mantles and cardboard laurels.”<sup>117</sup>

The author is particularly angry that the previously maligned tango (by the upper classes) has now arrived in aristocratic circles, its suburban roots overlooked now that it is danced in “the stiff attire of the impeccable tailcoat and polite gloved hands”.<sup>118</sup> Viejo Tanguero has a word of warning for those who do not follow the true spirit of the dance: its artistic value is lost. Two weeks later, *Fray Mocho* published an article about that very *concurso de tango*, organised by the Sociedad Sportiva at the Palace Theatre: a French street musician living in Buenos Aires, José de Wavrin alias J. Nirvassed,

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<sup>115</sup> *La Nación*, 3 June 1913. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 268.

<sup>116</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>117</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>118</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.



won the competition for best tango composition!<sup>119</sup> Whereas the public questioned whether a foreigner, let alone a Frenchman without musical education, could have written a tango, the article ultimately concludes that *El tony*, de Wavrin's composition, is quite *criollo* despite its composer's French origins, and capable of making anyone dance, even a friar!<sup>120</sup>

Prominent literary figures such as Leopoldo Lugones (famous for his prolific literary output and fierce proponent of Argentine nationalism, alongside writers such as Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez) and Enrique Larreta (writer and Argentine ambassador in France at the time) also condemned the new-found social respectability of the tango. Both men emphasized similar thoughts: that tango was not a national dance of Argentina, and that it was a product of the brothels. Lugones, in a November 1913 article published in *La Nación*, stated rather forcefully: "The tango is not a national dance, and neither is the prostitution that created it. The residents of the brothels, where it was born, are only ever exceptionally *criollas*. To accept it as ours, because it is labelled as such in Paris, would be to fall into the most despicable servility."<sup>121</sup> Similarly, at the end of 1913 – let us not forget that 1913 was the peak of Tangomania in Paris – the Argentine ambassador to France was interviewed for an article about tango in *La Nación*. In the interview, he mentions a number of provocative points: tango is not danced throughout Argentina, but only in the brothels of Buenos Aires and other large cities. Furthermore, the tango in Argentina is like the apache dance in Paris – not socially acceptable. He calls it more of a "sensual apéritif" than a dance. He finishes rather forcefully: "There is at least in Paris one salon where the Argentine tango is not danced, and that is the salon of the Argentine embassy!"<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, despite the opposition of Lugones, Larreta and others, the Argentine elite was acutely aware of the tango by late 1913. Unlike earlier indifference to the tango prior to its popularity in Paris, tango had very much arrived as part of the social agenda of Buenos Aires.

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<sup>119</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 3 October 1913.

<sup>120</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 3 October 1913.

<sup>121</sup> *La Nación*, 23 November 1913. Quoted in full in Carozzi, "Europa," 19. The anti-immigrant tones of Lugones' text are quite clear: the prostitutes dancing tango in the brothels are immigrants, not *criollas*, and since tango originated in the brothels (according to Lugones), danced by these foreigners, it couldn't possibly be a national dance.

<sup>122</sup> *La Nación*, 21 December 1913. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 198-199.

While evidence from the press demonstrates that the question of tango's social acceptability had not been resolved by 1914, one thing was certain: Argentina was acutely aware that tango had become a national symbol abroad. On 16 May 1914, *Caras y Caretas* published an article, by theatre critic, journalist, and writer César Viale, about tango abroad, asking the question, echoing earlier, pre-Tangomania press coverage of the tango: is tango *criollo* or not? The article offers us the perfect summary of what happened, before, during and after Tangomania:

The caprices of Terpsichore... taking – apparently – a dance that is said to be ours; secretly, he takes it out of the *peringundin*, makes it popular in society, gives it a passport, implants it and acclimatizes it in Paris, first; later, in the salons of society; it spreads, becomes universal later; then the dance is criticized and it is discussed whether or not it is a sin; the dance returns to the Río de la Plata more or less transformed; there are girls of high society defying commentary, dancing [tango steps], and, just like with wool and leather, they are first produced here, then in the Old World are transformed, and once returned, we enjoy them. ...  
Is tango criollo or not? ....  
In any case, it is said, if tango is not exactly a purebred national dance, wherever it comes from, it has a *Porteño* passport, and it is with this label that it has travelled the world.<sup>123</sup>

Echoing Goyo Cuello's 1912 article "El éxito del tango", Viale mentions the exportation of raw materials from Argentina, returning as a refined commodity from Europe.<sup>124</sup> As Viale's article so aptly states, before travelling to Paris, tango was largely ignored by the elites of society. Once it achieved glory, it returned to Buenos Aires, and was welcomed back, as something *Porteño*, as something Argentine, and it was transformed by its experiences in the Old Word.

## Conclusion

Buenos Aires is the wife, and Paris the mistress of the tango, the old *Porteño* expression goes.<sup>125</sup>  
Since the first tango scores and musicians arrived in Paris in 1906, and especially because of the

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<sup>123</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 16 May 1914.

<sup>124</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.

<sup>125</sup> Zalko, *Paris-Buenos Aires*, 7.

intense three-year period in which Tangomania took Paris by storm, the two cities have been forever linked. Nonetheless, as we have seen, other factors contributing to the social acceptance of tango preceded its popularity in Paris. These include tango's presence in elite turn-of-the-century Carnival dances, the music publishing industry and the nascent recording industry. However, press coverage of the time clearly indicates that social acceptance in Buenos Aires was indeed heavily accelerated by what had happened in Paris. Perhaps had that period of glittering nightlife and luxury not taken place, tango would not have become such a powerful symbol of *Argentinidad* abroad. While the social rise of tango would continue in Buenos Aires in the years following Tangomania, the process had certainly begun by 1914. Tango, once the *rendez-vous du tout-Paris*, now faced a bright future, back home in Buenos Aires.

That Tangomania played a major role in elite acceptance and the emergence of tango as a national symbol of Argentina, then, is corroborated by my analysis of Argentine press materials. As such, tango is an excellent vector for discussing class and social relations in Argentina. Elite acceptance stemming from tango's popularity in Paris was a key factor in tango's becoming a national symbol, albeit not the only one as an emerging middle class, and its acceptance of the tango in this same time period similarly played a role. As such, I would like to caution against the image of Buenos Aires in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as one rigidly split among class lines, with the elite, on one side, and the poverty-stricken on the other. For scholars such as Ema Cibotti, such a conception fails to take into consideration the complexities of a society shaped by a mass immigration from all social strata.<sup>126</sup> Cibotti reminds us that Argentina was the only country in the world in which, for 50 years (1880-1930), the majority of the population was foreign in the most dynamic economic and cultural area of the country, namely Buenos Aires.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, there was a burgeoning middle class of both immigrants and Argentines alike, that was the primary consumer of the emerging leisure industry. Across class lines, Buenos Aires was highly literate, with a well-established and vast literary

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<sup>126</sup> Cibotti, "El tango argentino," 97.

<sup>127</sup> Cibotti, "El tango argentino," 94.

and journalism industry as well as an enormous presence of theatres, theatregoers, and theatrical genres. For Cibotti, this huge presence of theatre and literature is highly linked to the immigrant population; one of the primary mechanisms of assimilation or *argentinización*, by the largely literate immigrant population was through the adoption of Argentine popular culture, such as music and theatre.

It is impossible to neglect the huge power of tango, especially after its emergence as a national symbol, as an assimilation mechanism amongst the socially mobile immigrant middle classes.<sup>128</sup>

Assimilation was not only for dancers and spectators, but also for musicians, particularly those of Italian and Jewish immigrant origin, for many of whom tango provided an access point to Argentine society.<sup>129</sup> This period of societal integration coincided with the emergence of tango music in cafés – frequented by middle and upper classes – for listening purposes, instead of dancing. Until this point in tango history, little distinction was made between tango music and dance, the former largely existing in order to accompany the latter. Indeed, Robert Scott’s highly negative 1907 article, which I referred to in conjunction with tango’s status as *música criolla*, mentions the presence of tango in the cafés of central Buenos Aires, perhaps with a touch of exaggeration: “[today] there is no café with an orchestra whose programme is not formed by a disturbing predominance of tangos.”<sup>130</sup> According to José Gobello, these cafés, first in the predominantly immigrant neighbourhood of la Boca and then in the more exclusive area of Barrio Norte, marked the emergence of a new class of professional tango musicians.<sup>131</sup>

Whereas many early tango musicians were self-taught players who performed on portable instruments such as the violin, flute and the guitar and didn’t read music, often combining music-making with

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<sup>128</sup> Cibotti, “El tango argentino,” 94.

<sup>129</sup> Lloica Czakis, “Yiddish Tango: A Musical Genre?” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 42, no.2 (Autumn 2009): 113; Marilyn Miller, *Tango Lessons: Movement, Sound, Image and Text in Contemporary Practice* (Duke University Press, 2013), 11.

<sup>130</sup> *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 165.

<sup>131</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 32.

other occupations, the emerging class of professional musicians had musical training, could read music, and were often equipped to perform more technically demanding repertoire.<sup>132</sup> Their greater artistic prowess led to diversification of performance practices in tango music. A few examples of professional tango musicians included Brazilian-born bandoneonist Arturo “El Alemán” Bernstein, as well as a number of violinists, including Carlos Posada, who studied classical violin in Belgium, and the Italian-born Vicente Pepe.<sup>133</sup> One such example was the pianist Alfredo Bevilacqua, whose tango *Independencia* was performed at the festivities of the 1910 *centenario*, the one hundredth anniversary of the *Revolución de Mayo*.<sup>134</sup> In November 1914, Bevilacqua published the first pedagogical manual of tango music destined for not only an Argentine, but also a global, public.<sup>135</sup> Entitled *Escuela del tango: Tratado teórico práctico en Español, Francés é Italiano*, the manual presents a series of rhythmical exercises designed to help articulation, phrasing and the independence of the hands.<sup>136</sup> A number of things are significant about this manual. First, while Bevilacqua self-published the manual in Argentina, he lists prestigious European publishing companies as concessionaries: B. Schott’s Sohne (Mainz and London), E. Gaudet (Paris), and Carisch & Janichen (Milan). Second, Bevilacqua dedicates the manual to the elite *Porteño* Jockey Club: “progressive institution, the highest exponent of culture in Argentine society”.<sup>137</sup> Finally, the preface is translated slightly differently in French and Italian; whereas the Spanish text speaks of “our tango” and the “rhythm of Tango Argentino”, the French and Italian texts – which do not contain the word “our” – speak of the rhythmic figurations of the “true” Tango Argentino.<sup>138</sup> Bevilacqua, addressing a foreign audience with these texts, clearly states that tango belongs to Argentina.

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<sup>132</sup> Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 297-298; Ferrer, *El tango*, 65.

<sup>133</sup> Nicholas Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 15.

<sup>134</sup> María Susana Azzi, “Multicultural Tango: The Impact and the Contribution of Italian Immigration to the Tango in Argentina,” *International Journal of Musicology* 5 (1996): 441.

<sup>135</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 351.

<sup>136</sup> Alfredo Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango: Tratado teórico para piano en Español, Francés e Italiano* (Alfredo A. Bevilacqua, 1914).

<sup>137</sup> Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango*.

<sup>138</sup> Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango*. The capitalisation of Tango Argentino is original to the text.

The process of professionalization – connected to the middle-class acceptance and adoption of tango as well as immigration and national identity – was accelerated by the recording industry. Not only did the industry reinforce the notion that tango music was national, Argentine music, but the recording studios hired the best, most proficient musicians, leading to a higher musical level. The recordings made by these musicians, and the tradition of performance practice indicated by them, constitutes the main body of evidence that I am using to consolidate the stylistic development of tango violin playing (1910-1935). The five violinists studied in the remaining chapters of this thesis were all directly affected by, or products of, the professionalization of tango musicians. Casimiro Alcorta's career as a tango musician occurred during the time when the genre was still largely marginalised, and his opportunities for formal recognition were likely significantly curtailed. On the other hand, Ernesto Ponzio rejected many aspects of the social advancement of tango, not wanting to modify his stylistic practice and proudly claiming his place as a *compadrito* of the *Guardia Vieja*. However, his stance must be nuanced: he frequently performed in venues with a well-to-do or even elite public, and he felt it was important to dress in a tuxedo. José Bonano, although little is known about his background, received one of the first professional recording contracts as a tango violinist, as part of the Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho." The *violín corneta*, or trumpet violin, that he used to record with would have been an extraordinarily expensive instrument at the time of recording, beyond the reach of a musician without financial means.<sup>139</sup> However, of all figures discussed in this thesis, David Roccatagliata embodies the social transitions of the period the most. His image and career were tightly linked to tango's gradual integration into more elite society. Known for his dapper attire, often wearing a tuxedo, he embodied the professional aspirations of tango musicians who played in increasingly elite venues, such as Juan Carlos Cobián and Osvaldo Fresedo. Furthermore, his high technical level indicates formal musical training, and he gave tango violin playing a hitherto unheard polish and

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<sup>139</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, in his essay "A History of the Tango" (1950), points out that instruments performed by early tango musicians were quite expensive, such as the bandoneon and piano, and uses this point to argue against tango's supposed origins on the poor outskirts of society. Conversely, the introduction of the piano, the bandoneon, and the *violín corneta*, in the 1910s could be seen as part of the process of the middle-class professionalization of the tango. See Jorge Luis Borges, *Evaristo Carriego*, 132; for a discussion of the middle-classification of tango in the 1910s, see Blas Matamoro's *Ciudad de tango*, 94-103.

panache. Finally, Julio De Caro proudly claimed his noble origins and middle-class social background. The son of an illustrious pedagogue, he grew up with formal musical training, and the primary goal of his career would be to elevate tango music using the best musicians and musical resources. The following three chapters will explore these violinists' performance practice against a background of increasing social acceptance of tango music.





## **Chapter Two**

### **Early Tango Violinists: Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio, José Bonano**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will be looking at three *Guardia Vieja* violinists, whose careers largely preceded the many changes in performance practice that will be studied in subsequent case studies, in order to understand better how the violin was performed in the early years of tango music (1890-1910): Casimiro “el negro Casimiro” Alcorta (ca. 1840-ca. 1915), Ernesto “el pibe” Ponzio (1885-1934), and José “Pepino” Bonano (birthdate unknown -1953). The three violinists I have chosen all influenced performance practice on the violin in key ways. In addition, their careers provide a glimpse into the social milieu in which tango initially prospered. Although these were not the only violinists performing during this period, they are perhaps the most representative players of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Casimiro Alcorta, otherwise known as “el negro Casimiro”, was of Afro-Argentine origin, and is remembered for the percussive, scratching sounds he produced on the instrument.<sup>2</sup> Ernesto Ponzio or “el pibe Ernesto”, the second violinist I will study, is perhaps the first truly well-known tango violinist; his technique was considered emblematic of the *Guardia Vieja* because, as Rubén Pesce writes, he remained forever loyal to his unchanging performance style and “didn’t evolve, or did not want to evolve”.<sup>3</sup> Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of José “Pepino” Bonano, who was the first, and only, violinist in the *Guardia Vieja* to use a trumpet or Stroh violin (as I will discuss in Chapter 4 of this thesis, Julio De Caro would make the instrument one of his stylistic trademarks, in a period in which Stroh violins were no longer commonly used in the recording industry). The

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A of this thesis for extended bibliographical information. See Appendix C of this thesis for the discographies of Ponzio and Bonano. There are no known recordings of Casimiro Alcorta.

<sup>2</sup> René Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 101-102.

<sup>3</sup> Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 466. Also, see Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” in *Ernesto Ponzio* (Ediciones Las Orillas, 1985), 20.

performance styles of these three violinists are closely connected with the socio-cultural context of the time. Casimiro Alcorta, and his legacy, must be understood within a greater discussion of the Afro-Argentine community in early twentieth century Buenos Aires. A self-described *compadrito* who went to prison multiple times for various offences including homicide, Ernesto Ponzio is representative of the swashbuckling days of the *suburbios* of Buenos Aires, during a time in which tango was undergoing a process of social acceptance amongst the middle and upper classes.<sup>4</sup> Finally, José Bonano and his Stroh violin are deeply connected to technological developments in the nascent recording industry, as he was primarily known for his recordings made with one of the most famous *Guardia Vieja* formations, the Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho”.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, there are no known recordings of Casimiro Alcorta, and Ernesto Ponzio is known to have only recorded briefly in the first Argentinian film with sound, *Tango!* (1933), shortly before his death in 1934.<sup>6</sup>

In the introduction to this thesis, I mentioned that pedagogical manuals discuss the different techniques that constitute the musical language of tango ahistorically, without specifically addressing the individuals responsible for introducing and developing them as part of tango performance practice. In this series of case studies of specific tango violinists, I hope to challenge this ahistorical viewpoint by creating a greater understanding of the individuals who incorporated and disseminated these techniques.

### Source Material

The three violinists provide a striking contrast in the way they are discussed in both primary and secondary materials, and it is worth highlighting the types of sources that address these violinists. On the one hand, Alcorta is remembered only as part of legend. His life and violin playing is only

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<sup>4</sup> Horacio Salas, *El tango* (Editorial Planeta, 1986), 101.

<sup>5</sup> Enrique Binda, “Las orquestas típicas y el disco, 1910-1912.”

<sup>6</sup> Miguel Ángel Lafuente, “Ernesto Ponzio, una vida en tiempo de tango,” in *Ernesto Ponzio* (Ediciones Las Orillas, 1985), 46.

described from the point of view of the past, even from source material (such as the 1913 *Crítica* article written by “Viejo Tanguero”, see below) dating from the period in which he was still purportedly alive. His own voice is silent – there are no known interviews, and no first-hand reports of his life. As such, his is the playing of myth. Ernesto Ponzio, on the other hand, was known, and discussed, by many of his contemporaries, and was frequently discussed in various periodicals. One possible explanation for this was Ponzio’s much longer life; he died in 1934, a time in which a robust periodical industry, including magazines such as *Sintonía* and *La Canción Moderna*, covered the lives and careers of recording and radio stars. Ponzio indeed was featured in several interviews, especially towards the end of his career. As such, it could be said that Ponzio participated in and perpetuated the various myths surrounding his life and artistic trajectory. One thing that both Alcorta and Ponzio have in common is that their lifestyles, and the rough-and-tumble world of the *compadrito*, have traditionally been discussed more thoroughly, and certainly more colourfully, than their musical endeavours. The legends surrounding their backgrounds coincide with a time in which various archetypes and symbols were being created: the *centenario*, or one-hundredth anniversary of the *Revolución de Mayo*. While I discuss these symbols in more detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis, here it is pertinent to mention the concepts of the *orillas* and the *arrabal*, the outskirts of Buenos Aires, a heterogenous space between the countryside and the urban centre, a literary topic treated by writers such as Evaristo Carriego and Jorge Luis Borges.<sup>7</sup> These symbols also emerged in journalistic literature of the time, for example in the 1915 *Crítica* article entitled “The realm of the tango”, which discusses tango’s presence in the *arrabal*, in the *conventillo*, and in the cafés and cabarets of central Buenos Aires.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Brian Bockelman has traced the simultaneous emergence of both rural – gauchesco – and urban – tango – symbols in popular songs in early twentieth-century Argentina, during a time of vast social changes: industrialization, mass (im)migration, and the development of urban popular culture.<sup>9</sup> To return to Alcorta and Ponzio, the pair form a stark contrast with the third

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<sup>7</sup> Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* (Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2020), 59-66.

<sup>8</sup> *Crítica*, 18 July 1915.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Bockelman, “Between the Gaucho and the Tango: Popular Songs and the Shifting Landscape of Modern Argentine Identity, 1895-1915,” *American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (June 2011): 577-601.

violinist I will discuss, José Bonano. Bonano seems virtually absent from primary sources and is only briefly mentioned in secondary source material. He is only discussed as a member of various ensembles in which he played and seems to disappear from tango music after about 1920, thirty or so years before his death. Yet, of the three violinists, Bonano is alone in providing us with a significant body of recorded material. To summarize: Alcorta's violin playing survives only as myth, Ponzio's as a self-perpetuated legend (with a few recordings made at the end of his life), and Bonano's only in the form of recordings. Another particularity is that Alcorta and Ponzio are almost always discussed as individuals in tango historiography, and Bonano only as a member of an ensemble. Below, I will discuss the source materials analysed for each violinist.

#### *Sources – Casimiro Alcorta*

Little has been documented about Casimiro Alcorta, nor is there any known phonographic evidence of his violin playing. Key source material includes a 1913 article published in *Crítica* and written by a certain "Viejo Tanguero", which criticizes recent developments in tango, especially its recent acceptance in Europe (see Chapter 1 of this thesis for a more ample discussion); René Briand's *Crónicas del tango alegre*, a 1972 essay collection recalling the glory days of tango's past; scholarship focussed on Afro-Argentine musicians in tango music, including Robert Farris Thompson's survey of the African origins of tango dance and music and Norberto Cirio's scholarship on black tango musicians; and Enrique Binda and Hugo Lamas' *El tango en la sociedad porteña* (1880-1920), which critically engages with tango historiography of the origins of tango music in order to nuance and refute previous arguments.<sup>10</sup> There are no known interviews with Alcorta, and all sources, including the 1913 *Crítica* article, present Alcorta as a legend. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed that Alcorta ever existed at all. René Briand's collection of essays is based on the oral stories of Eugenio Reville and his father Gastón Briand, who apparently knew the violinist, but the

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<sup>10</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913; René Briand *Crónicas del tango alegre*; Norbert Cirio, "La historia negra del tango. Todo tiene su 'historia negra'"; Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango, The Art History of Love*; Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña*.

stories are presented second-hand, not first-hand. There are no known photos of Alcorta. Other violinists, such as Ponzio, do not refer to him, or indicate having known him or performed with him. As such, Alcorta can be considered one of the many myths of tango music; as Lamas and Binda indicate, while it is certainly possible that he may have lived and had a career as a tango violinist, it is unlikely that he had the influence attributed to him in sources such as *Crítica*.<sup>11</sup> The authors of *Tango, un siglo de historia* consider Alcorta to be controversial, because, as they assert, there is no evidence of his tango compositions, or recordings.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Sources – Ernesto Ponzio*

Despite a relative lack of recordings – Ponzio only recorded at the very end of his career, as mentioned above – a great deal was written about Ponzio both while he was alive and after his death. Key sources written during Ponzio’s lifetime include several interviews, including those published in *La Canción Moderna* on 9 July 1928, and *Sintonía* on 24 June 1933.<sup>13</sup> The 1928 *La Canción Moderna* interview highlights his attachment to the *Guardia Vieja*, and discusses his ideas of tango music, as well as his fond memories of the colourful environment in which he performed during his youth. The 1933 article, in contrast, focusses more on Ponzio’s past as a *compadrito*, focussing on the social elements of Ponzio’s earlier career. Other articles published during Ponzio’s lifetime include “Con la música a otra parte: Ponzio” (*La Canción Moderna*, 25 June 1928), which discusses Ponzio’s return (presumably after leaving prison, which I will discuss below) and “El alma del tango criollo a través de medio siglo de existencia” (*Caras y caretas*, 22 August 1931), where Ponzio’s composition *Don Juan* is mentioned.<sup>14</sup> His obituary, published in *Sintonía* in 1934, also provides vital information, particularly about Ponzio’s compositional output.<sup>15</sup> Following Ponzio’s death, discussions of his life and career include the 1936 Héctor and Luis Bates tome *Historia del tango*, in which the authors

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<sup>11</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña*, 187.

<sup>12</sup> Roberto Selles, “6 - La llegada del bandoneón,” *Tango, un siglo de historia 1880-1980* (Editorial Perfil, S.A., 1980), 87-88.

<sup>13</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928; *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.

<sup>14</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 25 June 1928; *Caras y Caretas*, 22 August 1931.

<sup>15</sup> *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.

focus primarily on Ponzio's social dealings (although, they do mention a few of the groups with whom Ponzio performed).<sup>16</sup> Although Ponzio himself spread many of these stories in interviews given during his lifetime, perhaps a large part of the myth surrounding Ponzio could be attributed to Héctor and Luis Bates, who insisted on Ponzio's role as a *compadrito*, often described in secondary literature as "young men of poor background....easily identifiable by their contemporaries from their standard attire: slouch hat, loosely-knotted silk handkerchief, knife discreetly tucked into belt, high-heeled boots."<sup>17</sup> According to Bates and Bates, "El 'pibe' Ernesto was a *compadrito*... He became the companion of toughs and criminals who were eagerly seeking his friendship. He made a cult of courage and love..."<sup>18</sup> Two violinists, including Francisco Canaro, who knew Ponzio personally, and Julio De Caro, include Ponzio in their memoirs.<sup>19</sup> While De Caro mentions Ponzio as a violinist and composer of the tangos *Don Juan* and *Quiero papita*, Canaro specifically mentions Ponzio's pizzicatos. Two sources consulted focus primarily on Ponzio's social proclivities: René Briand's collection of essays *Crónicas de tango alegre* (and in particular, the essay "Seguila que tiene premio", which discusses Ponzio's 1932 Luna Park performances) as well as Horacio Salas' *El tango*.<sup>20</sup> Sources focussing on Ponzio's musical output include "El violin en el tango," which discusses Ponzio's position as one of the first celebrated tango violinists, the *Antología del tango rioplatense*.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the most complete sources are the series of articles compiled by tango historians Luis Adolfo Sierra, Miguel Lafuente and Roberto Selles in the book *Ernesto Ponzio*, which endeavour to cover most aspects of Ponzio's life and career, as well as the feature article "Músicos fundamentales del tango: El Pibe Ernesto" in *Estudios de tango*, which provides a thorough overview, as well as a bibliography, of Ponzio's playing, compositions, and what others wrote about him.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 306-309.

<sup>17</sup> Simon Collier, "The Popular Roots of Tango," 94-95.

<sup>18</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309-311.

<sup>19</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango de mis recuerdos*, 152; Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 303-304.

<sup>20</sup> René Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 47-87; Horacio Salas, *El tango*.

<sup>21</sup> Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Castro, "El violín en el tango"; Jorge Novati et al., *Antología del tango rioplatense*.

<sup>22</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, Miguel Ángel Lafuente and Roberto Selles, *Ernesto Ponzio* (Ediciones Las Orillas, 1985); Fuyee Querido, "Músicos fundamentales del tango: El pibe Ernesto," 136-158.

Finally, José Bonano is only described, briefly, in a few secondary sources, and even then, only as a member of ensembles such as Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” and Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía. Advertisements, particularly of those of Juan Maglio “Pacho”, form the entirety of primary source materials available.<sup>23</sup> Secondary source material is primarily biographical in nature (for example, the biographies of Juan Maglio “Pacho” in *Antología del tango rioplatense*).<sup>24</sup> By far the most complete discussion of Bonano’s career, in conjunction with his use of the *violín corneta* or Stroh violin, can be found in Enrique Binda’s *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional (1902-1926)*; Binda provides vital information about the recording process at Casa Tagini, the use of the *violín corneta*, the recordings the ensembles made, and some of the advertisements featuring the group in various periodicals such as *Fray Mocho* and *Caras y Caretas*.<sup>25</sup>

### Musical Training – Early Tango Violinists

The violinists’ musical background, and the degree to which they received musical training, would have a strong influence on their performance practice. It has been often claimed in tango historiography that the first tango musicians were amateurs, who did not read music and were intuitive or self-taught.<sup>26</sup> While it is certainly true that some *Guardia Vieja* musicians were, by their own admission, autodidacts, such as Manuel Campoamor, and that many tango musicians of the time had other professions, such as those of painter (Eduardo Arolas), cobbler (Pascual Contursi), decorator (Roberto Firpo), and so forth, it can be questioned whether or not (all) tango musicians lacked in musical training.<sup>27</sup> In particular, Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, who list more than 40

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<sup>23</sup> Examples include: *Fray Mocho*, 30 August 1912; *Fray Mocho*, 21 March 1913.

<sup>24</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional*, 77-80.

<sup>26</sup> See Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 409, 438.

<sup>27</sup> Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 409. Pesce includes several quotes from Campoamor, where the pianist says that he learned the piano by ear, and Pesce writes that specialists from the musical publishing company Casa Breyer notated Campoamor’s compositions, which he dictated from the piano. As for the professions of *Guardia Vieja* musicians, see Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 65.

early composers of tango working in the *género chico*, or the popular theatre industry, question how all of them could have been without musical training; as they point out, in order to compose musical theatre, they must have had some sort of orchestral knowledge.<sup>28</sup> Of the three violinists studied in this chapter, only one is reputed to have been self-taught, Casimiro Alcorta.<sup>29</sup> Little is known about José Bonano's musical development, but Enrique Binda claims that Bonano was a violin teacher, which Binda uses as evidence that not all tango musicians from the time were lacking in training.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the most curious example of musical training, however, is that of Ernesto Ponzio. In a 1933 interview published *Sintonía* magazine, provocatively entitled "While 'the kid' [el pibe] played the violin, others stole wallets in the arcade", Ernesto Ponzio discusses his violin studies at the Conservatorio Williams, where he claims to have earned a gold medal in the final exam; shortly afterwards he performed the "intermezzo" from *Cavalleria Rusticana* in a party organized at the Operai Italiani.<sup>31</sup> In the interview, Ponzio claims that his violin studies were supported by a certain "señora Diana" who encouraged him to study at the Conservatorio, and that he would play the violin in order to attract crowds while his street chums stole the wallets of the unsuspecting public.

The Conservatorio Williams was part of a large network of private conservatories founded by Alberto Williams, considered to be one of the founding fathers of Argentinian musical nationalism alongside Julián Aguirre.<sup>32</sup> Williams created a system of more than 100 regional, private conservatories throughout Argentina, based on the Conservatorio de Música de Buenos Aires, which he had founded in 1893.<sup>33</sup> According to Manuel Massone and Oscar Olmello, the Conservatorio Williams system was focussed on the professional training of performers and composers, unlike the state conservatory

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<sup>28</sup> Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña*, 343.

<sup>29</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional*, 78.

<sup>31</sup> *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.

<sup>32</sup> Vicente Gesualdo, *La música en la Argentina* (Editorial Stella, 1988), 184.

<sup>33</sup> Vanina Giselle Paiva, "El campo de la música académica en Argentina y el problema de la identidad nacional, entre las décadas de 1890-1950. Los conservatorios privados," *VIII Jornadas de Sociología de la UNLP* (2014); Manuel Massone and Oscar Olmello, "La crisis de 1890. Divisoria de dos modelos antagónicos de educación musical en la Argentina," *Resonancias* 22, no. 42 (2018): 35. According to Massone and Olmello, there were more than 160 branches; according to Paiva, 144; and 107, according to an article in *Disonancias*, October-November 1928.



system (the Conservatorio Nacional, initially founded in 1888 and closed in 1890, and later re-opened in 1924), more oriented towards forming teachers of music.<sup>34</sup> Williams modelled his system of music schools after Paris Conservatoire, where he had studied.<sup>35</sup> In fact, from 1893 until 1924, when the Conservatorio Nacional opened, private conservatories such as those of Williams (and others, such as Conservatorio Beethoven) were the primary vectors of musical education in Argentina.<sup>36</sup> The level of musical education provided by the Conservatorio Williams was not universally praised, however. On the one hand, music critic Gastón Talamón praised Williams for forming composers and performers in a genuinely Argentinian school.<sup>37</sup> However, two articles in the magazine *Disonancias*, an Argentine periodical published between 1927 and 1932, were far more scathing in their estimation of Conservatorio Williams. The first, entitled “The theses of Conservatorio Williams,” tells the story of a student who copied her thesis on the history of the fugue, word for word, from Joaquín Turina’s *Enciclopedia abreviada de la música*, much to Williams’ supposed delight; mocking the school and Williams for their lack of knowledge and academic rigor, the magazine asks itself just how long the Conservatory thinks it can continue with such ridicule.<sup>38</sup> The second, published only a few months later, describes a former student of the Conservatorio Williams who went to Milan after years of studying in Argentina, only to be placed in a low level class by the professor.<sup>39</sup> Of course, these critiques must be put into context: *Disonancias* was a polemical, anti-institutional, pro-Italian magazine that attacked figures associated with Argentinian musical nationalism, including Williams, criticized for his questionable teaching – as we have seen – as well as his entrepreneurial approach to music schools and Gastón Talamón, whose writing was frequently attacked as simplistic.<sup>40</sup> Despite any attacks that the Conservatorio Williams may have received, several well-known tango musicians from the *Guardia Vieja* studied there, besides Ernesto Ponzio. Juan de Dios Filiberto, born in 1885,

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<sup>34</sup> Massonne and Olmello, 33-34. It would seem that the Conservatorio also had classes for younger students, but all source material found, both primary and secondary, refer to professional training.

<sup>35</sup> Massonne and Olmello, 49.

<sup>36</sup> Paiva, “El campo de la música académica.”

<sup>37</sup> *La Revista de Música*, 1929, 214.

<sup>38</sup> *Disonancias*, October-November 1928.

<sup>39</sup> *Disonancias*, January-February 1929.

<sup>40</sup> Juan Bühler, “Una sinfonía de desagradables sensaciones auditivas. La revista *Disonancias* y su defensa de la música italiana en Buenos Aires (1927-1932),” in *Dar la nota: El rol de la prensa en la historia musical argentina*, ed. Silvina Luz Mansilla (Gourmet Musical Ediciones, 2012), 165-196.

declared in a 1928 *Caras y Caretas* interview that he had obtained a scholarship to study there, where he studied counterpoint, piano and guitar.<sup>41</sup> Finally, *Guardia Nueva* pianist and composer Juan Carlos Cobián, studied piano at the Conservatorio Williams branch located in Bahía Blanca.<sup>42</sup>

### Casimiro “el negro” Alcorta (ca. 1840-ca. 1915)

Alcorta’s dates of birth and death are uncertain. According to Norberto Cirio, he was born around 1840, and died around 1915, in Buenos Aires, although, according to René Briand, he died sometime around 1908.<sup>43</sup> His last name, Alcorta, was taken from that of his mother’s employer, who may have been his father.<sup>44</sup> He is remembered for three principal reasons: his identity as a black musician (he is almost always referred to in connection with his race) working in *academias de baile*; his role as one of the first tango violinists; and his legacy as a composer, although most works that he may have composed were attributed to other authors.<sup>45</sup> There is a great difference in the way Alcorta is described in tango historiography. Perhaps no one praises Alcorta’s career as much as the American art historian Robert Thompson in his survey of the African origins of tango, *Tango: The Art History of Love*.<sup>46</sup> Thompson writes of Alcorta: “some call this black man the inventor of tango because he was clearly composing long before de Caro (sic)”<sup>47</sup> Likewise, for José Gobello, Alcorta was not only the most popular violinist performing in the *academias*, he was also the first violinist to transform other previously extant dances such as mazurkas and habaneras into tangos.<sup>48</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra both places Alcorta as the first tango violinist and the author of the first known *tango criollo*, *La Yapa*.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 17 November 1928.

<sup>42</sup> Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián* (Editorial Rueda, 1976): 18-20.

<sup>43</sup> Norberto Cirio, “La historia negra del tango. Todo tiene su ‘historia negra’,” 9; René Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 105.

<sup>44</sup> Simon Collier, “The Popular Roots of the Argentine Tango,” 97.

<sup>45</sup> Norberto Cirio, “La historia negra del tango,” 4. For information about Alcorta’s compositional output, see Briand, 102-112.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*. Thompson’s sources are *Crítica*, 22 September 1913, and René Briand; as such it is possible to trace his descriptions of Alcorta.

<sup>47</sup> Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 177.

<sup>48</sup> José Gobello, *Breve historia*, 22.

<sup>49</sup> Roberto Selles, “Ernesto Ponzio, una obra con esencia tanguera,” in *Ernesto Ponzio* (Editorial Las Orillas, 1985), 69-70.

Others, however, refer to Alcorta as “controversial,” questioning his compositional output,<sup>50</sup> or refute the idea that Alcorta could have had the influence on tango music attributed to him, citing his poor musical level.<sup>51</sup>

### *Alcorta’s Life*

Alcorta’s life is described briefly in two principal sources: the highly influential article “El tango, su evolución y su historia” written under the pseudonym “Viejo Tanguero” and published in the newspaper *Crítica* on 22 September 1913,<sup>52</sup> and a chapter dedicated to Alcorta in René Briand’s *Crónicas del tango alegre*, where the author narrates oral histories based on the memories of his father Gastón Briand – himself a violinist – and a friend of his father’s, don Eugenio Reville, who were active in the early days of tango music.<sup>53</sup> “Viejo Tanguero,” although more focussed upon documenting a way of life and a type of tango that according to the author no longer existed by 1913, dedicates a lengthy paragraph to Alcorta, focussing primarily on his violinistic activities in the *academia* located on Independencia and Rosas streets, and his compositions. From this article, the reader learns nothing about Alcorta’s life, only that he was popular, with an “easy-going” (*bonachón*) and friendly character, and that he enjoyed drinking (heavily, the article suggests), with his peers.<sup>54</sup> The chapter in *Crónicas del tango alegre*, entitled “Concierto de tango y más allá,” is perhaps an even more curious document.<sup>55</sup> At the beginning of the chapter, the narrator tells the story of Alcorta’s ghost, who comes to him one night, and whom he interviews; the narrator then asks Paul Entha, who studies urban folklore, to give him more “factual” information about Alcorta. Like “Viejo Tanguero,” the chapter mentions Alcorta’s light-hearted character, adding that he was white-haired and popular

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<sup>50</sup> Roberto Selles, “6 – La llegada del bandoneón,” 81-87.

<sup>51</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 187.

<sup>52</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>53</sup> René Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*. Also, for a discussion of Briand, see Roberto Selles, “6- la llegada del bandoneón,” 87.

<sup>54</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>55</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 89-112.

with his peers.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Briand gives the reader many colourful anecdotes about Alcorta's relationships with the women in his life, at least in the memory of the narrator, with his wife Carmela, his daughter Felicitas, and the various women of the *academias* – the *francesas* Georgette and Margot, the Italian Paulina, with whom he had a relationship after his wife's death, and so forth.<sup>57</sup> Above all, the reader learns more about Alcorta's work in the *academias*, including those located at Pozos and Independencia, as well as at the Prado Español and the Scudo d'Italia, located at Corrientes and Uruguay.<sup>58</sup>

### *Academias*

In reading both texts, the reader gets an idea of the sociological atmosphere of the *academias* of the time, and descriptions of Alcorta's violin playing and compositional output must be understood within the larger context of these dance venues. Public dance halls principally located in the lower-class outskirts of Buenos Aires, *academias de baile* first appeared in the 1820s, but reached their heyday between the 1860's and 1870's.<sup>59</sup> Whether they were innocent dance venues for learning, or places of ill-repute, depends on the source consulted. As León Benarós delicately writes, they were places for dancing, "antechambers" of prostitution, although not necessarily brothels.<sup>60</sup> If Vicente Rossi in his polemical 1926 book *Cosas de negros* is to be believed, the *academias* of Buenos Aires developed an unsavoury reputation, unlike their Montevidean counterparts, which were schools.<sup>61</sup> Lamas and Binda have demonstrated, however, that the terminology evolved over time; although initially, they were dance schools, synonymous with the term *escuela de baile*, by the 1850's the two concepts separated, and *academia* began to have other connotations.<sup>62</sup> To return to René Briand's account of Alcorta, there are clear undertones of prostitution in the text. For example, Briand – as always, expressing

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<sup>56</sup> In fact, since "Viejo tanguero"'s article (*Crítica*, 22 September 1913) is mentioned in Briand's text, it can be supposed that the information about Alcorta's character may have come, at least in part, from the 1913 article. See Briand, *Crónicas*, 102.

<sup>57</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 94-97.

<sup>58</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 102-3.

<sup>59</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 22-24.

<sup>60</sup> León Benarós, "El tango en las 'academias'," 233.

<sup>61</sup> Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 140.

<sup>62</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 22-24.

himself through an interview between the narrator and Paul Entha – writes of the rapport Alcorta had with the women of the *academia*: “much like other musicians of popular music, he was protected by the women he seduced. They say that they fought to *work* with him.”<sup>63</sup> Likewise, Alcorta’s character in Briand’s text refers to several women who worked in the *academias*, with whom he had relationships.

Above all, however, the *academias* were associated with the *Afrocriollo* population. Blas Matamoro goes so far as to describe *academias de baile* as perhaps the greatest black contribution to tango.<sup>64</sup> Although it is beyond the remit of this chapter to dissect the development of tango music from the Afro-Argentine candombe and the milonga, *academias* were places of racial, musical and chorographical interaction. For example, according to George Reid Andrews, *academias* were located mostly on the outskirts of the city and were venues where both black and white dancers belonging to the city’s underclass would mix.<sup>65</sup> For him, the *academia* was more than simply common ground between black and white dancers; instead, it was the very place that linked the candombe to the tango, via the milonga, tango’s slightly older cousin. Citing a 1902 *Caras y Caretas* article on the *Afrocriollo* community and the candombe, Andrews points out that the milonga was initially danced by white dancers imitating the candombe in such venues.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, Vicente Rossi writes that the tango was “incubated” in the *Afrocriollo academias*, emerging from the “creator element” the milonga, “between women with the worst appearance, fearsome professional *compadraje*, and an atmosphere thick with smoke, dust and alcoholic stench”.<sup>67</sup>

“Viejo Tanguero”, too, describes the *academias*, and the tango that emerged from within them, as part of the *Afrocriollo* community. The author describes the “bronze people” who attended the *academia* located at Pozos and Independencia, as well as the prestige of the dancers who participated

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<sup>63</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 103.

<sup>64</sup> Blas Matamoro, “Orígenes musicales,” in *La historia del tango: sus orígenes*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1976), 70. Matamoro downplays connections between candombe and tango, saying that nothing from candombe can be seen in tango, besides a small choreographic contribution. See Matamoro “Orígenes,” 65.

<sup>65</sup> George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 166.

<sup>66</sup> Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines*, 166. The article Andrews refers to is found in *Caras y Caretas*, 15 February 1902.

<sup>67</sup> Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 130.

in events there. Above all, the author insists on the mixed social atmosphere: not only poor, black, people attended the *ennegrecidos salones* – blackened salons – but also members of the middle and upper classes (the author refers to deputies, military, and members of the national administration) who would flock to these events in search of tango dancing.<sup>68</sup> The author describes tango dancing as a form of “currency” between the men who attended these events and the ladies; the better the dancer, the more he was able to attract the women. Likewise, the author mentions the frequent knife fights that broke out in such socially mixed environments, referring to the “true cult of bravery” of the fighters: “Indifferent to any criticism, the [upper-class men] did not hesitate to rub shoulders and even engage in an iron-to-iron fight with any quarrelsome *compadrito*.”<sup>69</sup> The author cites police reports mentioning the frequent brawls occurring in these venues; these picaresque stories help depict the environment in which tango was first created.

#### *Alcorta’s Violin Playing*

It is thus within the context of the *academia* that Alcorta’s violin playing and compositions are mentioned. It is curious that both “Viejo Tanguero” and Briand emphasize Alcorta’s sound quality. For example, “Viejo Tanguero” claims that Alcorta, referred to as *el negro compositor*, was one of the best performers of the *academia*, known for the “tickling” sound that his old, patched violin made.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, as Briand – highlighting Alcorta as the most popular musician of the *academias* and describing him as an undisputed star – writes, “he became famous for the “scratching” that his instrument produced, which was said to be a technical device to disguise the poor fidelity of his battered violin”.<sup>71</sup> It is tempting to interpret these statements as evidence that Alcorta introduced percussive sounds into the genre, as it were, a sort of primitive *chicharra*, a scratching noise generally first attributed to Julio De Caro.<sup>72</sup> Ramiro Gallo describes *chicharra* – grasshopper or cicada in

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<sup>68</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>69</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913. See Borges’ *Evaristo Carriego* for a discussion of the cult of bravery in early twentieth century Buenos Aires. Jorge Luis Borges, *Evaristo Carriego*.

<sup>70</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>71</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 101-102.

<sup>72</sup> For a discussion of Julio De Caro’s *chicharra*, see Pablo Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave,” 59.

English – as the “star of all the percussion effects on the violin”.<sup>73</sup> The effect is made by using significant bow pressure on the third string of the violin, behind the bridge and on the winding of the string just before the beginning of the tailpiece, producing a rasping noise, much like a grasshopper or cicada. The rhythms are generally improvised. In current-day practice, *chicharra* is generally notated



Widely used in all types of tango music, the effect is perhaps the single most distinctive element of tango performance practice on the violin. It is thus tempting to connect Alcorta’s “scratching” sounds with percussive devices such as *chicharra*, even though there is no phonographic evidence to confirm what these noises may have sounded like.

The idea is not without foundation. Néstor Ortíz Ortega connects percussive sounds used in tango music to an African origin, attributing their initial implementation in tango to the *Afrocriollo* double bass player Leopoldo Thompson, who performed and recorded with Roberto Firpo, Francisco Canaro and Julio De Caro before his death in 1925.<sup>74</sup> These percussive noises, which include *golpes*, hitting the bouts of the instrument with the palm of the hand, and *strappati*, hitting the strings with the bow, are referred to in tango parlance as *efecto canyengue*.<sup>75</sup> It is thus possible that Alcorta’s “technical device”, as Briand describes it, was a type of *efecto canyengue*. In Argentina, the term *canyengue* has multiple meanings, referring to a specific type of early tango dancing or to musical effects. Both are strongly connected to the Afro-Argentine community, according to Robert Farris Thompson.<sup>76</sup> Originally of Congolese origin (*kanienge*), where the word means “melting into the music”, *canyengue* refers in Argentina to the tango of the *Guardia Vieja*, “the pure essence” of early tango,

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<sup>73</sup> Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 119.

<sup>74</sup> Néstor Ortíz Oderigo, *Latitudes africanas del tango*, 139.

<sup>75</sup> Pablo Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave,” 58; Ortíz Oderigo, *Latitudes africanas*, 206; Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 181; Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 72.

<sup>76</sup> Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 151; 181.

how it was danced before the dance achieved widespread social acceptance in the 1910s.<sup>77</sup> Musically, *canyengue* is more than just the percussive noises made by double bass players such as Leopoldo Thompson, but a world of accentuations, syncopations, rhythmic displacement and polyrhythms, providing the music with groove, according to Néstor Ortiz Oderigo.<sup>78</sup> For him, *canyengue* can be likened to “swing” in African-American Music, or *bossa* in Afro-Brazilian music.

Without phonographic evidence, however, it is not possible to hear what Alcorta’s “scratching” sounded like. While *Tango, un siglo de historia* mentions that Alcorta played in the group of Nicolás Braun at some point, nothing else is known about Alcorta’s ensembles.<sup>79</sup> Briand claims that Alcorta made one recording, that of his own composition *La Yapa* on wax cylinder, although unfortunately there is no known trace of this recording.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, it is impossible to know if Alcorta simply scratched because of his rudimentary violin technique and poor quality instrument, or whether he consciously introduced percussion to mask the problems of his violin, or whether percussive noises were part of his musical lexicon as part of *canyengue*, or finally, whether others later emulated and imitated the sounds he made, leading to the later consolidation of percussive sounds as part of the violinistic language of tango music. As such, Lamas and Binda question how *el negro* Casimiro could have been considered an illustrious performer, with such descriptions as “tickling” and “scratching” sounds. As they point out, “that a character with such a name and few meritorious violin skills existed is of course possible. But from there to being transcendent, to have been fundamental for the genre, is completely something else.”<sup>81</sup> Despite their reservations, it does seem reasonable to make a connection between the “scratching” sounds of Alcorta, the *canyengue* noises of Leopoldo Thompson (of which there is phonographic evidence), and the wide lexicon of percussive sounds that would

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<sup>77</sup> Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* 158; 151; quoted in Thompson, 152. The quote is from tango dancer Marta Antón. For a discussion of the social acceptance of tango, see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

<sup>78</sup> Néstor Ortiz Oderigo, *Latitudes*, 135. Also quoted in Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave,” 58.

<sup>79</sup> Roberto Selles, “6 – La llegada del bandoneón,” 88. Little is known about Nicolás Braun: according to the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, he was the author of several tangos, including *Don Ernesto*, *El Alemán*, *¿Qué hacés a la noche?*, and *Tito*. See *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 115.

<sup>80</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 104.

<sup>81</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 187.



develop on the violin over the years: *chicharra*, *guitarrita*, *tambor*, *golpe de caja*, *cepillo*, *látigo*, and so forth. These percussive devices are one of the major hallmarks of tango violin playing and are unique to the genre. As Ramiro Gallo writes, “the violin ranks among those instruments in the tango orchestra that have developed most techniques for use as a percussive instrument”.<sup>82</sup>

### *Alcorta's Compositional Output*

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the relationship between composer, performer and music is complex in tango music. As tango compositions are highly adaptable, and the arrangement having been the dominant form of performance for much of tango's history, the position of the composer is often far less visible than that of the performer. Furthermore, given the plasticity of the tango composition, it can be questioned: what constitutes a composition? Is it the melody of the piece? The basic rhythms? That being said, many early tango musicians felt proud of what they considered to be their own compositions, however developed or simple they may have been. Within this framework, *el negro* Casimiro was the most prolific composer of early tangos, which were popularized and even performed on the *organillos* [*organitos*] of the time, according to ‘Viejo Tanguero.’<sup>83</sup> *Organitos*, or street organs, were key vectors of popular music in the streets of Buenos Aires, contributing to the spread of tango, but also other genres such as waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and opera, alongside other popular melodies.<sup>84</sup> The *organito*, whose heyday was from 1900-1910, contributed to the rise of the sheet music. Not only was musical knowledge necessary in order to prepare the musical material on the metal cylinders with which the *organito* functioned – the cylinders were generally prepared from scores – but also, people listening to the *organitos* would ask what pieces of music were being played, and would then buy the corresponding sheet music.<sup>85</sup> Lamas and Binda question the performance of Alcorta's tangos on *organitos*, arguing that in order to be

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<sup>82</sup> Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 119.

<sup>83</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>84</sup> Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 315.

<sup>85</sup> Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 315.

programmed onto an *organito*, there would first have to be a published score, and there is no evidence that such a score ever existed, dictated or otherwise.<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps the most well-known composition of Alcorta's is *La Yapa*, mentioned previously, which was used to announce the final dance of the night.<sup>87</sup> Other compositions potentially composed by Alcorta were in fact attributed to other authors, which Briand explains by saying that some of his compositions remained anonymous, whereas others were "stolen" by both famous and unknown authors alike.<sup>88</sup>

One such tango was *Entrada prohibida*, later signed by flutist Luis Teisseire. While Roberto Selles questions whether Alcorta composed the piece and not Teisseire, he writes that at the time, it was very common to score melodies that had been passed around as part of an oral tradition, and Teisseire may have been unaware that the piece had an author in the first place.<sup>89</sup> Roberto Thompson also mentions that the tango *Cara sucia*, generally attributed to Francisco Canaro, was originally the work of Alcorta.<sup>90</sup>

Alcorta claimed, if René Briand is to be believed, that it did not occur to anyone at the time to ascribe an author to a work; he also says that he did not "compose" tangos, rather he "invented" them.<sup>91</sup> After all, he did not read music – described as intuitive and unable to read music, according to Briand; any tango published under his name or otherwise would need to be dictated.<sup>92</sup> Roberto Selles, writing in 1980, cast doubt on Alcorta's compositional output, arguing that while some of Alcorta's compositions might have been later attributed to and signed by other authors, there were nonetheless several published compositions from the time, such as those of (*Afrocriollo* pianist) Rosendo Mendizábal, Francisco Hargreaves or Ángel Metallo.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 187.

<sup>87</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 104.

<sup>88</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 102.

<sup>89</sup> Selles, *Primera época*, 167.

<sup>90</sup> Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 177.

<sup>91</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 96.

<sup>92</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 101-102.

<sup>93</sup> Roberto Selles, "6 – La llegada del bandoneón," 81.

In the absence of more definitive documentation, and recording evidence, it is difficult to ascertain what is known about Alcorta and his violin playing. As mentioned earlier, his Afro-Argentine background, his presence in the *academias* of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Buenos Aires, his compositional output in the form of pieces such as *La Yapa*, are all uncertain. From a violinistic point of view, the “squeaking” and “scratching” described in sources such as *Crítica* could be potentially linked to Leopoldo Thompson’s percussive noises, described as *canyengue*, and provide a tantalizing possible connection to the family of percussive devices on the violin in tango music. Could Alcorta have developed or inspired the *chicharra*, or any one of the other percussive devices on the instrument? This begs another question: why did so many percussive devices develop on the violin, as opposed to other instruments of tango ensembles? Unfortunately, in the absence of more conclusive evidence, it is only possible to speculate about Alcorta’s influence on tango violin playing. That being said, if Alcorta did indeed play such percussive sounds on his instrument, he could be the vital link between *Afrocriollo canyengue*-style playing – audible in recordings of double bass player Leopoldo Thompson – and Julio De Caro, the first musician credited with recording such percussive noises on the violin.

### Ernesto Ponzio

Born in Buenos Aires in 1885, some forty years after Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio is considered, at least in terms of tango historiography, to be the most representative – a “synthesis”, according to Pepe and Casco – of the first generation of tango violinists.<sup>94</sup> His parents were both immigrants: his father, Antonio Ponzio, was a harp player from Naples (Italy), and his mother, Casilda Casafú de

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<sup>94</sup> Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 7. There is a discrepancy about his place of birth: according to Héctor and Luis Bates, Ponzio was born in San Telmo (Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 307); according to Juan Silbido, in the Tierra del Fuego neighbourhood, and according to García Jiménez in the north of Buenos Aires. See Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 136; Juan Silbido, *Evocación del tango* (Fondo nacional de las artes, 1964), 103; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 17.

Ponzio, was Uruguayan.<sup>95</sup> His uncle, Vicente “El Bigotudo” Ponzio, was a violinist who played in both zarzuelas and operas. Although some sources have claimed that Antonio and Vicente performed in illustrious venues, including the Teatro Colón, and the “Gran Sótano Argentino”, respectively, both Antonio and Vicente played in the prostitution houses of San Fernando, especially the brothel “El Eucaliptus”, according to *Estudios de Tango*.<sup>96</sup> As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Ponzio would receive some musical education at the Conservatorio Williams, but the rudiments of the instrument were taught to him by his uncle, “with more enthusiasm than pedagogic knowledge.”<sup>97</sup> There are three main elements of Ponzio’s life which I would like to discuss: 1) his role as a *compadrito*, playing in the *casas de baile* and *peringundines* of lower-class Buenos Aires; 2) his musical career and performance practice, including an analysis of Ponzio’s only known recordings, taken from the film *Tango!* (1933), and 3) his compositional output.

### *Ponzio’s Life*

Ponzio’s colourful character, and connection to the sordid underbelly of early twentieth-century *Porteño* nightlife, are as well-known as his musical activities. Unusual for *Guardia Vieja* musicians, his lifestyle was widely covered by the press, attracting writers such as Ulyses Petit de Murat, Nicolás Olivari and Ernesto Tuñón.<sup>98</sup> Imprisoned from 1908-1910, and sentenced in 1924 to fifteen years of jail for manslaughter (having killed a man at a performance in Rosario, he was released in 1928 for good behaviour),<sup>99</sup> Ponzio was described as a *compadrito* by Héctor and Luis Bates,<sup>100</sup> a *batallador* or fighter in *La Canción Moderna*,<sup>101</sup> and a man who represented the “cult of bravery and friendship” typical of early twentieth-century suburban Buenos Aires.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Luis Adolfo Sierra described

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<sup>95</sup> Juan Silbido, *Evocación del tango*, 103; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio,” 17.

<sup>96</sup> See *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 132; Horacio Salas, *El tango*, 100; Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 137.

<sup>97</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 137.

<sup>98</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 29.

<sup>99</sup> Salas, *El tango*, 101.

<sup>100</sup> Bates, *La historia del tango*, 308.

<sup>101</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>102</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 141. See Borges’ *Evaristo Carriego* for a more ample discussion of the masculine cult of bravery and violence of the time.

him as a “professional only of music, but an unrepentant frequenter of the sordid world of the lowlife.”<sup>103</sup> Likewise, in an interview published in *La Canción Moderna* shortly after his release from prison in July 1928, Ponzio is described as an *hombre de ley*, a man of law. He claims he was rejected from polite society balls just for being a *tanguista* in the early days of tango, and that “society with its prejudices and families with their cowardice looked at me like the devil”.<sup>104</sup> It is certainly possible to detect a note of pride in Ponzio’s words, just like the pride he took in his appearance, always dressed in a tuxedo, “excessively ironed,” in the words of René Briand.<sup>105</sup> His 1934 obituary insists that he and other early tango composers – remember that many of Ponzio’s artistic activities pre-dated the social acceptance of tango detailed in the previous chapter – were greatly hindered by the marginalized environment in which tango developed.<sup>106</sup> His character, and social milieu, were directly connected to the musical environment of his career.

One of the more famous anecdotes of Ponzio’s musical life – according to René Briand – occurred one night in the Restaurante 3 de Febrero, a *café de verano* in the Bosque de Palermo better known as *lo de Hansen* after its first owner Juan Hansen, where Ponzio performed alongside Luis Teisseire (flute) and the violinist Genaro Vázquez; some upper-class youths entered, demanding that the orchestra play a *vals*, and Ponzio got out his revolver, indicating that he was not to be threatened, and told his fellow musicians to keep on playing.<sup>107</sup> Whether or not this story is true, however, is debatable. For example, Lamas and Binda describe a very similar event that occurred on 22 December 1901 in El Tambito: a criminal was mortally wounded after having requested a tango that the musical ensemble – comprised of Eusebio Aspiazu (guitar), Vicente Pecchi (flute) and Roque Rinaldi (violin) – did not have in its repertory.<sup>108</sup> Ponzio was thus not performing when that occurred. That a similar

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<sup>103</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 9.

<sup>104</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>105</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 80.

<sup>106</sup> *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.

<sup>107</sup> Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 76-77; Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 138. According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, Ponzio played in a trio with Teissiere and the guitarist “Vizcacha” Herrera. See Appendix A of this thesis for more information.

<sup>108</sup> Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 294. Despite the authors’ methodology, whereby they use primary source material to question various aspects of tango historiography, they do not specify where this information comes from.

event could have occurred at *lo de Hansen*, however, is not impossible. *Lo de Hansen* attracted a socially heterogeneous public as a place where one could “eat, drink and dance”, according to Francisco García Jiménez; while during the day, it functioned as a space for families, in the evening, the café was a venue where upper classes rubbed shoulders with criminals and miscreants.<sup>109</sup> Due to the mixed social nature of the venue, frequent fights broke out.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, depending on the source, it is debated whether dancing, and, perhaps by extension, prostitution, occurred at *lo de Hansen*. Carlos Vega describes the dancing that occurred in the *glorietas*, or pergolas, outside of the café, which were armed with a bell to warn the dancing couples if the police were on their way (Vega, 119), and the *Antología de tango rioplatense* refers to the space as the “prequel” (*prolegómeno*) of mixed-class dances (*Antología*, 30). José Sebastián Tallón describes the venue as a “mixture of sumptuous brothel and restaurant... a boisterous precursor... of the cabaret...” attracting a varied public of gentlemen and criminals alike.<sup>111</sup> He specifies that the musical groups performing there, such as that of Ponzio, were the same as those requested by middle-class dance salons. Perhaps testimonies of musicians who performed in the venue can shed light on the matter. In a 1952 interview, Roberto Firpo described *lo de Hansen* as a place where wealthy customers, alongside “*compadritos* with daggers,” came to eat, drink and listen to the different musical ensembles performing; they did not dance.<sup>112</sup> It is not impossible, according to Firpo, that couples may have danced occasionally, but it wasn’t habitual. Ponzio himself, for example, insisted upon two things: there was no dancing in *lo de Hansen*, and the café was known for its upper-class presence. In an interview published in 1933 in *Sintonía*, he described the famous café of yore: “all the wealthy people of Buenos Aires passed through *lo de Hansen*, where, by the way, no one danced... Even Adelina Patti, one night, dressed in a superb *toilette* let herself be seen there.”<sup>113</sup> As we have seen, *Lo de*

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<sup>109</sup> Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango: Historia de medio siglo 1880-1930*, 20-22. See Tallón, *El tango en sus etapas musicales prohibidas*, chapter 3: “Intimidación de ‘El Cívico y ‘La Moreira’.”

<sup>110</sup> Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango*, 20-22. Lamas and Binda dispute these fights, citing a lack of police reports. The authors ironize that if all these tales were to be believed, there was at least a death per day at *lo de Hansen*, of which there would have been verifiable evidence. See Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 293-294.

<sup>111</sup> Tallón, *El tango en sus etapas musicales prohibidas*, chapter 3.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in León Benarós, “El tango y los lugares y las casas de baile,” 248. According to Firpo, it isn’t inconceivable that people occasionally danced in the *glorietas*, but it wasn’t a habitual activity.

<sup>113</sup> *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933. Adelina Patti was one of the great soprano singers of the day, globally famous.

*Hansen*, which closed in 1912, was an institution in which social boundaries between classes blurred, and a place where tango music could be appreciated – perhaps at a safe distance – by the more socially prurient classes, in a period that predated Tangomania and the more widespread social acceptance of tango after 1914. Tango thus had a certain attraction for the upper classes much earlier, albeit as something that might have provoked certain *escalofríos de emoción* or a *frisson* of excitement. It is perhaps revealing that Ponzio – who was undoubtedly conscious about his position in society – did not mention the anecdote about threatening a member of the public with a revolver, despite discussing other colourful anecdotes from his past: after all, the title of the interview was “While “el pibe” (the kid) played the violin, others were stealing wallets in the alcove” – a story he himself told.<sup>114</sup>

### *Performance Practice*

Before discussing Ponzio’s violin technique, it is useful first to discuss the tango ensembles in which Ponzio played. Following his father’s death, his uncle Vicente took him under his wing, bringing him into the *peringundines* and brothels of San Fernando, where he got the nickname *el pibe* or the kid.<sup>115</sup> By the age of 14, Ponzio was supported by the violinist Genaro Vázquez, who taught him and got him a position in a *peringundin* located near the Hotel de Inmigrantes in La Bateria (Retiro, today).<sup>116</sup> The pair moved soon on to the illustrious *café de verano* lo de Hansen, mentioned earlier, where they performed alongside Luis Teisseire (flute).<sup>117</sup>

Shortly before 1900 he was performing in the *casa de baile* lo de Mamita, in a trio together with Vicente Pecci (flute) and Eusebio Aspiazu (guitar), where he is thought to have premiered his most famous tango, *Don Juan*; the group is known to have performed in lo de Hansen as well as in the *casa*

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<sup>114</sup> *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.

<sup>115</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 137.

<sup>116</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 137.

<sup>117</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 138. According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, Ponzio played in a trio with Teisseire and the guitarist “Vizcacha” Herrera. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 19.

*de baile* Kiosko Casares, better known as El Tambito.<sup>118</sup> A key formation in Ponzio's career was first formed in 1902 (and re-created thirty years later), together with his uncle, Tortorelli on the harp, and the clarinettist Juan Carlos Bazán, with whom he would form a life-long personal and musical bond, performing together until Ponzio died in 1934.<sup>119</sup> Ponzio enjoyed an itinerant musical lifestyle, and changed ensembles, as well as cafés, frequently. Examples include the café "la turca", where he played alongside José Domingo Fuster (flute) and "el pardo" Canaveri (guitar), or in the brothel "El farol Colorado", together with Bazán (clarinet), "el negro" Lorenzo (guitar) and "el Yepi" Bianchi (bandoneon).<sup>120</sup> Such a mixture of cafés, and such musicians, were typical of the time and milieu in which Ponzio's career flourished. While his early career is well-documented, and he is known to have worked in cafés such as El Almacén Suizo together with Aspiazú in 1908 and in "Iglesias" in 1909, he went to prison off and on until 1928, interrupting his musical life during this time.<sup>121</sup> The next ensemble of note, based on Ponzio and Bazán's earlier collaboration, was the Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán, formed in 1932. All of the musicians were well-known *Guardia Vieja* performers, including Bazán (clarinet), Ponzio (violin), Alcides Palavecino and Enrique Muñecas (violins), Vicente Pecci (flute), Enrique Saborido and José Luis Padula (piano), Eusebio Aspiazú and Domingo Pizarro (11-stringed guitar) and Eduardo Arbol (double bass).<sup>122</sup> Shortly after the group's creation, Julio De Caro offered them work in the Lavalle movie theatre, alternating with his orchestra, and the orchestra inaugurated the new facilities of Luna Park during Carnaval, 1932.<sup>123</sup> In May 1932, the orchestra performed alongside most of the main tango orchestras of the time (including the orchestras of Roberto Firpo, Julio De Caro, Francisco Lomuto, and others) in a benefit concert for the *Guardia Vieja* composer Samuel Castriota, who was deathly ill at the time.<sup>124</sup> Finally, in February

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<sup>118</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 138.

<sup>119</sup> Bates and Bates, *La historia del tango*, 117. Héctor and Luis Bates refer to the ensemble as an "orquesta", but this terminology was not common usage in tango music until the creation of Orquesta Típica Criolla in 1910. Tangos were frequently performed by *rondallas* and *bandas* as well as other ensembles in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Pesce, "Principales protagonistas," 334. Of course, ensembles were frequently referred to as *orquestas*; for example, in a 1907 article in *La Argentina* complains about the presence of orchestras performing tangos in the cafés of Buenos Aires (*La Argentina*, 28 October 1907).

<sup>120</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 20.

<sup>121</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 140.

<sup>122</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 144-145.

<sup>123</sup> Pesce, "Principales protagonistas," 463.

<sup>124</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 145.



1933, the Ponzio-Bazán orchestra participated in the *concurso de orquestas típicas* organized by *Crítica* in Luna Park, and amongst the 25 orchestras that took place, Ponzio-Bazán was placed second in the first round (De Caro took first place, and Pedro Maffia third), and in the final round, which took place on 28 February 1933, Ponzio-Bazán was placed fifth in the popular vote, the final order being: (1) Julio De Caro, 2) Edgardo Donato, 3) Juan Pedro Castillo, 4) Pedro Maffia, 5) Ponzio-Bazán and 6) Anselmo Aieta.<sup>125</sup> The orchestra, whose sound evoked the *Guardia Vieja* for which it was named, was clearly quite popular, competing alongside some of the most progressive orchestras of the time, including those of Maffia and De Caro. In the same year, the Ponzio-Bazán orchestra took part in the recording of the film *¡Tango!*, which will be discussed below. Ponzio's final known public appearance took place alongside the Ponzio-Bazán orchestra and Carlos Gardel on 24 March 1933 at the Teatro Nacional as part of Ivo Pelay's *De Gabino a Gardel*.<sup>126</sup> He died the following year of an aortic aneurism.

In contrast to the reports on Alcorta's playing, Ernesto Ponzio's playing is documented more clearly, despite few traces of phonographic evidence. In fact, Ponzio was one of the first violinists who showed any sort of distinctive interpretation in tango music, according to Luis Adolfo Sierra.<sup>127</sup> During the early days of the *Guardia Vieja*, melodic instruments such as the violin, clarinet or flute played the melody in unison on top of an accompaniment played by instruments such as the guitar. Dixit Sierra, "all the instruments performed strictly in unison, without any hint of nuances, nor of passages reserved for the performance of certain instruments."<sup>128</sup> Whether his assertions are accurate or not is a matter of conjecture, but listening to early recordings does seem to confirm this trend, technological limitations of the time notwithstanding.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 146.

<sup>126</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 147.

<sup>127</sup> Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 36-37.

<sup>128</sup> Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 10.

<sup>129</sup> Recordings such as those of the Orquesta Típica Criolla (1910-1911) indicate this tendency: instruments performing in unison on top of an accompanimental line.

Ernesto Ponzio was known for two main stylistic elements: his pizzicato playing, for which he was most famous, and various techniques involving his bow. His pizzicato, in particular a strumming rhythmical effect later described in pedagogical literature as *guitarrita*,<sup>130</sup> made by holding the bow between the thumb and the palm of the right hand, and then employing the other fingers in a flexible, vertical movement against the string, was considered a significant musical development for multiple reasons: it was the first time that there was a departure from melodies executed *al unísono*, adding a vibrant textural and timbral element, as well as the first known traces of ornamentation in tango violin performance.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, the technique, no longer used as extensively by the violinists of the *Guardia Nueva* and subsequent variations, can be identified as one of the distinctive technical elements of tango music as it was interpreted in the period from 1900-1920. Such pizzicato elements imparted a joyous, playful character to the music, something for which Ponzio was famous.<sup>132</sup> The pizzicatos did more than create an upbeat atmosphere; they also had a rhythmical function. According to René Briand, Ponzio's pizzicatos had an "electrifying" or "stinging" effect on the dancers, reinforcing the strength of their *cortes* and *quebradas* – as were typical of tango dancing at the time – and, causing everyone to focus their attentions on Ponzio's playing.<sup>133</sup>

Although I could not find descriptions of Ponzio's pizzicatos in periodicals from the time, his usage of the technique was described after the fact by several writers who knew Ponzio personally.

Francisco Canaro, one of the most well-known tango violinists, orchestral leaders and empresarios of the early twentieth century, described Ponzio as a "consummate specialist" of pizzicato, with which he "flourished" and embellished his tango performances in a style Canaro described as pure *compadrito*, fitting Ponzio's social proclivities detailed above.<sup>134</sup> It is perhaps difficult to understand

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<sup>130</sup> Julián Peralta, *The Tango Orchestra: Fundamental Concepts and Techniques*, 189; Andrés Serafini, "Yeites de tango," 351.

<sup>131</sup> Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 16; Sierra *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 36-37; Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 147-148; Pesce, "Protagonistas," 465; *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 75; Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 303.

<sup>132</sup> Fueye Querido, "El pibe Ernesto," 148.

<sup>133</sup> Briand, *Crónicas del tango alegre*, 75.

<sup>134</sup> Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 303.

what Canaro meant by a *compadrito* performance style, but perhaps Canaro was referring to an intuitive way of playing, different from the more learned, European-influenced classical training of other tango violinists. Others described Ponzio's pizzicatos as *canyengue*, referring to a style of tango music and dancing associated with the *arrabales* and *compadritos* of early tango music.<sup>135</sup> It is worth quoting Luis Adolfo Sierra, a prolific tango historian and radio presenter who regularly described Ponzio's pizzicatos as *canyengue*, in full:

The pizzicato is the first trait of individuality of the violin in the orchestral performance of tango, a paternity that corresponds exclusively to Ernesto Ponzio. Evidently, those of us who had the opportunity to get to know very closely, and appreciate the interpretative charms of the unique method of execution of the “pibe” Ernesto, believe that none of the most important followers in the use of the interesting interpretive resource of the violin in tango – Tito Roccatagliata first, and Julio De Caro later – achieved the freshness and suggestion, so identified with the essences of tango, that Ernesto Ponzio achieved, in the *canyenguera* vibration of his piercing fingers in the visceral sound of the noble instrument that we admire so much.<sup>136</sup>

Taken from the Ki-Kongo word *Ku Yenga*, or “to melt”, the term was originally used in conjunction with the *candombe* of the *Afrocriollo* community discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>137</sup> In fact, *canyengue* has a great deal of stylistic continuity with *candombe*.<sup>138</sup> It is tempting to see a connection, in the absence of phonographic evidence, between the “scratching” or “rasping” noises made by Casimiro Alcorta, and the pizzicatos employed by Ponzio. Indeed, if no direct connection can be made with Alcorta, similarities with Leopoldo Thompson, the first well-known tango double bass player, can be pointed out. Thompson, of *Afrocriollo* origin, employed many percussive techniques: pizzicatos, *golpes* of both the instrument and the strings, *strappati*, and so forth. Use of these techniques, alongside the employment of syncopations, accents and polyrhythmic elements, became known as *canyengue* playing in tango music.<sup>139</sup> Ernesto Ponzio's employment of these techniques, however, were not unanimously applauded, it would seem: one night in 1933, Ciriaco Ortíz the well-known bandoneon player, invited Ponzio to play a piece with his group, since Ponzio was in the

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<sup>135</sup> Fueye Querido “El pibe Ernesto,” 148; Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango”; Pesce “Protagonistas,” 466.

<sup>136</sup> Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 16. See José María Otero, “Luis Adolfo Sierra,” *Tangos al bardo*, accessed 5 June 2021, <https://tangosalbardo.blogspot.com/2021/06/luis-adolfo-sierra.html>.

<sup>137</sup> Robert Harris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 10.

<sup>138</sup> Norberto Cirio “La historia negra,” 6.

<sup>139</sup> Mitilineos, Pablo “El 3 3 2,” 58.

audience. Apparently, this was a joke, but Ponzio rose to the challenge, asking violinist Claudio Cassano (who later played in De Caro's orchestra) if he could borrow his violin:

[Ponzio] began to make music, making music is a saying, since what he did with the unfortunate instrument was more percussion, strange noises and antics. Cassano was surprised at first, but soon he reacted and with justified indignation, upon seeing and hearing his instrument treated so badly, he tried to attack Ernesto Ponzio.<sup>140</sup>

It must be considered that by 1933, Ponzio's style could be considered a relic of the past, something that may not have pleased all listeners or fellow musicians.

Ponzio's use of the bow was also described as *canyengue*, to draw a parallel between his playing and that of Alcora's, and involved fast movements, ricochet and percussive sounds. Ponzio would use a movement of his shoulders in order to increase the rhythmic effect of the music; barely holding the bow with the fingers of his right hand, Ponzio would make the bow fly rapidly through the air, much like the flight of a bee, in the words of René Briand.<sup>141</sup> This shoulder movement, while curious, is likewise confirmed by Luis Adolfo Sierra, who refers to the combination of rhythmic shoulder movement together with a "juggling" or *malabarismo* of the bow.<sup>142</sup> Without providing too much more detail, other writers have noted Ponzio's right-hand prowess. Rubén Pesce describes his bowing style as "attempted acrobatics."<sup>143</sup> Likewise, Francisco Canaro refers to the "feats" that Ponzio achieved with his bow.<sup>144</sup> However, these "feats" and "juggling" movements are difficult to confirm due to a lack of phonographic and video evidence.<sup>145</sup>

For a variety of reasons, Ponzio did not make any audio recordings during his lifetime. His early career took place before tango music was widely recorded, he spent many years in prison during the formative years of the recording industry, and when he finally left prison in 1928, two things can be noted: a) there had been a great stylistic evolution during the 1920s and b) the radio industry, together

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<sup>140</sup> Pepe and Casco, "El violín en el tango," 14-15.

<sup>141</sup> Briand, *Crónicas*, 80.

<sup>142</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 16. It is quite possible that Briand was inspired by the text of Luis Adolfo Sierra, which would explain the similarities of language.

<sup>143</sup> Pesce, "Protagonistas," 466.

<sup>144</sup> Canaro, *Mis bodas*, 304.

<sup>145</sup> See my discussion of the film *¡Tango!* below.

with the economic crisis of the 1930s, would lead to a crisis in the recording industry.<sup>146</sup> However, together with the Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán, Ponzio recorded four pieces as part of the first Argentinian “talkie”, or film with sound, aptly entitled *¡Tango!*. Argentina’s answer to the first talkie released in the United States, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *¡Tango!* (1933) was a production of Argentina Sono Film, directed by Moglia Barth.<sup>147</sup> In the film, Ponzio can be seen in three pieces: *Don Juan* (his composition); *El entrerriano*, officially attributed to Rosendo Mendizábal but claimed by Ponzio as his own composition (see discussion below); and a *tango canción* together with singer Tita Merello: *Yo soy así p’al amor* (Lalo Etchegoncelay/Juan Antonio Collazzo).<sup>148</sup>

Fortunately, *¡Tango!* provides both an audio and visual record of Ponzio’s playing, for he features heavily in the pieces, although the image and sound are not synchronized. In *Yo soy así p’al amor*, the camera focusses on the singing of Tita Merello, and Ponzio performs right next to her, but the images and sound tell us little about his violin playing – in those moments, he seems almost hesitant to play, waiting for her to sing.<sup>149</sup> In fact, it appears as if Ponzio is not actually playing on camera, but that the sound was added afterwards, for he barely moves. His smile, on the other hand, which, according to some, was famous in tango music before that of Gardel, features heavily in the scene.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, my discussion will focus on *Don Juan* and *El entrerriano* because his violin playing is much more audible in these pieces, and both his use of pizzicato and special bowing effects are in evidence.

*Don Juan* serves as a good indication of Ponzio’s pizzicatos. Three violinists can be seen playing in the video footage, with Ponzio playing the lead part. Ponzio begins to play pizzicato 0:37 seconds into the piece, while the others play the theme, and countermelody, with the bow. Ponzio begins by

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<sup>146</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 148-149.

<sup>147</sup> Matthew Karush, *Culture of Class*, 74-75.

<sup>148</sup> Fueye Querido. “El pibe Ernesto,” 147. Note: Fueye Querido also mentions, *La Chiflada* (Anselmo Aieta/Francisco García Jiménez), which does not appear in the copy of *¡Tango!* that I accessed.

<sup>149</sup> *¡Tango!*, directed by Luis Moglia Barth (Argentina Sono Film, 1933), 1:17:23. *Yo soy así pa’l amor* is from 5:07-6:49.

<sup>150</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 136. Carlos Gardel’s smile, is, of course, extremely famous. According to Marilyn G. Miller, Gardel’s smiling face is so famous in Latin America that only the image of Ernesto “Che” Guevara is more recognizable. See Marilyn G. Miller, ed. *Tango Lessons: Movement, Sound, Image and Text in Contemporary Practice*, 14.

playing the pizzicato part with his thumb, strummed across two strings, idiosyncratic from a technical point of view. Already by the second part of the four-measure phrase, he begins to accompany the melody with semiquavers. By 0:50 he can be seen holding the bow against the palm of his right hand with his thumb and playing a *guitarrita* pattern with the other fingers. Let us look at Ponzio's playing in more detail, as well as the relationship with the other players. Figure 8 is a transcription made of the main theme and accompaniment, from the moment that Ponzio begins to play pizzicato. One player plays a simple legato counter melody in a higher register, while the other plays the principal melody with a short articulation in the middle register. Ponzio accompanies the others with his pizzicato.

The figure displays a musical score for a segment of 'Don Juan' by Ernesto Ponzio. The score is written for three staves: Ponzio, Violin 2, and Violin 3. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 2/4. The Ponzio staff is marked 'arco pizz.' and contains a series of chords and semiquaver patterns. Violin 2 is marked 'arco' and plays a simple legato counter melody. Violin 3 is marked 'arco' and plays the principal melody with short articulations. The score is divided into two systems, each containing five measures.

Figure 8 Don Juan (Ernesto Ponzio, OTGVBPB, 1933, 0:37-0:50), public domain<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Orquesta Típica de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán, *Don Juan*, by Ernesto Ponzio, recorded 1933, *¡Tango!*, directed by Luis Moglia Barth, Argentina Sono Film. See “Abbreviations” page for abbreviations of all orchestras.

In *El entrerriano* (Figure 9) rather more aspects of Ponzio's playing can be revealed. The piece begins with a rather strident, almost aggressive-sounding, introduction, including a glissando and several grace notes, which precede the beginning of the actual piece (indicated by the double bar):



Figure 9 *El entrerriano* (R. Mendizábal, OTGVPB, 1933, beginning), public domain<sup>152</sup>

By measure three of the piece, Ponzio has begun his trademark *guitarrita* pizzicato playing, holding the bow in the same way that he did in *Don Juan*, between his thumb and the palm of his hand, so that the fingers of his right hand are free to play the *guitarrita* pattern. The rhythmical pattern remains stable throughout (Figure 10).



Figure 10 *El entrerriano* (R. Mendizábal, OTGVPB, 1933, mm. 3-11), public domain

By measure 15, Ponzio begins to play a rapid *tremolo* pattern – perhaps one of the “feats” of his bow referred to by Francisco Canaro, as discussed earlier. In fact, his way of playing *tremolo* is also highly idiosyncratic; he mixes grace notes in the *tremolo* pattern, something which I have never seen nor heard another violinist play (Figure 11):

<sup>152</sup> Orquesta Típica de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán, *El entrerriano*, by Rosendo Mendizábal, recorded 1933, *¡Tango!*, directed by Luis Moglia Barth, Argentina Sono Film.



Figure 11 El entrerriano (R. Mendizábal, OTGVBP, 1933, mm. 15-22, from 0:32), public domain

In the rest of the piece, Ponzio employs the same techniques. It is perhaps difficult to establish the degree to which his violin playing influenced future generations of tango musicians; after all, these pieces were recorded in 1933, at the end of his career. At least one technique that he readily employed – *guitarrita* – would be developed much more thoroughly by Tito Roccatagliata (subject of Chapter 3 of this thesis), in addition to his frequent use of grace notes, a common feature of tango violin playing. However, techniques described by his contemporaries, such as moving the right-hand shoulder to perform “feats” with the bow, are not known to have been employed by other tango violinists.

### *Compositional Output*

In addition to his career as a violinist, Ponzio remains one of the most representative composers of the *Guardia Vieja*. In fact, his legacy as a composer is more well-documented than that of his violin playing, due to the fame of several of his pieces, including *Don Juan*, *Ataniche*, *Cara dura*, and *Quiero papita*, amongst others.<sup>153</sup> Likewise, according to the Bates brothers, tango owes more to the composer Ponzio than to his violin playing. His memory, and strong, brave, character, are preserved in his tangos.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Héctor Benedetti, *Nueva historia del tango: De los orígenes al siglo XXI* (Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2017), 104.

<sup>154</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309.



In total, eighteen compositions are attributed to Ponzio, including seventeen tangos and one estilo.<sup>155</sup>

Ponzio considered himself to be a “simple author of tangos”, according to his obituary, which quotes Ponzio and places him alongside “...our most qualified creators of national repertory.”<sup>156</sup> Revealingly, the obituary does not mention his violin playing at all, only his compositional output, citing his “popular craftsmanship and rhythm” as a “guarantee of beauty, undoubted success and much satisfaction for lovers of the *criolla* muse [tango]”.<sup>157</sup>

One of the most famous tangos of all time, *Don Juan* was first written in 1898 when Ponzio was only 13 years old.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, it was the first tango, alongside *Rosendo* of Genaro Vázquez, to be recorded by an *orquesta típica*, the Orquesta Típica Criolla in 1910.<sup>159</sup> According to Rubén Pesce and Francisco García Jiménez, *Don Juan* (subtitle: *El taita del barrio*, referring to a “courageous” or “brave” man) refers to don Juan Cabello, who was a well-known customer of lo de Hansen.<sup>160</sup> However, according to Roberto Firpo, Ponzio named the piece after the manager of el Tambito.<sup>161</sup> One of the first known performances of the piece – the premier, according to *Estudios de tango* – occurred in the *casa de baile* lo de Mamita, where Ponzio was well known, despite his young age; he performed the piece together with Ciento Pocci (flute) and Eusebio Aspiazu (guitar).<sup>162</sup> Ponzio’s composition was subsequently arranged and recorded by a large number of tango orchestras, including those of Francisco Lomuto (1927); Francisco Canaro (1927); Osvaldo Fresedo (1928);

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<sup>155</sup> Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 155. His tangos include *Ataniche*, *Avellaneda*, *Cara dura*, *Contámela que te escuche*, *Culpas ajenas*, *¿De quién es eso?*, *18 kilates*, *Don Juan (El taita del barrio)*, *Don Natalio*, *El azulejo*, *La milonga (La milonga de mi barrio)*, *Los inmortales*, *No aguanto más*, *No te lo puedo decir*, *Pluma al viento*, *Quiero papita*, *Trovador de arrabal*, and his estilo is entitled *Tardes pampeanas*. Estilo is a folkloric genre from the Rioplatense region, generally sung and accompanied by guitar.

<sup>156</sup> *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.

<sup>157</sup> *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.

<sup>158</sup> Juan Silbido, *La evocación del tango*, 103; Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio,” 11, etc.

<sup>159</sup> Fernando O. Assunção, *El tango y sus circunstancias (1880-1920)* (El Ateneo, 1998), 141.

<sup>160</sup> Francisco García Jiménez, *Así nacieron los tangos* (Ediciones Corregidor, 2018), 20; Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 466. For information about lo de Hansen, see Carlos Vega, *Estudios para los orígenes del tango*, 119.

<sup>161</sup> Enrique Pucci, *El Buenos Aires de Ángel G. Villoldo, 1860-1919* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1997), 173.

<sup>162</sup> Benedetti, *Nueva historia del tango*, 56; Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 138.

Orquesta típica Victor (1932); Juan D'Arienzo (1936); Carlos Di Sarli (1941); Aníbal Troilo (1954); José Basso (1955); Astor Piazzolla's first quintet (1961); and Florindo Sassone (1965).<sup>163</sup>



Figure 12 Ernesto Ponzio, *Don Juan*, Editorial Musical José Fontana, public domain<sup>164</sup>

<sup>163</sup> “Don Juan,” El Recodo, accessed 14 March 2024, <https://www.el-recodo.com/music?lang=en&S=don+juan>.

<sup>164</sup> Ernesto Ponzio, *Don Juan*, Editorial Musical José Fontana, Todo Tango, accessed 21 March 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/1279/Don-Juan-El-taita-del-barrio/>. Score in public domain.

# DON JUAN

El Taita del Barrio

Música de  
ERNESTO PONZIO

Letra de  
RICARDO J. PODESTÁ

The image shows a musical score for the tango 'Don Juan'. It consists of two staves: a vocal melody (CANTO) and a piano accompaniment (PIANO). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are in Spanish and are written below the vocal staff. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano line. The lyrics are: 'Yo soy el taita del barrio Nombrado en Barriola Y en la', 'bo-cá cualquier día No se me dice señor Y si voy por los Países Se acor-', 'dona el más va-liente Y es-tando entre mucha gente Me la largo, me la largo, de doc-', 'tor Ca-lá ché ca-lá. Siga el piano ché, Dése cuenta Vá. Y después di'.

Figure 13 Ernesto Ponzio, *Don Juan*, Editorial Musical José Fontana, public domain<sup>165</sup>

Ponzio was especially proud of *Don Juan*. He claimed, for example, that *Don Juan* travelled to Europe in 1902, and “imposed our spirit in Europe with more force than all the words of our prudent diplomats”.<sup>166</sup> Crossing the ocean at such an early date was likely hyperbole on the part of Ponzio, as the first known tangos to travel to Europe, in the form of sheet music, were *El Choclo* and *La morocha*, in 1905 or 1906.<sup>167</sup> While the first edition of *Don Juan* was likely dedicated to Juan Cabello, Ponzio changed the dedication in the second edition, which includes lyrics from Ricardo Podestá: “I dedicate this first Argentine tango, with lyrics and pizzicato, to all the musicians of my

<sup>165</sup> Ernesto Ponzio, *Don Juan*, Editorial Musical José Fontana. Score in public domain.

<sup>166</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>167</sup> The first known tango scores that travelled to Europe were *El choclo* and *La morocha*, in 1905 or 1906. Ponzio was known for his self-aggrandizing charm. As Héctor and Luis Bates put it, “...he liked brave, strong, cheerful tango. He liked himself”. Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309.

country, as a sincere tribute from the *Guardia Vieja* to the brilliant youth of today.”<sup>168</sup> The tribute is intriguing: he specifically mentions pizzicato, as well as his commitment to the *Guardia Vieja*. It is thus fitting that his dedication encapsulates his legacy in tango history, as a man of the *Guardia Vieja*, and as the first known systematic user of pizzicato techniques in tango violin playing. In addition, he describes *Don Juan* as “the first Argentine tango”. The tango *El entrerriano* is generally considered to be the first published tango – described by José Gobello as “the first tango per se” – and written in 1897, according to Héctor and Luis Bates.<sup>169</sup> Ponzio himself claimed to be the composer of *El entrerriano*, the first known published tango score generally attributed to Rosendo Mendizábal. Ponzio claimed to have given it to Mendizábal as a gift at a dance in the Club de Pelotas, filled with wealthy patrons from Entre Ríos.<sup>170</sup> This assertion was, however, refuted in 1934, by José Guidobono in a letter to Héctor Bates; Guidobono was present when Mendizábal first played *El entrerriano*, not in the Club de Pelotas, but in the *casa de baile* of “María la Vasca”.<sup>171</sup> Although Mendizábal initially wanted to dedicate the piece to Guidobono, Guidobono instead insisted that the tango be dedicated to a certain Segovia, who was with them that evening, and the tango was named *El entrerriano* in honour of Segovia’s Entrerrianian origins.

Given Ponzio’s claims, it is debatable whether, or to what extent, he composed *Don Juan*. Compositional “borrowing”, either via gift or theft, was very common in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, something that we have already seen in the case of Casimiro Alcorta. Ponzio indicated the same, making the analogy between giving (and taking) tangos and giving cigarettes to others.<sup>172</sup> Likewise, Horacio Salas claims that Ponzio “appropriated” melodies from the tango *¡Qué polvo con tango viento!*, attributed to Pedro Quijano, to compose *Don Juan*.<sup>173</sup> Other accusations are much stronger. In a documentary entitled “El tango en su historia”, broadcast by Radio Belgrano in 14

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<sup>168</sup> Quoted in Pesce, “Protagonistas,” 466-467.

<sup>169</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 20; Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia de tango*, 275.

<sup>170</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>171</sup> Quoted in Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 152. The letter was dated 13 July 1934.

<sup>172</sup> Quoted in Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 152. According to the article, the quote comes from an interview of Ponzio published on 19 January 1932, but the source is not listed.

<sup>173</sup> Salas, *El tango*, 57.

June 1963, the pianist Teodoro Espósito asserted, in a story told to him by the dancer Roque Amato, that *Don Juan* and two other tangos, *Ataniche* and *Cara dura*, were not by Ponzio at all, but by a certain violinist named Quiroga, who was stabbed by accident one night in a *peringundin*; Ponzio's uncle is supposed to have collected the scores and have given them to Ponzio.<sup>174</sup> The story seems extremely far-fetched, even like something out of a cowboy film according to the authors of *Estudio de tango*. It seems to me that this theft would have pre-dated the period before tango musicians performed with scores. The story remains unsubstantiated.

With Ponzio's death in 1934 – and that of Juan Maglio “Pacho”, who died just two months before – *lo auténtico del tango* was lost, the author of Ponzio's obituary intones.<sup>175</sup> *Lo auténtico del tango*, or *el genuino*, in his own words, was something that Ponzio believed in strongly, both as a composer and a performer. In the 1928 *La Canción Moderna* interview referred to earlier in this chapter, Ponzio is quoted as saying that tango should not change, but instead “the trajectory of ancient tango must be followed. That of the *Guardia Vieja*, apart from its intrinsic value, has the essence of evocation, memory and tradition, essential principles of every work of art.”<sup>176</sup> Likewise, although he indicates that he has great respect for modern composers, saying that there have been significant musical advancements, he laments that tango has become an industry, that whereas in the past eight out of ten tangos were remarkable, by 1928 perhaps four or five out of 1000 tangos stood out.<sup>177</sup>

Judging from Ponzio's interviews, although he personally considered his compositions to be his most significant contribution to tango music, Ponzio's violin playing was considered by his colleagues, such as Francisco Canaro, to be representative of his time. According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, his playing marked the first traces of expressive devices in tango violin playing, notably in the form of his pizzicatos.<sup>178</sup> In particular, Ponzio used a type of pizzicato referred to as *guitarrita*, whereby he

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<sup>174</sup> Quoted in Fueye Querido, “El pibe Ernesto,” 155.

<sup>175</sup> *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.

<sup>176</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>177</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

<sup>178</sup> Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 16.

strummed the violin with multiple fingers of his right hand, like a guitar, or, as Robert Farris Thompson indicates, a banjo.<sup>179</sup> His recordings in the film *¡Tango!* revealed the usage of other devices, including grace note ornamentation, tremolos and a few glissandi; ornamentation is something that would significantly expand in the playing of violinists such as Tito Roccatagliata, subject of Chapter 3 of this thesis. Other aspects of Ponzio's playing discussed by his peers, such as his use of the shoulder to effectuate certain techniques with the bow, or the "juggling" effect described by Luis Adolfo Sierra, cannot be confirmed due to a lack of evidence.<sup>180</sup>

### **José "Pepino" Bonano**

Unlike the other two violinists discussed in this chapter, little has been documented about the life and career of José "Pepino" Bonano. His nickname "Pepino" or cucumber in English, is likely a play on words, Bonano being similar to "banana". According to the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, his date of birth is unknown, and he died in 1953; the anthology describes him as a violinist and author of several pieces, including several tangos, such as *De mi pago*, *Desengaño*, *El apache porteño*, *El desastre*, and *Pinela (El camandulero)*.<sup>181</sup> Two vales of Bonano's were known to have been recorded, although he is not likely to feature in these recordings: Orquesta típica Maglio (Pacho) recorded *Recordar es vivir* for Victor in 1918;<sup>182</sup> and in 1920 Roberto Firpo recorded Bonano's *valse Boston* entitled *Mi morocha*.<sup>183</sup> His career as a violinist is also virtually unknown. Enrique Binda describes Bonano as a violin professor, using Bonano to justify his argument that not all *Guardia Vieja* musicians were self-taught or amateur; however, Binda does not provide any evidence of Bonano's training.<sup>184</sup> That being said, Bonano had a prolific, if short-lived, recording career, leaving

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<sup>179</sup> Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love*, 155.

<sup>180</sup> Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 16.

<sup>181</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 113. Some of these tangos are attributed to other composers, such as *El apache porteño*, attributed to Luis Bernstein, and *Desengaño*, attributed to Francisco Canaro. It is not clear whether the melodies are the same or not.

<sup>182</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 28 September 1918.

<sup>183</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 16 October 1920.

<sup>184</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 78.

behind many more recordings than Alcorta (zero) or Ponzio (three). Bonano made recordings with one of the first truly famous tango ensembles, Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho”, with whom he recorded seventy-four tangos in 1912, and made forty-two recordings in 1913.<sup>185</sup> In 1914, he recorded a further twenty-one pieces with the Cuarteto Típico Criollo la Armonía.<sup>186</sup> Another significant element is that he is the first known tango violinist to record with a Stroh or trumpet violin, more than a decade before Julio De Caro, who made the instrument his trademark, began to record with such a violin. In fact, he is the only known tango violinist to do so, besides De Caro. Due to his use of the Stroh violin, Bonano’s playing is extremely audible, giving the listener a series of very clear recordings despite the rudimentary technology of the age. As Enrique Binda points out, the violin can be heard in the foreground of these recordings, and since the instrument plays the melody, this can be identified as a distinctive feature of these ensembles.<sup>187</sup>

My discussion of Bonano will have three main sections: 1) the orchestras in which he played and 2) a discussion of the *violin corneta*, or trumpet violin, and 3) an analysis of several of his recordings.

#### *Orchestras in which Bonano Played*

I have found documentation that Bonano played in three orchestras: Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” (1912-1913), Cuarteto Típico Criollo la Armonía (1914), and the Quinteto Criollo Augusto P. Berto (1915). Perhaps the most apocryphal is Bonano’s membership in the latter group. He is not known to have recorded with Quinteto Criollo Augusto P. Berto, whose first recordings were made on the Atlanta label, together with violinist Julio Doutry, in 1913.<sup>188</sup> Nor is there any information about Bonano’s participation in the ensemble. However, Bonano was photographed as part of the group, alongside Luis Teisseire (flute), Augusto Berto (bandoneon), José Martínez (piano) and Domingo Salerno (guitar); the photo appeared on the cover of the catalogue of the Atlanta recording label,

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<sup>185</sup> Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 79, 89. See Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>186</sup> Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 134.

<sup>187</sup> Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 78.

<sup>188</sup> See Appendix A.

likely in 1915.<sup>189</sup> Notably, he does not appear with a Stroh violin in the photograph, although he performed with one in both the Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” and the Cuarteto Típico Criollo la Armonía.

Fortunately, there is a consensus that Bonano indeed performed and recorded as part of the Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho,” one of the most famous groups of the time, alongside Maglio (bandoneon), Hernani Machi (flute) and Luciano Ríos (guitar); in 1913, Leopoldo Thompson, who would later play double bass in many tango orchestras including those of Roberto Firpo and Julio De Caro, replaced Ríos on guitar. According to Julio De Caro, the musicians were “true cultivators” of tango.<sup>190</sup>

Although the ensemble was not the first *orquesta típica* to record – Orquesta Típica Criolla’s record was made in 1910 for Columbia – it was, according to Francisco García Jiménez, the first to sign a formal contract for a tango record, also with Columbia, in 1912.<sup>191</sup> The ensemble recorded seventy-four tangos, four polkas, and two *aires criollos* in 1912, and forty-two recordings in 1913.<sup>192</sup>

Benefitting from wide distribution and excellent sales, Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho”’s recordings became extremely popular, to the extent that the term “pacho” – Maglio’s nickname – was used as a metonym, synonymous to the term “disc” in many parts of Argentina.<sup>193</sup> In fact, the ensemble was so popular, that it helped contribute to the social acceptance of tango; according to José Tallón, tango reached all social classes thanks to “Pacho”’s records and Columbia’s records.<sup>194</sup> Maglio’s signature even appeared on all records sold, together with the inscription “the discs that do not bear the signature of Mr. Juan Maglio, “Pacho,” are falsified.”<sup>195</sup> Casa Tagini, the record concessionary of

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<sup>189</sup> The cover of the catalogue is reproduced in Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango: Historia de medio siglo 1880/1930*, 49. The same photo, without reference to the Atlanta catalogue, is reproduced in Héctor and Luis Bates *La historia del tango*, 122, and dated 1915.

<sup>190</sup> *El Canillita*, October 1954, 40.

<sup>191</sup> Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango*, 49. García Jiménez writes that Maglio signed the first formal contract of authentic tango musicians with a record company, Columbia. He does not elaborate on the details of the contract.

<sup>192</sup> Binda, *Los 25 primeros años*, 79, 89; *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Orquesta Típica Juan Maglio (“Pacho”),” accessed 15 November 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/114057>.

<sup>193</sup> Benedetti, *Nueva historia*, 100; Oscar Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes, Tomo 1* (Ediciones Corregidor: 1998), 130.

<sup>194</sup> José Tallón, *El tango en sus etapas de música prohibida*, chapter 5, note 16.

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in García Jiménez, *El tango*, 50.



Columbia, published many advertisements in the periodicals of the time. In 1913, Casa Tagini published a letter purportedly from the “famed bandoleon (sic) professor Juan Maglio ‘Pacho’”, where he authorizes the use of his name, and nickname, and states that there are to be no other recordings of his orchestra other than those pressed by the Casa Tagini.<sup>196</sup> This was, of course, a marketing stunt; Maglio himself had invested in Casa Tagini, which went bankrupt during the first World War.<sup>197</sup> Despite its enormous popularity, the initial formation of the Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” was also short-lived; by 1913, his musicians, including José Bonano, Carlos Macchi (flute), Leopoldo Thompson (guitar) and Manuel Firpo (bandoneon) left the ensemble to found the Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía.<sup>198</sup> According to Fernando Assunção, the ensemble was one of the best sounding orchestras of the time.<sup>199</sup> Another short-lived group, they recorded twenty-one pieces for the labels Tocasolo Sin Rival and Sonora.<sup>200</sup> Maglio, on the other hand, reformed his ensemble with different musicians, including Luciano Ríos (guitar), Durán (flute), and an unknown violinist, recording for the label ERA.<sup>201</sup>

#### *Trumpet Violin and Recording Technology, 1912-1914*

As mentioned above, José Bonano’s brief recording career is memorable because he was the first-known violinist to play and record tango music with the trumpet violin. The instrument is above all associated with Julio De Caro, who would make the trumpet violin his trademark, having received the instrument as a gift in 1925 from the director of RCA Victor – when trumpet violins were already considered obsolete, their heyday being from about 1904, year of their first commercial use, until about 1915.<sup>202</sup> De Caro explains in his memoirs that the director gave it to him so that his violin solos

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<sup>196</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 21 March 1913. Including letters from artists was a common marketing strategy at the time. See Odeon/Max Glücksmann’s advertisement in *Caras y Caretas* in 1914, which includes letters from Eduardo Arolas, Roberto Firpo and Carlos Marchal. *Caras y Caretas*, 28 March 1914.

<sup>197</sup> Pesce, “Protagonistas,” 430; García Jiménez, *El tango*, 49.

<sup>198</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 127; Zucchi, *El bandoneón*, 132.

<sup>199</sup> Assunção, *El tango y sus circunstancias*, 159.

<sup>200</sup> Binda, *Los 25 primeros años*, 134; *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 114. See Appendix A of this thesis for more information.

<sup>201</sup> *Antología*, 127.

<sup>202</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music*, 11.

would be more easily audible in large concert venues in a time before microphones were widely used; he mentions that his use of such a violin had a great effect on the public for the most part, except for a few detractors who accused him of eccentricity for introducing a novelty and of a publicity stunt, something “very far from my character.”<sup>203</sup> What he does *not* mention, however, is that the trumpet violin was not new to Argentina, nor to tango music, because José Bonano had recorded with the instrument more than a decade earlier. Curiously, De Caro includes a biography of Juan Maglio “Pacho” later in his book, together with a photo of Maglio’s *cuarteto* featuring Bonano and his trumpet violin, but does not mention anything about Bonano besides his name.<sup>204</sup> Likely referring to De Caro, Héctor and Luis Bates ironize in 1936 that listening to the trumpet violin may sound like something new for the public, but that Bonano had played one long before any other tango musician.<sup>205</sup>

Trumpet violins were well-known in the earliest days of the recording industry. In the acoustic era of recording, which lasted until the invention of the microphone in 1924, a limited range of frequency could be captured on recordings. In particular, the frequencies of stringed instruments, and especially low stringed instruments such as the cello and bass, were extremely challenging, unlike voice, which was easily picked up by the acoustic horn.<sup>206</sup> In order to be heard on recordings, players often needed to remove dynamics and play all music as loudly as possible.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, it was necessary to think of alternative instrumentation, and to rewrite pieces to produce an effective recording. The trumpet violin, better known as the Stroh violin in honour of its German-born, but Britain-based creator Augustus Stroh, provided an excellent solution, allowing string instruments to come to the foreground of recordings, instead of languishing in inaudible obscurity. Patented virtually simultaneously in 1900 in England, the US, Germany and Austria, the Stroh violin featured both a diaphragm and resonator in the shape of a trumpet, which could be moved in order to direct the sound towards the listener, or,

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<sup>203</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 51-52. De Caro benefitted from a huge amount of media attention throughout his career, and his statement can be treated with a degree of irony.

<sup>204</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 270.

<sup>205</sup> Luis and Héctor Bates, *La historia del tango*, 252.

<sup>206</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, 3.1.25.

<sup>207</sup> Day, *A Century of Recorded Music*, 53.

later, to the acoustic horn.<sup>208</sup> By 1925, with the invention of the microphone and electrical recording, the Stroh violin's popularity waned as a recording instrument.<sup>209</sup>

A photo of an unidentified violinist playing a trumpet violin can be seen in the first known article about recording studios, known as *laboratorios de impresión*, in Argentina, entitled “How noise is immortalized”, which appeared in 1912 in *Fray Mocho*.<sup>210</sup> Although the article does not specify the recording company, a poster for Columbia recordings can be seen in the background of several of the photos, by which we can infer that these photos were taken at Casa Tagini, concessionary of Columbia in Argentina until 1915. Before the first record production company, including studios, was established in 1919 by Max Glücksmann and Odeon, several companies installed recording studios in Buenos Aires. The records were then pressed in the home country of the recording company: the United States (Columbia, Victor), Germany (Odeon), and so forth. For example, Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” recorded for Columbia in Tagini's studio located at Avenida de Mayo 601/611, in 1912.<sup>211</sup> While the article in *Fray Mocho* concentrates primarily on the technical aspects of recording (which horn was used for the voice, which was for instruments, which for concerts), the author specifies that the matrixes are “printed” in the studio, and then sent to the United States for pressing and production. The caption of the photo (Figure 14) with the trumpet violin is fascinating: “Piano, violin... and tenor. (The violin used to print, has a horn instead of a body)”.<sup>212</sup> The position of the musicians is also noteworthy: the singer is pointed directly at the main auditory horn, with the violinist immediately to his left, the trumpet of his violin pointed at the horn. The pianist is on a pedestal, with the back of the piano immediately to the right of the horn:

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<sup>208</sup> Alison Rabinovici, “Augustus Stroh's Phonographic Violin,” 104-105.

<sup>209</sup> Alison Rabinovici, “Augustus Stroh,” 109. In fact, Rabinovici shows that while the Stroh violin was no longer frequently used in recordings after that date, it was in fact used in music halls. It is perhaps revealing that the director of RCA Victor gave De Caro a Stroh violin in the very year that they began to record electrically (1925), specifying that it was so that he could be better heard in the hall – and not saying anything about De Caro recording with it. The focus in this chapter is not on De Caro, but I will develop this subject further in Chapter 4.

<sup>210</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912.

<sup>211</sup> Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*, 105.

<sup>212</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912.



Figure 14 “Cómo se inmortaliza el ruido,” Fray Mocho, 17 May 1912, permission given by Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut<sup>213</sup>

#### *Recording Analysis, José Bonano*

In this section, I will discuss *Armenonville*, recorded by Bonano and Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho” in 1912, as well as *El jagüel*, recorded by Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía the following year.<sup>214</sup> Bonano’s playing in itself does not present the acrobatic pizzicato of Ponzio, or the *fraseo* and short articulations of the violinists of the *Guardia Nueva*, but is worthy of analysis because it is so clearly audible, due to the trumpet violin. As such, it can be treated as an excellent sample of the violinists’ role in an early *orquesta típica*, as the recordings were made only two years after those of the first *orquesta típica*, Orquesta Típica Criolla.

<sup>213</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, accessed 18 November 2024, <https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863738494/>.

<sup>214</sup> *Armenonville* is perhaps the most famous recording of the Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho,” and *El jagüel* is the only recording I could access of the Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía.

Arguably the most famous of Maglio's compositions, *Armenonville* was written in honour of the luxurious Parisian-style cabaret Armenonville, which opened in 1910 on Avenida Alvear in Buenos Aires.<sup>215</sup> Ironically, "Pacho" never played at the venue himself, according to Roberto Selles;<sup>216</sup> García Jiménez writes, perhaps more subtly, that the name "Pacho" is not especially linked with the venue.<sup>217</sup> Open only in the summer-time and presented upon opening as having "Parisian style and comfort" according to *Caras y caretas* in January 1910, the cabaret presented some of the most famous musicians of the time, including Carlos Gardel and José Razzano, Roberto Firpo, and Francisco Canaro, before closing in 1919.<sup>218</sup> *Armenonville* was recorded in 1912, and features in the Casa Tagini advertisements of the year. For example, in an advertisement dated 30 August 1912 in *Fray Mocho*, Tagini mentions "Pacho" and his *orquesta típica*, having recorded *El Gabure* (sic), *La Catrera*, *Independencia*, *Emancipación*, *Armenonville*, *Un Copetín*, "and an infinity of other danceable pieces".<sup>219</sup>

In the piece, Bonano plays the melody in unison with the flute and bandoneon parts, customary in many *Guardia Vieja* arrangements and compositions (see earlier discussion). As such, the violin part can be easily compared with the other instruments, as there is a significant amount of overlap. Perhaps the most salient feature of Bonano's playing is his use of ornamentation, namely: grace notes, mordents and portamento. There is no *fraseo* to speak of; *fraseo*, or variations in timing, would not occur until later in the decade.<sup>220</sup> In Figure 15, I have transcribed the A section (bars 1-16) of Bonano's playing, comparing it to the published score.<sup>221</sup> Typical of *Guardia Vieja* compositions, the

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<sup>215</sup> García Jiménez, *Así nacieron los tangos*, 96.

<sup>216</sup> Roberto Selles, "Armenonville – Story of the tango 'Armenonville'," *Todo Tango*, accessed 28 November 2023, <https://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/78/Armenonville-Story-of-the-tango-Armenonville/>.

<sup>217</sup> García Jiménez, *Así nacieron los tangos*, 95.

<sup>218</sup> Quoted in Sirena Pellarolo, *Sainetes, cabarets, minas y tango: Una antología* (Ediciones Corregidor, 2010), 27-29.

<sup>219</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 30 August 1912.

<sup>220</sup> As mentioned earlier, *fraseo* is a key expressive device first associated with Carlos Gardel; its usage in instrumental tango dates from the *Guardia Nueva*.

<sup>221</sup> Juan Maglio, *Armenonville*, Edición J.S. Balerio, *Todo Tango*, accessed 28 November 2023, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/1022/Armenonville/>. The format of the piece is A (16 measures, repeated twice), B (16 measures) C or trio (16 measures, repeated twice), BABC.

piece is structured in three sections (A, B, and C) of 16 measures).<sup>222</sup> The date of publication of the score is not indicated in the score, but can be assumed to be around 1912; according to Selles, the publisher Juan S. Balerio made six editions in quick succession, due to the extreme popularity of the sheet music.<sup>223</sup> One unusual thing in the score is that many grace notes are indicated. These can be heard by the flute, bandoneon and violin in the recording. As we can see, Bonano's playing is almost identical to that of the melody of the printed score. His timing, for example, does not deviate at all from the melody.

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<sup>222</sup> See Irma Ruiz and Néstor Ceñal, "La estructura del tango," 51-88; Andrea Marsili, *Los códigos del tango*, (Abrazos, 2019), 77-78; and Peralta, *The Tango Orchestra*, 19-20 for a discussion of form in tango pieces.

<sup>223</sup> Selles, "Armenonville."

The figure displays a musical score for the tango 'Armenonville' by Juan Maglio 'Pacho'. It compares two versions: José Bonano's performance and the published score. The score is written for violin in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The measures are grouped into four systems, each with a measure number (1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16) at the beginning. In each system, the top staff represents Bonano's performance and the bottom staff represents the published score. Bonano's version includes several grace notes and portamenti (indicated by slurs and wavy lines) that are not present in the published score, particularly in measures 3, 8, and 11. The published score includes a triplet in measure 16.

Figure 15 Armenonville (Juan Maglio “Pacho”, CJMP, 1912, m. 1-16), public domain<sup>224</sup>

The types of grace notes are similar to those available in the printed score, but Bonano does not always play these in the same locations as the other musicians (whose grace notes reflect those printed in the score; I have noted where Bonano plays different grace notes. Also important are the traces of rhythmic variation (m. 8-9), as well as number of portamenti (m. 3, m. 8, m. 11). Such portamenti

<sup>224</sup> Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho,” *Armenonville*, by Juan Maglio “Pacho”, recorded 1912, track 16 on *Antología del tango rioplatense, vol 1*, Instituto Nacional de Musicología “Carlos Vega,” 1980, CD.

were commonplace in early-twentieth century recordings of violinists, becoming less prevalent by the 1930s.<sup>225</sup> I will discuss portamenti in much more detail in Chapter 3, with the playing of Tito Roccatagliata.

In the rest of the piece, similar trends can be noted; Bonano does not always play grace notes in the same place as his fellow musicians, who play the melody in unison with him on top of the accompanimental line (a habanera rhythm). In the C section, something significant happens, which, although it does not really pertain to Bonano's violin playing, is nonetheless significant to the development of tango music: a countermelody, played by the flute, can be heard. In tango historiography, Roberto Firpo is credited with adding a second violin part in his orchestra in 1915 or 1916, depending on the source (Tito Roccatagliata on first violin, and Agesilao Ferrazzano on second); the moment when countermelodies appeared is generally credited as marking the end of the initial stages of tango music and the beginning of a new, evolutionary period.<sup>226</sup> However, here in 1912, Juan Maglio "Pacho" included *contracanto* in *Armenonville*, several years before Firpo's interplay between violin parts. Furthermore, there is no mention of the *contracanto* in the published score. In this transcription (Figure 16), I have noted what Bonano plays, the violin part as indicated by the published score, the flute, and the accompaniment, played by guitar (bandoneon plays the melody as well; I have not notated it as there are no noticeable differences). While Bonano's melody is virtually identical to the printed score, bar a few differences in grace notes, articulation and the addition of a glissando at the beginning, the simple countermelody is notable here. Indeed, this may be the first known instance of counterpoint in a tango.

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<sup>225</sup> Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143.

<sup>226</sup> There is no consensus as to when Firpo first added a second violin. According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, this occurred in 1914 (Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 65); Rubén Pesce, in 1915 (Pesce, "Protagonistas," 498); and Oscar Del Priore, in 1916-1917 (Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla*, 57). The most famous early recording featuring *contracanto* was "La Cumparsita," recorded in November 1916.



The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Bonano, Published, Flute, and Guitar. It is divided into two systems. The first system begins at measure 32, and the second system begins at measure 36. The key signature changes from one flat (B-flat) to three sharps (F#, C#, G#) between the two systems. The Bonano and Published parts feature complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. The Flute part has a more melodic line with some rests. The Guitar part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Figure 16 Armenonville, (Juan Maglio “Pacho”, CJMP, 1912, m. 32-38, from 1:19), public domain<sup>227</sup>

<sup>227</sup> Cuarteto Juan Maglio “Pacho,” *Armenonville*, by Juan Maglio “Pacho”, recorded 1912.

Written by Arturo de Bassi, *El Jagüel* was recorded by the Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía on the labels Tocaloso Sin Rival and Sonora in 1913. The ensemble included the musicians José Bonano, Carlos Macchi (flute), Leopoldo Thompson (guitar) and Manuel Firpo (bandoneon).<sup>228</sup> Bonano, Macchi and Thompson left Juan Maglio “Pacho”’s ensemble, forming their own group, which was only known to have performed and recorded in 1913-1914. The first thing that strikes the listener at the beginning of *El jagüel* (Figure 17) is the quantity of vibrato used by Bonano, in a time that preceded generalized vibrato usage.<sup>229</sup> Bonano vibrates all long notes. In addition, while it cannot be said that the flute is playing a countermelody, the flute plays the same rhythms as the violin in various intervals (third, fifth, sixths). I have not notated the bandoneon part here as it is not relevant to my discussion, but I have notated the guitar part to have some sense of the accompanimental line.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Bonano (flute), Flute, and Acoustic Guitar. The music is in 2/4 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Bonano part is written in treble clef and includes several notes marked with 'vib.' (vibrato). The Flute part is also in treble clef and includes grace notes. The Acoustic Guitar part is in treble clef and provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Figure 17 *El jagüel* (Arturo de Bassi, CCA, 1913, mm. 1-4), public domain<sup>230</sup>

The flute can be heard playing grace notes that Bonano doesn’t play; after all, all instruments added ornamentation to their parts.

<sup>228</sup> *El jagüel* is the only recording of this ensemble that I was able to access. There is no published score available.

<sup>229</sup> See Robert Philip, *Early Recordings*, 100. Vibrato was treated as an effect or embellishment until well into the twentieth century, only becoming generalized by the 1930s. Mark Katz has labelled the steady inclusion of more vibrato a phonographic effect (see Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, 95-101). I will discuss vibrato in greater detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>230</sup> Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía, *El jagüel*, by Arturo de Bassi, recorded 1914, track 15 on *Antología del tango rioplatense*, vol. 2, RGS Music, 2015, CD.

In the B section (B major) both the flute and the violin play a syncopated pattern *al unísono*, except for the last four bars, where again, a countermelody in the flute can be heard, against a grace-note heavy violin melody, which the bandoneon plays as well (Figure 18). Again, Bonano includes vibrato on the long notes.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Bonano, Flute, and Acoustic Guitar. The music is in B major, indicated by three sharps in the key signature. The Bonano staff features a syncopated melody with a vibrato marking ('vib.') above the final long note. The Flute staff provides a countermelody, particularly in the final four bars. The Acoustic Guitar staff plays a syncopated pattern throughout the section.

Figure 18 El jagüel, (Arturo de Bassi, CCA, 1913, mm. 29-32, from 1:12), public domain<sup>231</sup>

The E-major C section features several striking elements. Much like in the B section, a countermelody of long notes can be heard in the flute part, against the violin, which plays the melody. The last four measures of the C section (shown in Figure 19) are of particular significance. Bonano stops playing the melody to play a simple pizzicato pattern, something not heard in his other recordings:

<sup>231</sup> Cuarteto Criollo la Armonía, *El jagüel*, by Arturo de Bassi, recorded 1914.



Figure 19 El jagüel (Arturo de Bassi, CCA, 1913, from 2:02), public domain

The difference in timbre created by the pizzicato was further exploited by violinists of the *Guardia Nueva*, including Tito Roccatagliata and Julio De Caro.

Bonano's primary contribution to tango violin playing is most certainly the body of recordings he made as part of Juan Maglio "Pacho"'s ensemble. His sound quality unusually clear for the time, because of his use of the *violín corneta*, allowing the listener to appreciate his frequent grace notes, occasional use of vibrato and occasional variations of rhythmic material. Furthermore, an analysis of Bonano's playing allowed me to discover the introduction of the countermelody, or *contracanto*, several years earlier than what is generally reported in tango historiography (according to Luis Adolfo Sierra, this would first happen in Roberto Firpo's orchestra in the violin playing of Tito Roccatagliata) is a crucial step in tango music, because it prepares the way for (virtuoso) solo material, a feature that would become ubiquitous in later periods of tango music.<sup>232</sup> While in the recordings analysed here, the *contracanto* was performed by the flute, the violin would be the primary instrument of the *contracanto* in the late 1910s and early 1920s.

<sup>232</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 37.

## Conclusion: Early Tango Violinists

The three violinists discussed in this chapter belong to the initial stages of tango history, when the stylistic language was still in its infancy. Their playing formed the foundation upon which other violinists continued to build. While Alcorta's percussive noises remain apocryphal due to the lack of aural evidence, other traces of stylistic elements, such as Ponzio's pizzicatos and Bonano's lyrical Stroh-violin recordings would be reflected in the playing of future tango violinists. Furthermore, elements such as *contracantos*, ornamentation, vibrato, and rhythmic variations – which all have made their timid appearance by now – would be fully developed during the *Guardia Nueva*. Analysing their stylistic practices provides us with a snapshot of tango violin playing at a time in which tango first began to be considered *música nacional*. As such, the socio-cultural context in which these violinists' careers existed was deeply connected to their musical output. This chapter begins with the societally marginal *academias* and *casas de baile*, in which Alcorta and Ponzio forged their careers, traverses the knife- and gunfights for which Ponzio was famous, and emerges with a genre that is widely celebrated. In addition, the musical analysis allows us to observe tango's place at the forefront of technological advancement, as the recording industry marketed the genre both domestically and internationally as a national symbol of Argentina: Bonano's *violín corneta* and Ponzio's performance in Argentina's first film with sound, *¡Tango!*. Although these violinists careers did not end at the same time chronologically (Bonano made his last known recordings in 1914, Alcorta likely died in 1915, and Ponzio died in 1934), from a stylistic point of view, the initial stages of tango violin playing come to a close. Ponzio's only known recordings, although made in 1933, nearly twenty years after the end of the other violinists' career, can be accepted as preserving an earlier style.<sup>233</sup> By his own admission, he believed he should stay true to his stylistic roots, those of the *Guardia Vieja*.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Robert Phillip has indicated that recordings can present evidence of earlier stylistic practice. See Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 1.

<sup>234</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.



## **Chapter Three**

### **David “Tito” Roccatagliata: The Mysterious *Máximo Violinista del Tango***

#### **Introduction**

David “Tito” Roccatagliata (1891-1925) can be considered the most enigmatic of all tango violinists. On the one hand, little is known about his personal life. Unlike many of his contemporaries, such as Ernesto Ponzio or Francisco Canaro, he was seldom discussed or even mentioned in periodicals of the time, such as *Caras y caretas*, *JBT*, or *Fray Mocho*. On the other hand, and despite his untimely death in 1925 at the age of 34, Tito Roccatagliata is remembered as one of the most influential tango violinists, because of the stylistic elements associated with his playing, audible in his many recordings, and which have become key elements of tango practice today. However, although Roccatagliata is considered by many to have been the *máximo violinista del tango*, that is, the greatest tango violinist,<sup>1</sup> his playing style has not yet been analysed in detail. This chapter is thus dedicated to his performance practice.

Most information about his life found in tango historiography is anecdotal and apocryphal – a series of stories collected, for the most part, many years after his death.<sup>2</sup> The largely unsubstantiated stories that make up what has been written about his life, the stuff of legend, are intimately connected with the social history of tango of the late 1910s and early 1920s, as the genre transformed itself from a societally marginal position limited to the outskirts of Buenos Aires and Montevideo into a globally recognized phenomenon, thanks in part to Tangomania, discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, and the subsequent marketing of tango as *música nacional*. As *Estudios de tango* wrote in 1972, almost fifty

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<sup>1</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 134. See Appendix A of this thesis for extended bibliographical information. See Appendix C for the discography of Roccatagliata.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most complete record of Roccatagliata’s life and musical activities can be found in Fueye Querido, “Músicos fundamentales del tango: ¡Tito!,” *Estudios de tango* 9 (May-June 1972): 406-420. Other relevant sources include the *Antología del tango rioplatense*; Horacio Salas, *El tango*; *Tango un siglo de historia*; Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*.

years after his death, “Tito IS tango himself. Even his life is a tango lyric. And his violin is the guiding voice of this instrument”.<sup>3</sup>

His recording legacy could be considered larger than life: several hundred recordings spanning little more than a decade (1912-1924) and made with the foremost tango ensembles of the time, such as those of Genaro Espósito, Eduardo Arolas, Roberto Firpo, Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, Orquesta Típica Select, Osvaldo Fresedo and Antonio Scatasso. His stylistic contributions include lyrical devices such as portamento, vibrato and the first traces of *fraseo*; rhythmical elements such as the percussive staccato articulations played at the frog of the bow, the first-known *arrastres* (an anticipation of the note either through a portamento, or an appoggiatura) played on the violin and syncopations; many types of ornaments, including grace notes, mordents, and runs; and finally, the use of percussive elements such as different types of pizzicato (regular, left-hand, and *guitarrita*), *saltellato* (a bouncing bow), and *sirena*, a wailing siren-like sound.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Horacio Ferrer names Roccatagliata as the first violinist whose performance style has had a lasting impact on tango violin playing.<sup>5</sup> Of course, Roccatagliata did not invent all of the stylistic elements that he employed; as I discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, musicians such as Casimiro Alcorta, Ernesto Ponzio and José Bonano also used percussive elements such as *canyengue* (Alcorta, Ponzio), pizzicato (Ponzio, Bonano), and *guitarrita* (Ponzio); ornamentation such as grace notes (Ponzio, Bonano); and lyrical devices such as portamento and vibrato (Bonano). Roccatagliata’s career overlapped with these violinists, and he was most certainly informed by their playing style. However, he took these elements and developed them much further, creating a very distinctive personal style with a panache not previously heard in the genre.

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<sup>3</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 406.

<sup>4</sup> See Ramón Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 26-42; Omar Brunelli “El fraseo en el tango”; Julián Peralta, *The Tango Orchestra: Fundamental Concepts and Techniques*, 32-33; Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 61-81. According to Ramiro Gallo, *arrastres* can be defined as an “anticipation of the real note” and are a key aspect of rhythmic ornamentation in tango music. See Gallo, 103.

<sup>5</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia y evolución*, 62-3.



Yet, unlike his violinistic successor, Julio De Caro, who played a great role in codifying and standardizing tango performance practice on the violin, Roccatagliata's style could be considered much more experimental, rapidly evolving and therefore much less established, especially due to his short lifetime. Furthermore, unlike De Caro, who made many of the artistic decisions as leader of his ensembles, Roccatagliata's practice was in many ways defined by the orchestras in which he played, since he was not the artistic leader.<sup>6</sup> There was a great proliferation of stylistic elements heard in the 1920 Orquesta Típica Select recordings, where Roccatagliata clearly had more artistic freedom; subsequent recordings made with the Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo (1922) and Orquesta Antonio Scatasso (1924) are much more subdued, reflective of the artistic decisions of their directors. Nonetheless, there are strong musical connections between Roccatagliata and De Caro, who carried on the violinistic traditions established by Roccatagliata. For example, De Caro cites Roccatagliata's pizzicatos, *canyengues* and portamenti in his autobiography, describing Roccatagliata as a *gran alma tanguera*, or a great tango soul.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, this connection was reinforced by two well-known musicians who performed with both violinists: Osvaldo Fresedo (who performed with Roccatagliata in the Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, Orquesta Típica Select and Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo, and with De Caro in Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo), and Juan Carlos Cobián (with Roccatagliata in Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo, and De Caro in Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián). A further connection between Roccatagliata and De Caro is via Enrique Delfino, who performed alongside Roccatagliata in Orquesta Típica Select and who would have a profound compositional influence on both De Caro and his brother Francisco, both greatly inspired by Delfino's *tango romanza*, a primarily lyrical genre of instrumental tango music.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Roccatagliata released three pieces (*Viaje a Europa*, *Ponele nombre*, and *Soñando*) with an ensemble bearing his name: Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata, recorded with Odeon in 1913. According to Enrique Binda, this was likely the orchestra of Eduardo Arolas recording under a different name, standard practice at the time. Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional (1902-1926)*, 124; also, Enrique Binda, personal communication, 13 April 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 154-156.

<sup>8</sup> Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 147.

## Source material

There are three main types of sources I consulted in preparation for this chapter: primary, secondary, and digitalized recordings of Roccatagliata. Unfortunately, there are no known surviving descriptions of Roccatagliata's playing during his lifetime. Of the primary sources, almost all of them are advertisements for recordings. Only one advertisement mentions Roccatagliata specifically by name. Casa Tagini, then the local concessionary of Columbia Records, published their catalogue in a series of advertisements in *Fray Mocho* in March 1913 (7; 14; 21; 28 March), specifying both *criollo* and international repertoire. The final instalment of the catalogue, published on 28 March, includes Roccatagliata's photograph as part of the Orquesta típica Genaro Espósito, a trio composed by Roccatagliata, violin; Espósito, bandoneon; and Roberto Firpo, piano.<sup>9</sup> The catalogue also mentions eight recordings made by the trio.



Figure 20 Catalogue, Casa Tagini, Fray Mocho, 28 March 1913, permission given by Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut

Other such advertisements feature ensembles with which Roccatagliata recorded, although they do not name him specifically. Some examples include advertisements for the orchestras of Eduardo Arolas (Odeon, *Caras y caretas*, 28 March 1914 and 25 April 1914), Roberto Firpo (Odeon, *Caras y caretas*,

<sup>9</sup> *Fray Mocho*, 28 March 1913, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, accessed 18 November 2024, [https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863753094/1/LOG\\_0003/](https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863753094/1/LOG_0003/). According to Enrique Binda, the caption should read Roccatagliata, Espósito and Firpo (Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 81). Other instalments of the catalogue can be found on 7, 14 and 21 March 1913 in *Fray Mocho*.

28 March 1914, 25 April 1914, 11 July 1914, 27 March 1915, 11 November 1916, 25 November 1916), Orquesta Típica Select (Victor, *Caras y caretas*, 18 March 1922, 25 March 1922), and Orquesta Típica Fresedo (Victor, *Caras y caretas*, 9 September 1922); through consulting a variety of secondary sources, I was able to determine that Roccatagliata played on all of these recordings.<sup>10</sup> Other primary source material includes a few photos featuring Roccatagliata in various ensembles, taken by the photographer Fermín Barnard.<sup>11</sup>

Of the secondary sources, by far the most influential is the 1972 article about Roccatagliata published in *Estudios de tango*, which discusses his life, musical career, discography, and compositional output.<sup>12</sup> Published under the pseudonym Fueye Querido (referring to a bandoneon, colloquially referred to as bellows or *fuelle* – in Lunfardo, *fueye* – in Argentina), the article draws upon discographic catalogues, published interviews of Roberto Firpo and Enrique Delfino, and a recently published booklet about Osvaldo Fresedo (Enrique Haba’s “Osvaldo Fresedo” in *Apuntes de tango 4*) in order to paint a fairly complete picture of Roccatagliata’s contributions to tango.<sup>13</sup> However, the author of the article insists on Roccatagliata’s alcohol and drug abuse, which rather detracts from the violinist’s legacy. For example, the author suggests that Roccatagliata was “too affected by his passion for alcohol” to record on some days of the “three month” recording session in Camden, New Jersey (USA) with Orquesta Típica Select, which would explain why there were no violin solo pieces.<sup>14</sup> This version of the story has been refuted by Enrique Binda, who points to the contractual agreement of fifty recordings made by the ensemble, in addition to four solo pieces for piano (Delfino) and two for bandoneon (Fresedo), as well as the Victor recording ledgers, that showed that

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<sup>10</sup> All of these advertisements can be found in *Caras y Caretas*: 28 March 1914 and 25 April 1914; 11 July 1914; 27 March 1915; 11 November 1916; 25 November 1916; 18 March 1922; 25 March 1922; 9 September 1922.

<sup>11</sup> Fermín Barnard was a well-known photographer and collector of tango materials. His archive is currently being housed at Instituto Nacional de Música (INAMU) in Buenos Aires. I was given permission to view and scan his photographs.

<sup>12</sup> Fueye Querido, “Músicos fundamentales del tango: ¡Tito!,” 406-420.

<sup>13</sup> The sources mentioned in Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” include Enrique Haba, “Osvaldo Fresedo,” *Apuntes de tango 4* (El Club de la Guardia Nueva, 1968); *La Nación*, 14 September 1961 (about Enrique Delfino); as well as an interview of Roberto Firpo published in *Aquí Está*, publication date unknown (see Fueye Querido, 408).

<sup>14</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 413.

the recordings took place between 24 August and 2 September 1920, not over a period of three months.<sup>15</sup> Roccatagliata's alcoholic tendencies did not cause him to miss certain days of what would become one of the most emblematic series of recordings in the history of tango music, because his recordings occurred consecutively during that one-week period. Nonetheless, the same version of the story is repeated in the 1980 biography of Roccatagliata published in *Tango, un siglo de historia*, which almost certainly used the *Estudios de tango* article as a source.<sup>16</sup>

Other secondary source material is primarily related to Roccatagliata's musical activities. These are all historical in nature, and not musicological, as they provide descriptions of the musicians he performed and recorded with, but do not provide musical analyses. In all sources consulted, Roccatagliata is hailed as the greatest tango violinist of his generation. *Estudios de tango* goes one step further, ranking Roccatagliata as the best tango violinist of all time in a 1972 study, followed by other illustrious names such as Elvino Vardaro, Cayetano Puglisi, Agesilao Ferrazzano and Julio De Caro, a sentiment echoed by violinist Esteban Rovatti.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, there is a consensus that Roccatagliata paved the way for future generations of prominent tango violinists, notably Julio De Caro and Elvino Vardaro. Julio De Caro, writing in his autobiography *El tango en mis recuerdos*, cites Roccatagliata as an intuitive and creative musician who created a true violinistic style in tango music, including pizzicato, *canyengues*, portamenti, and ornaments or *floreos*.<sup>18</sup> Others cite his lyricism, the development of solo passages, especially those first played in a medium register and later in either a higher or lower register, a range of pizzicato techniques (developing on those heard in the playing of Ernesto Ponzio), the first traces of *fraseos*, a “driving” quality in his sound (frequently anticipating notes), portamenti and glissandi, the use of vibrato as a stylistic mechanism, as well as

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>16</sup> “David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliata (sic): Un talento inimitable,” *Tango: Un siglo de historia, 1880-1980* 17 (Editorial Perfil S.A., 1980): 264-5.

<sup>17</sup> “El ranking del tango,” *Estudios de Tango* 10 (July-August 1972): 509; Quoted in Néstor Pinsón, “Tito Roccatagliata,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/941/Tito-Roccatagliata/>.

<sup>18</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 153; 158.

various percussive techniques.<sup>19</sup> As Rubén Pesce writes, Roccatagliata “knew how to adapt his instrument to his way of feeling the tango”.<sup>20</sup>

One element of his playing commented on by several sources is his musical training, of which very little is known. Roccatagliata’s solid technical foundation, in terms of agility, accuracy and sound quality, is evident in the many recordings he left behind, which would suggest some sort of musical training as a child. Violinist Emilio Fresedo, the brother of Roccatagliata’s colleague Osvaldo, stated that Roccatagliata was well-taught and had performed in several classical orchestras.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the violinist Juan Pedro Castillo, originally a mandolin player, claims to have studied with Roccatagliata, sometime after 1910.<sup>22</sup> In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I discussed musical education in Buenos Aires in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is probable that Roccatagliata also studied in one of these music schools, such as the Conservatorio Williams or Beethoven, as did musicians such as Ernesto Ponzio or Juan Carlos Cobián. On the other hand, Julio De Caro, as well as Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, describe Roccatagliata as an intuitive musician, suggesting he had a strong level of self-training.<sup>23</sup> As a tango violinist, his playing was shaped by his prolific, if short-lived career. Not only did he perform alongside the most famous musicians of the day, but he was also influenced, at least in some capacity, by violinistic predecessors such as Ernesto Ponzio, from whom he inherited techniques such as the *guitarrita*.

Finally, several sources provided crucial information about Roccatagliata’s recordings. Compiling and determining Roccatagliata’s exact discography was a massive challenge. Unfortunately, with the exception of Victor, record labels of the time did not keep records of who was performing on which album and many times the same formation would record on different labels with different names (and

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<sup>19</sup> Pepe and Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 7-8, 15-16; Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 28; De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 153; Blas Matamoro, *Ciudad de tango*, 114.

<sup>20</sup> Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 497.

<sup>21</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 407; “David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliatta [sic]: Un talento inimitable,” 265; Néstor Pinsón, “Tito Roccatagliata.” *Tango: un siglo de historia* and Pinsón clearly used Fueye Querido as a source.

<sup>22</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 117.

<sup>23</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 153; Pepe and Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 15.

at least some of the same musicians).<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, even Victor did not always record the names of the individual musicians, or did not list them correctly. Roccatagliata is only mentioned in Victor's ledgers as a performer in Orquesta Típica Select, listed erroneously as "Tito Delfino".<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the records themselves suggest that Orquesta Típica Select was a trio, specifying the players as "Delfino-Tito-Fresedo".



Figure 21 Victor record label: OTS, 1920, image permission given by Enrique Binda<sup>26</sup>

However, the ensemble was actually a quintet. The three members of the ensemble mentioned on the recording labels (Roccatagliata, Delfino and Fresedo) travelled from Buenos Aires by ship to the Victor studios in Camden, New Jersey (United States), arriving in August 1920.<sup>27</sup> There, they were joined by two locally-based musicians, Luis Alberto Infantas (violin), present on the Victor ledgers

<sup>24</sup> Enrique Binda, "Las orquestas típicas y el disco, 1910-1912."

<sup>25</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Delfino, Tito," accessed 4 September 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/311768>.

<sup>26</sup> Enrique Binda, "La otra Orquesta típica Select," *Todo Tango*, accessed 21 February 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/374/The-other-Orquesta-Tipica-Select/>.

<sup>27</sup> Andrea Matallana, *El tango entre dos Américas: Representaciones en Estados Unidos durante las primeras décadas del siglo XX* (Eudeba, 2016), 107.

from 24 August 1920, and cellist Alfred Lennartz from 26 August 1920.<sup>28</sup> Infantas was an Argentine violinist living in New York, and he would later have two brief roles in the Carlos Gardel films *El tango en Broadway* and *El día que me quieras*; Lennartz was a prolific Victor recording artist, performing in popular and classical ensembles from 1911 until 1929.<sup>29</sup> Neither are known, however, to have had specialist knowledge in tango music. Enrique Binda suggests that the presence of non-specialist musicians, the fact that most of the pieces were only recorded in one take, and the existence of a very similar Orquesta típica Columbia album that appeared shortly after, indicates the presence of written arrangements, something generally attributed to the orchestra of Julio De Caro from 1924 on.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, Victor's ledgers, as preserved in the Discography of American Historical Recordings, are a vital source of information.<sup>31</sup> Other key sources include Enrique Binda's excellent *Los primeros 25 años de la fonografía nacional (1902-1926)*; Marina Cañardo's *Fábricas de músicas: Comienzos de la industria discográfica en la Argentina (1919-1930)*; and the discographies of Eduardo Arolas, Genaro Espósito, Roberto Firpo, Orquesta Típica Select, and Osvaldo Fresedo.<sup>32</sup>

### David "Tito" Roccatagliata: the man

The dates of his birth and death are approximate at best, and his family origins are uncertain. Most sources list Roccatagliata's dates of birth and death based on a proclamation made by Raúl Lafuente of the Academia Porteña del Lunfardo: Roccatagliata was born in Buenos Aires on 30 January 1891,

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<sup>28</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Victor matrix B-24413. Nueve puntos / Orquesta Típica Select," accessed 21 February 2024, [https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/700009627/B-24413-Nueve\\_puntos](https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/700009627/B-24413-Nueve_puntos).

<sup>29</sup> Carlos Groppa, "Orquesta típica Select," *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 9 October 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2009/08/orquesta-tipica-select.html>; Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!," 413. See Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup> Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 179; Binda, "La otra Orquesta típica Select".

<sup>31</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/>.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix A of this thesis.

and died in Buenos Aires on 7 October 1925, at the age of 34.<sup>33</sup> Publications prior to Lafuente's proclamation that mention Roccatagliata either do not discuss his dates of birth and death, or list them as sometime around 1890 (birth) and 1924/1925 (death).<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, Lafuente does not provide a large amount of information, except that he was able to obtain Roccatagliata's marriage license from a niece of Roccatagliata – no name mentioned, nor that of Roccatagliata's spouse – who also communicated Roccatagliata's date of death to him. The 1980 publication *Tango: Un siglo de historia* mentions the uncertainty of Roccatagliata's origins, stating that he, or his parents, could easily have emigrated from Italy.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the surname Roccatagliata is of Ligurian origin, suggesting that the family's origins lie in or near Genoa.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the likelihood of the family's Ligurian origins, Roccatagliata's father's first name is unfortunately unknown. According to Héctor Ernié, however, Roccatagliata's mother's name was Cayetana L. Roccatagliata.<sup>37</sup> In 1917, Eduardo Arolas – Roccatagliata's great colleague and friend – dedicated his *tango sentimental* entitled *Lágrimas* ("Tears") to her. The cover of the published score (Figure 22) shows a woman crying when an inebriated-looking violinist appears in the doorway, carrying his violin case under one arm and a bottle of what appears to be wine in his other hand. Ernié claims the cover may have been drawn by Arolas himself and certainly reflected reality, Roccatagliata's addictions to drugs and alcohol being well-known.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Raúl F. Lafuente, "Comunicación académica número 572, del señor Raúl F. Lafuente, acerca de Tito Roccatagliata," (Academia Porteña del Lunfardo, 5 April 1973).

<sup>34</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!," 406. Earlier publications such as those of De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*; Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*; or Pepe and Casco, "El violín en el tango" do not mention dates of birth or death.

<sup>35</sup> "David 'Tito' Roccatagliatta (sic): Un talento inimitable," 265.

<sup>36</sup> According to the Italian genealogy website Cognomix.it, there are about 185 Roccatagliata families in Italy, and 123 of them alone in Liguria, with 26 in neighbouring Lombardy and just 13 in Piemonte. See "Diffusione del cognome Roccatagliata," Cognomix, accessed 31 January 2024, <https://www.cognomix.it/mappe-dei-cognomi-italiani/ROCCATAGLIATA>. See Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>37</sup> Héctor Ernié, "Arolas," in *La historia del tango 5: El bandoneón*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 746. A similar account, with fewer details, appears in Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!," 411.

<sup>38</sup> Héctor Ernié, "Arolas," 746.





Figure 22 Eduardo Arolas, *Lágrimas*, public domain<sup>39</sup>

If the drawing is to be taken as a representation of Roccatagliata's life, then we might suppose that the woman depicted, of indeterminable age, is his wife, and not his mother. Accordingly, Cayetana could have been the name of his wife, who was known as "La Gallega," and to whom he dedicated the tango of the same name.<sup>40</sup> *Gallega* would suggest that his wife had Spanish origins, the term having been used to describe Spaniards, or Argentines of Spanish origin, since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, in the absence of more information, only conjecture is possible. In any case, there is no

<sup>39</sup> Ricardo García Blaya, "Eduardo Arolas," *Todo Tango*, accessed 1 February 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/ficha/4/Eduardo-Arolas>.

<sup>40</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!," 419.

<sup>41</sup> José C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (University of California Press, 1998), 15.

record of a Cayetana Roccatagliata (nor that of David) in the ecclesiastical records of the city or the province of Buenos Aires, which may have shed more light on the matter if found.<sup>42</sup>

Although reports of Roccatagliata's alcoholism may have been slightly exaggerated, in that it did not stop him from completing the Orquesta Típica Select recordings, it does seem highly likely that he suffered from addictions to alcohol and drugs. The frequency with which he changed ensembles, as well the virtual lack of recordings made in the last few years of his life (of his several hundred recordings, the vast majority were made by 1920, with only a handful recorded with Fresedo in 1922, and shortly before his death in 1925 with Antonio Scatasso), and finally his untimely death at the age of 34, are likely connected to his drug and alcohol problems.

Periodically from 1909 until 1917, he lived and worked very closely to the great bandoneon player Eduardo Arolas with whom he shared a similar lifestyle. As mentioned above, Arolas' composition *Lágrimas*, dedicated to Cayetana Roccatagliata, features a woman crying while a drunken violinist enters the room on its cover. Arolas himself died just a year before Roccatagliata in Paris in September 1924, officially of tuberculosis but after years of problems with alcohol.<sup>43</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, writing just a decade after Arolas' death, describe his health problems coyly, saying that he lived "artistically" and "intensely, perhaps abusing the pleasure of living and got tired too soon" of life.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, anecdotes of Roccatagliata's alcoholic tendencies abound: for example, in Cadícamo's biography of Cobián, the author discusses Arolas, Roccatagliata and Cobián's penchant for alcohol, describing a period in which the trio emptied a demijohn of gin (about five litres) while working at the café "Las Delicias" in Córdoba.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "Colección nacimiento, matrimonio y defunción: Argentina, Buenos Aires, registros parroquiales, 1635-1981" and "Colección nacimiento, matrimonio y defunción: Argentina, Capital Federal, registros parroquiales, 1737-1977)," Family Search, accessed 31 January 2024, <https://www.familysearch.org/es/>.

<sup>43</sup> Bulletin de Décès, Hôpital Bichat, Paris, 13 September 1924; *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 112.

<sup>44</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 101.

<sup>45</sup> Cadícamo, *El desconocido*, 34. The information about demijohn quantities was found here: Juan Diego Wasilevsky, "Durante décadas, supieron reinar en las mesas de los argentinos. Hoy, condenadas al olvido, resisten en los pueblos del interior," IProfesional, accessed 2 February 2024, <https://www.iprofesional.com/vinos/184233-auge-y-caida-del-vino-en-damajuanas-ya-representan-menos-del-5-del-consumo-total>.

In addition to alcohol abuse, Roccatagliata was known to have issues with drug addiction, notably cocaine, which would eventually claim his life. These reports emanate, however, from the same source: Fueye Querido writing in *Estudios de tango*, and are subsequently repeated in other sources, whose authors almost certainly consulted that article.<sup>46</sup> As such, *Estudios de tango* speculates about the “trance-like” state that Roccatagliata may have played in, high on cocaine, which could have influenced his “improvisations”.<sup>47</sup> The authors continue, claiming to have heard through “oral tradition” that he required his wife, La Gallega, to prostitute herself to earn money for the purchase of drugs.<sup>48</sup> Finally, they insinuate that Julio De Caro may have lent him money, having run into him on the street, which he then used to buy the drugs that led to his final overdose.<sup>49</sup> Whether or not these allegations are true – the “trance-like” state and the prostitution of his wife, as well as the money lent by Julio De Caro seeming particularly spurious accusations – it is not implausible that Roccatagliata suffered from a cocaine addiction. Drug use, cocaine in particular, was rampant in the cabarets of the 1910s and 1920s in Buenos Aires.<sup>50</sup> Roberto Arlt, writing as part of his famous *Aguafuertes porteñas*, a series of articles depicting the urban life of Buenos Aires in the newspaper *El Mundo* between 1928 and 1933, describes the glittering atmosphere of calle Corrientes (later Avenida), the epicentre of tango music and the cabaret of the 1920s and 1930s:

Falling between the great cubic buildings, with panoramas of spit-roasted chickens and gilded halls, and cocaine stands, and theatre lobbies, how wonderfully shameless calle Corrientes is at night! How beautiful and how lazy! More than a street, it seems like a living thing, a creation that exudes cordiality from every pore; our street, the only street that has a soul in this city...<sup>51</sup>

A look at Roccatagliata’s discography shows an abundance of alcohol- and drug-related titles. A few examples include: *Curda completa* (“Complete drunkenness,” 1913, Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas,

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<sup>46</sup> See reports of drug usage in Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 417-419. Other sources that discuss his drug usage were published after this article. These include: Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas de la Guardia Vieja,” 500-501; “David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliatta [sic]: Un talento inimitable,” 265-268, published in 1980; and his biography on TodoTango.com (Néstor Pinsón, “Tito Roccatagliatta”).

<sup>47</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 417.

<sup>48</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 419.

<sup>49</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 419.

<sup>50</sup> Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*, 149-150.

<sup>51</sup> *El Mundo*, 26 March 1929.

and Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, 1914); *Noche de farra* (“Night of partying,” 1913, Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas; also, Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, 1913); *Champagne tango* (Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, 1914), and *La copa del olvido* (“The glass of oblivion,” Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo, 1922). Finally, one of Roccatagliata’s final recordings refers directly to drug usage: Juan Carlos Cobián’s *Los dopados*, or “The doped ones,” made with Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo on 25 August 1922.<sup>52</sup>

It is undeniable that Roccatagliata died an untimely death, despite the unconfirmed allegations of drug and alcohol abuse: on 7 October 1925, his body was found in his house located at Rodríguez Peña 351 in central Buenos Aires, less than one block from (then) calle Corrientes.<sup>53</sup> Officially, he died of cardiac arrest; following a drug overdose, it is claimed.<sup>54</sup> These stories are a part of the legend surrounding Roccatagliata’s life, and contribute to the myth-creations around him, that of a flawed genius, whose stylistic influences forever changed the nature of tango violin playing, despite his supposed addictions. Such myth creation is not atypical in early tango history. As we saw in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Casimiro Alcorta’s memory only survives in the form of myth, and Ernesto Ponzio himself controlled the narrative of the myths surrounding his life, through a series of media interviews.<sup>55</sup> As there are no known interviews of Roccatagliata, we do not have his version of the story. Instead, his life as legend is, as Fueye Querido writes, a tango lyric: tragic, dramatic, short.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Today, the tango is known as *Los mareados* (“The dizzy/tipsy ones”). According to Horacio Belmaña, *Los dopados* was initially forgotten, until in the 1930s Aníbal Troilo approached Enrique Cadícamo with the instrumental version of the tango, asking him to write lyrics for it (neither knew the tango had lyrics already); the lyrics formed the basis for *Los mareados*. See Horacio Belmaña, “Los mareados,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 22 February 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/123/Los-mareados-Los-mareados/>.

<sup>53</sup> Proclamación 571; “David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliatta [sic]: Un talento inimitable,” 268.

<sup>54</sup> “David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliatta [sic]: Un talento inimitable,” 268.

<sup>55</sup> A main difference between Alcorta, Ponzio and Roccatagliata is that Ponzio lived until 1934, a time in which specialized press about the popular music industry proliferated. Alcorta is thought to have died in 1915, and Roccatagliata in 1925, preceding the creation of the first widespread specialized publication, *La Canción Moderna*, in 1928.

<sup>56</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 406.

## David “Tito” Roccatagliata: the violinist

### *Ensembles*

Roccatagliata performed in many of the most representative ensembles of the 1910s and 1920s. However, many of these were short-lived, and it is not always clear when he left various ensembles, due to conflicting information in historiographical materials. Likewise, as discussed earlier in this chapter, his discography can be very confusing, because he left ensembles such as Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo and Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo during periods in which they made many recordings, making it challenging to identify recordings featuring Roccatagliata. In this section, I have tried to give an overview of ensembles he is known to have played with, and those with which he recorded. Despite the hundreds of recordings he left behind, live performance was the dominant activity of the time, in the many cafés, *casas de baile* and (later) cabarets of Buenos Aires. As such, while the first traces of his musical activity date to 1908, when he began to play in a trio with Juan Carlos Bazán (clarinet) and Roberto Firpo (piano), his first known recordings were made in 1912, as part of Genaro Espósito’s ensemble.

Roccatagliata’s participation in numerous orchestras, and his transition from café performer to recording artist mirrors the larger social ascension of tango during this period, detailed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. One major turning point occurred when musicians such as Roccatagliata began to play in cabarets, luxurious Parisian-inspired venues such as the *Armenonville*, the *Elysée*, and the *Royal Pigalle*, that were vital performance spaces for tango music in the period from 1910-1935; Blas Matamoro refers to their presence as part of the “new ecology” of tango during the period.<sup>57</sup> In particular, Matamoro identifies two generations of tango musicians who played in these cabarets: the first, musicians who had emerged from tango’s more plebian past, such as Roccatagliata, Roberto Firpo and Juan Maglio “Pacho”, and the newer generation associated with the *Guardia Nueva* – from

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<sup>57</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad de tango*, 96-97.

middle class backgrounds – namely Julio De Caro, Enrique Delfino and Juan Carlos Cobián.<sup>58</sup> In particular, Roberto Firpo, with whom Roccatagliata performed and recorded from 1913-1917, played a critical role in Roccatagliata’s career, both musically and socially. Notably, Firpo insisted that his musicians wear tuxedos and bowties when performing in such venues.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Eduardo Arolas, known as the “dandy” of tango music, dressed his musicians in tuxedos, as can be seen in the 1913 photo below (Figure 23).<sup>60</sup>



*Figure 23 Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas (1913). Roccatagliata (violin), Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon), Gregorio Astudillo (flute) and Emilio Fernández (guitar). Archive of Fermín Bernard, permission given by INAMU<sup>61</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 98-99.

<sup>59</sup> Oscar Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón*, 353.

<sup>60</sup> Oscar Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón*, 353.

<sup>61</sup> Archive of Fermín Barnard, property of INAMU. The same photo can be found in Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes*, 364.

In order to understand the interactions between the musicians at such a formative time of tango music, I am particularly concerned with assessing, as much as possible, which recordings he was playing on, in order to develop a clear picture of his stylistic practice preserved on these recordings.<sup>62</sup> Table 3 presents a list of ensembles in which Roccatagliata is known to have performed, and recorded. Where possible, I have indicated the ensembles and musicians with whom he played, as well as the locations where they are known to have performed, in order to present a complete picture of his performance and recording career. This data helps situate Roccatagliata within the broader network of early tango musicians and allows us to trace the social mobility of his artistic activities, notably his evolution from performances in cafés early in his career to more luxurious cabarets such as *El Armenonville* and *L'Abbaye*, as well as his prolific discographic activity.

| Year | Formation  | Live performance   | Recording, label            | Quantity of recordings |
|------|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1908 | Trio with Juan Carlos Bazán (clarinet); Roberto Firpo (piano) <sup>63</sup>                                      | El Tambito, Palermo  | No                          |                        |
| 1910 | Orchestra of Juan Carlos Bazán; with Arturo Bernstein (bandoneon), Pedro Modesto Ramírez (piano) <sup>64</sup>   | Café Oriental (Entre Ríos between Estados Unidos and Carlos Calvo) | No                          |                        |
| 1911 | Quartet with Agustín Bardi (piano); Carlos ‘Hernani’ Macchi (flute), Graciano De Leone (bandoneon) <sup>65</sup> | ?  | No                          |                        |
| 1912 | Orquesta de Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon); Vicente Pecci (flute), Emilio Fernández (guitar) <sup>66</sup>           | Café Apolo (Corrientes 1373)                                       | Yes, Polyphon <sup>67</sup> | 4                      |
| 1912 | Ensemble with Agustín Bardi (piano); Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon) <sup>68</sup>                                    | Cafés T.V.O. and Leon, Barracas                                    | No                          |                        |

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix C for a full discography of Roccatagliata.

<sup>63</sup> Fernando Assunção, *El tango y sus circunstancias*, 172.

<sup>64</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 407.

<sup>65</sup> Horacio Salas, *El tango*, 113.

<sup>66</sup> Oscar Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes*, 363.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>68</sup> *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 112.

| Year      | Formation   | Live performance  | Recording, label                                  | Quantity of recordings   |
|-----------|---|---|---|--|
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito (bandoneon); Roberto Firpo (piano) <sup>69</sup>   | ?   | Yes, Columbia <sup>70</sup>                       | 10   |
| 1913      | Trio with Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon), Roberto Firpo (piano) <sup>71</sup>   | Café El Estribo (Entre Ríos 763); El Armenonville (Avenida Alvear); L'Abbaye (calle Esmeralda); Café Benigno (Rioja 2177) | No  |  |
| 1913-1915 | Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas; Orquesta Típica Criolla JBT; Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata (same formation, different names), with Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon), José Astudillo (flute), Marcos Ramírez (guitar) <sup>72</sup>            | Café El Estribo (Entre Ríos 763); El Armenonville (Avenida Alvear); L'Abbaye (calle Esmeralda); Café Benigno (Rioja 2177) | Yes, Odeon; JBT, Tocaloso Sin Rival <sup>73</sup> | 30 (Odeon, OT Eduardo Arolas); 3 (Odeon, OTC Roccatagliata); 13 (JBT, OTC Arolas); 3 (Tocaloso Sin Rival, OTC JBT) |
| 1913-1917 | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo with Firpo (piano), Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon, until 1914), Bachicha (bandoneon, from 1914), Agesilao Ferrazzano (violin 2, from 1915), Alejandro Michetti (flute) Leopoldo Thompson (double bass). <sup>74</sup> | L'Abbaye, El Armenonville, Teatro Colón (Rosario, Carnaval 1917), La Giralda (Montevideo), Palais de Glace (Posadas 1430) | Yes, Atlanta; ERA; Odeon <sup>75</sup>            | 14 (Atlanta); 25 (ERA); Odeon (until the end of 1917, 221)   |
| 1917      | Trio, Quartet with Eduardo Arolas (bandoneon); Juan Carlos Cobián (piano); Juan Carlos Bazán (clarinet, only quartet) <sup>76</sup>   | Trio at Cabaret Montmartre (Corrientes 1436); Cabaret 'Fritz' (Suipacha 400); Las Delicias, (Córdoba); Quartet, unknown   | No  |  |
| 1917      | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián with Osvaldo Fresedo (bandoneon), Juan Carlos Cobián (piano) <sup>77</sup>   | L'Abbaye; El Armenonville   | Yes, TelePhone                                    | 4  |

<sup>69</sup> Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 81; *Fray Mocho*, 25 May 1913; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 408; Enrique Binda “Orquestas Típicas and Recordings,” *Todo Tango*.

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>71</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 409.

<sup>72</sup> Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón, y sus intérpretes*, 366; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 410.

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>75</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>76</sup> Information about the trio can be found in Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 34. The quartet is mentioned in *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 113.

<sup>77</sup> Fueye Querido, “Tito !,” 412; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Osvaldo Fresedo,” in *La historia del tango 5: El bandoneón*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 791. According to Sierra, Roccatagliata offered



| Year      | Formation  | Live performance                            | Recording, label          | Quantity of recordings   |
|-----------|--|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1918      | Quartet with Juan Carlos Cobián, Ricardo Brignolo (bandoneon); Agesilao Ferrazzano (violin 2) <sup>78</sup>  | L'Abbaye                                    | No                        |                          |
| 1920      | Orquesta Típica Select with Enrique Delfino (piano), Osvaldo Fresedo (bandoneon), Alberto Infantas Arancibia (violin 2), Alfred Lennartz (cello) <sup>79</sup>                                     | Unknown                                     | Yes, Victor               | 52                       |
| 1921      | Cuarteto de Maestros with Enrique Delfino (piano), Osvaldo Fresedo (bandoneon), and Agesilao Ferrazzano (violin 2) <sup>80</sup>   | Cine Capitol                                | No                        |                          |
| 1922      | Orquesta Típica Fresedo, with Osvaldo Fresedo (bandoneon 1), Alberto Rodríguez (bandoneon 2), Manlio Francia (violin 2), Juan Carlos Cobián (piano), Leopoldo Thompson (double bass) <sup>81</sup> | Abdullah Club (Galería Güemes, Florida 165) | Yes, Victor               | Approx. 30 <sup>82</sup> |
| 1922-1923 | Trio with Juan Carlos Cobián (piano) and Luis Petrucelli (bandoneon) <sup>83</sup>   | Casino Pigall (Maipú 300)                   | No                        |                          |
| 1924-1925 | Orquesta Típica Antonio Scatasso with Scatasso (bandoneon), Fidel Del Negro (piano), Bernardo Germino (violin 2?), Luis Bernstein (double bass) <sup>84</sup>                                      | Café El Nacional (Bolívar 220)              | Yes, Victor <sup>85</sup> | 12                       |

Table 3 Discography of David "Tito" Roccatagliata

Having established a more precise performance history and discography, in the next section, I will address his performance style, with a focus on his lyrical, rhythmical, ornamental and percussive techniques. My findings are based upon an analysis of 115 recordings, drawn from Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito (4); Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas (15); Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo (27); Trio

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Fresedo to replace Arolas in the trio, having been offered better conditions at L'Abbaye. Cadícamo writes that Arolas left the trio "for reasons that are not very elegant to comment upon." Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 35.

<sup>78</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!", 412; Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 35.

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>80</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!", 418. When Enrique Delfino left the ensemble, he was replaced by Juan Carlos Cobián. See *Tango, un siglo de historia* 265.

<sup>81</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>82</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>83</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!", 419.

<sup>84</sup> Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!", 419; Fermín Barnard archive (photograph).

<sup>85</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Orquesta Scatasso," accessed September 5, 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/335521>.

Fresedo-Tito-Cobián (3); Orquesta Típica Select (48); Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo (16); and Orquesta Antonio Scatasso (2).<sup>86</sup>

Nonetheless, while my focus is on Roccatagliata and the violin, his stylistic development did not occur in a bubble. Instead, it was directly related to, and informed by, the ensemble in which he was performing. Although stylistic characteristics of orchestras such as those of Arolas, Firpo, and Fresedo are well-documented, I would like to mention a few ways in which these orchestras impacted Roccatagliata's playing.<sup>87</sup> From a stylistic point of view, Eduardo Arolas's orchestra can be considered one of the first ensembles that developed expressivity in a significant way. Known for his legato sound quality, Arolas introduced changes in register, as well as playing in intervals (instead of all instruments playing the melody in unison, as had previously been the norm), in addition to creating a "singing" or lyrical character in tango music.<sup>88</sup> According to bandoneonist Pedro Laurenz, who would rise to prominence in the orchestra of Julio De Caro, Arolas can be credited with developing instrumental *fraseo*, a way of performing melodies in accordance with *Porteño* speech patterns; speaking in 1954, he said "the *fraseo* that is stylized today, that today is considered modern, was already being used by Arolas in 1920".<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Arolas may have invented the *arrastre*, the "dragging" effect occurring when a note is anticipated either with a glissando, chord, or chromatic

scale (  ).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> These recordings, all digitalized, were sourced from a number of archives, including those of the IIMCV, Enrique Binda, DAHR, and Fresedo.de (Mark John).

<sup>87</sup> Some examples of stylistic discussions of these orchestras include Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*; Pablo Kohan, *El ADN del tango*; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*.

<sup>88</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 78-79.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón*, 383. The quote comes from a transcription of a radio documentary in 1954, entitled "La llegada de los restos de Arolas," broadcast on Radio El Mundo on 19 April 1954.

<sup>90</sup> Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 164; Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 50. Visually, *arrastrés* are generally notated in the same way as portamenti, with a slash. Knowing how they sound, and are played, is something requiring insider interpretational knowledge. Omar García Brunelli describes interpretational devices in tango music in *emic* vs. *etic* terms. See Omar García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo en el tango," 163.

Alongside Arolas, Roberto Firpo's orchestra is credited as being one of, if not the, most innovative in the period preceding Julio De Caro.<sup>91</sup> Two elements in this orchestra would greatly impact Roccatagliata's playing: the addition of a second violin, and the addition of double bassist Leopoldo Thompson. While not all sources agree when second violinist Agesilao Ferrazzano joined the orchestra, there is a consensus that Roccatagliata's distinctive personal style incited Roberto Firpo to add a second violin to the lineup.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, the interaction of the two violins in Roberto Firpo's orchestra, with frequent countermelodies played by the second violin while Roccatagliata plays melodies and pizzicato soli, is a defining feature of the orchestra.<sup>93</sup> The different characters of Roccatagliata's and Ferrazzano's playing – Roccatagliata's nervousness complementing Ferrazzano's calmer, lyrical qualities – suited one another well, creating a thrilling combination.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, double bassist Leopoldo Thompson is credited with adding percussive elements such *golpes* (hitting the instrument with the palm of the hand) and *strappati* (hitting the strings with the bow, using ricochet) to the tango ensemble, providing the music with an undeniable swing, or groove – often referred to as *efecto canyengue*.<sup>95</sup> Thompson likely influenced Roccatagliata, who began to expand his repertoire of percussive sounds in Firpo's orchestra, and subsequently in Orquesta Típica Select.

Orquesta Típica Select can be considered one of the first true ensembles of the *Guardia Nueva*, with increasingly sophisticated structures, contrasts, musical balance and good taste.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, Omar García Brunelli indicates that the ensemble “inaugurated a more modern sound that announced a new

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<sup>91</sup> Enrique Binda, “Pre-Decarean Orchestral Innovators,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/250/Pre-Decarean-Orchestra-Innovators/>.

<sup>92</sup> According to *Antología del tango rioplatense*, two violins can be heard on the 1913 Odeon recordings, Roccatagliata and Pedro Vicente Festa, who remained in the ensemble until 1915 when replaced by Ferrazzano. Luis Adolfo Sierra situates Ferrazzano's arrival in 1914. Rubén Pesce and Fueye Querido indicate 1915. *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 189; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 65; Rubén Pesce “Principales protagonistas,” 498; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 409.

<sup>93</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 409; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 65; Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 498.

<sup>94</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 409.

<sup>95</sup> Pablo Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave,” 58; Néstor Ortiz Oderigo, *Latitudes africanas del tango*, 206; Francisco García Jiménez, *El tango*, 46.

<sup>96</sup> José María Otero, *ABC del tango*, 193.

style,” with arrangements that featured each instrument in a prominent role.<sup>97</sup> Curiously, for an ensemble that would influence the development of tango music so significantly, entering into the “mythology of tango music” according to Carlos Groppa, the group was short-lived, and did not have much media presence at the time.<sup>98</sup> Musically, the ensemble can be seen as a precursor to the Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo, in which Roccatagliata played and recorded in 1922. Fresedo’s influence, as bandoneonist of the Orquesta Típica Select, can be heard in the expanded use of contrasts and dynamics, as well as the prominence of lyrical elements within the ensemble.<sup>99</sup> However, Orquesta Típica Select plays with far more rhythmic drive and groove – more *canyengue* – than Fresedo’s orchestra. In Orquesta Típica Select, Roccatagliata’s playing can be characterized as stylistically exuberant. Building upon techniques he used in ensembles such as those of Arolas and Firpo he greatly expanded his repertoire of stylistic devices. Likewise, his “nervous” edginess, commented on previously, attains a maturity here that can be considered an essential element of his style.

In contrast, the recordings made with Osvaldo Fresedo are less wild, and more elegant. Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo could be described as very smooth, with a steady underlying rhythm, and a much more conservative approach to phrasing than that of Orquesta Típica Select. “Fresedian” elements present in Select, such as contrasts and melodic character, are more exaggerated in Fresedo’s orchestra. It is possible to speculate that Fresedo was exacting in his musical wishes in these recordings. Whereas Orquesta Típica Select recorded most pieces in one take (occasionally two), Fresedo’s orchestra recorded as many as nine takes, such as *Siete pelos*, made on 26 April 1922.<sup>100</sup> Fueye Querido claims that Roccatagliata changed his playing completely in Fresedo’s orchestra, greatly reducing percussive elements such as pizzicatos and eliminating others, such as *guitarrita*,

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<sup>97</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “Tango,” *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World Genres: Caribbean and Latin America*, vol. 9 (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 829.

<sup>98</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>99</sup> For an analysis of Fresedo’s style, see Enrique Haba, “Osvaldo Fresedo,” *Apuntes de tango* 4, 4-7.

<sup>100</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Victor matrix BA-45. Siete pelos / Orquesta Típica Fresedo,” accessed 22 February 2024, [https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004307/BA-45-Siete\\_pelos](https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004307/BA-45-Siete_pelos).

hypothesizing that Fresedo preferred a more elegant style.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, there are fewer “wild” elements in Roccatagliata’s playing on these recordings. It seems less nervous, with fewer anticipations, less ornamentations, and precise, rather than aggressive, staccato articulation. As such, the context of the ensemble must be considered when discussing the stylistic elements he employed.

### *Lyrical Qualities*

Roccatagliata’s lyrical technique can be described as a highly expressive combination of different types of portamento and a non-generalized vibrato, by which I mean that instead of vibrating every note, Roccatagliata vibrated specific notes in a phrase. In addition, it is possible to hear the emergence of *fraseo* in Roccatagliata’s recordings, although the technique would not become standardized until the sextet of Julio De Caro (1924-1932).<sup>102</sup>

Portamento can be described as the single most emblematic technique used by late nineteenth and twentieth century violinists, both classical and tango. One key distinction, however, between classical violin playing and tango violin playing is that while in classical violin, the use of the portamento waned in popularity by the 1930s, the use of portamento has remained in tango violin.<sup>103</sup> The portamento emerged in violin playing by the 19<sup>th</sup> century; one of the key texts in 19<sup>th</sup> century violin pedagogy is De Bériot’s *Méthode du violon*, in which De Bériot advocates connecting violin playing directly to singing, through attention to dynamics, “syllabation” or “pronouncing” notes as a singer would, and ornaments such as grace notes, mordents and *messa di voce*, a crescendo/decrescendo swell in the middle of longer notes.<sup>104</sup> In particular, De Bériot describes portamentos – or *port-de-voix*, “carrying the voice” – at length, identifying different types based on character: energetic, gentle,

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<sup>101</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 416.

<sup>102</sup> See Chapter 4 of this thesis for a discussion of *fraseo* in De Caro’s recordings.

<sup>103</sup> Robert Philip has shown that the popularity of vibrato and portamento in early twentieth century classical players was inversely proportional. As vibrato gained in popularity, generalized vibrato becoming common in the 1910s, the usage of portamento became less common after the 1930. Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 143.

<sup>104</sup> Charles de Bériot, *Méthode du violon*, 3<sup>e</sup> partie: *Du Style et de Ses Éléments* (Schott, 1858).

languid.<sup>105</sup> From a more technical perspective, Carl Flesch, who studied in Paris with Martin Marsick, a pupil of Hubert Léonard who had in turn studied with de Bériot, distinguished three types of portamento: a direct slide on the same finger, as well as two types involving intermediate notes, which he termed B-portamento and L-portamento. In B-portamento, the violinist departs from the initial note, sliding to an intermediate note before changing fingers, and in L-portamento, the violinist changes position before beginning the portamento, performing it with the ‘arrival’ finger.<sup>106</sup>



Figure 24 Flesch's identification of three types of portamento: a) on the same finger, b) B-portamento (portamento using departure note) and c) L-portamento (portamento using arrival note)<sup>107</sup>

Likewise, Kai Köpp, in a study of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century performance practice on the violin and singing, has identified six types of portamento: a glissando on one finger, glissando between two fingers, a glissando before the beginning of a phrase with the arrival finger, glissando before the change of the bow, after the change of the bow, and finger changes on the same note.<sup>108</sup> These types can all be found in the playing of Roccatagliata. Today, in tango practice, several of them remain common practice: ascending and descending portamenti on the same finger; descending B-portamento (to use Carl Flesch's terminology), in which the violinist departs with a portamento from the upper note, changing fingers on an intermediate sound before playing the arrival note; ascending L-portamento, in which the player changes fingers before the portamento, playing it from an intermediate note to the arrival note; finger changes on the same note, especially changing strings (for example, playing a D on the A string, and then the same D on the D string, changing timbres); and finally, a “scoop”, or a form of portamento preceding a long note, whether at the beginning of the

<sup>105</sup> De Bériot, *Méthode*, 215.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Philip, *Early Recordings*, 144-145. Information about Flesch's training can be found in Dijana Ihas, “Rational Thinkers: Ševčík and Flesch,” in *Teaching Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass: Historical and Modern Pedagogical Practices* (Routledge, 2024), 65.

<sup>107</sup> The figures are adapted from Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 145.

<sup>108</sup> Kai Köpp, “Die hohe Schule des Portamento,” *Dissonance/Dissonanz* 132 (2015): 22.

measure or within it.<sup>109</sup> The final type is a form of lyrical *arrastre*, one of the most distinctive *recursos* used in tango music, which I will discuss more in the section about rhythmical qualities. What has become less common over time, but that can be heard in Roccatagliata's recordings, is the ascending B-portamento, whereby the portamento is initiated from the lower note until an intermediate note before the violinist changes fingers (the arrival note).

Portamento can be heard in almost all the one hundred and fifteen recordings of Roccatagliata that I consulted in preparation for this chapter. As such, in this section, I will discuss a few pertinent examples of different types of portamenti: ascending and descending portamenti using the same finger, b-portamento, l-portamento, finger changes on the same note, and scoops before the beginning of the measure. The use of this technique is closely connected to the character of the phrase; while he tends to use one type of portamento in calmer passages, he more frequently mixes multiple types of both ascending and descending portamenti in more active melodic lines, attracting the listener's attention through his wide variety of slides.

As mentioned earlier this chapter, Roccatagliata often played rhythmical melodies in the Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, while the second violinist, Agesilao Ferrazzano, played lyrical countermelodies. However, we can also note the emergence of solo material for the main instruments of the ensemble during this period, something that would become standardized in the sextet of Julio De Caro. In *Para hoy* (Figure 25) the violin solo is indicated as such in the published score of the piece:

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<sup>109</sup> This discussion is partially taken from Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 110-111, as well as my own observations.



Figure 25 Para hoy (Emilio Marchiano, E. Caviglia, mm. 38-45),<sup>110</sup> orphan work license OWLS000425-1 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

Roccatagliata plays the solo as written in the score, except one octave higher, while the second violinist plays a simple rhythmical line below. In his plaintive version of the solo passage, shown in Figure 26, Roccatagliata only uses portamento on the same finger (descending in mm. 65, 66, 69 and 70, and ascending in 71):<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Emilio Marchiano, *Para hoy*, E. Caviglia, Todo Tango, accessed 24 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/3052/Para-hoy/>.

<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, I do not have any video or photographic evidence of Roccatagliata's playing. I have indicated fingerings on the basis of sonic evidence, slowing down the recordings using the program *Anytune* in order to hear the portamenti carefully, and through trying the passages out myself on the violin.





Figure 26 Para hoy (Emilio Marchiano, OTRF, 1916, mm. 65-72, from 1:53),<sup>112</sup> orphan work license OWLS000425-1 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

Furthermore, Figure 27 shows portamento on the same finger in the famous countermelody of *La cumparsita*, which Roccatagliata plays in the 1917 Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián recording:

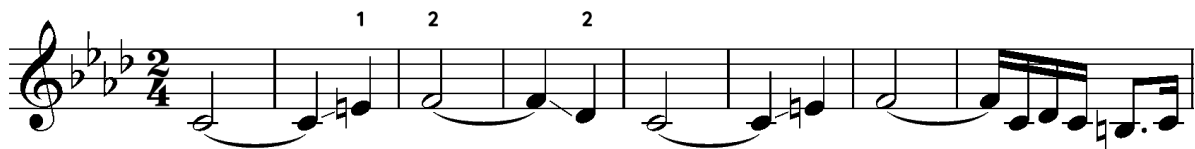


Figure 27 La cumparsita (G. Matos Rodríguez, TFTC, 1917, mm. 1-8)<sup>113</sup>

Here, the ascending portamenti in mm. 2 and 6, as well as the descending portamento in m. 4 are all played using the same finger, with a good amount of finger pressure. The portamenti can be considered the most striking parts of the phrase.

<sup>112</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Para hoy*, by Emilio Marchiano, recorded 1916, Odeon BA 108/ 478-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by Enrique Binda. From this point on, I will give the recording label (Odeon), Matrix number (BA 108) and disc number (478-B) of all recordings digitalised directly from 78 rpm. The recordings analysed in the chapter on early violinists were available on CD, so I have not listed the matrix and disc numbers there.

<sup>113</sup> Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded 1917, TelePhone 3.082, 78 rpm, digitalised by Enrique Binda.

However, it is far more common to hear passages in which Roccatagliata mixes multiple types of portamenti. In Figure 28, we can see mixed portamenti in the B-section of *Los Guevara*:



Figure 28 *Los Guevara* (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm. 17-21, from 0:29), public domain<sup>114</sup>

In this passage, we can see two main types of portamento. The first is an ascending I-type portamento (to use the terminology of Carl Flesch), whereby the arrival-note finger performs the portamento; in this instance the portamenti in both m. 17 and m. 19 use the fourth finger to go up to a harmonic *e*. The second type, a re-articulation of the same note using a different finger, also known as a scoop, can be found in m. 22.

As with all techniques, more types of portamenti, and combinations thereof, can be found in Roccatagliata's Orquesta Típica Select (1920) recordings. In *Curupayti* (Figure 29), Roccatagliata begins with a descending B-type portamento, with an intermediate note (B) marking the end of the portamento. The same thing occurs in m. 3, but then he modifies the material with an ascending B-type portamento. In m. 5, we see a portamento on the same finger from G-F#, and then a L-type portamento up to the B of m. 6. Finally, in m. 7, there is a descending portamento on the same finger.

<sup>114</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914, Odeon 357/511-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by Enrique Binda. Although this piece was recorded under the name *Los Guevara* and indicated as a composition of Roberto Firpo, the true name of the piece is *Ataniche*, likely composed by Ernesto Ponzio. For more information, see Roberto Selles, "Ataniche – Historia del tango 'Ataniche'," *Todo Tango*, accessed 27 November 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/311/Ataniche-Historia-del-tango-Ataniche/>.

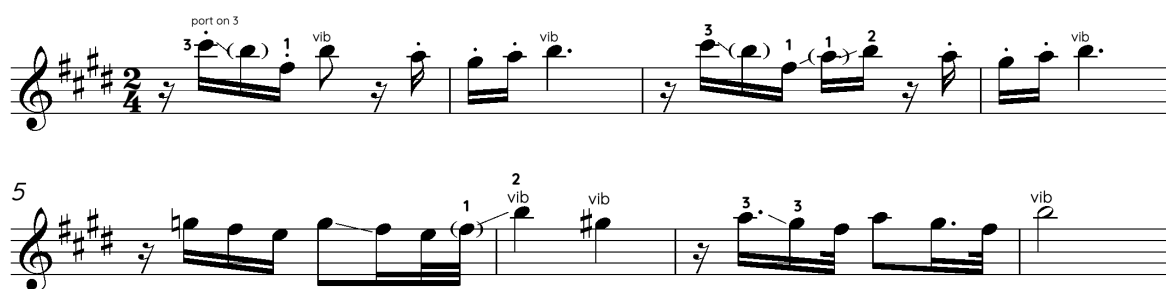


Figure 29 Curupayti (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 1-8), public domain<sup>115</sup>

In one eight-measure passage, that is a lot of portamenti! Several measures later (Figure 30), we can find even more:



Figure 30 Curupayti (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 11-16, from 0:20), public domain

In m. 11, Roccatagliata shifts upwards in a sort of scoop from the F# in beat 3, not connecting it with the following note (D#). Furthermore, between mm. 12 and 13, there is an ascending portamento on the same finger, followed by a B-type descending portamento on the fourth finger. In measure 15 both ascending and descending portamenti are B-type, whereby the portamento is executed with the departing finger.

Many times, portamenti, of different types, are used in between larger intervals. In *Don Esteban* (Figure 31), Roccatagliata uses ascending and descending B-type portamenti between mm. 2 and 3, and then in m. 4, to connect the intervals of a fifth and fourth, respectively.

<sup>115</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Curupayti*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920, Victor B-24402/72804-B, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, El tango y sus invitados, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.

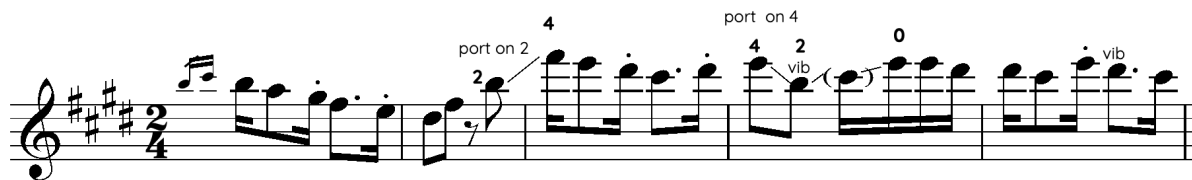


Figure 31 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 1-5), public domain<sup>116</sup>

The ascending portamento that follows is on the same finger up to the harmonic E. Later in the piece (Figure 32), Roccatagliata again uses multiple types of portamenti to bridge the gap between intervals:

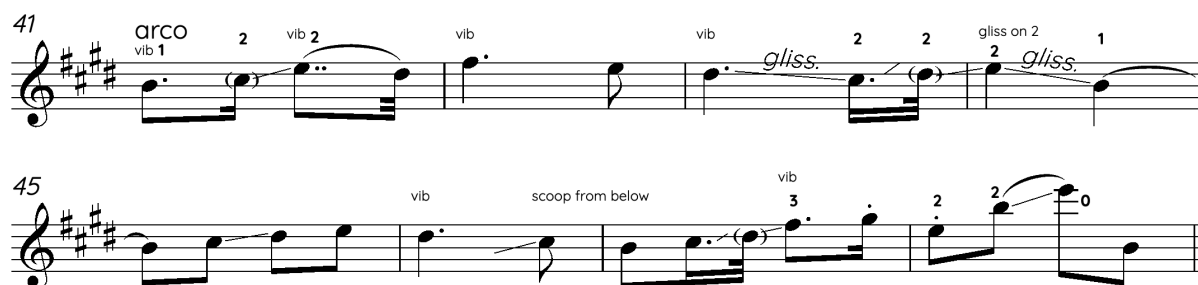


Figure 32 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 41-48, from 1:13), public domain

In mm. 41 and 47, he uses a l-type portamento, using his second finger to ascend to the E in beat 3 (m. 41), and third finger to arrive on the F# (m. 47). In mm. 44 and 45, all portamenti are made with the same finger. Finally, in m. 46 he begins his ascending portamento into beat four from below the note, scooping into C#. Scoops such as the one in m. 46 are common in Roccatagliata's Orquesta Típica Select recordings.

Some of the most extreme scoops can be found in *Nobleza de arrabal* (Figure 33):

<sup>116</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920, Victor B-24401/72804-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.



Figure 33 Nobleza de arrabal (Francisco Canaro, OTS, 1920, mm. 7-12, from 0:12)<sup>117</sup>

In mm. 7, 9 and 11, Roccatagliata begins each measure with a scoop, which could be considered a 1-type portamento as it is performed with the arrival-note finger. These scoops are not attached to the previous measures in any way; instead, there is a gap before he begins the portamento. In m. 10, he also plays a scoop, approaching the G# from below, instead of from above. To this we can add descending portamenti in the second halves of mm. 7 and 11, and ascending portamenti in mm. 8 and 12.

One final type of portamento involves the crossing of strings. Figure 34 shows mixed portamento types in the beautiful violin solo of Roccatagliata's own composition, *Elegante papirosa*, recorded with the Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo in 1922. This solo occurs at 1:59 in the lower octave, and then at 2:29, one octave higher, but the portamenti are slightly different between versions:

Figure 34 Elegante papirosa (David Roccatagliata, OTOF, 1922, from 1:59), public domain<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Nobleza de arrabal*, by Francisco Canaro, recorded 26 August 1920, Victor B-24408/72810-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, El tango y sus invitados, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.

<sup>118</sup> Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo, *Elegante papirosa*, by David Roccatagliata, recorded 21 July 1922, track 11 on *Osvaldo Fresedo y su orquesta típica 1922-1925*, Victor/El Bandoneón SP, 2004, CD.

In both versions, Roccatagliata crosses strings in between the first and second measures of the phrase; the ascending portamento up to both C notes is l-type, played with the arrival-note finger. However, in the lower-octave version, we see a descending portamento (same finger) in the third measure of the phrase, and in the upper-octave version both ascending and descending portamenti (on the same finger). While simple in construction, these portamenti add a lilting beauty to the phrase.

Another major lyrical aspect of Roccatagliata's playing is his use of vibrato, which is reflective of a transitional period of vibrato usage amongst both classical and tango violinists. Unlike younger musicians such as Julio De Caro or Elvino Vardaro, whose vibrato could be described as both generalized and an integral part of their sound, Roccatagliata tends instead in his recordings to vibrate on certain notes for expressive purposes; the vibrato is a key part of the character of the phrase. In the playing of late 19<sup>th</sup> - and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century violinists, vibrato was considered an ornament, rather than a way of developing tone. Indeed, many prominent pedagogues, such as Joseph Joachim and Leopold Auer, were against the practice, although its usage gradually became more frequent, especially in the playing of violinists such as Fritz Kreisler.<sup>119</sup> However, by 1910, these mentalities were changing. In 1911, the first treatise specifically about vibrato, Siegfried Eberhardt's *Violin Vibrato*, was published, in which the author specifically connected tone production to vibrato usage.<sup>120</sup> According to Eberhardt, "vibrato acts as the main function of the entire technical equipment of the violinist. The great importance of the vibrato is to give the tone individuality".<sup>121</sup> By the 1920s, generalized, or constant vibrato – that of De Caro and Vardaro, for example – was the new norm. Robert Philip has connected transition from vibrato-as-ornament to generalized vibrato to recordings of the time, in what can be called a phonograph effect, to borrow the expression of Mark Katz.<sup>122</sup> A generalized

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<sup>119</sup> Clive Brown, "Bowings, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113, no. 1 (1988): 111-114; Robert Philip *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 99-101.

<sup>120</sup> Siegfried Eberhardt, *Violin Vibrato: Its Mastery and Artistic Use*, trans. Melzar Chaffee (C. Fischer, 1911).

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Robert Philip, *Early Recordings*, 101.

<sup>122</sup> Philip, 104-108. The term "phonograph effect" is from Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, 2. Katz defines it as "any change in musical behavior – whether listening, performing, or composing – that has arisen in response to sound-recording technology."

vibrato sounded more expressive on recordings, more vibrant, in contrast with the non-vibrato notes.

As Philip points out, there was a major difference between “players of the old school, who continued to use vibrato sparingly and were predominantly of the older generation, and younger players who had adopted the continuous vibrato.”<sup>123</sup>

Roccatagliata’s playing, and vibrato usage, emerged during a transitional period, in which vibrato was commonly used, but not yet constant in character. Figure 35 shows Roccatagliata’s vibrato usage in the violin solo of *Para hoy*, discussed earlier in this section. Of the eight measures of the solo, six of them begin with vibrato on the longest note of the measure:

The image displays a musical score for two violins, labeled 'Rocca.' and 'Violin 2', in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score covers measures 65 through 72. Measures 65, 66, 67, and 68 show the Rocca. staff with vibrato markings ('vib.') on the first note of each measure. Measures 69-72 show the Violin 2 staff with vibrato markings on the first note of each measure. The score is marked with a piano 'p' dynamic.

Figure 35 *Para hoy* (Emilio Marchiano, OTRF, 1916, mm. 65-72, from 1:53),<sup>124</sup> orphan work license OWLS000425-1 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

A similar passage can be found in *A la gran muñeca* (Figure 36). While Roccatagliata vibrates most longer notes, the D in m. 23 has no vibrato at all, creating a rapid change in character:

<sup>123</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings*, 106.

<sup>124</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Para hoy*, by Emilio Marchiano, recorded 1916.

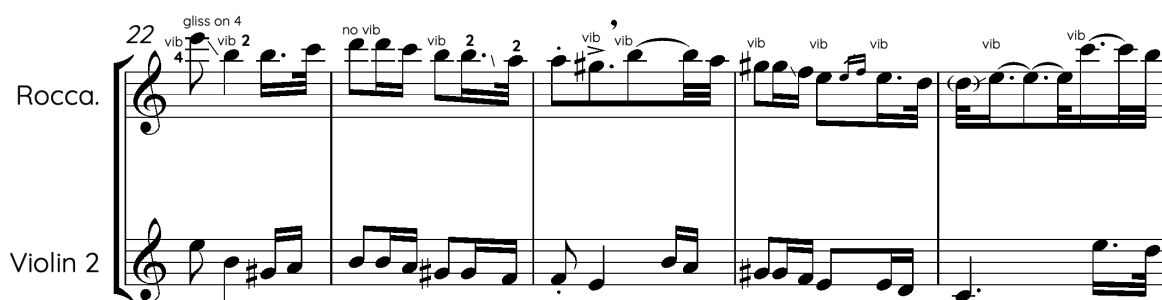


Figure 36 A la gran muñeca (Jesús Ventura, OTS, 1920, mm. 22-26, from 0:39)<sup>125</sup>

Vibrato or no, the overall shape of the phrase is extremely beautiful.

The third major lyrical device heard in Roccatagliata's playing is that of *fraseo*, a form of melodic rubato that mimics *Porteño* – the inhabitants of Buenos Aires – speech patterns. The concept, generally considered to have originated with Carlos Gardel's first tango recording, *Mi noche triste* (1917), was appropriated by instrumental tango musicians and became a key aspect of Guardia Nueva stylistic practice.<sup>126</sup> Although I will discuss *fraseo* far more extensively in Chapter 4 of this thesis, as De Caro standardized and codified the technique in instrumental practice, certain elements of *fraseo* can be heard in Roccatagliata's recordings, especially those made with Orquesta Típica Select (1920). In *A la gran muñeca* (Figure 37), Roccatagliata plays the melody in unison with the second violinist, but his timing is different:

<sup>125</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *A la gran muñeca*, by Jesús Ventura, recorded 25 August 1920, Victor B-24403/72805-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, El tango y sus invitados, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.

<sup>126</sup> For an extended discussion of *fraseo*, see Omar García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo en el tango," 161-170.



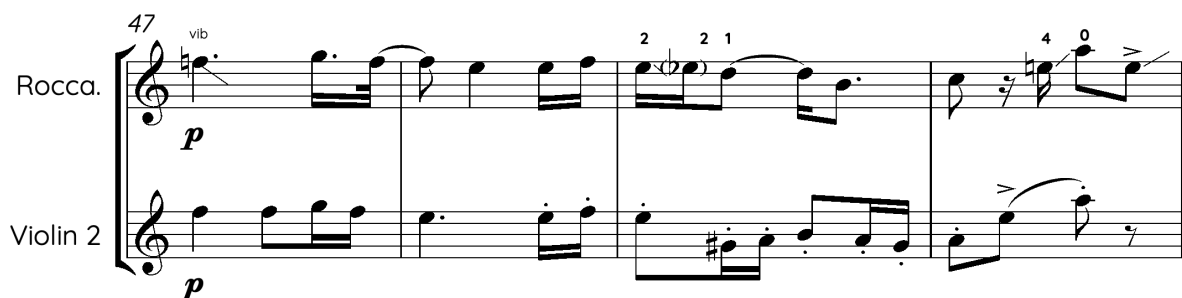


Figure 37 A la gran muñeca (Jesús Ventura, OTS, 1920, mm. 47-50, from 1:25)<sup>127</sup>

He delays, for example, the entry of m. 48, creating a syncopated pattern. Also, we can see a form of double dotting, something that would become standard practice in Julio De Caro's playing, in m. 47. Also, m. 50 becomes far more energetic, as he delays the material in beats two and three, adding a glissando up to a harmonic.

The C-section violin solo in *Don Esteban*, a response to the cello countermelody that precedes it, is repeated twice (Figure 39, from 1:13 and Figure 40, from 2:36), but Roccatagliata's timing is not identical. In Figure 38, we can see the cello countermelody, alongside the pizzicato accompaniment of the violinists (*guitarrita* and *pizzicato*, respectively):

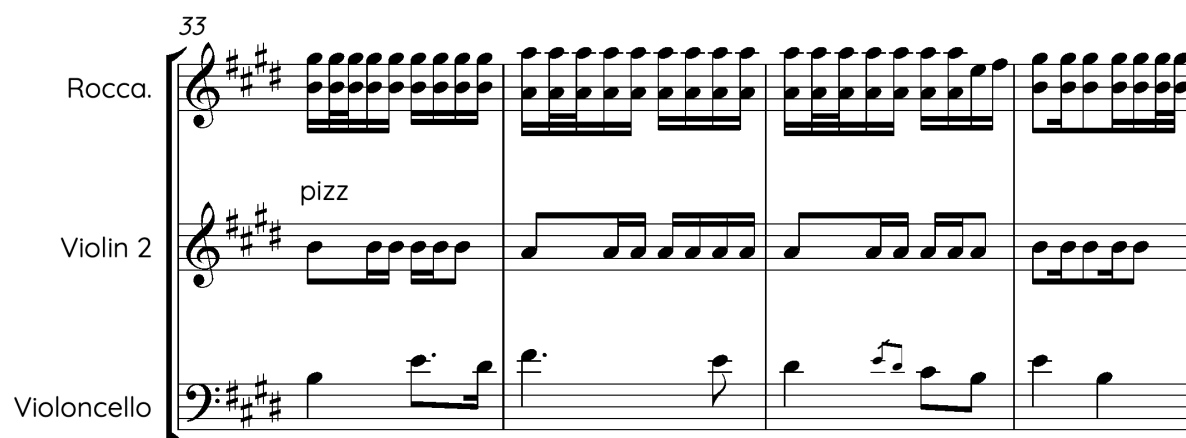


Figure 38 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 33-37, from 0:59), public domain<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *A la gran muñeca*, by Jesús Ventura, recorded 25 August 1920.

<sup>128</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

The cellist plays a beautiful, if rhythmically simple version of the melody, adorned with a few grace notes. Roccatagliata takes the melody over from him, and the timing is much more exaggerated, as is the addition of several portamenti.

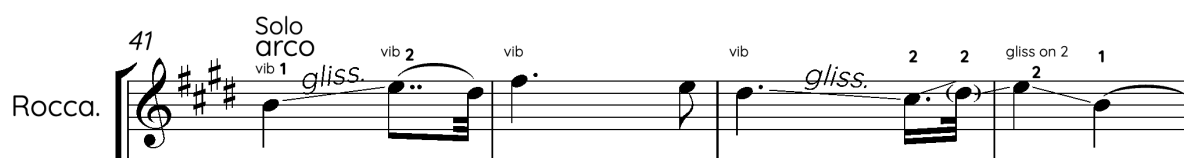


Figure 39 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 41-45, from 1:13), public domain<sup>129</sup>

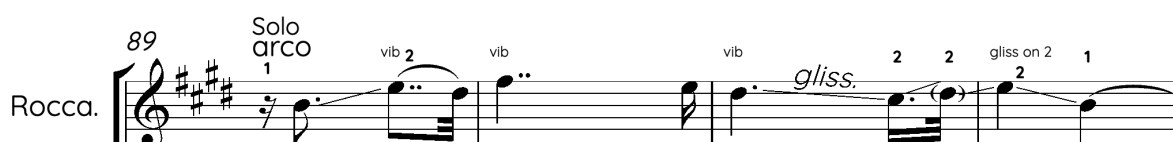


Figure 40 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 89-92, from 2:36), public domain<sup>130</sup>

As we can see, the timing between the two versions of the phrase, although similar, is not identical. Double dotting occurs in the first measures of both phrases, but Roccatagliata delays beginning m. 89, also double dotting m. 90, which varies the material slightly.

### *Rhythmical Characteristics*

Roccatagliata's contribution to rhythmical techniques centres upon three main aspects: extremely short staccato articulations, played at the frog of the bow; the rearticulation of notes, by which he created syncopated patterns; and most significantly, the inclusion of the *arrastre* on the violin, a technique that would later be fully codified and standardized by Julio De Caro.

<sup>129</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

<sup>130</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

The usage of extremely short staccato articulations, one of the ways in which Roccatagliata created the rhythmic drive for which he was famous, was a major stylistic development.<sup>131</sup> There is a great deal of precision, as well as a slight aggressivity in his staccato melodies. In current-day tango practice, these figures are played extremely close to the frog, largely underneath the fingers of the right hand.<sup>132</sup> Unfortunately, his way of playing staccato – nor that of tango violinists in general – cannot be adequately depicted in a written score. This is one of those techniques that requires *emic* knowledge on the part of the performer and can also be seen as one of the many limitations of written notation in tango music.<sup>133</sup> In *Los Guevara* (Figure 41), Roccatagliata employs very short staccato articulation:

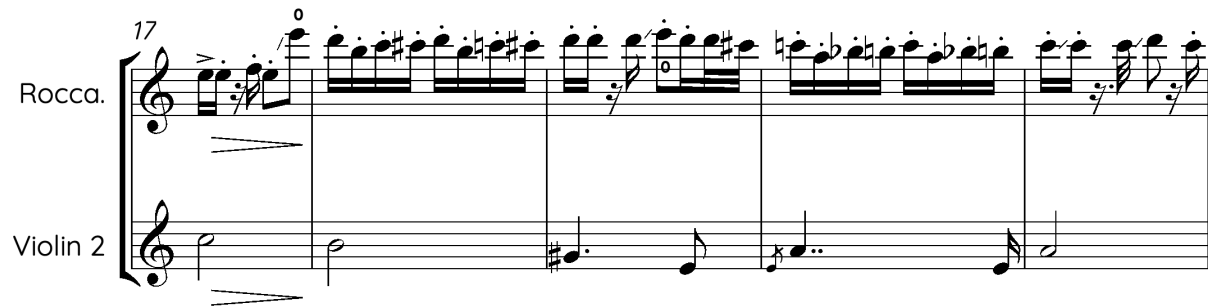


Figure 41 *Los Guevara* (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm. 17-21, from 0:29), public domain<sup>134</sup>

This passage from the B section of *Los Guevara* is anxious in character, accentuated by the very short articulations emanating from Roccatagliata's violin, and offset by the languid counter melody in the second violin part.

Similarly, Roccatagliata's articulation is very short, almost aggressive, in the B section of *Munyinga* (Figure 42). He alternates pizzicato and arco articulation here, creating a variety of different textures:

<sup>131</sup> Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 28.

<sup>132</sup> Sonic evidence suggests that he did indeed play in this part of the bow, for his staccato melodies are aggressive, short, and precise, and sound exactly how tango violinists would play similar material today. For a description of how tango violinists play this type of articulation, see Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 21-22.

<sup>133</sup> For a discussion of *emic* vs. *etic* in tango music interpretation, see Omar García Brunelli, "El fraseo en el tango," 163.

<sup>134</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.



Figure 42 Munyinga (Arturo Vicente De Bassi, OTS, 1920, mm. 24-27, from 0:42), public domain<sup>135</sup>

Most of Roccatagliata's recordings, particularly those with Orquesta Típica Select, include this type of short articulation.

One of the major ways in which Roccatagliata modified rhythmical material was through the re-articulation of short notes, creating syncopated patterns out of rhythmical melodies. This was likely a way of avoiding repetition, but also added energy and panache to the phrase. In Figure 43, we can see the original published score of *La cumparsita* to Roccatagliata's playing in the 1916 recording with Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo. One of the most famous melodies in tango music, the beginning of *La cumparsita* comprises essentially a series of arpeggios in the first, third and fifth measures of the phrase:



Figure 43 La cumparsita (G. Matos Rodríguez, 1916, original published score, mm. 1-5)<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Munyinga*, by Arturo Vicente de Bassi, recorded 2 September 1920, Victor B-24448-1/72962, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.

<sup>136</sup> G. Matos Rodríguez, *La cumparsita*, Ediciones Breyer Hermanos, Todo Tango, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/172/La-cumparsita-Si-supieras/>. The staff labelled "violin" is actually the countermelody, played in the 1916 OTRF recording by the second violinist, Agesilao Ferrazzano.

However, in the 1916 Roberto Firpo recording (Figure 44), Roccatagliata modifies the original melody through repeated notes, making a syncopated pattern and accentuating the different intervals of the phrase, while the second violinist (Ferrazzano) plays the famous countermelody. In addition, we can see different articulations: he begins with staccato notes, but then in mm. 3 and 5 slurs the intervals of the eighth and minor seventh, respectively, effectively varying the material with stylistic flair.

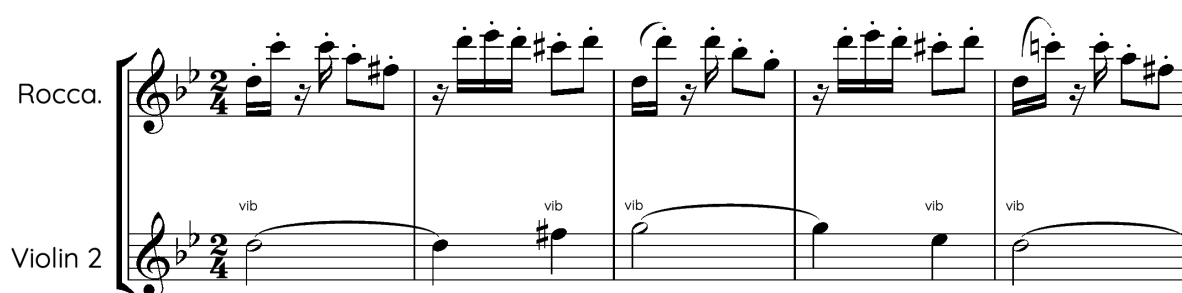


Figure 44 *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, OTRF, 1916, mm. 1-5)<sup>137</sup>

This tendency, such as many stylistic aspects of Roccatagliata's playing, became more pronounced in the recordings of Orquesta Típica Select (1920). The B section in the published score of *Entrada prohibida* (Figure 45) shows an offbeat melody of three semiquavers and two quavers:



Figure 45 *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, 1916, original published score, mm. 17-22)<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded November 1916, Odeon 483-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by Enrique Binda.

<sup>138</sup> Luis Teisseire, *Entrada prohibida*, Todo Tango, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/366/Entrada-prohibida/>.

While Roccatagliata plays the melody of the B section as originally written in the first iteration of the B section (except for a few grace notes), subsequent repetitions of the phrase include the repetition of notes, creating a syncopated pattern. Let us compare the phrase in mm. 17-22, which is virtually identical to the published version (if one octave higher), to that of a more elaborate version of the phrase in mm. 85-90:



Figure 46 *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, *OTS*, 1920, mm. 17-22 (from 0:31) and mm. 85-91 (from 2:32))<sup>139</sup>

Besides the addition of many more grace notes, Roccatagliata varies the phrase through the repetition of notes, in what can be described as a more technically challenging, musically exuberant adaptation. As such, the phrase, although recognizable as the same basic material, is transformed, adding complexity and musical interest.

In the B section of Orquesta Típica Select's recording of *A la gran muñeca*, Roccatagliata varies not only the rhythm through dotting and anticipation, but also avoids playing longer notes by incorporating syncopation into the phrase. On the other hand, the second violinist plays almost exactly what is written in the published score, shown in Figure 47. The published score indicates a basic rhythm of one quaver and two (repeated) semiquavers:

<sup>139</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Entrada prohibida*, by Luis Teisseire, recorded 30 August 1920, Victor B-24424-1/72895, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.



Figure 47 A la gran muñeca (Jesús Ventura, 1920, original published score, mm. 17-21)<sup>140</sup>

In Figure 48, Roccatagliata dots the figures in m. 17 and m. 20, and anticipates the second half of m. 18. He also avoids playing syncopated figures, for example in m. 19: instead of a crochet we see a dotted semiquaver, demisemiquaver and quaver. Furthermore, he anticipates the note change in the third beat of m. 21. The phrase thus becomes much more active in character.

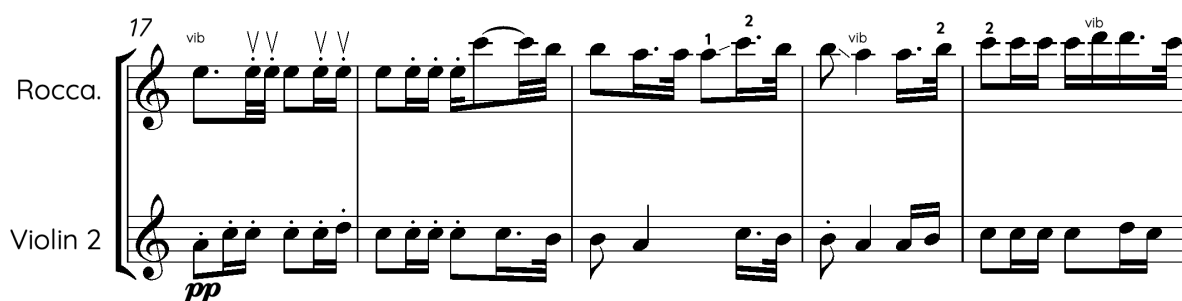


Figure 48 A la gran muñeca (Jesús Ventura, OTS, 1920, mm. 17-21, from 0:30)<sup>141</sup>

Yet another example is that of *Nobleza de arrabal*. If we look at the published score (Figure 49), we can see that the C section melody is comprised of a combination of offbeat patterns and accented quavers:

<sup>140</sup> Jesús Ventura, *A la gran muñeca*, Todo Tango, accessed 23 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/926/A-la-gran-muneca/>.

<sup>141</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *A la gran muñeca*, by Jesús Ventura.



Figure 49 Nobleza de arrabal (Francisco Canaro, 1919, published score, mm. 30-37)<sup>142</sup>

The corresponding passage in the Orquesta Típica Select recording begins in measure 40 (Figure 50).<sup>143</sup> Gone are the offbeat rhythms, which can be seen in mm. 29, 31 and 33 of the original score. Instead, we see a simple quaver/semiquaver rhythm in the violin 2 part, and a more elaborate first violin part (played by Roccatagliata, of course). In addition to his use of grace notes, portamenti, and pizzicato, Roccatagliata creates rhythmic diversity by re-articulating notes in m. 42, 44, 46 and 47, in contrast to the simpler pattern in the second violin part.

<sup>142</sup> Francisco Canaro, *Nobleza de arrabal*, original published score, IIMCV, accessed 18 November 2024, [https://www.iimcv.net.ar/archivo\\_popular\\_tango\\_item.php?id=906](https://www.iimcv.net.ar/archivo_popular_tango_item.php?id=906).

<sup>143</sup> While the published score is in F minor/D major, the OTS recording is in F# minor/A major.



The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Roca and Violin 2. The score is for measures 40-48 of the piece 'Nobleza de arrabal' by Francisco Canaro. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The Roca part is written in a treble clef, and the Violin 2 part is written in a treble clef. Measures 40-44 show Roca playing a melodic line with 'arco' (arco) markings, while Violin 2 plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Measures 45-48 show Roca continuing the melodic line, with Violin 2 playing a rhythmic accompaniment and a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking in measure 48.

Figure 50 *Nobleza de arrabal* (Francisco Canaro, OTS, 1920, mm. 40-48, from 1:11)<sup>144</sup>

Similar passages can be noted in *Munyinga* (Arturo De Bassi, OTS, 1920, 1:24), in which he re-articulates the beginning rhythm of the A section, playing it differently than at the beginning of the piece; and *Sin querencia* (Enrique Delfino, OTS, 1920, 1:42), in which the second half of the C section is much more syncopated than the first half through the re-articulation of notes.





Another rhythmic element heard in Roccatagliata's playing, in particular in the recordings of Orquesta Típica Select, is the *arrastre*. Bandoneonist Eduardo Arolas, and his musical descendant Pedro Maffia, are credited with developing the *arrastre*, or quite literally “drag”, which can be considered the quintessential form of rhythmic ornamentation in tango music.<sup>145</sup> Ramiro Gallo defines it as an “effect produced by playing early a note or chord with sounds of indeterminate pitch and duration, which cut off abruptly on reaching the pitch and duration of the written note.”<sup>146</sup> Indeed, the *arrastre* is a way of anticipating the strong beats, pulling or dragging the listener – *arrastrar* - into the

<sup>144</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Nobleza de arrabal*, by Francisco Canaro, recorded 26 August 1920.

<sup>145</sup> Julián Graciano, for example, claims that the first *arrastre* can be heard in Enrique Delfino's 1917 recording of *La huella*, and thus questions whether Arolas invented the figure. See Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 50.

<sup>146</sup> Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 164.

rhythmic pattern. Julio De Caro claimed that Arolas invented the figure, which likely grew out of Arolas' use of *rezongos*, a type of cluster Arolas played in the lower registers of his bandoneon.<sup>147</sup> On the violin, the *arrastre* can be performed in a variety of different ways; while the most common type, described in the introduction of this chapter, is a portamento beginning with an undefined sound and

leading to an accented staccato note (  ), other types include octavation (  ), or anticipating through chromatic semiquavers (  or  ).<sup>148</sup> These *arrastrés* likely emerged from appoggiaturas, or grace notes

that Roccatagliata and other violinists frequently employed to precede notes (see the section on ornamentation below). A major difference, however, between grace note figures and *arrastrés* is that these *arrastrés* have a rhythmic function, affecting the relationship between accented and unaccented material; the *arrastre* essentially is a way of exaggerating the accent, drawing more attention to it.

A close listening to Roccatagliata's playing reveals a few *arrastre*-like figures in his earliest recordings, such as *El 14 de Suipacha* (Eduardo Arolas, OTEA, 1913/14, 1:59) or *Pica pica* (R. Alfaro, OTRF, 1916, 0:40); however, the rhythmic device did not become commonplace in his recordings until those made in 1920 as part of Orquesta Típica Select, in which there are many *arrastrés* of multiple types (portamenti, octaviated, chromatic). Conversely, in Roccatagliata's Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo (1922) and Orquesta Scatasso (1924) recordings, many fewer *arrastrés* can be heard, which could likely be linked to the artistic decisions of the ensembles' leaders.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Pepe and Casco, "El violín en el tango," 11; Horacio Salas, *El tango*, 110. See Omar García Brunelli, "Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro," 93. Brunelli takes the definition from Oscar Zucchi (*El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes*, 382).

<sup>148</sup> For a more complete discussion of different varieties of *arrastrés* and their rhythmical functions, see Paulina Fain, *Herramientas fundamentales del tango*, 21-24.

<sup>149</sup> Fueye Querido suggests that Fresedo's refined, elegant approach to tango may have led him to remove some of the wilder stylistic elements that can be heard in Orquesta Típica Select. See Fueye Querido, "¡Tito!," 416.

The first clear *arrastre*-like figure in Roccatagliata's playing can be heard in the C section of the 1913/14 Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas recording of *El 14 de Suipacha* (Figure 51). If we look at the end of the B section and the beginning of the C section (indicated by the double bar, we can see that Roccatagliata anticipates the section with the addition of an open G string, which he slurs into the accented F# on the downbeat. The flute, which mostly plays in unison with Roccatagliata, does not play these extra notes, likely indicating an improvised addition on Roccatagliata's part.



Figure 51 *El 14 de Suipacha* (Eduardo Arolas, OTEA, 1913/14, 1:55-1:59), public domain<sup>150</sup>

Similarly, in *Los Guevara* (Figure 52), several *arrastre*-like figures can be heard.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas, *El 14 de Suipacha*, by Eduardo Arolas, recorded 1913/14, JBT 8738c/28118, 78 rpm, digitalised by Colecciones privadas de “El tango y sus invitados,” accessed 11 October 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2009/03/orquesta-eduardo-arolas-seleccion-de-36.html>.

<sup>151</sup> I use the term *arrastre*-like because it is not completely clear when the technique was first invented or codified. For example, Julián Graciano claims that the first *arrastre* can be heard in the 1917 Enrique Delfino recording of *La huella*. See Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 50.

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Roca and Violin 2. The score is divided into two systems, measures 24-27 and 28-31. In measure 24, the Roca part has an octave grace-note before the downbeat. The Violin 2 part has a series of eighth notes. In measure 28, the Roca part has a double stop downbeat. The Violin 2 part has a portamento leading into measure 30. The score is in 2/4 time and features various rhythmic patterns, including staccato notes and a portamento.

Figure 52 Los Guevara (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm 24-31, from 0.41), public domain<sup>152</sup>

First, as we see, in m. 24 (0:41), Roccatagliata adds an octave grace-note before the downbeat, which is not dissimilar to the octave-figure heard in *El 14 de Suipacha*, discussed above. However, there are more rhythmical *arrastrés* in this passage. While the last note of m. 27 is a staccato, Roccatagliata anticipates the beginning of measure 28 by playing the double stop downbeat early. Furthermore, while the portamento preceding the downbeat of m. 30 could be classified as a scoop-type portamento, as he approaches the staccato d from below, the figure is rhythmical, rather than lyrical in nature, in the middle of a staccato passage; there is also a gap between the staccato E at the end of m. 29 and the beginning of the scoop.

The repeat of the A section of *Pica pica* (Figure 53), recorded with Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, features a chromatic *arrastre* likely played in both violin parts.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.

<sup>153</sup> See Appendix A.



Figure 53 *Pica pica* (R. Alfaro, OTRF, 1916, 0:40),<sup>154</sup> orphan work license OWLS000453-1  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

Many more *arrastres* can be heard in Roccatagliata's recordings with Orquesta Típica Select; by the time of this recording (1920), the *arrastre* had become more widespread. One type frequently heard in Roccatagliata's playing is a portamento leading up to an accented, staccato harmonic. In *A la gran muñeca* (Figure 54), Roccatagliata begins with an *arrastre* leading from first position up to an E harmonic, preceding mm. 1 and 5.<sup>155</sup>

Figure 54 *A la gran muñeca* (Jesús Ventura, OTS, 1920, mm. 1-5)<sup>156</sup>

A similar effect can be heard preceding m. 5 of *Nobleza de arrabal* (Figure 55):

<sup>154</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Pica pica*, by R. Alfaro, recorded 1916, Odeon 485-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by Instituto de Investigación Musicológica "Carlos Vega" (IIMCV).

<sup>155</sup> I've placed the *b* in parentheses preceding mm. 1 and 5 as this note is not clearly defined. At full speed, only the ascending portamento to the harmonic is audible. However, when played at 20% of the original speed using the program *Anytune*, the note can be detected. I believe that he did not fully press his fourth finger into the string in order to play the *arrastre*.

<sup>156</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *A la gran muñeca*, by Jesús Ventura, recorded 25 August 1920.



Figure 55 *Nobleza de arrabal* (Francisco Canaro, OTS, 1920, mm. 4-9, from 0:05)<sup>157</sup>

Like in *A la gran muñeca*, Roccatagliata glides up to a harmonic at the beginning of m. 5, through an intermediary note that is not fully defined (G#).<sup>158</sup> Here, we can also distinguish between a rhythmic scoop into a measure, which can be defined as an *arrastre* (into m. 5, for example) and the more lyrical portamenti scoops at the beginning of mm. 7 and 9; the latter two do not have a rhythmical function, rather one of lyrical expressivity.

Another *arrastre* up to an accented harmonic can be found in *Curupayti* (Figure 56). This time, the *arrastre*, which precedes m. 21, functions as part of a crescendo, as the phrase goes from piano to forte in dynamic:

Figure 56 *Curupayti* (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 19-22, from 0:35), public domain<sup>159</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Nobleza de arrabal*, by Francisco Canaro, recorded 26 August 1920.

<sup>158</sup> Although Roccatagliata's exact fingerings cannot be determined, I believe that he plays in third position on the A-string at the beginning of m. 4, and uses the fourth finger to play the *arrastre* on the G# leading to the A harmonic. Such a fingering is plausible and would explain what can be heard on the recording.

<sup>159</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Curupayti*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

Sometimes, Roccatagliata's *arrastres* in Orquesta Típica Select were not portamento-based, but instead grace-note based. For example, in *Entrada prohibida* (Figure 57), Roccatagliata precedes mm. 18, 20 and 22 with an octaviated grace note, a simple but effective way of accelerating the energy of the phrase and connecting the measures together.



Figure 57 *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, OTS, 1920, mm. 17-22, from 0:30)<sup>160</sup>

Other *arrastres* are far more complex in nature. In the C section of *Munyinga* (Figure 58), Roccatagliata inserts an *arrastre* in between the percussive fourth beats of mm. 35 and 43 and the staccato beginnings of the next measures. It almost sounds as if Roccatagliata slurs the fourth beats and first beats of the next measure together; however, listening in slow motion reveals that there is a gap between the staccato fourth beat and the beginning of the portamento, suggesting that he lifted his bow in between:

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<sup>160</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Entrada prohibida*, by Luis Teisseire, recorded 30 August 1920.



Figure 58 Munyinga (Arturo Vicente De Bassi, OTS, 1920, mm. 33-45, from 0:57), public domain<sup>161</sup>

The passage is complex in other ways, notably the alternation of arco and pizzicato and the many grace notes. With the addition of the *arrastres*, the passage is highly energetic and jovial in character.

### Ornamentation

Roccatagliata expressed his musical personality through ornamentation. While he didn't necessarily utilize a massive range of different ornamental techniques, those that he did employ were creatively applied, and extremely numerous. The most common type of ornamentation, found in nearly all his recordings, is the grace note. However, these are used in many different ways: neighbouring tones, successive notes, chromatic patterns, intervals of a third, trills, turns and mordents.

The principal melody of *La picarona* (Figure 59), recorded with Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito, is highly ornamented. The passage here is taken from the second iteration of theme, in mm. 9-14. In mm. 11 and 14, we see neighbour-tone grace notes in two different ways. In m. 11, the grace notes anticipate the C in beat three of the measure; in m. 14, the grace notes are used to connect via an upper neighbouring tone.

<sup>161</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Munyinga*, by Arturo Vicente de Bassi, recorded 2 September 1920.





Figure 59 *La picarona* (Juan Pardal, OTGE, 1912, mm. 9-14, from 0:23), public domain<sup>162</sup>

This is a way of varying material, to avoid repetition. Rhythmically, they also add interest: the figure in m. 11 occurs in the middle of a passage of rapid notes, adding brilliance and virtuosity to the measure, whereas that of m. 14 links two longer notes, adding interest to what would otherwise be a descending line. Such figures can be found in all instruments of the tango orchestra and are frequently improvisational in nature. However, the frequency with which Roccatagliata uses these types of notes is distinctive, adding an urgency to the character of his playing.

In *La montura* (Figure 60) also recorded with OTGE, Roccatagliata begins the C section with a series of the same types of grace notes seen above. The phrase, which is ostensibly a repetition of the same note multiple time (A), becomes more jumpy, more nervous:



Figure 60 *La montura* (Genaro Espósito, OTGE, 1912, from 2:38), public domain<sup>163</sup>

In *Pabellón de las rosas*, this time from Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas, Roccatagliata avoids repetition by modifying and accelerating the use of grace notes. We can compare an excerpt from the

<sup>162</sup> Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito, *La picarona*, by Juan Pardal, recorded 1912, Columbia 57134-x/T-628, 78 rpm, digitalised by IIMCV.

<sup>163</sup> Orquesta Típica Genaro Espósito, *La montura*, by Genaro Espósito, recorded 1912, Columbia 57135-1/T-628, 78 rpm, digitalised by IIMCV.

published score (Figure 61), a *vals* that features a neighbouring-note triplet in the last beat of each measure, to what Roccatagliata plays (Figure 62):



Figure 61 Pabellón de las rosas (José Felipetti, published score, mm. 7-11), public domain<sup>164</sup>



Figure 62 Pabellón de las rosas (José Felipetti, OTEA, 1913, mm. 7-11, from 0:09), public domain<sup>165</sup>

While measure 7 is the same, Roccatagliata adds another turn by adding an upper neighbouring note in m. 8, creating a quintuplet, instead of a triplet pattern; likewise, instead of playing a triplet in m. 9, he plays the last two notes of the measure extremely quickly, almost like a grace note.

In the Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo (OTRF), we can observe many grace notes, in both melodic, and rhythmical patterns. In *Alma gaucha* (Figure 63), Roccatagliata ornaments the offbeat rhythmical patterns, which he plays together with the flute, with grace notes, which contrasts with the lilting countermelody of the second violin.

<sup>164</sup> José Felipetti, *Pabellón de las rosas*, Todo Tango, accessed 7 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/4448/Pabellon-de-las-rosas/>.

<sup>165</sup> Orquesta Típica Eduardo Arolas, *Pabellón de las rosas*, by José Felipetti, recorded 1913, Odeon BA 098/582, 78 rpm, digitalised by Colecciones privadas de “El tango y sus invitados,” accessed 11 October 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2009/03/orquesta-eduardo-arolas-seleccion-de-36.html>.

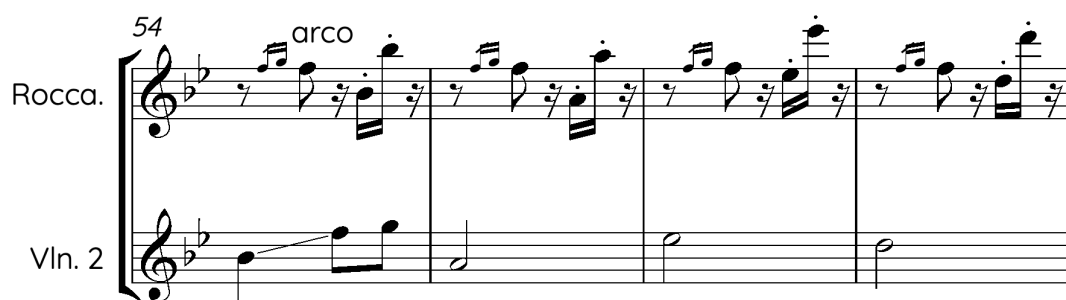


Figure 63 *Alma gaucha* (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm. 54-58, from 0:54)<sup>166</sup>

Many rhythmical melodies are ornamented, such as the beginning of *Los Guevara* (Figure 64). The A section constitutes of an eight-measure theme, repeated twice. The first time, there is no ornamentation, and the second time, he includes grace notes on mm. 9, 11 and 13, avoiding monotony. We can see how the offbeat melody contrasts with the lyrical countermelody, similarly to the passage seen in *Alma gaucha*.

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<sup>166</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Alma gaucha*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914, Odeon 353a-517-B, 78 rpm, digitalised by IIMCV.

Rocca.

Vln. 2

Rocca.

Violin 2

Rocca.

Violin 2

Rocca.

Violin 2

Figure 64 Los Guevara (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914 mm. 1-16), public domain<sup>167</sup>

A remarkably similar pattern can be noticed in the C section of the most famous recording of Roberto Firpo, *La cumparsita* (Figure 65).

<sup>167</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.

The image shows a musical score for two staves: Rocca and Violin 2. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 63 to 70, and the second system covers measures 71 to 78. In the first system, the Rocca part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The Violin 2 part has a similar rhythmic pattern. In the second system, the Rocca part features more ornate patterns with grace notes and a quintuplet flourish in measure 77. The Violin 2 part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

Figure 65 *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, OTRF, 1916, mm 63-78, from 1:47)<sup>168</sup>

In this sixteen-measure section that can be broken down into two halves of two subphrases each (or even four + four subunits, if we look at the dynamic contrasts in the first half), we see that in the first subphrase of each half, there is little ornamentation, but in the second half, he incorporates grace notes into the same patterns (mm. 67, 69, 75, 76, 77). In measure 77 he even includes a quintuplet flourish.

These forms of ornamentation became even more exaggerated in Orquesta Típica Select (OTS).

Unlike the alternation between unornamented and ornamented material seen in previous ensembles, the recordings of OTS abound in ornamentations throughout each piece. Roccatagliata often begins pieces with grace notes, such as the beginning of *Pablo* (Figure 66):

<sup>168</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded November 1916.



Figure 66 Pablo (José Martínez, OTS, 1920, mm 1-8, beginning), public domain<sup>169</sup>

While the second violinist plays a similar melody in unison one octave below without ornamentation, Roccatagliata adds grace notes in mm 1, 2, 6 and 7 – quite a lot for an eight-measure phrase. These are either consecutive runs (mm. 1, 6) or neighbouring notes (3, 7). In measure six, we can see another type of ornamentation: octaviation, or the changing of an octave with the inclusion of grace notes (the notes at the end of the measure).

Sometimes, Roccatagliata approaches octaviation through successive grace notes in OTS. The bravura passage in the B section of *Entrada prohibida* (Figure 67) combines many different types of ornamentation through grace notes: the passage from one octave to the next through successive tones in m. 24, triplet-like chromatic grace notes in m. 25 and 29, octave grace notes in m. 26, 28 and 30, and the inclusion of a double stop in m. 28. This is perhaps the most representative passage of Roccatagliata's usage of grace-note ornamentation of all his recordings:

<sup>169</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Pablo*, by José Martínez, recorded 25 August 1920, Victor B24405/72807-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.



Figure 67 *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, OTS, 1920, mm. 24-32, from 0:42)<sup>170</sup>

The use of triplet-like chromatic patterns, such as the ones in mm. 25 and 28 of *Entrada prohibida*, can be found in Roccatagliata's playing in many OTS pieces, such as the second half of the B section of *Munyinga* (Figure 68). The mixture of patterns is particularly relevant.



Figure 68 *Munyinga* (Arturo De Bassi, OTS, 1920, mm. 28-37, from 0:49), public domain<sup>171</sup>

In m. 28, 29, and 37, we see slurred triplet chromatic patterns. In mm. 30, 33, and the beginning of 37, neighbouring note grace notes. That, plus the alternation of arco and pizzicato (mm. 34, 36). In the span of a few measures, Roccatagliata is very active!

### *Percussive Effects*

Pizzicato is, by far, the most frequent percussive technique found in Roccatagliata's recordings. In many ways, this is a legacy of the *Guardia Vieja*; as Luis Adolfo Sierra reminds us, pizzicato was the

<sup>170</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Entrada prohibida*, by Luis Teisseire, recorded 30 August 1920.

<sup>171</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Munyinga*, by Arturo De Bassi, recorded 2 September 1920.

first element that indicated stylistic individuality in tango violin playing.<sup>172</sup> Roccatagliata, however, built upon the technique used by violinists such as Ernesto Ponzio, and expanded it into three different types: regular (played with the right hand), left-hand (in which the pizzicato patterns are played with the fingers of the left hand) and *guitarrita* (a guitar-like strumming created with the middle, ring and pinkie fingers of the right hand). Furthermore, Roccatagliata often used pizzicato to play the melody, instead of employing the technique as a form of accompaniment or special effect. Especially in Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo (1913-1917), Orquesta Típica Select (1920) and that of Osvaldo Fresedo (1922), Roccatagliata's pizzicatos functioned in symbiosis with the second violin part, either in a pizzicato duet, or combining assertive pizzicato melodies in the first violin with a lyrical countermelody in the second violin. While Roccatagliata occasionally used *guitarrita* and left-hand pizzicato in Firpo's and Fresedo's orchestras, standard pizzicatos were more common in these ensembles.<sup>173</sup> On the other hand, Orquesta Típica Select adds another layer of complexity: the violins frequently act in symbiosis with the cello, who plays a lyrical countermelody while Roccatagliata plays *guitarrita* and the second violin a simpler pizzicato part. This can be understood as a development of the earlier pizzicato/lyrical countermelody combination of violins of Roberto Firpo's orchestra. No matter what type of pizzicato used, the synthesis between pizzicato and arco creates fascinating textual interplays of a sort not heard in the earliest tango recordings.

Let us look at different types of pizzicato usage. The beginning of *Tallada* (Figure 69) features a 6-measure pizzicato duet introduction, which perhaps inspired the more famous pizzicato duets of *Shusheta* (1923, Juan Carlos Cobián, Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián) and *Boedo* (1928, Julio De Caro, Sexteto Julio De Caro), discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

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<sup>172</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 36-37.

<sup>173</sup> I only found one *guitarrita* passage in Roccatagliata's recordings with Eduardo Arolas, in *El entrerriano* (Rosendo Mendizábal, Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas, 1913), from 0:06. I did not find any other pizzicato. In Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, he uses *guitarrita* in *Buenos Aires tenebroso* (Tito Roccatagliata, 1917) from 1:59; and in *Don Pancho* (Osvaldo Fresedo, 1917) from 0:56. Pizzicato can be heard at the very end of the trio's version of *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, 1917).



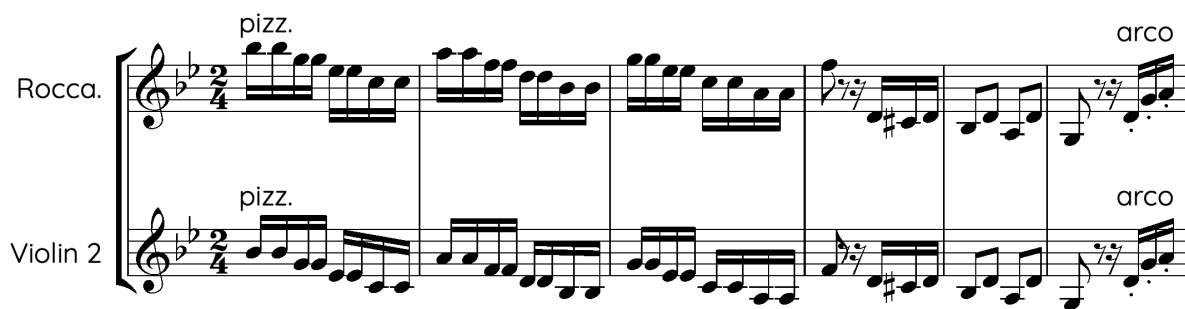


Figure 69 Tallada (Roberto Firpo, OTRP, 1913, mm. 1-6)<sup>174</sup>

Here, both violins play in unison at the octave for the first four measures, before Roccatagliata changes octaves in bar four. Here, “standard” pizzicatos can be heard, as in, there is no inclusion of left-hand pizzicato or *guitarrita*.

Pizzicato duets can be found frequently (but not always) in the C section of pieces, both in Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo and Orquesta Típica Select. In that sense, they seem to connect more to the *Guardia Vieja* than the *Guardia Nueva*; while early tangos generally include three sections in a variety of repetitions (commonly labelled A, B, C, with C being known as a ‘trio’), by the 1920s and the *Guardia Nueva*, two sections (A+B) became standard.<sup>175</sup> In the C section of *Los Guevara* (Figure 70), both violins interact with each other to create the melody in a dialogue between both parts, such as in m. 36, where the semiquavers in the first violin part are continued in the second violin part. Roccatagliata plays with more punch, also including left-hand pizzicato (marked with a + sign). Although the first violin part (Roccatagliata) has a weightier role in executing the melodic line, the two violins switch roles briefly, in m. 37, in which the syncopated melody can be heard in the second violin part. Instead, Roccatagliata plucks the open E string, which rings out, creating a jubilant character.

<sup>174</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Tallada*, recorded 1913, Odeon BA 085/504-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by IIMCV.

<sup>175</sup> See Irma Ruiz and Néstor R. Ceñal, “La estructura del tango,” 68-88; Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la guardia vieja a la guardia nueva,” 6.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a duet between Roccatagliata and Violin 2. The first system, starting at measure 32, shows Roccatagliata playing a pizzicato melody with accents, while Violin 2 provides a counter-melody. The second system, starting at measure 37, continues the duet with Roccatagliata playing a more complex pizzicato melody and Violin 2 playing a simple counter-melody. Both parts are in 2/4 time and G major.

Figure 70 Los Guevara (Roberto Firpo, OTRP, 1913, mm. 32-39, from 0:55), public domain<sup>176</sup>

Similar duets can be heard in a number of Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo recordings, including the C section of *La gigolette* (Manuel Aróztegui, OTRP, 1914, from 1:48), in which both violins play a syncopated melody in a dialogue with the bandoneons; as well as in the C section of *En la rambla* (Manuel Aróztegui, OTRP, 1914, from 1:14), where the violins play a pizzicato melody accompanied by the piano.

However, the combination of an accentuated pizzicato melody in the first violin part and a lyrical counter-melody in the second violin part is perhaps even more common in Firpo's orchestra than a pure pizzicato duet. These counter-melodies are usually simple and languid, and can be heard in several different registers. In Figure 71, taken from the beginning of *Alma gaucha*, we hear an anxious syncopated pizzicato melody played by Roccatagliata, with a much more calm, simple counter-melody in the second violin.<sup>177</sup>

<sup>176</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, 1913.

<sup>177</sup> The anxious feeling is perhaps stronger because Roccatagliata is standing directly next to the megaphone (used to record in the period before the introduction of the microphone in 1925). The second violin can be heard in the background.



Figure 71 *Alma gaucha* (Roberto Firpo, OTRP, 1914, mm. 1-8)<sup>178</sup>

The drawn-out ascending and descending portamenti between measures two and three, and between measures four and five, as well as a very slight, almost non-existent vibrato, contribute to this languid feeling, creating a great contrast between the two violinists. A similar pattern occurs in the C section of the piece (Figure 72), which is a sixteen-measure section of four-subphrases. The first and third subphrase are arco, but the second and fourth are pizzicato in the first violin, and arco in the second. The second violin plays a simple countermelody, repeated in the first and third subphrase, followed by a four-measure trill. It is worth showing this section in full. In particular, the final four measures of the phrase are curious: Roccatagliata only plays the chromatic pizzicato pattern offbeat, in a dialogue with the second violin, who plays the same chromatic pattern articulated with the bow. The effect is exuberant and virtuoso in character.

<sup>178</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Alma gaucha*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.

38 arco

Rocca.

Vln. 2 gliss.

42 pizz.

Rocca.

Vln. 2 tr.

46 arco

Rocca.

Vln. 2 gliss.

50 pizz.

Rocca.

Vln. 2 ff

Figure 72 *Alma gaucha* (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm. 38-53, from 0:54)<sup>179</sup>

In Orquesta Típica Select, we hear a pizzicato duet in the violin, complemented by a lyrical countermelody in the cello. Roccatagliata most often played *guitarrita*, combined with a simpler

<sup>179</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Alma gaucha*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.

pizzicato line in the second violin. As mentioned earlier, these duets were usually complemented by a lyrical counter melody in the cello. In the C section of *Curupayti* (Figure 73), Roccatagliata employs *guitarrita*, whereas the second violinist plays a standard pizzicato.

The musical score for Figure 73 shows three staves: Rocca, Violin 2, and Violoncello. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. Measures 33-36 show Rocca playing a fast, repetitive 'guitarrita/pizz.' pattern, Violin 2 playing a 'pizz.' pattern, and Violoncello playing an 'arco' counter melody. Measures 37-40 show Rocca continuing the 'guitarrita/pizz.' pattern, Violin 2 playing a 'pizz.' pattern, and Violoncello playing an 'arco' counter melody.

Figure 73 *Curupayti* (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm.33-40, from 0:57), public domain<sup>180</sup>

These *guitarrita* patterns seem largely improvisational, because if we look at the repetition of this section later in the piece (Figure 74), Roccatagliata's *guitarrita* is slightly modified, whereas the second violin part is the same, as is the cello counter melody.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Curupayti*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

<sup>181</sup> See Appendix A.

Figure 74 *Curupayti* (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 77-80, from 2:14), public domain<sup>182</sup>

A similar passage can be heard in the C section of *Nobleza de arrabal* (Figure 75), where Roccatagliata plays *guitarrita* and the second violinist a simpler pizzicato pattern. Upon the return of the section later in the piece (m. 76, from 2:14), the pattern is slightly varied.<sup>183</sup>

Figure 75 *Nobleza de arrabal* (Francisco Canaro, OTS, 1920, mm. 32-40, from 0:57)<sup>184</sup>

Virtually identical *guitarrita* patterns can be heard in the C section of *Don Esteban* (Figure 76):

<sup>182</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Curupayti*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

<sup>183</sup> I have not transcribed the cello countermelody here as it is not central to my argument.

<sup>184</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Nobleza de Arrabal*, by Francisco Canaro, recorded 26 August 1920.

Figure 76 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 33-37, from 0:58), public domain<sup>185</sup>

Likewise, they can also be heard in *Melgarejo* (Antonio Scatasso, OTS, 1920, from 2:14), and *Color de rosa* (Pedro Polito, OTS, 1920, from 0:56).

Although Roccatagliata mostly played these pizzicato parts, with a legato countermelody in the second violin (in the case of OTRF) or the cello (OTS), this was not always the case. Sometimes, he played arco, while the second violin played some form of pizzicato. However, he occasionally added left-hand pizzicato, and even *guitarrita* to these otherwise arco passages, adding a variety of textures to the phrase. In the second half of the C section of *Los Guevara* (Figure 77), Roccatagliata plays the melody with the bow, while we hear arpeggiated pizzicatos in the second violin. He includes both *guitarrita* and left-hand pizzicato in the otherwise arco passage; it is very typical of his playing to adorn phrases in this way.

<sup>185</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

Figure 77 shows a musical score for two instruments: Roccatagliata and Violin 2. The score is divided into two systems, measures 40-43 and 44-47. In the first system, Roccatagliata plays arco guitar, arco, and pizz. arco. Violin 2 plays pizz. and arco. In the second system, Roccatagliata plays pizz. arco and arco. Violin 2 plays arco.

Figure 77 Los Guevara (Roberto Firpo, OTRF, 1914, mm. 40-47, from 1.09), public domain<sup>186</sup>

While there are many fewer such passages in the recordings of Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo (OTOF), one such passage, in which Roccatagliata mixes arco, *guitarrita* and left-hand pizzicato while the second violinist plays a simpler pizzicato pattern, can be found in *Siete pelos* (Figure 78).

Figure 78 shows a musical score for two instruments: Rocca. and Vln. 2. The score is divided into two systems, measures 33-36. In the first system, Rocca. plays arco vib., (guitarrita) pizz., and (left-hand pizz.). Vln. 2 plays pizz. In the second system, Rocca. plays (left-hand pizz.). Vln. 2 plays pizz.

Figure 78 Siete pelos (Osvaldo Fresedo, OTOF, 1922, mm. 33-36, from 0:58),<sup>187</sup> orphan work license OWLS000425-3 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

The mixed articulation gives an active character to the section.

<sup>186</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, *Los Guevara*, by Roberto Firpo, recorded 1914.

<sup>187</sup> Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo, *Siete pelos*, by Osvaldo Fresedo, recorded 26 April 1922, Victor BA-45-9/73367-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by Enrique Binda.



In addition to the mixed arco-pizzicato articulations mentioned above, the mixed *chan-chan*, or the onomatopoeic way of describing the final two chords of most tangos, became prevalent in Orquesta Típica Select.<sup>188</sup> In this mixed approach, one violinist plays pizzicato, and the other arco, creating a highly unusual ending not heard in other styles of tango. I have identified two main types: standard pizzicato together with arco, and *guitarrita* together with a slurred *chan-chan* in violin 2. The first type can be heard at the ends of *Mala sangre* (Osvaldo Fresedo, OTS, 1920), *Nobleza de arrabal* (Francisco Canaro, OTS, 1920), *La mimosa* (Ricardo González, OTS, 1920), *Por ti llore* (Samuel Castriota, OTS, 1920), *Locatelli* (Enrique Delfino, OTS, 1920), and *En Galicia hay una niña* (Enrique Maciel, OTOF, 1922) just to name a few Figure 68s. The *guitarrita*-type of mixed *chan-chan* can be found in *Panchito* (Osvaldo Fresedo, OTS, 1920), *Tiene la palabra* (Vicente Greco, OTS, 1920), and *Sin querencia* (Enrique Delfino, OTS, 1920).

The *saltellato*, a technique later used by Julio De Caro, is another type of percussive effect closely related to the *guitarrita*. This is primarily used as a way of varying material. Earlier in this section, we looked at a four-measure passage from the C section of *Don Esteban*, in which Roccatagliata plays a *guitarrita*, the second violin a simple form of pizzicato, and the cello a counter melody. When the A section returns (Figure 79), after four measures Roccatagliata begins to play virtually the same patterns and notes he did in the C section. However, the second violin plays the melody, softly, instead of the simple pizzicatos of the C section. After four measures, the two violins are joined by the cello in a counter melody (a variation of the melody, in this instance):

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<sup>188</sup> Link and Wendland describe *chan-chan* as “one of the true hallmarks of Argentine tango.” See Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 35.

Figure 79 Don Esteban (Augusto P. Berto, OTS, 1920, mm. 52-60, from 1:33), public domain<sup>189</sup>

Not only does Roccatagliata anticipate the *saltellato*, beginning with the rhythmical pattern before the measure, he includes *arrastres*, scooping in between mm. 55 and 56. He also ends the passage with left-hand pizzicato, plus octave re-articulations of the note, creating a very energetic and highly sprightly character. The *saltellato* is almost identical to *guitarrita*, only played with the bow instead of the fingers.

<sup>189</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Don Esteban*, by Augusto P. Berto, recorded 24 August 1920.

One final kind of effect, which is technically not percussive in nature but can be considered part of the greater family of effects or *yeites* of tangos, is the *sirena*, or a siren-like wailing sound.<sup>190</sup> Julio De Caro would develop both the ascending and descending *sirena* much more in tangos such as *El pillete*, *El monito*, *Vayan saliendo*, but Roccatagliata is the first violinist known to have recorded the technique. *Sirena* can be heard in two recordings: *Color de rosa* (Pedro Polito, OTS, 1920), and *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, OTS, 1920). In *Color de rosa* (Figure 80) the figure is repeated three times throughout the piece, each time preceding a repeat of the C section (0:54, 2:08, 2:35).

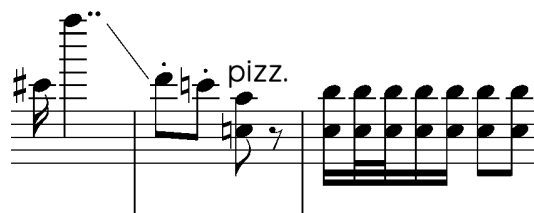


Figure 80 *Color de rosa* (Pedro Polito, OTS, 1920, *sirena*)<sup>191</sup>

He plays the *sirena* by playing one of the highest notes on the violin, followed by a descending portamento over almost an entire measure. The character is humorous, light and slightly wild, as it sounds uncontrolled.

The same type of figure can be found in the C section of *Entrada prohibida* (Figure 81):



Figure 81 *Entrada prohibida* (Luis Teisseire, OTS, 1920, mm 49-53, from 1:33)<sup>192</sup>

<sup>190</sup> I discuss *yeites* at length in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>191</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Color de rosa*, by Pedro Polito, recorded 28 August 1920, Victor B 24421/72833-A, 78 rpm, digitalised by Homero de Madrid, El tango y sus invitados, accessed 21 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2015/07/orquesta-tipica-select-su-discografia.html>.

<sup>192</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Entrada prohibida*, by Luis Teisseire, recorded 30 August 1920.

Here, the *sirena* is slightly different: he clearly goes from an E to an E-harmonic in the highest ranges of the instrument, before descending. However, he does not connect with the following measure, instead bringing the bow to the frog to articulate the offbeat in m. 53.

## Conclusion

In a professional career spanning just over fifteen years, and a recording career little more than a decade, Roccatagliata performed in the most illustrious tango ensembles of his day, recording several hundred tangos in the process, before his premature death at the age of 34. His career unfolded during a period when tango was undergoing a profound social transformation, reflected as well in his varied career. On the one hand, his career could be described as erratic: with the exception of his multiple-year tenure in Roberto Firpo's orchestra, he went from group to group, performing in cafés and bars – sometimes with a questionable reputation<sup>193</sup> – in one period, and elite venues dressed in a tuxedo in the next. Struggles with addiction and an untimely death, combined with the lack of periodical articles dedicated to his career, suggest a certain social volatility. On the other hand, his refined, experimental performance style marked a departure from the rougher, more rudimentary techniques of earlier tango musicians. His much more developed technical and artistic prowess aligned with the professionalization of musicians during the time period; although little is known about his upbringing, he clearly benefitted from formal musical training. Indeed, many techniques he employed, such as his varied use of portamento and his somewhat selective use of vibrato, show many similarities with classical violin playing of the time.

Most importantly, his distinctive playing style, which combined beautiful phrasing with rhythmic drive with distinctive ornamentation and innovative percussive techniques, elevated the violin to a key

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<sup>193</sup> For example, the “café de camareras” in Córdoba, with whom Roccatagliata spent a month performing with Juan Carlos Cobián and Eduardo Arolas. See Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 34.

instrument within the tango orchestra at a time when the music was undergoing a rapid process of stylistic development. His pizzicatos, *canyengue* style and glissandos would be an inspiration to Julio De Caro, subject of Chapter 4 of this thesis and key violinist and orchestra leader of the 1920s.<sup>194</sup> In the words of “Fueye Querido”, if Roccatagliata – Tito’s – life resembled a tango lyric, the only appropriate words would come from Homero Manzi’s *Ninguna*: “no habrá ninguno igual”: there will not be anyone like him”.<sup>195</sup> With Roccatagliata’s untimely death in 1925, a major chapter in tango violin playing ends; over the course of his career, the genre as a whole, as well as violin performance practice underwent a massive transformation. However, performance practice was not yet standardized or codified: that would be a key contribution of Julio De Caro.

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<sup>194</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 154.

<sup>195</sup> Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 406.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Julio De Caro: The Great Consolidator**

#### **Introduction**

In the words of Luis Adolfo Sierra, tango music can be divided into two main historical periods: before and after Julio De Caro (1899-1980).<sup>1</sup> Arguably, the same could be said for tango violin playing. Indeed, De Caro can be considered the single most influential artistic leader, composer and musician that the genre has known, so much so that he inspired a movement known as the *escuela Decareana* or the Decarean school.<sup>2</sup> His successors – such as Aníbal Troilo, Osvaldo Pugliese, and Astor Piazzolla, to name a few – can be considered disciples of *decarismo*, a term coined in the 1950s to describe what Oscar Del Priore describes as “one of the most important movements in the renewal of tango music”.<sup>3</sup> Based on two guiding principles, the first that “tango is also music”, and the second that it was necessary to elevate the tango in order to ensure its survival, De Caro sought to enrich tango music with a combination of lyrical musicality, interpretational excellence, an extreme variety of elements and techniques to avoid monotony, and, ultimately, a codification of the musical language of tango.<sup>4</sup> Codification (and standardization), which Blas Matamoro identifies as De Caro’s most crucial contribution to the tango language, will be a key idea in this chapter, which will focus on De Caro as a violinist.<sup>5</sup> Matamoro notably links this desire to codify and elevate the language of tango music to De Caro’s middle-class upbringing as well as the overall social ascension of tango music, which was undergoing a process of “canonization” by the mid-1920s.<sup>6</sup> This canonization was firmly

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<sup>1</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 3. See Appendix C for a complete discography of De Caro (1923-1934).

<sup>2</sup> Secondary source material about the *escuela Decareana* abounds. De Caro himself said he had to create a school, similarly to Benny Goodman in jazz, so that tango would develop and thrive. See “Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso del tango,” *Tango, un siglo de historia 1880-1980* 16 (Editorial Perfil S.A., 1980), 253.

<sup>3</sup> Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla*, 87; Gobello, *Breve historia*, 105. Gobello describes Piazzolla’s 1961 composition *Decarísimo* as a form of canonisation.

<sup>4</sup> *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942; *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934.

<sup>5</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108-109.

<sup>6</sup> Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108-109.

based on past practices. De Caro employed many technical and musical devices initially used by predecessors such as Ernesto Ponzio and Tito Roccatagliata, developing them further, introducing new ideas partially based on them, and then using them repeatedly in his recordings, creating a lasting form of both writing and performing tango music. In their 1936 tome *La historia del tango, vol. 1*, Héctor and Luis Bates identify Julio De Caro as a central figure: for them, he is the link between the past – the Guardia Vieja – and future of tango, which they refer to as *los modernos*.<sup>7</sup> De Caro's violin playing can be described in the same way: while using and building upon the elements of the past, he nonetheless forever changed the genre, forming the link between past and present performance practice. Nearly all elements of tango violin playing as we know it today can be found in his recordings.

However, despite the recognition given to De Caro's contributions to tango music, and the significant amount of secondary source material written about them, his violin playing has not been studied in detail. While neither disparaged nor ignored, his playing is often overlooked, in comparison with that of other prominent tango violinists, such as Elvino Vardaro, Cayetano Puglisi or even Tito Roccatagliata. In a ranking of the greatest tango violinists made by the Instituto Argentino de Estudios sobre el Tango in 1973, Julio De Caro placed fifth, after Roccatagliata, Vardaro, Puglisi and Agesilao Ferrazzano, with whom De Caro began his recording career as part of the Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián in 1923.<sup>8</sup> Violinistically, he is perhaps more remembered for the distinctive sound produced by his *violín corneta* or trumpet violin, which was given to him by RCA Victor in 1925, than for the extreme lyricism and beauty of his solos.

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<sup>7</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 169.

<sup>8</sup> "El ranking del tango," *Estudios de tango* 10, 509. The ranking also includes pianists (Julio's brother, Francisco, taking first place), bandoneonists (Pedro Maffia, first bandoneon player of Sexteto Julio De Caro from 1924-1926, in first place), double bassists (Leopoldo Thompson, legendary first double bass player of De Caro's sextet until his death in 1926), and so forth. Curiously, the publication announces the results from 28 February 1973, but in the July-August 1972 issue – perhaps the authors meant 1972?



Four main aspects distinguish him from his violinistic predecessors, which were discussed in previous chapters. The first is the aspect of violin training: while musicians such as Casimiro Alcorta and Ernesto Ponzio only had rudimentary musical training, that of Tito Roccatagliata being largely unknown, Julio De Caro grew up in his father's – who had previously taught at the La Scala Conservatory in Milan – conservatory, receiving classical training, and eventually teaching violin and solfège himself. His primary teachers were David Bolla and Alberto Williams, the latter being an illustrious composer and founder of Conservatorio Williams, whose numerous branches dispensed musical training across Argentina. Williams is considered the father of Argentine music.<sup>9</sup> A second aspect is that Julio De Caro's career developed during a time in which there was a proliferation of specialized press about popular music, providing a platform that shared his ideas. Periodicals such as *La Canción Moderna*, *Sintonía*, and *Radiolandia* featured not only photographic material and gossip about the activities of various musicians, but also interviews; De Caro was frequently consulted about his musical ideas. Third, he made more than 400 recordings throughout his career, which began during the acoustic recording era, and provide excellent evidence of his musical style. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, he was the leader of his ensembles from 1924 until 1953, ultimately making the artistic decisions, even if he was strongly aided and influenced by some of his fellow musicians, notably his brother Francisco, with whom he performed throughout his entire career, but also bandoneonists Pedro Maffia, Pedro Laurenz, and Armando Blasco, as well as double bassist Leopoldo Thompson, to name a few.

De Caro's career as a violinist and (subsequently as) orchestra leader lasted more than forty years, initially beginning in 1917 as part of Ricardo Brignolo's orchestra, until his final recordings made in 1953.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his varied career, he was a prolific recording artist, 35 recordings as part of the Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián (1923), four recordings in the ensemble *Los virtuosos* (1936), as

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<sup>9</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A.

well as 421 recordings as artistic leader of his own ensembles.<sup>11</sup> These recordings can be broken down into periods and recording companies, presented in table 4:

| Year      | Formation   | Record company                            | Quantity of recordings |
|-----------|---|---|------------------------|
| 1923      | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián <sup>12</sup>  | RCA Victor                                | 35                     |
| 1924-1928 | Sexteto Julio De Caro (recorded under the names Orquesta Típica De Caro and Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica) <sup>13</sup> | RCA Victor                                | 137                    |
| 1929-1932 | Sexteto Julio De Caro (recorded under the name Orquesta Típica De Caro)   | Brunswick                                 | 165                    |
| 1934      | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta típica (3 violins, 4 bandoneons, piano, double bass)  | RCA Victor; Odeon                         | 2; 13                  |
| 1936      | Orquesta Melódica Internacional   | Odeon                                     | 6                      |
| 1936      | Los virtuosos   | RCA Victor                                | 4                      |
| 1938-1944 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta típica  | Odeon (1938-1942); RCA Victor (1943-1944) | 51; 8                  |
| 1949-1953 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta típica  | Odeon (1949-1951); Pathé (1952-1953)      | 26; 16                 |

Table 4 Discography of Julio De Caro<sup>14</sup>

Despite a long and varied recording career, De Caro's most crucial stylistic innovations and developments occurred during the period of his sextet (1924-1932), described by Omar García Brunelli as "foundational for the future history of tango".<sup>15</sup> After this period, De Caro focussed on larger ensembles, and especially the creation of symphonic tangos, which he viewed as essential for ensuring the survival and flourishing of tango music.<sup>16</sup> While expanding the size of his ensembles, De Caro experimented a great deal with instrumentation and orchestration, adding percussion, woodwinds and brass instruments. In 1938, he returned, at least partially, to his earlier style with the

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>14</sup> Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*; Marino E. Ricardi, *Discografía de Julio De Caro y su orquesta*; Enrique Binda, "Discografía de Juan Carlos Cobián 1917-1944;" Enrique Binda, "Discografía de Julio De Caro," Academia.edu, accessed 13 August 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/64373333/Discografia\\_de\\_Julio\\_De\\_Caro\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/64373333/Discografia_de_Julio_De_Caro_por_Enrique_Binda).

<sup>15</sup> Omar García Brunelli, *Discografía básica del tango: Su historia a través de las grabaciones (1905-2010)*, 63.

<sup>16</sup> *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934.

creation of his *orquesta típica*, but many of the arrangements he would later record were based on repertoire he had initially recorded with his sextet.<sup>17</sup>

In this chapter, I will focus primarily on the recordings of tangos De Caro made as part of his sextet, which can be divided into two periods: 1924-1928, in which the ensemble recorded 137 pieces with RCA Victor, and 1929-1932, when 165 recordings were made on the Brunswick label. From a violinistic perspective, nearly all stylistic elements were introduced and standardized during the RCA Victor period, and as such my discussion will centre upon these.<sup>18</sup> During this period, many key stylistic aspects can be noted, many of which were introduced, and then repeatedly used, to the point where they became standardized. These can be categorized as lyrical (De Caro's legendary portamentos, *fraseo*, and use of vibrato in a general expansion of countermelodies and proliferation of lyrical solo material), rhythmical (short and long accents, *arrastres*, *síncopas*), or percussive (*yeites* or percussive elements such as *chicharra*, *tambor*, *golpes*, *sirena*, and pizzicatos – normal, left-hand, and *guitarrita*), as well as ornamental (grace notes and trills). The four-year RCA Victor period (1924-1928) involves substantial changes in technology – the microphone was introduced in April 1926, and De Caro began to record with his *violin corneta* by 1927, but also includes recordings of many of De Caro's best-known pieces. Finally, De Caro focussed almost exclusively on recording tango music during this period; with Brunswick he began to record more folkloric music, including rancheras, chacareras, estilos and zambas, even if tangos remained his primary focus throughout his career.

### Source material

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>18</sup> After listening to more than 300 recordings, including all his sextet recordings and many of those from later in De Caro's career, I concluded that the sextet is the most salient period for my analysis.

Four main types of sources were used in preparing this chapter: 1) primary source material, mostly from periodicals; 2) secondary source material about Julio De Caro; 3) violin-specific materials; 4) the recordings mentioned above. Julio De Caro was widely written about, both during and after his lifetime; as such, there are a variety of materials available. As mentioned in the introduction, De Caro's career flourished alongside the emergence of press specialized in popular music, such as *La Canción Moderna*, *Sintonía* and *Radiolandia*. The earliest materials mentioning Julio De Caro are advertisements for performances and recordings. For example, in September 1926, RCA Victor published an advertisement (Figure 82), in which they describe De Caro as an exclusive Victor artist, mentioning two key elements: first, that he was a “genius interpreter of national *música típica*”, and secondly, that he had met the Prince of Wales, who was an avid fan of Argentine music, bringing scores and recordings back to England with him:



*Figure 82 Caras y Caretas, 25 September 1926<sup>19</sup>*

The earliest article featuring De Caro's career, however, was published in 1928, in a series entitled "La guardia vieja y guardia nueva".<sup>20</sup> Comparing De Caro to early tango musician Vicente Greco, the article describes De Caro as a "pioneer" of the new generation of musician, an "energetic violinist, [and] inspired composer". From 1928 on, De Caro was frequently interviewed, which gave him a platform for expressing his musical ideas. In early interviews he described his ambitions to travel abroad, to Europe (including visiting the Prince of Wales in London, who had invited him in 1926), and to New York City, to show the public abroad the "true Argentine tango".<sup>21</sup> However, from 1932 on he expressed his primary musical ambitions via the press. While I will discuss his musical ideas later in this chapter, several elements remained constant throughout his career, as viewed by the

<sup>19</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 25 September 1926.

<sup>20</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 April 1928.

<sup>21</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 5 January 1929. While De Caro never travelled to the US, his 1931 European tour to Italy and France was widely covered in the press of the time. However, his plans to perform for the Prince of Wales in London never came to fruition.

articles published in the press: he viewed elevating the musical language of tango as essential to its survival, and the best way to do this, in his opinion, was to create an enlarged orchestra with a focus on orchestration and new forms of instrumentation.<sup>22</sup> In his view, tango had to transform itself or die.<sup>23</sup>

In most primary source material, De Caro is described as an accomplished violinist, or the articles speak of his magic violin, but without specifically addressing his playing style.<sup>24</sup> An exception to this could be a 1936 campaign in *Sintonía* entitled “Los Virtuosity”, in which the magazine encouraged its readers to vote for the best tango musicians, in order to form a quintet: the two violinists chosen were Julio De Caro and Elvino Vardaro.<sup>25</sup> De Caro himself describes his playing on a few occasions, but generally in the context of his *violin corneta*. One story he tells in his memoirs, as well as in a 1971 interview about the past and present of the violin in tango, is the time Carlos López Buchardo – one of the most influential Argentinian composers and classical musicians at the time – asked him to play for Fritz Kreisler, one of his violinistic idols, at the Salón Dorado of the Teatro Colón.<sup>26</sup> Describing his initial nervous state in playing for such an illustrious violinist, he mentions showing Kreisler a number of effects: guitarrita, pizzicatos, arpeggios, *saltellatos*, (or bouncing bows), *canyengues* and other techniques, earning Kreisler’s profound admiration.<sup>27</sup> According to De Caro, Kreisler signed his violin.<sup>28</sup> In the 1971 interview he also mentions showing Kreisler something called ‘*rasqueta sorda*’ – or “dull scraping”, which he claimed was an invention of his (I believe he is referring to *chicharra*,

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<sup>22</sup> Some examples of published articles include: *La Canción Moderna*, 14 April 1932; *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933; *Sintonía*, 30 September 1933; *La Canción Moderna*, 27 November 1933; *La Canción Moderna*, 22 January 1934; *Sintonía*, 18 August 1934; *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; *Sintonía*, 5 January 1935; *Caras y Caretas*, 2 March 1935; *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936; *Radiolandia*, 5 June 1937; *Antena*, 10 September 1938.

<sup>23</sup> *Sintonía*, 26 November 1936. In the article, he responds, vehemently, to Canaro’s earlier assertions, that tango music was not declining, only bad composers and musicians. See *Sintonía*, 19 November 1936.

<sup>24</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 9 April 1928; *Micrófono*, 02 August 1934; *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.

<sup>25</sup> *Sintonía*, 10 September 1936; *Sintonía* 17 September 1936, *Sintonía*, 29 October 1936.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>27</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 112-113.

<sup>28</sup> I was allowed to photograph Julio De Caro’s violin at SADAIC in Buenos Aires; however, I could not see any signature on it. Press reports of the time discuss the signature on the instrument, for example in a 31 March 1938 *Sintonía* article, in which the journalist mistakenly writes that the signature was made by the genius violinist Jascha Kreisler (mixing up Fritz Kreisler and Jascha Heifetz).

one of the most distinctive techniques he developed, which I will discuss later in this chapter).<sup>29</sup> He cannot resist adding one of his key ideas, that tango musicians have developed their own repertoire of techniques to enrich the music, just like jazz musicians such as Benny Goodman:

Just as in jazz, where B. Goodman, H. James or Duque Ellington (sic) have created effects and resources for their popular music, tango instrumentalists have not lagged behind. And that is the enchantment by which violinists are completely captured by the true school of tango.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the many interviews conducted over the course of his career, De Caro himself became a columnist. In the 1950s he penned a series of articles about the history of tango for the Peronist cultural magazine *El canillita*, where he wrote about the origins of tango as well as a number of illustrious musicians, including Eduardo Arolas, one of his great mentors.<sup>31</sup> These articles served as an initial step towards the preparation of his memoirs, which were published in 1964: *El tango en mis recuerdos*.<sup>32</sup> A flawed document featuring an autobiography, that is, his own version of his career (part 1), a history of tango (largely taken from the *El canillita* articles) (part 2), biographies of famous tango musicians (part 3, also largely from *El canillita*) as well as a biography written by Luis Rey (part 4), his memoirs nonetheless provide an excellent reflection of his musical ideas, if not necessarily an accurate depiction of all of his activities. For example, there are conflicting stories about how De Caro obtained his *violín corneta*: De Caro explains at length in his memoirs that Mr. Cheney, the technical director of RCA Victor in Argentina, had given him the instrument in order to project better in public venues, as his own instrument was insufficiently loud.<sup>33</sup> However, in a 1980 interview, De Caro himself claimed that famous jazzman Paul Whiteman, who had heard De Caro's recordings in the USA, intervened to have the instrument sent down to Argentina.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Julio De Caro," *Buenos Aires Tango 6: Pasado y presente del violín en el tango* (Ediciones 2X4, 1971), 21.

<sup>30</sup> "Julio De Caro," *Buenos Aires Tango 6*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> *El canillita*, May 1954; June 1954; July 1954; August 1954; September 1954; October 1954; November 1954; December 1954. An article about his own musical ideas was published in October 1954.

<sup>32</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango*.

<sup>33</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 51-52.

<sup>34</sup> "Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso del tango," 253-4.

Secondary source material is abundant, although primarily biographical in nature. Perhaps the most complete material comes from the writings of Luis Adolfo Sierra, who considered himself a close friend of De Caro. In particular, his article “La escuela Decareana”, provides an excellent overview of his career.<sup>35</sup> Other historical sources providing information about his career include José Gobello’s *Breve historia crítica del tango*; Oscar Del Priore’s *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla y después*, Horacio Ferrer’s *El tango: Su historia y evolución*, to name a few.<sup>36</sup> Other, more recent sources, are musicological in nature. Omar García Brunelli has published several excellent articles about Julio De Caro’s musical style, as well as about *sextetos típicos* (1924-1935), and the stylistic transition from Guardia Vieja to Guardia Nueva.<sup>37</sup> Other useful sources include Pablo Mitilineos’ article about 3+3+2 accompanimental patterns in tango music, where he discusses *yeites*, syncopations and a number of interpretational resources used by Julio De Caro’s orchestra; the transcriptions and musical analysis of Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot and Pablo Mitilineos in *Las orquestas de tango en el primer periodo de la Guardia Nueva: Elementos compositivos y criterios de arreglo*; Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland’s *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Instrumental Tango Music*; and Bárbara Varassi Pega’s analysis of *Boedo* in her recent book *The Art of Tango*.<sup>38</sup> Finally, information about De Caro’s recordings, and the recording industry in general, can be found in Lefcovich’s *Estudios de la discografía de Julio De Caro*, Enrique Binda’s *Los primeros 25 años de la discografía nacional*, and Marina Cañardo’s *Fábricas de músicas*.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps the most complete discussion of De Caro’s violin playing in secondary literature can be found in the 1964 manual *El violín en el tango*, written by the Club de la Guardia Nueva, a Montevideo-based association of tango aficionados wrote a number of *cuadernos* – or notebooks

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<sup>35</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” 1007-1183.

<sup>36</sup> Some examples include José Gobello *Breve historia*; Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla*; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” 1007-1183.

<sup>37</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro y su proyección en el género,” 85-104; Omar García Brunelli, “La transición estilística del tango luego de la crisis de 1930.”

<sup>38</sup> Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot and Pablo Mitilineos, *Las orquestas de tango en el primer periodo de la Guardia Nueva* (Fondo Nacional de las Artes, 2012); Bárbara Varassi Pega, *The Art of Tango*.

<sup>39</sup> Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*; Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años de la discografía*; Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*.



about tango history.<sup>40</sup> For the authors, De Caro can be considered the inheritor of Tito Roccatagliata's many stylistic innovations; however, due to De Caro's more solid technical foundation, he was able to improve upon them, both developing and standardizing them. According to them, De Caro was the true creator of a more *subjective* form of tango, where individual interpretation and musical expression was vital. As such, they identify two main branches of violinistic development: expressive, including De Caro's famous portamentos, his magnificent *fraseo*, and his lyrical solo material; and rhythmical, including the use of the *arrastre*, short articulations and accentuations.<sup>41</sup> Finally, they signal the influences of his brother Francisco and bandoneon players Pedro Maffia and Pedro Laurenz on De Caro: De Caro's style evolved within the context of the sextet, and was intimately informed by these players, especially *fraseo*, rhythmic accentuation, and syncopations.

Likewise, Horacio Ferrer, while crediting all of the musicians of the sextet for their specific contributions, specifically singles out De Caro's portamento, countermelodies, and usage of counterpoint, signalling De Caro's creation of a true school of violin playing.<sup>42</sup> Blas Matamoro highlights De Caro's usage of techniques such as *guitarrita*, employed by older violinists such as Roccatagliata and Ferrazzano, as well as a huge array of polyphonic and rhythmic contributions – using different registers in countermelodies, for example.<sup>43</sup> Finally, Luis Adolfo Sierra identifies De Caro's portamento, vibrato, staccato articulation at the frog of the bow, and his pizzicatos as evidence of De Caro's violinistic innovations; in his words, “all of these effects continue to endure as true institutions among the interpretative resources of tango”.<sup>44</sup>

In relation to De Caro's musical training and possible stylistic influences, I consulted *La Gymnastique du Violon* of the Ecole Léonard, De Bériot's *Méthode du Violon*, Siegfried Eberhardt's *Violin Vibrato*, as well as a few secondary sources providing information about late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>40</sup> Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violin en el tango,” 11, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violin en el tango,” 11, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 82.

<sup>43</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad de tango*, 109-110.

<sup>44</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” 1037-1038.

classical performance practice, such as Robert Phillip's *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, Kai Köpp's article "Die hohe Schule des 'portamento'", and Clive Brown's "Bowing styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing".<sup>45</sup> Although there were many archival materials related to violin playing from the time upon which I could have drawn, there were specific reasons for consulting these sources in particular. *La Gymnastique du Violon* is the most important manual from the Ecole Léonard, from which De Caro claimed to have studied in his memoirs, and De Bériot, who wrote one of the foundational texts of the Franco-Belgian violin school, was Léonard's professor and mentor. Finally, Eberhardt's text, originally published in 1910 – beginning of the time period covered by this thesis – was an extremely influential book about early twentieth-century vibrato usage.

### Early life and musical training

De Caro's insistence on his non-working class origins, his consciousness of tango's origins and overall place in society, would be a recurring theme in his autobiography, as well as in the many interviews and articles penned through his lifetime.<sup>46</sup> Born on 11 December 1899 in Buenos Aires to José De Caro De Sica and Mariana Ricciardi Villari, both Italian immigrants from illustrious families, De Caro insists on their noble origin in his autobiography, including an excerpt from the *Storico Nobiliaria Italiana* about his family origins.<sup>47</sup> His mother's family was originally from Naples, and his father's from Sicily. Of his twelve brothers and sisters, two would be particularly meaningful to his professional career: Emilio, who played second violin in the Sexteto Julio De Caro from 1924 until 1930, and especially Francisco, who played piano in all of De Caro's ensembles throughout his career, from 1924 until 1953. Francisco's influence on Julio's musical career cannot be overestimated.

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<sup>45</sup> Hubert Léonard, *La Gymnastique du Violon* (Edition Schott, 1911); Charles de Bériot, *Méthode du Violon, 3e Partie: Du Style*; Siegfried Eberhardt, *Violin Vibrato: Mastery and Artistic Uses*; Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*; Kai Köpp, "Die hohe Schule des 'portamento'"; Clive Brown, "Bowing styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing."

<sup>46</sup> Blas Matamoro describes De Caro's self-consciousness on class as symptomatic of the overall social ascension of tango music. See Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108-109.

<sup>47</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 2.

Drawing upon the pianistic style of Juan Carlos Cobián – including pianistic fills (*rellenos*), ornaments and melodic material – Francisco standardized the function of the piano as a driving force within the tango ensemble and greatly expanded its role as a soloistic instrument within the ensemble.<sup>48</sup>

De Caro's father, José, was crucial to his sons' musical development. Professor of the Conservatory at La Scala in Milan, José emigrated to Argentina, where he opened a conservatory and shop selling sheet music and instruments, including bandoneons, imported from Germany.<sup>49</sup> Many tango musicians were clients of his father's store: he names Juan Maglio "Pacho", Angel Villoldo, Vicente Greco, and others in his autobiography. In addition, his father sold tango sheet music, which De Caro had the occasion to learn secretly, necessary because tango was a 'forbidden word' at the time, especially in their house, a "bastion of classical music", to use De Caro's own turn of phrase.<sup>50</sup> De Caro depicts his father as authoritarian, requiring eight hours per day of studying. While initially, his brother Francisco played the violin and Julio the piano, the brothers soon switched instruments, much to their father's dismay; only after their mother intervened were the brothers permitted to switch permanently. By the age of 13, Julio was teaching violin, solfège and music theory at his father's conservatory.

De Caro's father's resistance to tango music, often repeated in tango historiography, must be treated with a grain of salt. Although he himself was a musician, and insisted on rigorous (classical) musical training for his children, De Caro's father wished for him to be a medical doctor, so that he would be financially successful.<sup>51</sup> As such, De Caro's father discouraged his activities as a professional musician. For example, De Caro incurred his father's wrath after his first experience performing

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<sup>48</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Francisco De Caro: El gran cambio," in *Todo es historia 3. Tango (I)*, ed. Félix Luna, (Todo es Historia, 1976), 80-82.

<sup>49</sup> Maria Susanna Azzi, "Multicultural Tango: The Impact and the Contribution of the Italian Immigration to the Tango in Argentina," 450.

<sup>50</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 15. See Chapter 1 of this thesis for a larger discussion of the social acceptance of tango music.

<sup>51</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 22-23.

popular music at the age of 15, when he played as second violin in the zarzuela company of De Bassi (father); his father made him reimburse the five pesos he had earned. Furthermore, De Caro was invited by friends to see Roberto Firpo's orchestra at the Palais de Glace in 1917; famously he tells the story of how he was encouraged to join the stage, playing "La Cumparsita" at the behest of David 'Tito' Roccatagliata. In the audience was a certain Eduardo Arolas, who immediately asked him to join his orchestra, which De Caro purportedly refused as he was going to become a doctor. Several days later, Arolas went to speak to his father, asking him if Julio could join his orchestra, provoking a strong refusal; when his father subsequently discovered that his son was indeed working with Arolas, he threw him out of the house, cutting off relations (supposedly) – asking his son whether he wanted to be a good doctor, or a vulgar *tanguero* – until what De Caro describes as the great reunion in 1937, when his father declared that he had followed his son's career avidly.<sup>52</sup> So goes the story. However, Luis Adolfo Sierra nuances many of these details in "La escuela Decareana". According to Sierra, De Caro's father's opposition was primarily financial, and not because he was playing popular music, pointing out that his father had taught solfège to the bandoneon player Rafael Rossi: "Don José himself was pleased that his children had turned their early artistic vocation to a popular genre, but one that did not offer prospects for serious professional dedication".<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Sierra also nuances the Palais de Glace story: Roccatagliata had already left Firpo's ensemble by then, and the two violinists were Agesilao Ferrazano and Cayetano Puglisi; also, Firpo was no longer performing *La cumparsita* at that point. Both Firpo and Puglisi remembered the evening in question, according to Sierra, and indeed Ferrazzano had lent his violin to De Caro.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, as he points out, although Arolas did indeed speak with De Caro's father, De Caro did not begin his professional career as a tango violinist with Arolas, but instead with Ricardo Brignolo, only joining Arolas' ensemble the following year.<sup>55</sup> Finally, although Sierra did not dispute De Caro's estrangement from his father, I would like to call it, at least somewhat, into question. In 1928, nine years before De Caro claims he

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<sup>52</sup> De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 22-24; 108-109.

<sup>53</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1050.

<sup>54</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1052.

<sup>55</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1053.

reconciled with his father in his memoirs, the two men advertised side by side in *La Canción Moderna*: Julio De Caro's orchestra's performance venues on the left, and De Caro's father's conservatory to the right (Figure 83).<sup>56</sup> Although the placement of the advertisements was likely decided by the typesetters of the periodical, it is nonetheless noteworthy that both appear on the same page. Moreover, if De Caro's father was so against non-classical forms of music – as claimed by De Caro – why does he advertise in a periodical for popular music, specifying that his establishment provides for the “Teaching of all types of jazz and *típica* instruments” including piano, violin, guitar, bandoneon, solfège and singing?<sup>57</sup>

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| <p><b>“LA PERLA”</b><br/>         EMPRESA DE MUDANZAS Y TRANSPORTES<br/>         —De—<br/> <b>GAUDINO Hermanos</b><br/>         Servicio esmerado en camiones. — Precios módicos. — Mudanzas para ciudad y campaña.<br/> <b>CHILE 2032 U. T. 47 - Cuyo 8495</b><br/> <b>BUENOS AIRES</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>JULIO DE CARO</b><br/> <b>Y SU ORQUESTA</b><br/>         ACTUACION:<br/>         Vogue's Club — Richmonds Bar — Select Lavalle — Teatro Opera — Teatro San Martín — Hotel Copacabana — Petit Splendid y Discos Victor.<br/> <b>LAVALLE 1054 - Dpto. 2</b><br/> <b>U. T. 38 - Mayo 5155</b></p> | <p>Organiza conjuntos típicos para fiestas, bailes y espectáculos públicos<br/> <b>HERRERA 587</b>      <b>Buenos Aires</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Academia musical DE CARO</b><br/>         Dirigida por JOSE DE CARO<br/>         Piano, Violín, Guitarra, Bandoneón, Solfeo, Canto, etc. Enseñanza de toda clase de instrumentos de jazz y típica.<br/> <b>MEJICO 2818</b>      <b>U. T. 8869 Cuyo</b></p> |
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Figure 83 *La Canción Moderna*, 30 April 1928, permission given by Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno

Despite the complex relationship De Caro shared with his father, he benefitted from solid musical training in both violin and music theory under his father's tutelage. His primary violin teacher was David Bolla, and he was also taught by Alberto Williams, known as one of the founding fathers of

<sup>56</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 30 April 1928.

<sup>57</sup> “Típica”, as in *orquesta típica*, is a way of describing instruments used in a tango ensemble.

Argentine music.<sup>58</sup> In his memoirs, De Caro mentions that while initially studying Kreutzer and Mazas (which he describes as Mazza) exercises, by 1913, he primarily learned with the Léonard system, describing it as the “the latest trend in methods”.<sup>59</sup> Successor of the legendary Belgian violinist Charles de Bériot at Brussels Conservatory, Hubert Léonard wrote a series of seven pedagogical manuals under the title *Ecole Léonard pour le violon*, the most famous of which was *La Gymnastique du Violoniste*, initially published in the 1860s, but revised and edited by Editions Schott in 1911.<sup>60</sup> Léonard was one of the key proponents of the Franco-Belgian violin school, which, based on de Bériot’s teachings, emphasized the production of beautiful sound, as well as the incorporation of singing techniques such as portamento (or *port-de-voix*, quite literally “carrying the voice”) and *messa di voce* (a crescendo/decrescendo swell in the middle of longer notes) into violin playing, emphasizing the lyrical qualities of the instrument.<sup>61</sup> Léonard’s *Gymnastique* includes exercises related to sound production, tone contrasts, dynamics, articulations (staccato, martelé, legato), ornaments such as trills and mordents, and for both right- and left-hand pizzicato.<sup>62</sup> Although it is impossible to know to what extent De Caro used, or was influenced by this method, it is perhaps revelatory that many of the techniques he employed in his own recordings are to be discovered in the manuals of the Ecole Léonard.

### Julio De Caro’s musical ideas

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<sup>58</sup> I discuss Alberto Williams, and his system of conservatories, in Chapter 2 of this thesis. However, I could not find any information about David Bolla. De Caro mentions him in his memoirs, as well as in an interview published in *La Canción Moderna* (14 April 1932). Interviewed by Héctor and Luis Bates for *La historia del tango*, De Caro describes Bolla (which the Bates write as “Bogliá”) as “malogrado”, suggesting that he died young. See Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 170.

<sup>59</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Hubert Léonard, *La Gymnastique du Violoniste*. It is not impossible that De Caro used this 1911 edition: the first pedagogical manual of tango music, Alfredo Bevilacqua’s *Escuela de tango* (1914), discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, was distributed in Europe by Schott, showing some connection between Argentina and Schott. The 1911 publishing date may explain why he described the method as the “latest trend”, even if it had been initially published 50 years earlier.

<sup>61</sup> Dijana Ihas, “Franco-Belgian Violin School: De Bériot, Léonard, Massart, and the First Modern Virtuosi-Composers,” in *Teaching Violin, Viola, Cello and Double Bass* (Routledge, 2024), 40-45.

<sup>62</sup> Léonard, *La Gymnastique du Violoniste*.

De Caro's primary idea was that "tango también es música" – tango is also music.<sup>63</sup> Within his central rallying cry were two key ideas: first, that although tango was originally a dance form, it should be interesting to listen to; second, that it is necessary to elevate the musical language of the tango in order to make it a popular art form respected globally, one that Argentina can be proud of, and also to ensure its survival. These ideas must be placed within the context of their time, and De Caro's life. Tango fought a long, complex battle for social respectability, something that I discussed at length in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Both tango dancers and musicians were marginalized, geographically (quite literally on the outskirts or the *orillas* of Buenos Aires), but also socially and economically. After tango dancing became popular globally, the dance became more socially respectable in Buenos Aires, reaching the centre as well as well-to-do areas such as *Barrio Norte*. However, many of the musicians accompanying these dancers – during the first forty years of its history, tango music was primarily a vehicle for dance – came from humble origins. Casimiro Alcorta and Ernesto Ponzio, discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, developed their careers within this marginalized space.<sup>64</sup> De Caro, however, did not grow up in the *orillas* of Buenos Aires; his parents, as we have seen, came from noble families, and his father was a highly trained musician, successfully directing a conservatory and music shop. Likewise, as discussed earlier, De Caro and his siblings benefitted from extensive classical music training as children, which shaped not only their performance practice, but also their approach to music as a whole. De Caro's middle-class upbringing, and musical training, is not an anomaly in tango history, but rather can be seen as indicative of the musical generation in which he developed: other musicians associated with the *Guardia Nueva* of tango, such as Osvaldo Fresedo and Juan Carlos Cobián, also received musical training as children.<sup>65</sup> That being said, their careers in tango music developed during the period in which tango gained social respectability: the 1910s. To this, we can add the explosion of recordings in

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<sup>63</sup> *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942.

<sup>64</sup> I mention Alcorta and Ponzio because little is known about the origins of Bonano and Roccatagliata, the other violinists I have discussed in detail.

<sup>65</sup> Fresedo's mother was a piano teacher, and he learned music theory as well as bandoneon. Enrique Haba, "Osvaldo Fresedo," 1968. Cobián learned piano as part of the Conservatorio Williams system. See Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 18-20.

the 1910s, subject of earlier chapters: tango recordings, marketed by companies such as Odeon as *música nacional*, sold extremely well, leading to a plethora of different ensembles. Developing interpretational identity – also through using any musical, and technical resources at their disposal – was a way for ensembles to become successful, to sell more recordings. Furthermore, De Caro's viewpoints were provoked by, or at least informed by, events and trends of the time. For example, most of De Caro press coverage is from the 1930s, a time in which other forms of popular music, especially jazz from North America, were becoming increasingly popular in Argentina, generating a feeling of anxiety amongst tango musicians.<sup>66</sup> As such, he became increasingly preoccupied with the survival of tango music, and his vision for the perdurance of tango in the future.

De Caro felt that tango music should be interesting to listen to, without, however, sacrificing its danceability, in line with his *Guardia Nueva* counterparts Osvaldo Fresedo and Juan Carlos Cobián, something that inspired future tango musicians such Aníbal Troilo and Osvaldo Pugliese.<sup>67</sup> In a 1932 *La Canción Moderna* interview, De Caro is asked about his personal way of interpreting tango music. De Caro replies laconically that his vision of tango music was that of *tango musicado*: “Like musicalized tango... Although it may seem like a joke, here [in Argentina] it is not the case. We [his orchestra] use our musical knowledge to interpret it, with harmony and counterpoint”.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, as he confirms in a 1933 *Sintonía* article, he writes music for both a dancing and listening public but tries to “remove that monotonous beat for dancing” in order to create something more varied and interesting.<sup>69</sup>

His approach to creating something more varied was, in his words, to elevate tango music, to ensure the development, flourishing and survival of tango music. In a 1942 *Sintonía* interview entitled,

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<sup>66</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>67</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 106.

<sup>68</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 14 April 1932.

<sup>69</sup> *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933.



“Julio De Caro affirms that it is necessary to revalorize tango music,” De Caro describes elevating tango music as the most consequential aspect of his musical life:

My ideal, the ‘leitmotif’ of my entire career, was to elevate the artistic hierarchy of popular music... Tango, besides being a vehicle for emotions that is closely identified with the people, is also music. Yes, gentlemen, tango is also music... In this respect, its possibilities are not limited by anything other than those of those who cultivate it.<sup>70</sup>

The desire to elevate the music could be described as something of an obsession of De Caro’s, expressed repeatedly in interviews and editorials.<sup>71</sup> There are three sub-arguments that can be distinguished through these articles: nationalism, the desire to create more complex, sophisticated music, and, finally, enlarging the orchestra in order to create a symphonic project around tango music, or *tango sinfónico*.

In the abovementioned 1933 *Sintonía* article, De Caro makes two decisive statements, first that he believes that tango music reflects the identity of the Argentine people, and second, that he wanted to make sure that tango music was “respected as the maximum expression of our personality”.<sup>72</sup> By elevating tango, he was acting in the best interest of Argentina, giving the music “weapons so that it can fight on equal footing with popular music from other countries.”<sup>73</sup> He repeatedly refers to jazz music in these discussions, praising musicians such as Paul Whiteman and Benny Goodman for creating schools of jazz (in the case of Goodman), or introducing melodic jazz (Whiteman), spreading its popularity throughout the globe. Describing himself in a 1937 *Sintonía* article as the “*Porteño* Paul Whiteman” for his contributions to tango music, De Caro discusses the threat of musical exoticism, provoked as he was by the enthusiasm of Buenos Aires’ youth for North American music: rather than rejecting other forms of popular music coming from abroad, it was necessary instead to improve the

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<sup>70</sup> *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942.

<sup>71</sup> Articles where he talks about elevating tango music include: *La Canción Moderna*, 27 October 1933; *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; *Sintonía* 5 January 1935; *Caras y Caretas*, 2 March 1935; *Sintonía*, 11 April 1936; *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936; “*Sintonía*, 26 November 1936; *Radiolandia*, 5 June 1937. The list is not exhaustive.

<sup>72</sup> *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933.

<sup>73</sup> *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936.

music as much as possible, in his words, “the only way to make sure that foreign music does not step on our ponchos”.<sup>74</sup>

In multiple articles, De Caro speaks about his musical ideas for elevating tango, stating “I will make sure that tango is not something poor”.<sup>75</sup> His great desire was to use the concepts and principles of music theory in order to embellish the tango – which he describes as “our urban music, our *Porteñísimo* tango” – enlarging its possibilities of musical expression.<sup>76</sup> In a 1935 editorial, he describes how he and his brother Francisco took early tango – boring, of little musical value besides that of rhythm, of limited social acceptance – and renewed it, dotting it with more harmonic richness and developing its melodic qualities. His “modest work” had contributed to the spread of tango’s popularity abroad (he names Brazil, Uruguay, France and Spain), and it was necessary to continue to improve the quality of tango if it was to continue to flourish.<sup>77</sup> The question, then, is: what kind of musical techniques did he introduce to make tango more interesting to listen to? While an in-depth discussion of the many compositional and interpretational techniques of De Caro is beyond the scope of this chapter – besides his violin playing – I can mention the development of more complex (and written) arrangements, more experiments in the structure of tango arrangements, the proliferation of instrumental techniques such as *fraseos*, *arrastres*, percussive material, the diversification of accompanimental models and syncopations, the explosion of solo materials, the dialogue between different groups of instruments in the sextet (violins, bandoneons, piano) avoidance of repetition through modifications in instrumentation, and, last but not least, the inclusion of humour.<sup>78</sup> Whistling (such as in *Mala junta* or *El baqueano*, both from 1927); funny shouts, questions, and statements (for example, in *El monito*, (1925), a character asks the monkey if he wants coffee); and dialogues between the instruments create a buoyant, joyful character. To that, I can add the extremely high

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<sup>74</sup> *Sintonía*, 2 September 1937.

<sup>75</sup> *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936.

<sup>76</sup> *Sintonía*, 11 April 1936.

<sup>77</sup> *Sintonía*, 5 January 1935.

<sup>78</sup> For a good analysis of De Caro’s stylistic practice, see Omar García Brunelli’s “Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro y su proyección en el género”. My discussion of elements is heavily based on his arguments.

technical level of his musicians, including his brother Francisco, and the famous bandoneon players he played with, in particular the great bandoneon duo Pedro Laurenz and Pedro Maffia (1924-1925), two of the most influential practitioners of the instrument.

It is vital, however, to nuance what De Caro referred to as elevating the language of the tango, as it could be interpreted as elitist, since many of the techniques that De Caro incorporated – not all, however – were gleaned from his classical musical education in violin and music theory. Such a discourse might be considered by some as Eurocentric. However, this interaction between popular and “elite” culture (if classical music can be considered as such) – and European vs. *criollo* – forms a part of the history of Argentina, and that of tango. As Omar García Brunelli reminds us, tango was a *Rioplatense* creation of *Guardia Vieja* musicians who used European instrumentation (pianos, for example), and began to develop a system of interpretational possibilities with them.<sup>79</sup> *Guardia Nueva* musicians such as De Caro developed these devices further, using every artistic means at their disposal, drawing upon their formal musical training, but not rejecting *lo popular* in the process.

By the early 1930s, De Caro became increasingly interested in expanding the size of his ensemble, with a focus on orchestration and experimental instrumentation. His dream was to create *tangos sinfónicos*, which he viewed as essential to his quest for elevating tango music. De Caro was not alone in such a project, because others such as Osvaldo Fresedo and Francisco Canaro also symphonized tangos in the period between 1928 and 1933.<sup>80</sup> While there were a number of precedents earlier in his career, such as the orchestra of more than fifty musicians he directed at the Teatro San Martín during the Carnaval season of 1921, and his expanded orchestra (Julio De Caro y su Gran Orquesta) during the Carnaval of 1924, he first began his symphonic project in 1932, following his European tour,

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<sup>79</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva.”

<sup>80</sup> For an ample discussion of *sinfonismo*, see Omar García Brunelli, “La transición estilística del tango luego de la crisis de 1930,” 329-333.

organized at the behest of Radio Splendid.<sup>81</sup> According to a 1938 interview, De Caro had been shocked to discover European orchestras performing tango music – even Toscanini – and felt that Argentina should not fall behind its European counterparts, but instead should allow the tango to shine through the creation of larger ensembles, demonstrating the high calibre of Argentinian music and musicians.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, in his memoirs, he describes the creation of symphonic tangos in the same language seen in his interviews: just like jazz music or waltzes, both of which were often performed by larger formations, tango music too could attain a higher position in the musical hierarchy through the creation of larger, symphonic tangos.<sup>83</sup> While the large orchestra on Radio Splendid only lasted three months, *sinfonismo* would be one of De Caro's main crusades of the 1930s, including his Orquesta Melodica Internacional (1936), which performed folkloric material alongside tangos.<sup>84</sup> He experimented heavily with instrumentation, introducing percussion, woodwinds, and brass to his ensembles in these orchestras. However, they were not commercially successful, with frequent criticism in the press of the ensembles' rigidity, or monotony, two things that are the antithesis of De Caro's sextet, known for its wonderful flexibility of timing and constant variation of material.<sup>85</sup> In 1938, De Caro returned to his earlier musical style, citing the desire to follow the tastes of the public: rhythmic and danceable tango. However, he never returned to the sextet formation of his earlier career, unwilling to turn his back on certain aspects of his symphonic projects, notably in terms of orchestration, instead forming an enlarged *orquesta típica* (four violins, five bandoneons, piano and double bass), which was more or less the format of the orchestras of the *época de oro* (1935-1955) of

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<sup>81</sup> See Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 356-357, 98, for a discussion of the creation of his orchestras in 1921 and 1932, as well as the chronology of De Caro's career in Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*, 11-16.

<sup>82</sup> *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.

<sup>83</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 98.

<sup>84</sup> De Caro became increasingly interested in Argentine folkloric music over the course of the 1930s. While he almost exclusively recorded tangos during the RCA Victor period (1924-1928), he recorded zambas, estilos, rancheras, vales, polkas, and others for Brunswick (1929-1932). However, his principal focus, as well as my own, was on tangos.

<sup>85</sup> Some examples of negative press include *Sintonía*, 22 September 1934 and *Radiolandia*, 28 November 1936. In 1936, De Caro had presented a concert at the Teatro Opera entitled "The evolution of tango from 1870 to 1936, in which he directed three ensembles: 1) melodic, 2) rhythmic and 3) symphonic. The criticism of the symphonic tango was particularly biting: "That music, admirably executed, very well-orchestrated, can be summed up as an acceptable symphonic concerto.... But it isn't tango and cannot be presented as such."

tango music.<sup>86</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, the later formations of De Caro do not present the same degree of stylistic codification and innovation as the sextet, which is why my discussions of De Caro's violin playing will focus on the sextet. Nonetheless, *sinfonismo* was a key aspect of De Caro's wish to elevate tango music.

### De Caro – the violinist

#### *Violín Corneta: De Caro's Trumpet Violin*



Figure 84 Julio De Caro's violin, permission of SADAIC<sup>87</sup>

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of De Caro's playing is the use of the trumpet violin, or *violín corneta*, which he received from RCA Victor and used for much of his career. De Caro was not the first tango violinist to play the trumpet violin, because José "Pepino" Bonano, discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, used the violin in the recordings of Juan Maglio "Pacho" (1912-1914). De Caro's use of the instrument can be considered a stylistic anomaly, as he made the *violín corneta* his trademark at a time when the instruments were no longer used in the recording industry. First used in classical and popular recordings around 1905 in order to amplify the sound of string instruments, their heyday was in the 1910s (when, for example, Bonano used one), and they were phased out with the introduction

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<sup>86</sup> *Antena*, 10 September 1938.

<sup>87</sup> De Caro's violin is located in the archive of SADAIC, Buenos Aires.

of the microphone in 1925.<sup>88</sup> The most famous of these amplified instruments was the Stroh violin, named after its creator, Augustus Stroh, which had a metal diaphragm instead of the traditional sound-post design of a violin and a trumpet-like bell, from which the sound was heard.<sup>89</sup> While the Stroh violin was invented in London in 1878, patented in 1899 but not trademarked until 1910, it was also produced in other places, such as the United States, where the instrument was patented in 1900. According to Alison Rabinovici, Victor, who used such violins in their recordings from 1902, had untrademarked instruments, listing them as “Viol-horns” in their catalogue.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, the instrument of De Caro – which he received from Victor – does not have a Stroh label. SADAIC possesses the *violin corneta* of De Caro’s colleague and rival Francisco Canaro – to my knowledge, Canaro never recorded with the instrument – which does indeed have a Stroh label. Canaro mentions De Caro’s *famoso violin corneta* in his memoirs but does not confess to owning one.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Kolkowski, Miller and Blier-Carruthers, “The Art and Science of Acoustic Recording: Re-enacting Arthur Nikisch and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra’s landmark 1913 recording of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.”

<sup>89</sup> Alison Rabinovici, “Augustus Stroh’s Phonographic Violin. A Journey: Victorian London, Australia, Transylvania,” 100-123, 220-224.

<sup>90</sup> Rabinovici, 105. It is not clear whether the Victor instruments were made by Stroh or not. However, De Caro’s violin is virtually identical, except for the shoulder pad which he later added, to a photo of a young violinist playing a Stroh violin, published in *Strand Magazine*, 1902. See Rabinovici, 107.

<sup>91</sup> Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 311.



*Figure 85 Francisco Canaro's violin, permission of SADAIC*

In his memoirs, De Caro claims he was given the violin in 1925 by the technical director of RCA Victor in Argentina, George Cheney.<sup>92</sup> Cheney was director in Argentina from December 1923 until August 1925; during his tenure, Victor opened Argentina's second record-producing factory.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 51-52.

<sup>93</sup> Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*, 50-52. Later in life, De Caro claimed that fellow Victor artist Paul Whiteman, who had heard his recordings in the United States, had contacted the technical director in the United States, a Mr. Shenning, in order to send De Caro a trumpet violin, which Shenning did on a trip to Argentina; however, this seems to be an unlikely version of events in that Cheney, not Shenning, was director in Argentina for two years. See "Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso del tango," 253.

According to De Caro's memoirs, Cheney went to listen to his sextet perform, and noticed that the sound of De Caro's violin did not carry properly. The next day, Cheney presented De Caro with the violin. It is worth quoting Cheney's words, at least as reported by De Caro, in full:

It is yours, and although its value is \$1,000, if you accept it, you will not have to pay a penny for it; thus, the amount that will be deducted from your foreign royalties will be less painful. My greatest wish is that you will be the one to use it, and bring out your beautiful violin solos, most of which have been lost without this powerful aid.<sup>94</sup>

The statement is revelatory: first, Cheney gave De Caro the violin, but not as a gift. Instead, the cost of the instrument would be deducted from his foreign royalties. Second, Cheney gave De Caro the instrument after noticing his violin was too soft in a live setting, not in recordings. There is no suggestion that he should use the instrument for recordings (and indeed, Victor had just introduced the use of the microphone, something that Cheney was surely aware of, making the use of such an instrument redundant; De Caro began to record electronically soon after, in April 1926). It would seem that Victor was offloading old technology, instead of providing their artist with cutting-edge material with which to record. To this, I can add my photo evidence: based on the pictures I took at SADAIC, I believe that Victor gave De Caro an older model, consistent with those used at the beginning of the century.<sup>95</sup>

Since George Cheney left Argentina in August 1925, it stands to reason that De Caro had received the violin by then. However, what is less clear is when he began to perform regularly with the instrument, let alone record with it. In his memoirs, he describes the difficulties he had in learning to use it, claiming that it took him at least three months to master the instrument, before he could present it in public.<sup>96</sup> In 1980, he described his resistance to using the instrument, describing it as a young colt that was difficult to master; in particular, he mentions that the chinrest was very high, injuring him.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 51.

<sup>95</sup> See the photo of the Stroh violin published in 1902 in *Strand Magazine*, reproduced in Rabinovici, 107. The instrument has an identical design to that of De Caro's.

<sup>96</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 51.

<sup>97</sup> "Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso del tango," 253.



Indeed, if we look at the chinrest on his violin, the combination of chinrest and shoulder rest is extremely high, which could make the instrument challenging to play.<sup>98</sup>



*Figure 86 Julio De Caro's chinrest and shoulder rest, permission of SADAIC*

Photos taken of him playing reveal different postures, making it challenging to determine exactly how he played the instrument. In perhaps the most famous picture, taken with his sextet, the instrument is angled downward. However, in another picture, his posture is more upright:

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<sup>98</sup> Due to the instrument's fragile state of conservation, I was not able to touch it, only take photographs.



Figure 87 Julio De Caro; permission given by Marcelo Solis of the Escuela de Tango de Buenos Aires (left) and Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno (right)<sup>99</sup>

To return to the 1980 article, he mentions that he first performed at the cinema with the violin, which would make sense, since the sextet regularly performed in cinemas such as the Petit Splendid and the Select Lavalle from 1924-1929.<sup>100</sup> However, it is not clear when he began to record with the instrument. Nicolás Lefcovich dates the use of the instrument to 1925, but does not specify which recording was the first to feature the *violín corneta*.<sup>101</sup> While comparing De Caro's acoustic recordings (1924-January 1926) to his electronic ones (the first was *Mary*, recorded on 12 April 1926) reveals major improvements in sound quality, I could not detect the sound of the *violín corneta* in 1925, nor in 1926. Instead, the first audible traces of the instrument can be heard on the recordings made in September 1927, following a five-month recording hiatus while De Caro and his sextet were in Brazil. On 12 and 13 September 1927, the sextet recorded some of their most famous tangos for the

<sup>99</sup> The photo on the left is taken from “‘Boedo’ por Julio De Caro y su sexteto típica 1949,” Escuela de Tango de Buenos Aires, accessed 15 August 2024, <https://escuelatangoba.com/buenosaires/boedo-por-julio-de-caro-y-su-sexteto-tipico-1949-musica-tango/>. The photo on the right is from *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.

<sup>100</sup> “El estilo más lujoso,” 253.

<sup>101</sup> Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía*, 13.

first time, including *El baqueano*, *Copacabana*, *Tierra querida*, *Amurado*, *Mala junta*, *Flores negras*, and *Gallo ciego*; the nasal sound of his trumpet violin is extremely audible in all of them, particularly in the duets shared with the second violinist, who always played a standard violin. The combination of trumpet violin and standard violins would be one of the most distinguishing features of Sexteto Julio De Caro from 1927 onwards.

While De Caro describes the public's reception of his *violín corneta* as extremely positive, he refers to a "very small sector of the public entrenched in old traditions" that criticized his use of the instrument, citing their claims that he was eccentric and that the use of the instrument was a publicity stunt.<sup>102</sup> Press coverage of his use of the instrument was not always positive. For example, in 1933, *La Canción Moderna* published a satirical article interviewing De Caro's violin, which they nicknamed "Coquito": they joke that De Caro is greedy, an exploiter for having placed the metal bell on the instrument, enslaving it for financial gain.<sup>103</sup> The following year, *Micrófono* described De Caro as a good violinist and praised the quality of his orchestrations, yet they criticized the enormous extent to which the trumpet violin was used.<sup>104</sup> Likewise, during De Caro's 1931 European tour, journalist Gustave Fréjaville published an excoriating editorial of De Caro's concerts in France, describing his violin as like that of a clown, citing its nasal and strident tones.<sup>105</sup> Nonetheless, despite these criticisms, De Caro would use the violin for hundreds of recordings, making the instrument his signature sound.

### *Early Career and Recordings (1918-1923)*

The formative years of his career would later have a great impact on many of the interpretational developments for which he is famous. In particular, there were three musicians who strongly impacted

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<sup>102</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 52.

<sup>103</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 16 October 1933. The journalists seem to think that De Caro attached the bell to a normal violin, which was not the case.

<sup>104</sup> *Micrófono*, 2 August 1934.

<sup>105</sup> *Comædia*, 16 June 1931.

his early career, forever shaping his musical destiny: Eduardo Arolas, Osvaldo Fresedo and Juan Carlos Cobián, the latter with whom he recorded 35 pieces in 1923.

Héctor and Luis Bates cite Arolas' musical influence on De Caro as one of the primarily linking points between the past and present of tango: by carrying forth Arolas' teachings, De Caro was inspired by his predecessors in order to create tangos of the future.<sup>106</sup> Likewise, Arolas can be cited as a key early innovator in tango music, one that, according to Omar García Brunelli, began the transition between the *Guardia Vieja* and *Guardia Nueva*.<sup>107</sup> Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the famous story of how De Caro came to play in Arolas' orchestra. While the story has plenty of picaresque elements, and Luis Adolfo Sierra confirms that certain aspects are true (Arolas was indeed impressed by De Caro's talent, and went to speak with his father), the chronology doesn't fully work out, because, as Luis Adolfo Sierra points out, De Caro's first professional engagement was not in Arolas' orchestra, but in that of Brignolo's (café TVO, 1917).<sup>108</sup> De Caro joined Arolas' ensemble the following year, alongside Rafael Tiegols (violin 1), Arolas (bandoneon), and Roberto Goyeneche (piano) – soon, Manuel Pizarro joined as second bandoneon and Goyeneche was replaced by José María Rizzuti. His tenure in the orchestra was brief, essentially consisting of the 1918 Carnaval season in Montevideo, and ending in 1919. However, Arolas would strongly influence De Caro; in his memoirs, De Caro cites his orchestral accompaniment, liberating the melodic capabilities of the ensemble by creating *fraseos*, especially octaviated *fraseos* (in which he would play the same note, but in different octaves, an expressive device that can be found in many De Caro recordings), as well as the *rezongo*, a type of “grumbling” in the lower registers of the instrument.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, for him, Arolas' spiritual son was Pedro Maffia, first bandoneon of the Sexteto until 1926.<sup>110</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this thesis, both Arolas and Maffia are credited with developing the *arrastre*, or quite literally, “drag”, which can be considered the most significant form of rhythmic

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<sup>106</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 169.

<sup>107</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva en el tango.”

<sup>108</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” 1053.

<sup>109</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 158.

<sup>110</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 158, also in “El estilo más lujoso del tango,” 253.

ornamentation in tango music.<sup>111</sup> The *arrastre* reached full maturity with the Sexteto Julio De Caro, something I will discuss in the section on rhythmic techniques.

Although De Caro only briefly performed alongside Osvaldo Fresedo in 1919 at the Casino Pigall, a period that lasted until Fresedo left for the United States to record with the Orquesta Típica Select in 1920, Fresedo nonetheless influenced many of De Caro's interpretative characteristics, especially the lyricism of the sextet's melodies.<sup>112</sup> Here, we can mention the emphasis placed on dynamic effects, the development of countermelodies between the two violins, and melodic expression.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, *tango romanza* – a lyrical, romantic style created initially by Delfino, Fresedo and Cobián, found its apogee in the compositions of Francisco and Julio, such as *Flores negras* (Francisco De Caro), *Copacabana* and others.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, the two styles, Fresedian and Decarean, have significant differences. According to Enrique Haba, De Caro displayed much more elasticity than Fresedo, both in terms of rhythmic marcation and in *fraseo*; Fresedo's ensemble remains more within the confines of each beat, unlike De Caro. In addition, while there is a proliferation of solo material for each instrument in De Caro, solos, variations for bandoneon, and other ways of modifying repeated musical material are much less common in Fresedo's style.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, despite the lyrical nature of many of De Caro's tangos, there is far more rhythmical drive than in that of Fresedo: according to Horacio Ferrer, Fresedo's "style is essentially melodic: what in De Caro is expressive vivacity, in Fresedo becomes placidity."<sup>116</sup> Or, put in another way, De Caro's orchestra had more grit, more punch.

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<sup>111</sup> Pepe and Casco, "El violín en el tango," 19; Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 103; Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 29-30. Link and Wendland, citing Julián Graciano, write that while many credit Arolas, an *arrastre* can be heard in Enrique Delfino's 1917 recording "La huella", which Graciano cites as the true creation of the concept. See Link and Wendland, 50.

<sup>112</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 28. In addition, the first Cuarteto de Maestros in 1922 included Fresedo, Cobián, Manlio Francia, and Tito Roccatagliata, but Roque Biaffore soon replaced Fresedo, and De Caro replaced Roccatagliata. See De Caro, *El tango* 30.

<sup>113</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 93-94.

<sup>114</sup> For a discussion of *tango romanza*, see Link and Wendland, 50; 147-148.

<sup>115</sup> Enrique P. Haba, "Osvaldo Fresedo."

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Tomás de Lara and Inés Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango en la literatura argentina*, 53.

Finally, in 1923, De Caro joined the Sexteto Juan Carlos Cobián alongside Agesilao Ferrazzano (violin 1), Pedro Maffia and Luis Petrucelli (bandoneons) and Humberto Constanzo on the double bass.<sup>117</sup> Contracted at the Abdulla Club at the Galería Guëmes, the group recorded a series of 35 recordings (including 33 tangos) under the name Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián with Victor in 1923, the first known recordings of De Caro.<sup>118</sup> Despite De Caro's short tenure in Cobián's orchestra, Cobián would have a major influence on De Caro's interpretational and compositional style. De Caro himself describes Cobián as a "launching pad" for his style, although he mentions a major disparity between Cobián's brilliant compositions and his playing.<sup>119</sup> He credits the many artistic ideas of the composer, citing the proliferations of piano and violin solos, as well as the creation of different interpretative colours, but especially his desire to elevate the musical language of the genre.<sup>120</sup> However, it is well-documented that Cobián's compositional innovations far exceeded his personal playing style – indeed, many of the innovations he introduced were further developed on an interpretational level by De Caro and his brother, Francisco, who can be considered the pianistic legacy of Cobián.<sup>121</sup> Among these aspects, much more developed in the Sexteto Julio De Caro include written scores with a high level of musical detail, with attention to harmonic development, development of phrasal material in order to avoid repetition, the use of introductions, and sections of different lengths.<sup>122</sup> Structurally, the instruments of the sextet are given roles, with the violins and bandoneons primarily responsible for melodic material, and the piano and double bass the rhythm section; the sections of the orchestra speak to each other in a dialogue that can be referred to as "call-and-response".<sup>123</sup> Violinistically, perhaps the biggest influence can be seen in the melodic development of the phrase: the countermelodies, something initially seen in orchestras such as Roberto Firpo, become far more extensive, something that De Caro would expand and develop even

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<sup>117</sup> Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía*, 12.

<sup>118</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Cobián, Juan Carlos," accessed 13 August 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/111277>.

<sup>119</sup> "Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso..." 255.

<sup>120</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 35.

<sup>121</sup> See Omar García Brunelli, *Discografía básica del tango*, 23; Also, Link and Wendland, 50; Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla*, 88.

<sup>122</sup> Pablo Kohan, *El ADN del tango*, 39-45.

<sup>123</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 147.

more in his sextet. Pianistically, Cobián introduced solo material (eight-measure piano solos), harmonized accompaniment, arpeggiated tenths in the left hand, and developed melodic material by adding fills – *rellenos* – and links – *enlaces* – all further developed by Francisco.<sup>124</sup>

Crucially, unlike De Caro's other early ensembles, there is phonographic evidence of him playing in the Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián. However, in the series of recordings made with Victor, Cobián amplified the string section to have a lush, fuller sound, including Astor and Remo Bolognini in the recordings.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, due to the expanded string sound, it is not possible to identify De Caro's playing in these recordings. Tantalizingly, De Caro mentions a countermelody he added to one of the recordings; however, he does not tell the reader in which piece.<sup>126</sup> According to De Caro, Cobián, extremely happy when he listened to the takes, asked who had played it, as he thought it might have been played by Ferrazzano, or the Bologninis, but it was De Caro. Cobián then reprimanded him, saying "Don't forget, De Caro, that every modification must have my approval; today it went splendidly; tomorrow...it could be quite the opposite."<sup>127</sup> The remark suggests Cobián's desire for artistic control, something that De Caro would enjoy for the rest of his career – in fact, Cobián's rebuttal was formative for him, as he was proud of his creative initiative.

Although De Caro's playing is not fully recognizable in these recordings, I would like to examine the interaction between the violins in a few of them, as there is a clear similarity to the performance style in De Caro's sextet. In particular, the lyricism of the strings, inclusion of a countermelody in a low register, doubling at the octave, dynamic contrasts, the use of a generalized vibrato can be heard, as well as discreet portamenti, ornaments such as grace notes, and changes in registers and textures via instrumentation. Similarly, repetitions of sections are often slightly modified, with the inclusion of 'solo' material, or the dialogue between one instrument section and the rest (for example, violins and

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<sup>124</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1015-1017; Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Francisco De Caro: El gran cambio," 90; Link and Wendland, 50.

<sup>125</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 33. See Appendix A.

<sup>126</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 34.

<sup>127</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 34.



piano). However, there are also many clear differences: a general lack of *fraseo*, a timid use of ornamentation, a limited palate of interpretational devices (no percussion, *arrastres*, and the like), as well as a more conservative approach to portamenti, timing, and less diversification of articulations.

My discussion will primarily concern the interaction between violins, particularly the interactions between melody and countermelody. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the violins often took responsibility for the melodic role in Cobián's recordings. As such, they frequently begin pieces playing the melodies in unison, at the octave (second violin playing an octave lower), such as in *Una droga* (Cobián, beginning), and *Plata vieja* (Alejandro Rolla, beginning), sometimes also playing them in intervals with each other, like in the thirds in the second phrase of the A section of *Virginia* (Lia Acuña de Andreoni, from 0:07), or the B section of *Sea breve* (from 0:29). Occasionally, three violin parts can be heard, in three different registers (such as the beautiful B section of *La Tirana* (Benjamin Tagle Lara, 0:30), in which one violin plays on the E string, another on the D string, and yet another on the G string, in a lilting dialogue between registers). However, far more significant is the division of roles between first and second violin, including the proliferation of lyrical countermelodies. There are several different types of violin countermelodies that can be noted in Cobián's recordings. The sections are generally brief, lasting a maximum of eight measures.

Perhaps the most common, a trope replicated by Julio De Caro, includes long slow notes in the lower register of the second violin, while the first violin plays a staccato melody. Pieces such as *Polola* (Hugo Rizzi, 0:22), *Una droga* (Cobián, 1:05), *¡No me olvides!* (Juan Carlos Durán, 1:05), and *Virginia* (Lia Acuña de Andreoni), include this type of combination in the violins. Similarly, while at times, these passages are made of descending sequences, such as the beginning of *Shusheta* (pizzicato in violin 1, descending passage of long, lyrical notes in violin 2), in others, they are more soloistic, a true melody unto themselves, such as in *¡No me olvides!*. Let us compare these passages. Because I will discuss *Shusheta* later in this chapter in conjunction with De Caro's *Boedo*, I limit my analysis here to the interaction between violins.



While the use of pizzicato abounds in De Caro's sextet, building upon the violinistic traditions of Ernesto Ponzio and Roccatagliata, Cobián's recordings rarely feature pizzicato (except for Juan Carlos Cobián's *Una droga*), in which the *chan-chan* pattern, which marks the end of tangos in general, is played pizzicato). However, one of the most famous beginning passages in all of tango music is the arpeggiated pizzicato of *Shusheta* (Figure 88), which includes descending arpeggiated pizzicato passage, accompanied by descending long notes in the violins (I can hear two separate violins playing the countermelody at an interval of a third).



Figure 88 *Shusheta* (Juan Carlos Cobián, OTJCC, 1923, mm. 1-5), public domain<sup>128</sup>

In contrast, the C section of *¡No me olvides!* (Figure 89), features a four-measure countermelody that goes beyond a simple descending passage. The first violin voice also stands out for its highly accented staccato articulation, something quite common in De Caro's recordings.

<sup>128</sup> Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián, *Shusheta*, by Juan Carlos Cobián, recorded 27 March 1923, Victor BA 262-1/73862-A, track 8 on *Juan Carlos Cobián: Orquesta Típica 1923*, El bandoneón, 2004, CD.



Figure 89 ¡No me olvides! (Juan Carlos Durán, OTJCC, 1923, C section, from 1:05), public domain<sup>129</sup>

Here we see that while in two string voices, there are heavily accented short notes, ornamented with rapid grace notes in both voices (as well as the bandoneons), while a third violin plays a lyrical countermelody. While the melody is simple in construction, we see more varied musical material, in terms of rhythms, as well as an ascending and descending line, as well as a small portamento.

In other passages, both violinists play lyrical material, and the melody and countermelody wind around each other. The violin duet in the C section of *Mujer* (Figure 90) is particularly developed. Unlike many of the previous examples, which are quite short, this section lasts for a full sixteen measures (two eight measure phrases). In it, we can see a division of registers (the first violin plays in the upper ranges of the E string, whereas the second plays *sul G*), as well as many of the lyrical techniques that De Caro would develop much further in his sextet. While the passage does not exactly indicate *fraseo* in the Decarean way, which involves anticipating notes through the inclusion of portamenti), there is some compression of material here: a mixture of long, and then fast notes within the measure, in a way that would later be typical of De Caro's style. Furthermore, although the portamenti are discreet, both violinists employ both ascending and descending portamenti. In particular, in the playing of the first violin (which I assume is Agesilao Ferrazzano), we can hear rearticulations of the same note in a scoop-portamento (m.6, 14) in a way that De Caro would later

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<sup>129</sup> Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián, *¡No me olvides!*, by Juan Carlos Durán, recorded 6 February 1923, Victor BA 208-2/73794-B, track 4 on *Juan Carlos Cobián: Orquesta Típica 1923, El bandoneón*, 2004, CD.

frequently use. Also, we can hear ascending glissandi in m. 2 and 10 of intermediary notes, suggesting that the violinist changed strings (the F in beat two played on the A string, then a portamento with the first finger up to A-flat on the E string, before playing the C with the third finger). I have transcribed the passage in full:



Figure 90 *Mujer* (Juan Carlos Cobián, OTJCC, 1923, C section violin duet), public domain<sup>130</sup>

To these portamenti, which I will explore much more in my discussion of De Caro's lyrical techniques, we can add ornamentation in the form of grace notes.

One final aspect I would like to discuss in the Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián is the introduction of solo material, although the prevalence of countermelodies is still far more common. Solo material

<sup>130</sup> Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián, *Mujer*, by Juan Carlos Cobián, recorded 14 June 1923, Victor BA 307-2/77022-B, track 15 on *Juan Carlos Cobián: Orquesta Típica 1923*, El bandoneón, 2004, CD.

is something that De Caro would develop fully in his recordings. In these solos, which are all lyrical in nature, we can see the same type of playing as that in *Mujer*: conservative portamenti, timid *fraseo* in the form of combining long notes, and then more serrated rhythms at the end of the measure, as well as a generalized vibrato. Some examples include the B section of *Campo ajeno* (Fausto Frontera, 0:29), in which one violin plays a D-string-register solo accompanied only by the piano and double bass; and the first section of the C section of *Virginia* (Lia Acuña de Andreoni), an eight-measure solo in a dialogue with the bandoneons. However, solo passages in the violins, besides countermelodies, could be considered infrequent at this stage.

In late 1923, Juan Carlos Cobián decided to leave Argentina for the United States, where he would live until 1927. The final recordings De Caro made as part of Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián occurred on 13 and 14 August 1923, including *Viaje al norte*, which Cobián dedicated to De Caro in honour of his upcoming voyage, *Tierra andalusa*, *La confesión*, and finally *Tapete verde*.<sup>131</sup>

Suddenly, De Caro found himself without an ensemble, as Cobián's orchestra dissolved; the other members of the orchestra, with the exception of De Caro, joined other ensembles.<sup>132</sup> He cites the moment as key: he finally had the opportunity to form his own orchestra. Perhaps the moment was fortuitous. His brother Francisco, who had just left the quartet of Rafael Rossi (where he played alongside his brother Emilio), met by chance the concert organizer Ochoa, who asked him to form a group of five or six musicians in order to play in aristocratic homes during the Christmas holidays, proposing the ensemble an enormous sum of money (800 pesos).<sup>133</sup> Francisco went to his brother Julio, who quickly contacted the two bandoneonists of Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián, Pedro Maffia and Luis Petrocelli to form an ensemble. They also asked brother Emilio to join as second

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<sup>131</sup> Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 70-71. Cadícamo claims that Cobián left Buenos Aires in July 1923, but the final recordings were made in August, so he must have been mistaken. See *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Cobián, Juan Carlos," accessed 13 August 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/111277>.

<sup>132</sup> According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, Ferrazzano joined Carlos Flores's orchestra, Humberto Constanzo that of Osvaldo Fresedo, Maffia joined the classical orchestra of Orestes Castronuevo, and Petrucelli the gypsy ensemble of Almovich. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1063.

<sup>133</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Francisco Canaro, El gran cambio," 87-88; Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1063.

violin. Soon after, they asked Leopoldo Thompson to join on the double bass: the Sexteto Julio De Caro was born. The early days of the sextet are well-documented in De Caro's memoirs and Sierra's articles. By early 1924, the sextet was both artistically and financially successful, offered a massive contract for 6500 pesos per month to work in Vogue's Club in April 1924.<sup>134</sup> By fall 1924, they began to record for Victor, making five recordings that year, the first of which being *Todo corazón*.<sup>135</sup> While brother Emilio played live with the ensemble, Manlio Francia joined the orchestra as the second violinist for at least the 1924 recordings, due to Emilio's poor health; Emilio would remain in the ensemble until 1929, when he was replaced by José Niesow.<sup>136</sup>

### *Sexteto Julio De Caro*

#### *Lyrical Qualities*

Of all the lyrical techniques used by De Caro, his varied and extensive portamento was the most famous. In his sextet, the violins generally were responsible for the presentation of melodic material – a legacy of Cobián – as well as the numerous counter melodies, and increasingly numerous solos.<sup>137</sup> He was not the first to employ the technique in tango, as its usage was well-established in the playing of Bonano and Tito Roccatagliata, studied in previous chapters. However, portamenti were arguably more pronounced in De Caro's playing than in that of Roccatagliata, and certainly more developed than that of Bonano. One possible explanation for De Caro's distinctive portamenti is his Franco-Belgian musical education, using the Ecole Léonard, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Léonard was the pupil and successor of Charles de Bériot, a famous Belgian pedagogue who

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<sup>134</sup> De Caro tells the story of how "Prince Jakobleff" offered the judicious contract. However, Sierra says that his name was Count Chikoff. *El tango*, 38; Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1066.

<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately, Victor's ledgers do not list the date of recording. According to DAHR, "the master disc was 'passed (approved)' on 4 December 1924, meaning that it was surely recorded before then. *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Victor matrix BA-515. *Todo corazón* / Orquesta Típica de Caro," accessed 19 August 2024, [https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004742/BA-515-  
Todo\\_corazn](https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004742/BA-515-Todo_corazn).

<sup>136</sup> Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía*, 13; Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 410; Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 208. In a 1979 interview, Manlio Francia himself said that he recorded as second violinist in all the Victor and Brunswick recordings. Quoted in Néstor Pinsón, "Manlio Francia," *Todo Tango*, accessed 20 August 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/946/Manlio-Francia/>.

<sup>137</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 147.

advocated connecting violin playing directly to singing, including portamenti or *port-de-voix*, quite literally “carrying the voice”.<sup>138</sup>

Of the more than three hundred De Caro recordings I listened to in preparation for this chapter, every single one of them includes different forms of portamento.<sup>139</sup> As such, I will present the most relevant passages here, which show a variety of different types of portamento.

The earliest big hit of De Caro, recorded in May 1925, was his composition *Buen amigo*. In his autobiography, he tells the story of how the tango got his name: he saved the pregnant wife of a friend by calling upon the assistance of several doctor friends, including the surgeon Enrique Finochietto – the woman was saved, the baby born, and that evening, he premiered a tango that did not yet have a name. It was baptized *Buen amigo*, according to De Caro, in recognition of Finochietto’s medical assistance.<sup>140</sup> Whether or not the story was romanticized, De Caro specifically refers to the violin solo at the piece’s initial performance, describing the emotion of the public, and Finochietto, who described it as extraordinary. Reportedly, it was a favourite tango of the Prince of Wales – mentioned earlier in this chapter in a 1926 Victor advertisement in *Caras y caretas* – who invited De Caro to visit Europe (he would never visit the Prince of Wales, but instead France and Italy in 1931).<sup>141</sup> De Caro would record the piece four times over the course of his career: 1925, 1930, 1942 and 1950 (1925 and 1930 are instrumental, and 1942 and 1950 with lyrics by Carlos Marambio Catán). Here, I will discuss the 1925 recording (Figure 91). While De Caro himself describes the violin passage as a solo, I consider it a duo, with a counter melody in the second violin; I have included it for reference. We can hear several portamenti, which are all executed with little finger pressure, due to the *dolce*

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<sup>138</sup> De Bériot, *Méthode*, 215.

<sup>139</sup> I use the types of portamento as labelled by Carl Flesch, discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>140</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 44-50. See Appendix A.

<sup>141</sup> *Caras y Caretas*, 25 September 1926; Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 50-51. See Appendix A.

character of the passage; De Caro's finger pressure varied depending on the intensity of the musical phrase.<sup>142</sup>

The image shows a musical score for two violins. The top system is for Violin 1 and Violin 2, measures 1-6. Violin 1 has fingerings (2, 2, 2, 1, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 2) and accents marked above the notes. Violin 2 has fingerings (2, 2, 2, 1, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 2) marked below the notes. The bottom system shows measures 7-13. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The passage is marked with a piano (p) dynamic.

Figure 91 *Buen amigo* (Julio De Caro, OTDC, 1925, C section from 1:23)<sup>143</sup>

The passage is extremely lyrical and could be described as a dialogue between the two violins, with the second violin playing in a lower octave. Portamenti can also be heard in the second violin, but they are not as much of a feature as in the first violin part – as such, I will focus here on De Caro's (violin 1) playing. One salient aspect of his portamenti is that he uses intermediate notes on both ascending and descending portamenti, which I have marked in parentheses in m. 1, 3, 5, 9, 11 and 13 of the passage. These are not fully articulated but can be heard when the passage is slowed down (which I did using the program *Anytune*). These barely audible notes indicate less finger pressure,

<sup>142</sup> The biggest difference between the same passage in the 1925 and 1930 recordings is not in the types of portamentos used, but in their timing, as they become much more pronounced in the 1930 recording, with more finger pressure, so much so that the timing of the passage becomes more urgent.

<sup>143</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *Buen amigo*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 28 July 1925, Victor BA 592-1/79553-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.

disguising the moment where he changes finger or string. For example, in m. 1 of the passage, he executes a B-style portamento, before changing strings on the B-flat (a small breath indicating the string change, as a minute gap can be heard in the tone). In m. 3, however, which is a repetition of the same melodic material, the first note is not even audible – only the glissando, which this time is an L-portamento on the E-string up to the B-flat. Likewise, in m. 2 and 4, we can hear L-portamenti, as he changes fingers before playing them. In m. 5 (and to a lesser extent, in the repeat of the phrase in m. 13), we can hear the most pronounced portamento of the solo, where he clearly uses more finger pressure in a B-portamento (an intermediate note on the G can be heard). Other noteworthy portamenti in the passage are the “scoops” emerging from silences (in which he begins with almost no finger pressure, starting with an indefinite note before sliding into the note), which can be heard in m. 1, 9 and 11. These are a form of melodic *arrastre*. Finally, I can mention re-articulations of the same note, such as between m. 6 and 7 (in the reiteration of the phrase, m. 14-15, I suspect that the “scoop” from underneath is so emphatic that the first note sounds a half-step lower).

Many solo (or duo) passages include this type of lilting glissando with very little finger pressure. Some examples include the hauntingly beautiful solos in *El buey solo* (Agustín Bardi, 1929, from 1:05), *Boedo* (Julio De Caro, 1928), and *Tierra querida* (Julio De Caro, 1927) – however, the portamenti are so connected with the *fraseo* that I will instead discuss them in connection with timing. Let us look at one other famous solo passage where portamenti are the most striking expressive device, but where *fraseo* cannot be considered a key element: *Mala junta*. In this excerpt from the published score (Figure 92), De Caro included the violin solo, which allows us to compare the differences. While he did include some of the performance practice details (the grace note at the beginning, for example, and that it should be performed with mute), the portamenti are not indicated in the score:





Figure 92 Mala junta (Julio De Caro and Pedro Laurenz, 1927, published score)<sup>144</sup>

In Figure 93, we can see the first half of the violin solo, as well as the syncopated second violin. The 3 2 pattern of syncopations, which I will discuss more in detail in the section on rhythmic patterns, is quite typical in De Caro's music, and the jaunty rhythms, plus dissonances of tritones, offset the languid beauty of the first violin. In particular, I would like to call attention to measure 4, in which the second violin "responds" to what the solo line does, playing harmonics, which sound two octaves above, creating a wonderful difference in texture.

<sup>144</sup> Julio De Caro and Pedro Laurenz, *Mala junta*, Todo Tango, accessed 20 August 2024, <https://www.TodoTango.com/musica/tema/423/Mala-junta/>. A notable exception is the score of *Boedo*, which does include some portamentos. See later in this chapter.



Figure 93 Mala junta (Julio De Caro and Pedro Laurenz, JDCOT, 1927, violin solo and countermelody, from 1:06)<sup>145</sup>

If we compare the printed score to the transcription, we can see that the timing is not so different between them in the violin solo, besides some double dotting (in m. 1, 3, 5 etc.), as well as the syncopation in m. 7, which De Caro plays in a 3 3 2 rhythm matching the accompaniment. We can see, however, the same types of portamenti as in *Buen amigo*, particularly in the use of intermediate notes, which I have indicated in parentheses. The phrase begins with an anticipation of the measure on the same finger (2), followed by a B-portamento, which he breaks by changing strings in the third beat, just like at the beginning of *Buen amigo*. Measure 3, in which we can see hear both B- and L-portamenti (he begins the portamento on the departure finger, but then changes on the G# to arrive on the harmonic A), is perhaps the most distinctive form. In addition, there are clear L-portamenti, such as in measure 5, which goes from an intermediate B to a D on the third finger. Finally, we see some portamenti on the same finger: between measures 4 and 5, for example, and the descending portamenti in m. 6.

<sup>145</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Mala junta*, by Julio De Caro and Pedro Laurenz, recorded 13 September 1927, Victor BAVE 1422-1/79925-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.

The nearly one-minute-long introduction of Sexteto Julio De Caro's 1929 arrangement of *La cumparsita* (Figure 94), is characterized by extremely exaggerated portamenti in both violin parts. While slow, "tempoless" introductions occasionally can be heard in the Sexteto recordings (such as *Pobre Margot* (Julio De Caro, 1924), *Media día* (Manuel Buzón and Celedonio Flores, 1928), *El taita* (Salvador Grupillo, 1928), *Tradición* (Fausto Frontera, 1930)) perhaps none is as dramatic and distinctive as that of *La cumparsita*. In a nearly one-minute section (a significant part of the 4:30 recording), the violins play scoops before nearly every note, instead of connecting directly between notes with descending portamenti. Only descending portamenti can be heard at the end of phrases (such as in measure 7, 11). The effect is odd, as if the violins are dragging the melody, heightened by the many fermatas in the section. Here, the term *arrastrar* or to drag is quite literally applied. By contrast, the famous *Cumparsita* melody begins in m. 12, with an extremely pronounced rhythmic *arrastre* – something that hits the listener like a whip, and that I will discuss in the section on rhythmic material. The contrast between extreme portamenti in the introduction, and the strident staccatos of the following section, could not be more emphatic – an impressive way of beginning what was, by then, an extremely well-known tango already recorded in many different versions (Roberto Firpo, 1916; Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián, 1917; Francisco Lomuto, 1925; Francisco Canaro, 1927; just to name a few).



Figure 94 *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, OTDC, 1929, mm.1-13), permission of Lysandre Donoso<sup>146</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded 1929, Brunswick 911/6-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024,

One final type of portamento passage that can be found in Sexteto Julio De Caro recordings is the use of “scoop-type” portamento to rearticulate the same note. While I have mentioned this in solos such as *Buen amigo*, in several recordings, the “solo” passages consist of the same note, repeatedly and connected with insistent portamenti. Occasionally these are in the same octave, such as *Qué noche* (Agustín Bardi, 1926 and 1930, 0:38), but more frequently, these notes are repeated in multiple octaves, such as *Blanquita* (Lancellotti, 1925, 0:39), *Negligé* (Vicente Sciarreta, 1929, 1:34) and connected with portamentos.

De Caro’s portamento usage was intimately connected to his phrasing of tango solos, and especially the technique known as *fraseo*, a way of modifying the rhythmic duration of a lyrical phrase. *Fraseo* is generally considered to be an invention of Carlos Gardel, who began to sing tangos after 1917 (*Mi noche triste*) in a way that reflected *Porteño* speech patterns.<sup>147</sup> As such, the melody becomes expressed as it would be spoken, rather than strictly sung in rhythm. It can be considered one of the key expressive elements of tango music.<sup>148</sup> Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the *fraseo* is the tension created between the *fraseo* melody and the accompaniment, which remains stable. Fabián Russo refers to this as a polyrhythmic effect, which the *fraseo* creates as it interacts with the accompaniment.<sup>149</sup> In particular, Gardel was known for anticipation through *fraseo*. According to Russo, who explains Gardel’s singing style in detail in his book *El tango cantado*, Gardel’s *fraseo* has a slightly anxious feel to it, producing a feeling of “running” in the measure.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, the great tango pianist Horacio Salgán, signals in his pedagogical text *Tango Course* that Gardel tended to anticipate in *fraseos*.<sup>151</sup> According to Omar García Brunelli, De Caro introduced Gardelian-style

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<https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-carro-su.html>. Transcription by Lysandre Donoso (and portamenti/dynamics added by me). This score is notated in 4/4, something that is common practice today. However, at the time of De Caro’s sextet, most tangos were written in 2/4 but felt in 4. 4/4 provides easier readability.

<sup>147</sup> Ramón Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 30.

<sup>148</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La cuestión del fraseo en el tango,” 162.

<sup>149</sup> Fabián Russo, *El tango cantado: Una lectura acerca del canto en la Escuela Gardeliana* (Corregidor, 2011), 46.


<sup>150</sup> Russo, *El tango cantado*, 40.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Brunelli, “La cuestión del fraseo en el tango,” 165. The original quote can be found in Horacio Salgán, *Tango Course* (Horacio Salgán, 2001), 34.

*fraseo* to instrumental tango, not just in the violin part, but also in the bandoneons and the piano.<sup>152</sup>

After all, Gardel was connected to De Caro in many ways: the two worked together on the film *Luces de Buenos Aires*, filmed in 1931 while De Caro was on tour in France, and De Caro wrote his 1932 *El Zorzal* in Gardel's honour.<sup>153</sup>

In many ways, I have been able to confirm this assertion in my analysis of De Caro's usage of *fraseo*: his timing almost systematically anticipates, rather than delays melodic material. In earlier work, I studied the phrasal timing of several violinists who performed with Astor Piazzolla's quintet, including Szysia Bajour, Antonio Agri, Elvino Vardaro and Fernando Suárez Paz; what I found is that *fraseo* could be delayed – that is, late – or anticipated.<sup>154</sup> However, this analysis is reflective of a later time in tango music: the 1960s. Instead, the *fraseos* of Julio De Caro result rather in a compression of material: he often arrives early on notes, especially using portamentos (particularly ascending). As such, they could be considered closer to Gardel. Perhaps the most common form of *fraseo* in De Caro's recordings could be described in current-day parlance as *fraseo cerrado*, which Ramiro Gallo describes as involving an “accumulation of short sounds – usually sixteenth notes – at the end”.<sup>155</sup> As such, what is commonly notated as four even quavers becomes compressed, with short

notes at the beginning and end of the pattern:  becomes something like this:



<sup>156</sup> In De Caro's playing, the *fraseos* are often even more exaggerated than the pattern I have just shown, with frequent double dotting of long notes, and short notes transformed into demisemiquavers. This is not always the case of the bandoneons of the sextet, whose *fraseos* could be

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<sup>152</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva”; “Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro y su proyección en el género,” 87, 95.

<sup>153</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 78-87.

<sup>154</sup> Stephen Meyer, “The solo violin in the tango of Astor Piazzolla.”

<sup>155</sup> Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 60. Gallo is referring to semiquavers.

<sup>156</sup> These are taken from Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 60. In his analysis of De Caro's *El monito*, Martín Jurado describes the combination of crochet, quaver and two semiquavers as a characteristic form of *fraseo*. See Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot and Pablo Mitilneos, *Las orquestas de tango en el primer período de la Guardia Nueva*.

much more elastic of the violins. One such passage is the beginning of *Quejas de bandoneon* (Juan de Dios Filiberto, 1927) in which the violins play an anticipated phrasing, followed almost immediately by a more elastic version of the phrase played by the bandoneons.

Let us look at a passages in which *fraseo cerrado* can be heard. In Figure 95, we can see the first four measures of the published score of Osvaldo Pugliese's *Recuerdo*, in which measures 1 and 3 involve semiquavers and quavers, while measures two and four are crochets.



Figure 95 *Recuerdo* (Osvaldo Pugliese, 1924, published score, m. 1-4)<sup>157</sup>

However, in De Caro's 1926 recording (Figure 96), while the notes are identical to the published score, we can see clear compression of material with the creation of a syncopated pattern.

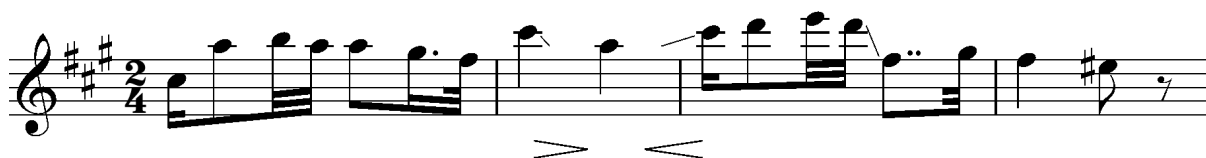


Figure 96 *Recuerdo* (Osvaldo Pugliese, JDCOT, 1926, m. 1-4)<sup>158</sup>

The notes at the end of the measure are shortened as much as possible: demisemiquavers and double dotting. The ascending portamento (L-type, made with the finger that plays the C# in m.3) preceding

<sup>157</sup> Osvaldo Pugliese, *Recuerdo*, Todo Tango, accessed 26 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/362/Recuerdo/>.

<sup>158</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Recuerdo*, by Osvaldo Pugliese, recorded 9 December 1926, Victor BAVE 1046-2/79778-B, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024. <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.

measure three has the effect of anticipating the material; furthermore, De Caro plays a crescendo on the portamento (aided by violin two and the bandoneons), making the listener feel like they are pulled into the next measure.

In *Sentencia* (Figure 97) De Caro uses *fraseo* to modify melodic material. He plays the same material (which can be broken down into two-measure sub-phrases) in three different ways: twice lyrically, one rhythmically, and then the end of the phrase, with an anticipation-type *fraseo*. I have included the second violin part here, because the interaction between the two: the mixture of registers, the different articulations mixing, the portamento, and of course the *fraseo* – the same type of *fraseo* pattern mentioned in *Recuerdo* – shows some of the magic of a Decarean beginning phrase. Here, in fact, the second violin uses more portamento, using it to anticipate the beginning of measures two and six; the first violin uses portamento to connect measures 3-4, and 7-8, but they are less pronounced due to the fast notes immediately preceding them.

The image shows a musical score for two violins in 2/4 time. The first system shows measures 1 and 2. Violin 1 has a rest in measure 1 and then plays a melodic line starting in measure 2. Violin 2 has a rest in measure 1 and then plays a lower melodic line starting in measure 2. Both violins use portamento to connect measures 3-4 and 7-8. The second system shows measures 3 and 4. Violin 1 continues its melodic line, and Violin 2 continues its lower melodic line. The score includes a 'gliss.' marking in measure 4 for Violin 2.

Figure 97 *Sentencia* (Pedro Maffia, JDCOT, 1926, mm. 1-8)<sup>159</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Sentencia*, by Pedro Maffia, recorded 15 November 1926, Victor BAVE 998-1/78753-B, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.

*Cerrado* phrasing can be found in many of his recordings, whereby the middle of the measure becomes more elastic, and the ends of measures much more compressed with fast notes, such as the beginning of *Copacabana* (Julio De Caro, 1927), or that of *Corazón herido* (Francisco De Caro, 1927).

In solo passages, portamento can often be seen as the secret to De Caro's *fraseo*, his way of anticipating notes. One of the most famous De Caro solos is *Tierra querida*, recorded in September 1927, on the first day of recordings following the ensemble's tour to Brazil (he wrote the piece while in Brazil, in honour of his "dear country").<sup>160</sup> Notably, it is also one of the first pieces in which De Caro's *violin corneta* can be heard. Figure 98 shows the first half of the solo, which extends over 16 measures, in two eight-measure sections:

The image displays a musical score for two violins, Vln. 1 and Vln. 2, spanning measures 25 to 32. Vln. 1 is marked 'solo' and Vln. 2 is marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato). The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first section (measures 25-32) shows Vln. 1 playing a melodic line with portamento and Vln. 2 providing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second section (measures 29-32) continues the melodic development in Vln. 1 and the accompaniment in Vln. 2.

Figure 98 *Tierra querida* (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1927, mm 25-32)<sup>161</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía*, 45; De Caro, *El tango*, 69.

<sup>161</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Tierra querida*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 12 September 1927, Victor BAVE 1420-1/79924-B, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.



Here, the feeling is almost paradoxical: while the sound of the solo violin seems calm, the rhythmical countermelody in the second violin (played pizzicato), the mixture of articulations, and especially the portamenti create a feeling of agitation. This is accentuated by the fact that all the portamenti – all of them ascending portamenti – are used to anticipate the arrival of the following note. Crucially, all these anticipated *fraseos* seem to be made with the inclusion of intermediary notes, which I have indicated in parentheses; they indicate that he changed fingers before beginning to slide. When played in slow motion, these intermediary notes are clearly audible. Furthermore, we can see a trend in De Caro's solo material: fast, clipped notes after longer ones (for instance, at the end of measure 27), and dotted or double dotted figures.

The solo from *Boedo* (1928) is much calmer than that of *Tierra querida*. Unusual in published scores, the *Boedo* violin solo (Figure 99) indicates some of the portamenti that should be played, if not the timing (see the top line):



Figure 99 *Boedo* (Julio De Caro, published score, 1928, violin solo)<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Julio De Caro, *Boedo*, Todo Tango, accessed 26 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/351/Boedo/>.

A comparison with a transcription of the 1928 recording (Figure 100) reveals far more portamenti, very much connected to the *fraseo*. While not every portamento is used for anticipation, such as in m. 44, where the first note seems ever so slightly delayed, there is still a feeling of anticipated *fraseo* in general in the passage. However, for the most part, they are used to anticipate, such as m. 38 (the second half of the first beat); m. 40 (beat 1); m. 42 (first to second beats); m. 43 (preceding beat three), and of course, between m. 44-45.

Figure 100 Boedo (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1928), permission of Lucas Guinot<sup>163</sup>

We can also notice compression of the faster notes at the end of measures, similarly to the solo passage in *Tierra querida*. The final notes of measures 38, 42, and 44, for example, add a slightly angular quality to an otherwise lyrical passage.

De Caro frequently employed anticipated *fraseo* through the usage of portamenti in solo material. One of the most salient passages is the beautiful solo in *El buey solo* (Agustín Bardi, Sexteto Julio De Caro, 1929, 1:10), in which he manages, using very light finger pressure, to create a lilting feeling

<sup>163</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Boedo*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 16 November 1928, Victor 44378-1/80999-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>; Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot and Pablo Mitilineos, *Las orquestas de tango en el primer periodo de la Guardia Nueva*. Based on transcription made by Lucas Guinot, for which I have approval. I modified the portamenti based on what I heard in the recording. See Appendix A.

despite constantly anticipated phrasing. In *Maipo* (Eduardo Arolas, 1927, from 2:02), portamento is constantly used to connect between notes, creating an anxious feeling. Finally, portamenti gives an extreme forward feeling at the beginning of *Flores negras* (Francisco De Caro, Sexteto Julio De Caro, 1927).

One final lyrical quality in De Caro's playing is his vibrato, which contributes greatly to its beauty. According to Luis Adolfo Sierra, De Caro's vibrato – alongside his use of portamento, rhythmic articulation at the frog of the bow and his percussive use of pizzicato – is one of the most exceptional stylistic traits of his playing.<sup>164</sup> This is, at least in part, because De Caro possessed a generalized vibrato, unlike De Caro's predecessors in tango, such as Tito Roccatagliata, who used vibrato on specific notes, like a type of ornament. In De Caro's playing, perhaps the biggest contrast between vibrated and non-vibrated material is with the portamenti, which are not vibrated, and the actual notes, which are vibrated for the most part, creating a sonic difference. I would argue, however, that De Caro did not possess the most distinctive vibrato amongst tango violinists; he did not have, for example, the nervous, narrow vibrato of Elvino Vardaro. Instead, I suggest that his vibrato was fully in the service of the musicality of the phrase: beautiful, lyrical, and general. It is often used to enunciate each note in the phrase, punctuating the melodic line (and foreshadowing the more extreme vibrato of Enrique Camerano in Osvaldo Pugliese's orchestra), for example in the violin solo of *El abrojo* (Luis Bernstein, 1925, from 1:22). Other instances of "enunciated" vibrato, in which a slight increase of speed can be heard in the middle of the note – creating a swell in the note, a form of *mesa di voce* – include the violin solos in *El buey solo* (Agustín Bardi, 1929, from 1:10), *Sueño azul* (Francisco De Caro, 1926, from 0:43), or the 1930 recording of *Buen amigo* (Julio De Caro, from 1:52).

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<sup>164</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1037-1038.

### *Rhythmical Characteristics*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter one of the key developments of the Sexteto Julio De Caro was its fantastic attention to rhythm, especially in terms of different articulations, syncopations and creation of different underlying marking models of tango music. Most of the techniques employed were not new to the genre: the differentiation between accented and unaccented notes, the use of both short and long accents, *arrastres*, and syncopations existed already. However, their usage is far extended here, with more variation and in a more exaggerated way. In addition, their usage becomes systematic. Furthermore, what is new in the Sexteto Julio De Caro is a true aspect of communication between the sections of the ensemble (violins, bandoneons, and the rhythm section of piano and double bass). These sections have a constant dialogue together, and their rhythmic effects reinforce each other, making something much more powerful than if just one instrument were to make the effect in question.

Short articulations, with the exception of unaccented, quiet countermelodies (for example, the violin two part in *Tierra querida*, which I discussed in the previous section), are frequently the subject of some sort of accentuation, above all, the distinction between accented and unaccented notes. These can either be used to play the melody, such as in *La cumparsita* (Figure 101):



Figure 101 *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, OTDC, 1929, mm. 12-15, permission of Lysandre Donoso<sup>165</sup>)

Or, these can be used to create a highly accented *marcato en dos* pattern, though the mixture of accented and unaccented material, such as in this passage from m. 5-9 of *El monito* (Figure 102):

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<sup>165</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded 1929. G. Matos Rodríguez, *La cumparsita*, transcribed by Lysandre Donoso, 2023 and used with permission.

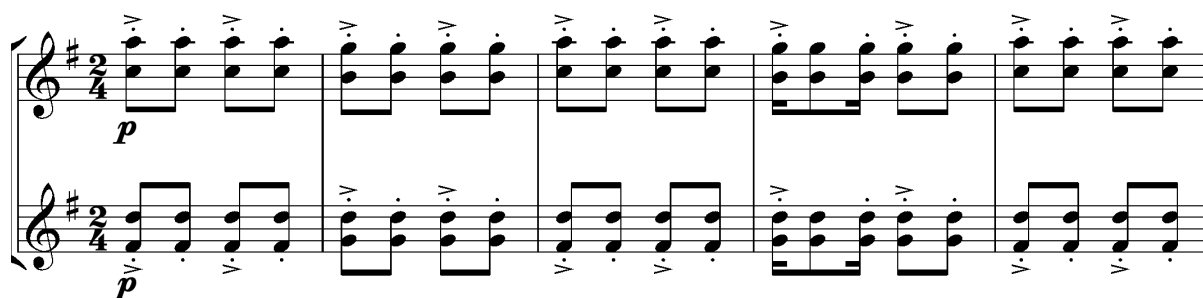


Figure 102 El monito (Julio De Caro, OTDC, 1925, mm. 5-9), permission of Martín Jurado<sup>166</sup>

In the fourth measure (m.8) of this passage, we can see a syncopation (*síncopa*), which is extremely common in De Caro's music. Similar patterns can be noted in tangos such as *El rebelde* (Pedro Laurenz, 1925, A section), *Chacabuco* (Carlos Macchi, 1925, from 0:16) and *Engrupido* (Adolfo Mondino, 1930, violin two accompaniment during the violin solo at 1:03), to name a few passages. This type of technique was employed to create any number of complex rhythmical patterns: offbeats and polyrhythms. So far, the articulations I have mentioned are not new in tango music. However, the character of these articulations can be considered new. One main feature in the Sextet is that these short articulations acquired an aggressive character, more strident than in those of De Caro's predecessors, something that became even more exaggerated after De Caro began to record on his *violín corneta*. On the violin, this technique is executed using the extreme frog of the bow; the unaccented note is barely played at all.

Another rhythmic device that De Caro developed much further is the long accent, or an accent slurred to a short note, that becomes a ghost note or *nota fantasma*, as it is barely articulated. In earlier tangos, while the division between melodic and rhythmical material became increasingly common, it

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<sup>166</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *El monito*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 6 July 1925, Victor BA 627-2/795694-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>; Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot, Pablo Mitilneos, *Las orquestas de tango*. Adapted from the transcription of Martín Jurado and used with permission.

was not common to *mix* both types of articulations. Effectively, this is what happens with this technique – the long articulation of the slurred accent contrasts with the staccatos that follow it, which are as light as possible. In this passage from the principal melody of *Boedo* (Figure 103) we can see a number of long accents, both unadorned, as in m. 6, and with an accented triplet (see the section on embellishments), such as in m. 7, 9 and 10. These accents do not fall on the strong beats of the measure, but rather offset, something referred to in tango as a *célula acéfala* – literally, a headless pattern, often translated as an up-beat rhythmic pattern.<sup>167</sup> They create tension by interacting with the underlying strong beats of the measure (one and three). The violins are not alone in using these long accents, but instead in unison with the bandoneons:

Figure 103 *Boedo* (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1928, mm. 6-11), permission of Lucas Guinot<sup>168</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 40-41.

<sup>168</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Boedo*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 16 November 1928; Martín Jurado, Lucas Guinot, Pablo Mitilneos, *Las orquestas de tango*. Transcription adapted from that of Lucas Guinot and used with permission.

The way of executing these long accents is far different from slurred accents in classical performance practice. Instead, the bow is thrown vertically onto the string, making percussive contact with it, unlike in classical violin playing, where an accent is generally produced by pulling the bow horizontally, from the string. It is possible, especially in the recordings of the *violín corneta* from 1927, to hear De Caro play these long accents in this way.

Perhaps the most distinctive form of rhythmic device, one that I mentioned in the section about portamenti, is the *arrastre*, or “dragging”. While the lyrical *arrastre*, a form of “scoop” in portamento preceding the beginning of a note in a phrase, was well-established in both classical and tango music by this time – and further developed by De Caro, as I showed earlier in this chapter – the rhythmical *arrastre* is something very much associated with the Decarean school. As mentioned earlier, the rhythmic *arrastre* likely emerged from the bandoneon as a creation of Eduardo Arolas, De Caro’s first major musical influence in tango music. De Caro himself claimed that Arolas invented the figure.<sup>169</sup> It grew out of Arolas’ use of *rezongos*, a type of cluster Arolas played in the lower registers of his bandoneon.<sup>170</sup> The bandoneon players of De Caro’s sextet, especially Pedro Maffia, who was in many ways the stylistic disciple of Arolas, most particularly in tandem with Pedro Laurenz, strongly emphasized and developed the *arrastre*, which became more forceful, more active.<sup>171</sup> Each instrument has their own way of playing *arrastres*, and they take many different forms. Perhaps the most prevalent type of *arrastre* found in De Caro’s playing is that with a portamento preceding the measure: the portamento is used in conjunction with a crescendo ending with a short, accented note. One such *arrastre*, played by every single instrument, occurs at the beginning of the main melody of *La cumparsita* (Figure 101). The ensemble finishes playing a nearly 45-second introduction (which I discuss in the section about portamenti), finishing with a fermata, and then a silence. Then, there is a

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<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Pepe and Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 11; Horacio Salas, *El tango*, 110.

<sup>170</sup> See Omar García Brunelli, “Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro,” 93. Brunelli takes the definition from Oscar Zucchi (*El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes*, 382).

<sup>171</sup> Link and Wendland, 144; Pepe and Castro, “El violín,” 11.

violent surge as all members of the orchestra execute an *arrastre* together, pulling the listener into the main melody. The rhythmic *arrastre* occurs between mm. 11 and 12:

Figure 104 *La cumparsita* (G. Matos Rodríguez, OTDC, 1929, mm. 1-11), permission of Lysandre Donoso<sup>172</sup>

De Caro used such *arrastres* in many tangos, such as in *Recuerdo* (Osvaldo Pugliese, 1929, from 0:08) in which a particularly aggressive set of *arrastres* can be heard in the violins and bandoneons; and the B section of the 1930 recording of *El pillete* (Graciano De Leone, from 0:30), in which every instrument except for the second violin, who plays a lyrical countermelody, play a forceful *arrastre* at the beginning of two measures in a row, creating a raucous and joyful character offset by the dreamy second violin.

### Ornaments

De Caro included many types of ornamentation in his recordings, including grace notes, trills, turns and mordents, as well as what he referred to as *fiorituras* or “flourishes”.<sup>173</sup> These ornaments can all be found in the playing of Tito Roccatagliata, and as such were not a new addition to tango violin playing. However, De Caro used these techniques repeatedly, to the point where they became

<sup>172</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *La cumparsita*, by G. Matos Rodríguez, recorded 1929. Transcription by Lysandre Donoso (and portamenti/dynamics added by me), used with permission.

<sup>173</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 62.



standardized as part of the stylistic language of tango music. *Engrupido* (Figure 105) illustrates the extent to which he used some of these techniques. The passage follows virtuoso material in the bandoneons, and as such the solo can be described as a “response” to what they were playing. I have also noted the second violin, for rhythmic contrast, as the second violins plays light staccato articulations in the upper, and then lower, register of the instrument:

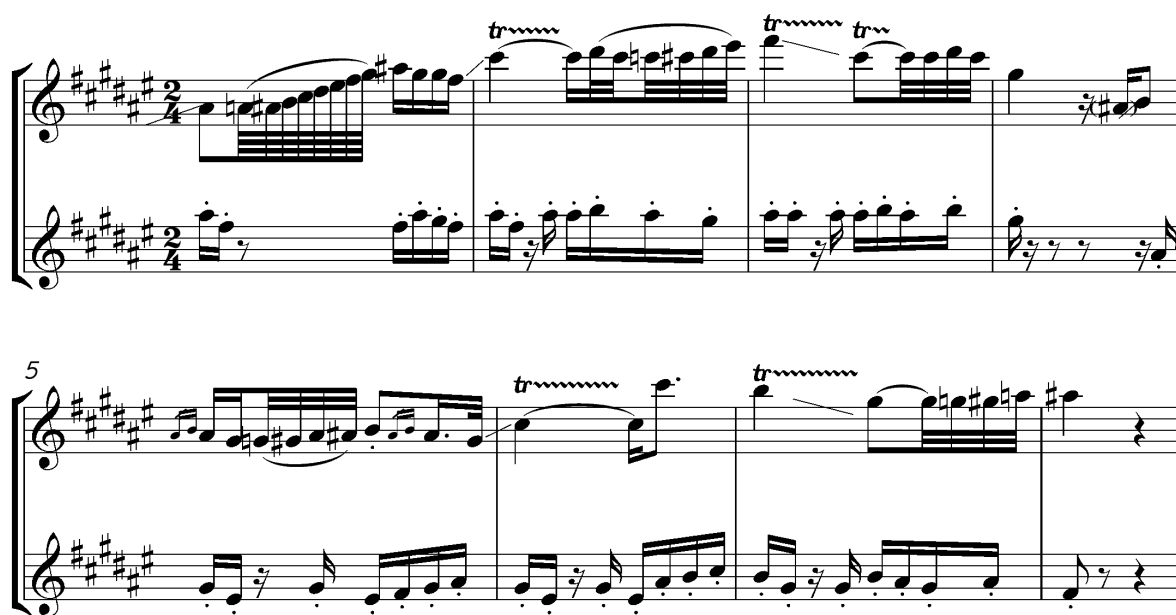


Figure 105 *Engrupido* (Adolfo Mondino, OTDC, 1930, violin solo from 1:05),<sup>174</sup> orphan work license OWLS000453-2 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

Besides expressive techniques that I have already discussed, such as portamenti (including several expressive *arrastres*) as well as changing registers and the compression of the phrase (long notes followed by demisemiquavers), we see a wide arrange of ornamental material in this passage: runs, trills, grace notes, chromatic turns. The passage is in F# major, and the tempo, at more than 120 BPM (beats per minute), is quite rapid, creating a feeling of technical and expressive brilliance. De Caro combined these different ornaments, creating a dazzling solo quite offset by the rhythmical character of the second violin.

<sup>174</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *Engrupido*, by Adolfo Mondino, recorded 1930, Brunswick 672/1225-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>.

### *Percussive Effects*

One of the most striking features of De Caro's playing – and that of the second violinist of his sextet – is the gradual introduction, proliferation and subsequent standardization of special percussive effects on the violin, which are, for the most part, unique to tango performance practice. In tango parlance, these are often referred to as *yeites*. A Lunfardo word meaning “bargain, advantageous business in relation to the little work it costs”, *yeites* can be best described as “licks” in English, according to Kacey Link and Kristen Wendland.<sup>175</sup> These “little tricks”, or *pequeñas trampas*, to use the description of Aníbal Troilo, are extremely distinctive, idiomatic to the genre.<sup>176</sup> While they were almost certainly improvised initially, today they can either be improvised or found in the written score; either way, in the words of Andrés Serafini, “written or improvised, it is necessary to know the ‘code’ to interpret them, that is, to produce and receive them”.<sup>177</sup> While each instrument has its own collection of *yeites*, and nor is there a formal definition of what constitutes a *yeite* (Horacio Ferrer, for example, considers all idiomatic interpretational devices, be they rhythmical or lyrical, to be a form of *yeite*),<sup>178</sup> here I will discuss the collection of primarily percussive devices employed by De Caro. Both De Caro and the second violinist in the sextet (see above) used these techniques, which can be considered Decarean in that De Caro himself made the artistic choices in his sextet and subsequent ensembles. These techniques are an essential part of what is known as *mugre* in tango, or literally, “dirtiness”, produced by special effects such as clusters, *arrastres*, or *yeites*.<sup>179</sup> *Mugre* can be considered a vital part the Decarean school, part of what gives it swing or groove. Comparing De

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<sup>175</sup> (Definition of *yeite*) quoted in Andrés Serafini, “Yeites de tango: Análisis de gestos musicales y técnicas extendidas en el tango para su utilización creativa y pedagógica,” 350. Quote of José Gobello; Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 27.

<sup>176</sup> Quoted in Ramón Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 40.

<sup>177</sup> Andrés Serafini, “Yeites de tango,” 350.

<sup>178</sup> Pelinski, “Decir el tango,” 40.

<sup>179</sup> See Martín Jurado, “‘Ponele más mugre, che.’ El tango y los recursos interpretativos en el piano,” (7<sup>o</sup> Congreso Latinoamericano de Formación Académica en Música Popular, 2019). Yuiko Asaba points out that the term *mugre* only emerged in the 1980s as a way to describe tango performance practice. The term *barro*, or mud, was used from the 1960s. See Yuiko Asaba, “Tango, emotion and transculturality,” 322-323. In some sense, describing De Caro's techniques as *mugre* could be considered slightly anachronistic. Nonetheless, the origins of these techniques, despite the terms used to describe them today, are largely Decarean.

Caro's edgier tango to the more refined, and subdued, tangos of Osvaldo Fresedo, Horacio Ferrer writes, "Julio De Caro's tango is more subject to the vicissitudes of city life..."<sup>180</sup>

The introduction of percussive noises in tango is generally attributed to Afro-Argentine double bassist Leopoldo Thompson, who recorded with Roberto Firpo, Francisco Canaro and as the first double bassist of De Caro's sextet before his untimely death in 1925.<sup>181</sup> It is not completely clear, however, when these types of techniques were first executed by tango violinists. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Casimiro Alcorta may have employed percussive, scratching sounds, reported by Viejo Tanguero in *Crítica* in 1913.<sup>182</sup> Unfortunately, there is no known phonographic evidence of Alcorta's playing, and the sounds cannot be confirmed. Ernesto Ponzio, also discussed earlier, used devices such as *guitarrita*, or a strumming of the violin in a rapid way, that sounds like a guitar, as well as ricochet with the bow. *Guitarrita* was heavily developed by Tito Roccatagliata, who can be considered the technique's most prolific proponent. In addition to *guitarrita* and standard right-hand pizzicato, Roccatagliata frequently used left-hand pizzicato, something that can also be heard occasionally in De Caro recordings (see below). In addition, Roccatagliata introduced the *sirena* or siren, a long one- or two-stringed glissando imitating a siren, in his Orquesta Típica Select recording *Color de rosa* (1920), which I discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.<sup>183</sup> Although the use of percussive effects was well-established by the time Julio De Caro began to record, none of his predecessors developed as extensive an arrange of effects as De Caro; in the initial period of RCA recordings (1924-1928), effects such as *chicharra*, *tambor*, and *golpes* became commonplace, in addition to pre-extant techniques such as *guitarrita*, left-hand pizzicato, and *sirena*. These techniques are not generally executed at the beginning of pieces (with a few notable exceptions), but instead when material is repeated: in solo passages, accompanying other instruments such as the bandoneon or the piano, or in the case of repeated sections. Early tangos were primarily composed of 3 sections (ABC)

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<sup>180</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 84.

<sup>181</sup> I discuss Thompson in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

<sup>182</sup> *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.

<sup>183</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Color de rosa*, by Pedro Polito, recorded 28 August 1920.

that would be repeated in different ways, the C section being referred to as a “trio”; one of the primary features of the Guardia Nueva – including compositions of De Caro and Fresedo – was a transition to a two-section format, with multiple repetitions of each section throughout the piece, which eventually became standard in tango music.<sup>184</sup> Indeed, although initial De Caro compositions (such as *Mala pinta*, 1918) include a C section, he quickly transitioned to a two-section format. Modification, through the addition of special effects, solo material, changing instrumentation, different articulations, or the use of other expressive devices such as fraseo, was a way to avoid monotony.

Perhaps the most emblematic percussive technique, which Ramiro Gallo describes as “the star of all the percussion effects on the violin”, is the *chicharra*, or “cicada”.<sup>185</sup> Perhaps, as mentioned earlier, it originated with Casimiro Alcorta. Although the pattern is generally improvised rhythmically, today it



Is usually noted in the following way in written scores:

The first phonographic evidence, however, of the *chicharra*, is in the recordings of Julio De Caro. In the July 1925 RCA Victor recording of *El monito*, “The Little Monkey,” a chicharra-like sound can be heard at 1:00, at the return of the A-section melody, although I am not entirely sure that the violin produces these sounds in the initial recording. In his memoirs, De Caro specifically credits Leopoldo Thompson’s (live) performance of the piece, mentioning his jumping bow, his pizzicato, his *golpes* and other special effects, claiming that Thompson received an ovation for his imitation of a monkey.<sup>186</sup> However, in subsequent recordings of the piece (July 1928, RCA Victor; May 1939, Odeon; September 1949, Odeon) the violin executes the *chicharra* in the same place as the original recording. While the 1925 *El monito* recording is perhaps not a clear example of the violin executing a *chicharra*, the pattern can be clearly heard in the June 1926 recording *La rayuela*; the *chicharra* pattern accompanies the bandoneon solo at 0:41. One month later, De Caro’s sextet recorded *Don*

<sup>184</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva,” 6.

<sup>185</sup> Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 119.

<sup>186</sup> Julio De Caro, *El tango*, 62.

*Goyo*, and *chicharra* is again used, this time by the second violinist, accompanying the violin solo at 0:48. Likewise, in the 1926 recording of *Derecho viejo* (Figure 106), the second violinist (Manlio Francia) plays a syncopated *chicharra* pattern:

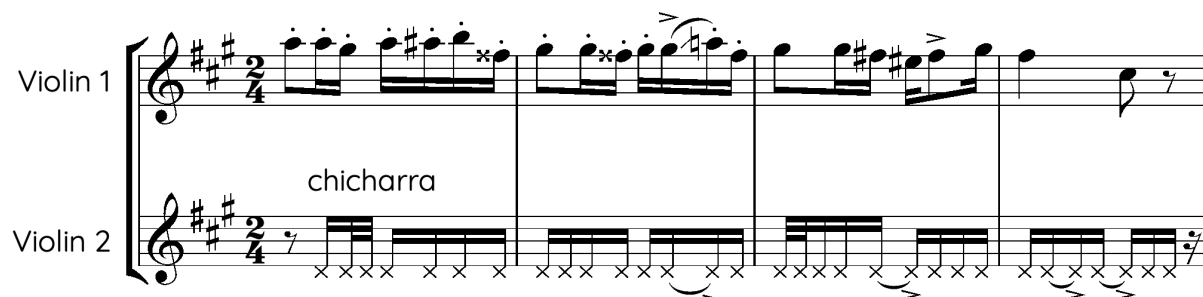


Figure 106 *Derecho viejo* (Eduardo Arolas, JDCOT, 1926), public domain<sup>187</sup>

While *chicharra* was performed by the second violinist in *Don Goyo* and *Derecho viejo*, in other recordings, such as *Vengan muchachos* (1928), De Caro himself clearly plays the technique, this time to accompany the bandoneon solo. By this point, he was recording with the *violín corneta*, and the echo of the sound permits us to identify the playing as his own. The same kind of pattern can be noted in *Mi churrasca* (1929): again, one violin, likely the first violin, accompanies the bandoneons in a duo passage. At other times, it is more ambiguous, when both violins can be heard playing, whether the first, or the second violin executes *chicharra*. In *Jueves* (1930), *chicharra* accompanies a chromatic violin passage on the G string (from 1:32-1:48). The timbre of the violin playing the lower-registered solo, which is quite fast and almost virtuoso in character, is identical to lower-registered countermelodies played by the second violin earlier in the piece (for instance from 0:40, where the first violin plays the melody with staccato articulation, while the second violin plays a lyrical countermelody in the lower register of the instrument), suggesting that the second violin played the solo while De Caro played the percussive pattern.

<sup>187</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Derecho viejo*, by Eduardo Arolas, recorded 4 August 1926, Victor BAVE 901-1/79706-A, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>. See Appendix A.

Another effect De Caro frequently employed is the *tambor*, or the drum. *Tambor* is executed by playing a pizzicato on the G string, but with the third finger of the left hand in between the G and D strings, producing a slightly muffled percussive noise.<sup>188</sup> The earliest clear recording including *tambor* is *Espuma de cabaret* (Figure 107), during the B-section bandoneon solo; the passage only lasts about four measures, accompanying only the second iteration of the bandoneon melody, from m. 9-12 of the solo. The syncopated pattern is distinctive:



Figure 107 *Espuma de cabaret* (Domingo Renis, OTDC, 1926),<sup>189</sup> orphan work license OWLS000425-2 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/copyright-orphan-works>

In particular, the offbeat syncopations played by the violin create a complex polyrhythmic pattern between the different instruments. Likewise, in the aforementioned *La rayuela*, *chicharra* is followed by a *tambor* passage, this time in a 3+3+2 rhythm, a distinctive rhythm that can be found in numerous De Caro recordings and compositions. According to Pablo Mitilineos, the inclusion of percussive material, as well as the usage of the 3+3+2 rhythm (which he identifies as *afrodescendiente* due to the connection with the *clave* rhythm found in many African-based Latin-American musical genres such as the Cuban *son*) is likely due to the legacy of Leopoldo Thompson, well-known for *canyengue* playing – including accentuations, syncopations, rhythmic displacement, polyrhythms, and percussive

<sup>188</sup> Gallo, *El violín en el tango*, 121.

<sup>189</sup> Orquesta Típica De Caro, *Espuma de cabaret*, by Domingo Renis, recorded 12 January 1926, Victor BA 743-1/79628-B, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoyesusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>. See Appendix A.

noises.<sup>190</sup> In Figure 108, I have reproduced his transcription of the *tambor* passage in *La rayuela*, which he labels “*Percusión en el violín*”:

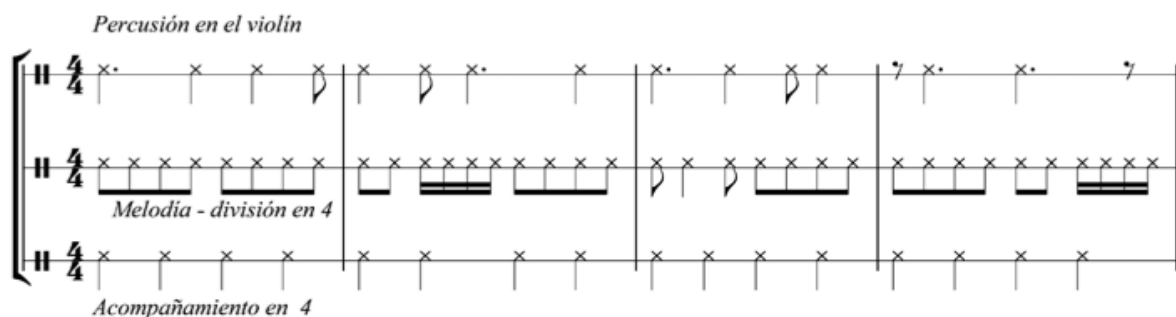


Figure 108 *La rayuela* (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1926), permission of Clang<sup>191</sup>

*Tambor* can be found in numerous Sexteto Julio De Caro recordings, including *Lágrimas de arrabal* (1928), *Flor de milonga* (1929), *De rompe y raja* (1930), *Tradición* (1930), *No es pa' ponerse a llorar* (1931), *Caminito al bajo* (1931) and *La sufrida* (1932).

Similar to the *tambor* is the *golpe* or the *golpe de caja*, the act of hitting the bout of the violin with the left hand. According to Ramiro Gallo, this effect is generally “performed with the same rhythms but with a softer, less incisive sound”.<sup>192</sup> Because the sound is made by hitting the wood of the violin, and not plucking the string, it is drier, less metallic than *tambor*. Initially, *golpes* were primarily performed by the double bass, whose resonant body reverberated and was well-captured by recordings. While *golpes* in recordings such as *Don Goyo* (1926) and *El monito* (1928) are deep-toned and seem to be played on the double bass, slightly later recordings such as *De antaño* (1929),

<sup>190</sup> Mitilineos, “Al son de la clave: El 3+3+2 en el tango,” 59-67. The 3+3+2 rhythmical pattern was especially used in tango music by Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla, who both considered themselves “Decarean”. The description of Thompson’s *canyengue* playing is from Néstor Ortíz Oderigo, *Latitudes africanas del tango*, 139, also quoted in Mitilineos “Al son,” 58.

<sup>191</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *La rayuela*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 9 June 1926, Victor BAVE 834-1/79673-B, digitalised by El tango y sus invitados, accessed 15 September 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2013/12/orquesta-y-sexteto-julio-de-caro-su.html>; Mitilineos, “Al son,” 59. Transcription of Pablo Mitilineos, used with permission.

<sup>192</sup> Gallo, *El violín*, 122.

*Engrupido* (1930), *Soñador* (1930), *Espuma del mar* (1930), *Carbonada criolla* (1930), *Tradición* (1930), and *La rayuela* (1941) could have been performed on violin. However, if they were, they were performed by the second violinist, and not De Caro, whose *violín corneta* did not have a *caja* or body on which to make the sound. Nonetheless, *golpes de caja* are commonly used in tango performance practice and can be considered part of the Decarean tradition.

One type of *yeite* commonly found in Julio De Caro's recordings was initially introduced by Tito Roccatagliata: the *sirena*, or siren-like sound. In the 1920 Orquesta Típica Select recording *Color de rosa*, Roccatagliata introduced a lengthy glissando connecting the highest register of the violin with the third position on the E string, spread out over nearly four beats (see Figure 80).<sup>193</sup> However, Julio De Caro, who first introduced the *sirena* to his repertoire in *Derecho viejo* (Figure 109), greatly expanded the technique, including ascending and descending *sirenas*, and many times on two strings. In fact, the passage immediately follows the *chicharra* passage discussed earlier in this chapter. Both violins play the *sirena* simultaneously, on different strings, and going in different directions, creating a wild and exciting sound:

The image shows a musical score for the tango 'Derecho viejo'. It consists of three staves: Melody, Violin 1, and Violin 2. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 2/4. The Melody staff shows a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Violin 1 and Violin 2 staves show a 'sirena' passage, which is a glissando (gliss.) connecting the highest register of the violin with the third position on the E string. The Violin 1 staff has a 'sirena' label and a 'gliss.' label. The Violin 2 staff has a 'sirena' label and a 'gliss.' label. The score is in public domain.

Figure 109 *Derecho viejo* (Eduardo Arolas, JDCOT, 1926), public domain<sup>194</sup>

<sup>193</sup> Orquesta Típica Select, *Color de rosa*, by Pedro Polito, recorded 28 August 1920.

<sup>194</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Derecho viejo*, by Eduardo Arolas, recorded 4 August 1926.



One curious feature of this passage is that both instruments begin by playing the melody (alongside the bandoneons and the piano) but interrupt the melody with their *sirena* for two measures, before joining the melody again. The effect is joyous and exuberant, but also well-organized, as the timing is precise, taking exactly two measures. Ascending and descending *sirenas*, performed on both instruments, can be heard in *El pillete* (1927, 1:58-2:00), *Vayan saliendo* (1927, 0:20-0:24) and others. Other *sirenas* are slightly longer, and performed by one violin, instead of two. For example, in *El baqueano* (1927), which also happens to be the first recording made after the sextet's tour to Brazil, and where the sound of the *violín corneta* is clearly audible, the *sirena* is performed by one violin (De Caro), on two strings, over the course of 4 measures (two ascending, two descending). Other *sirenas* are only descending, such as in *Gallo ciego* (1927), where a two-stringed descending *sirena* emerges from the bandoneon duet (at 1:55), in an engaging mixture of timbres.<sup>195</sup> Another one-stringed descending *sirena* can be heard in the violin solo of *Luz mala* (1929, 1:55-1:57). Still others are only ascending, such as the *sirena* De Caro employs (alone) at the beginning of the 1928 recording of *El monito*, or the two-stringed *sirena* (2:22) in *Luz y sombra* (1930). Some unusual *sirenas* include those of *Siempre te quise* (1929, 0:18-0:20), in which De Caro plays an ascending *sirena*, whereas José Niesow (the second violinist) plays an ascending, and then descending *sirena*, and *El entrerriano* (1930), which includes multiple *sirenas* in different directions throughout the piece.

Speaking of *El entrerriano*, it can be described as something of an anomaly, because its primary feature is a form of ricochet, which De Caro refers to as *saltellato* or “springing bow” – something De Caro mentions that impressed Fritz Kreisler when he played the piece for him.<sup>196</sup> Rhythmically, it is very similar to the *guitarrita* technique. However, this is the only piece I could find with this technique.

One final percussive technique frequently found in De Caro's recordings is pizzicato: standard, left-hand, and *guitarrita*. Of course, these are not novelties, nor can it be said that De Caro heavily developed

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<sup>195</sup> It is unclear if one or two violins play this pattern. I suspect both violins are playing the *sirena* together, but the effect would sound similar regardless of if one or both violins play the pattern.

<sup>196</sup> De Caro, *El tango*, 112.

these techniques, well-established in tango violin playing by the 1920s, including that of Ernesto Ponzio and especially Tito Roccatagliata. The pizzicato marked, according to Luis Adolfo Sierra, the “earliest trace of individuality” in tango violinists, the first instances of interpretational identity.<sup>197</sup> By employing these different pizzicato techniques, De Caro was building upon the interpretational devices of his predecessors, in an example of what Héctor and Luis Bates describe as De Caro being the link between the past and present of tango.<sup>198</sup>

*Guitarrita*, or the strumming of the violin with multiple fingers of the right hand, producing a rapid pizzicato reminiscent of a guitar, can be considered to be the most emblematic violin technique of the *Guardia Vieja*. Unlike *chicharra*, *tambor*, *golpe*, and *sirena*, which are commonly used in current-day practice, the *guitarrita* is slightly less common, reserved primarily for evoking the past. While passages employing *guitarrita* are not as extensive in De Caro’s recordings as in those of Roccatagliata, for example, they are nonetheless numerous. However, while in the recordings of Roccatagliata – for example, those of Orquesta Típica Select – the *guitarrita* passages could be considered the star of the show, De Caro employs *guitarrita* primarily to add texture and ornamental interest to sections, as a form of accompaniment or as a way of varying material to avoid monotony in repeated sections. Another major difference between the *guitarrita* passages found in De Caro’s recordings and those of predecessors such as Roccatagliata is that in De Caro, both violins generally play the same rhythmic pattern, creating an organized, and arguably more powerful sound; in Orquesta Típica Select, Roccatagliata generally played the *guitarrita* while the second violinist played an interlocking, but different, rhythmical pattern.<sup>199</sup> Only the Sexteto’s version of *Color de rosa* (1928), a piece originally recorded by Orquesta Típica Select in 1920, slightly contradicts the assertions I have just made. Here, the *guitarrita* passage is virtually identical to that of Orquesta Típica Select: 8 measures, similar melodic material, the same types of rhythms in both instruments. Despite the obvious homage to Orquesta Típica Select in the De Caro recording, there is a key difference: both violinists play *guitarrita*, and not just

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<sup>197</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango,” 16.

<sup>198</sup> Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 169.

<sup>199</sup> See Chapter 3 of this thesis for more information.

one, as in the Select recording. However, it is far more common for the Sexteto De Caro to use *guitarrita* as a way to modify repeated sections. Modified repeated material can be found in the earliest Sexteto De Caro recording featuring *guitarrita*: a four-measure passage in *El abrojo* (1925), which is followed by offbeat pizzicatos. In fact, this is a repetition of the B section – the first time (0:51) the violins both play syncopated accompaniment with *arrastres*; when the material returns, they play similar rhythms, but this time with a *guitarrita* imitating the arco *arrastres* from earlier. While most *guitarrita* passages are short, sometimes just an ornament at the beginning middle of a “standard” passage, such as in *Don Goyo* (1925, 1:22), or *Recuerdo* (1926, 0:27), others, are more extensive, such as the 16-measure passage in *Lorenzo* (1926, beginning), in which the phrase is repeated twice: the first time accompanying the piano, which plays the melody (8m), and the second, a whistler, whistling the melody. The *guitarrita* both adds texture and ornamental interest to the section. A similar *guitarrita* accompaniment, performed by both violins, can be heard during the bandoneon duet in the B section of *Quejas de bandoneón* (1927, 0:45, and again 2:08). Similarly, *guitarrita* passages can be heard in *Con todo amor* (1928), *De antaño* (1929), *Batida nocturna* (1930), *Rodríguez Peña* (1930), *Luz y sombra* (1930), amongst others.

While *guitarrita* is common in De Caro’s recordings, left-hand pizzicato is far less common. When it can be heard, it is virtually identical to that of Tito Roccatagliata: a rapid descending pattern on the E string, ending with an open string. The figure can generally be found at the end of a phrase. The earliest such figure can be found in *El Abrojo* (1925, 0:21); De Caro finishes his lyrical phrase, and executes the left-hand pattern as the bandoneons begin, responding to the melody that he just played. Others conform to a nearly identical format: in *La última cita* (1928, 0:22), De Caro plays the exact same left-hand pattern at the end of his lyrical passage, at the moments the bandoneons begin to play, something he also does in *La revancha* (1932, 1:34). It is almost as if he employs the technique to herald the bandoneons’ arrival. Only *Mal de amores* (1928, 2:17) is slightly different: when the B section returns for the last time, at 2:12, the bandoneons begin to play the melody, interrupted in the second measure by the piano, and then De Caro interjects the left-hand pizzicato pattern before the bandoneons take the

melody back: in the span of four measures, there is a wide range of different registers, textures, and ornamental features, making for fascinating listening.

“Standard” pizzicato – that is, executed with the right hand – is far more common than either *guitarrita* or left-hand pizzicato in De Caro’s recordings. These pizzicato sections take on several different forms, however: they can be melodic, accompanimental, single notes or chords, performed by one violin or both. Of the many famous compositions and recordings by Julio De Caro, perhaps the most famous is *Boedo*, originally recorded in 1928 (and subsequently in 1939, 1950 and 1952), which begins with a descending arpeggiated pizzicato pattern in both violins, as part of a five-measure introduction to the A section, which begins in measure 6 (Figure 110):

The musical score for the first six measures of 'Boedo' is presented. The score includes staves for Violin 1, Violin 2, Bandoneon I, Bandoneon II, Piano, and Contrabajo. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. Measures 1-5 show a descending arpeggiated pizzicato pattern in both violins, marked 'mf' and 'Pizz'. Measures 6-8 show the instruments playing in arco, marked 'Arco' and 'mf'. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Figure 110 *Boedo* (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1928), mm. 1-6, permission of Lucas Guinot<sup>200</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Boedo*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 16 November 1928. Martín Jurado et al, *Las orquestas de tango en el primer período de la Guardia Nueva*, 93. Transcription of Lucas Guinot.

Of course, this passage is remarkably similar to the 1923 Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián recording *Shusheta*, which begins with a descending arpeggiated passage (Figure 111). One of the striking similarities is the displacement of rhythmic material in the first measure; if we listen to *Boedo* and *Shusheta* it is difficult to feel where the first beat lies, due to the rhythmic ambiguity at the beginning:



Figure 111 *Shusheta* (Juan Carlos Cobián, Ediciones Breyer Hermanos, m. 1-5), public domain<sup>201</sup>

However, there are two significant differences. First, the descending passage in *Shusheta* is part of the A-section material, and not an introduction. Second, the second violin (and third violin, I believe, since Cobián enlarged the string section, including Astor and Remo Bolognini on the violin in addition to Agesilao Ferrazzano and De Caro in the 1923 recordings) plays a countermelody of minims while the first violin plays the arpeggiated pizzicato material (Figure 112).

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<sup>201</sup> Juan Carlos Cobián, *Shusheta*, Ediciones Breyer Hermanos, Todo Tango, accessed 15 August 2024, <https://www.TodoTango.com/musica/tema/57/Shusheta/>.



Figure 112 *Shusheta* (Juan Carlos Cobián, OTJCC, 1923, m. 1-5), public domain<sup>202</sup>

Using pizzicato to play melodies can be found in several recordings. For example, in *Pura mañana* (1925), the entire B section (0:33, 16 measures in total) forms a pizzicato melody played by the first violin (subsequently, the piano and bandoneons share the material when it returns). Likewise, similar arpeggiated patterns to *Boedo* can be found in recordings such as *El penado 14* (1931) *Flor de milonga* (1929) and *A la francesa* (1930), although the latter two are not introductions, but instead presented in the middle of the pieces.

Another usage of pizzicato, similar to the passage in *Shusheta* seen above, is when one violin plays a lyrical (counter)melody, while the other violin plays a pizzicato pattern. In *Qué noche* (1926, 0:38), the first violin plays a pizzicato melody, while the second violin plays a repeated long note with the bow (G) – the repeated notes are connected by portamento scoops and create a very insistent character. While a lyrical second violin countermelody, together with a pizzicato melody in the first violin, can be heard in several recordings – such as *Mocosita* (1925), where the second violin connects the same note in different registers, while the first violin plays a pizzicato melody – the opposite, whereby the first violin plays a solo while the second violin plays a pizzicato pattern,

<sup>202</sup> Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián, *Shusheta*, by Juan Carlos Cobián, recorded 27 March 1923.

happens frequently. One famous passage is the violin solo in *Tierra querida* (Figure 113), described earlier in this chapter:



Figure 113 *Tierra querida* (Julio De Caro, JDCOT, 1927, mm. 25-28)<sup>203</sup>

A similar passage, where the second violin accompanies the bandoneon solo with a melodic line, can be heard in *El taita* (1928, 1:58), or in the fantastic dialogue between the bandoneons and both violins, playing pizzicatos at intervals, in *Vengan muchachos* (1928, 1:16).

Perhaps the most common type of pizzicato, however, is the creation of syncopated rhythmical patterns as a form of accompaniment. One of the very first Sexteto Julio De Caro recordings, *Pobre Margot* (1924) includes a syncopated pizzicato accompaniment during the piano solo at 1:16: a mixture of off-beat accents, on-beat quavers, and combinations of semiquavers and quavers (semiquaver, quaver, semiquaver). Although the passage only lasts for four measures, it has fantastic rhythmic drive. Another such passage can be found in *El rebelde* (1925), this time as an accompaniment to the bandoneon melodic passage. The (first, I believe) violin plays a heavily accented pattern of chords (the individual notes are not easy to make out, because of the recording



quality), while the bandoneons play the melody: . The

syncopated pattern is not always identical, but changes frequently in these types of sections; similar

<sup>203</sup> Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica, *Tierra querida*, by Julio De Caro, recorded 12 September 1927.

passages can be heard in *Cachita* (1926, 0:32) and *Mal de amores* (0:39), to name a few. Finally, these syncopations can also form the melody of a passage, such as in *Batida nocturna* (1930, 0:35), where the bandoneons and violins share the syncopated melody.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, De Caro forms the link between the past and present in tango. While many of the expressive and rhythmical techniques he employed existed in some shape or form, De Caro built upon these, creating and honing a stylistic language that tango musicians still use today. While he declared that his greatest ambition was “to ensure that tango be the music respected as the maximal expression of the personality of the Argentine people”, he went beyond that, creating a tango that was the utmost expression of his own personality.<sup>204</sup> Violinistically, he took many techniques used by predecessors such as Roccatagliata – to name a few of them, portamentos, *guitarrita*, and ornaments such as trills and grace notes – and expanded them greatly, employing a massive range of expressive, rhythmical and percussive techniques in a systematic, organized way, and featuring the instrument in a solo capacity in ways that had not yet been heard in the genre. Furthermore, while most of De Caro’s solo material was more lyrical in nature, some solo passages foreshadow the next frontier in tango violin playing: *virtuosismo*, or the presentation of solo material of great technical difficulty, showing off the capacities of the instrument, would become relevant in the playing of De Caro’s stylistic successors, such as Elvino Vardaro, Cayetano Puglisi, Argentino Galván and Raúl Kaplún. Julio De Caro’s middle-class background played a pivotal role in how he presented himself and his tango playing to the world. His class identity positioned him as a cultural mediator, allowing him to connect with tango’s working-class roots but also to align with the cultural tastes and values of the Argentine middle and upper classes. Although tango had largely undergone a process of social acceptance by the time of De Caro’s recording career, he helped situate tango’s position, with his desire to distinguish

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<sup>204</sup> *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933.



the genre on a global scale. Finally, the standardization and codification of tango violin playing – which Blas Matamoro connects to De Caro’s middle-class identity – would formalize the genre, creating a model for future generations.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108-109.



## **Concluding Remarks**

As the famous refrain in Carlos Gardel's *Volver* goes, “veinte años no es nada” – twenty years is nothing.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the twenty-five years between 1910 and 1935 marked a period of extraordinary transformation for Argentine tango. During this time, tango evolved from a genre largely confined to the lower-class *orillas* of Buenos Aires and performed by self-taught musicians as an accompaniment for dance, into a highly complex musical art form recognized internationally as Argentina's *música nacional* and embraced by all social classes. The violin, as the only instrument consistently present throughout all stages of tango's development,<sup>2</sup> underwent a remarkable stylistic metamorphosis during this period. This study has demonstrated that the evolution of violin performance practice in tango from 1910 to 1935 was deeply intertwined with the genre's journey toward social acceptance.

By combining the aural analysis of recordings with socio-cultural context and drawing extensively on primary sources from the time, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how performance practice evolved alongside considerable societal changes. Illustrating the interactions between the violinists and their socio-cultural context, this thesis also contributes to broader methodological conversations across cultural history and music. The approach developed here underscores how performance practice, identity and cultural acceptance are inherently intertwined in any musical tradition, offering a model for examining these dynamics in other historical and cultural contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> “Volver,” Todo Tango, accessed 28 November 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/31/Volver/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 62; Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Cayetano Puglisi: Artista cabal,” in *Todo es historia: 3. Tango (I)*, ed. Félix Luna (Todo es Historia, 1976), 117.

## Social Transformation and the Interaction Between Music and Society

The stylistic evolution of tango violin playing is inseparable from the genre's broader social trajectory. Initially marginalized as a working-class phenomenon on the edges or *orillas* of Buenos Aires, tango's social ascent was catalysed by Tangomania in Europe, particularly in Paris (1911–1914). While Tangomania played a pivotal role in accelerating tango's acceptance by the middle class and elites in Buenos Aires, the process was already underway, supported by local developments such as the inclusion of tango in Carnival dances, the rise of music publishing, as well as the emergence of pedagogical manuals such as Alfredo Bevilacqua's *Escuela de tango* (1914).<sup>3</sup> During this decade, the recording industry played a decisive role in consolidating tango's status as both a national and international phenomenon.

The case studies reveal how violinists were not only musicians but also cultural agents; they illustrate, in part, how tango music could transcend its origins to resonate across class boundaries, while engaging with Argentina's aspirations for modernity. As the genre gained popularity across class boundaries, performance practice diversified. One aspect worth mentioning is the emergence of tango music performance in cafés, such as *lo de Hansen*, frequented by the middle and upper classes, in the early twentieth century. While initially the music primarily existed as an accompaniment to tango dancing, tango music for listening gained a larger appeal, heralding the great age of luxurious Parisian-inspired cabarets such as *Armenonville* and *L'Abbaye*, where tango music proliferated. The increasing popularity of tango music in such venues, alongside the rapidly expanding recording industry, led to a massive professionalisation of tango musicians. While the earliest musicians, such as Casimiro Alcorta, did not have formal training, by the late 1910s and 1920s, formal training was widespread among tango musicians, many of whom came from middle-class families, such as Julio De Caro. This influx of classically trained performers brought new technical resources to the genre,

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<sup>3</sup> Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango*; Cibotti, "El tango argentino."

expanding the existing stylistic vocabulary on instruments such as the violin. These techniques did not replace earlier performance practices but built upon them, allowing musicians to preserve tango's distinctive character while simultaneously appealing to new audiences. The evolving performance practices of these violinists thus not only reflected changing musical tastes, but also embodied the shifting values, aspirations and class dynamics of early twentieth-century Argentine society.

### **The Violin's Central Role and Stylistic Evolution in Tango**

This study has traced the development of tango violin playing from the earliest recordings until it attained stylistic standardization and codification. Although other violinists were active during the period, the five selected for this thesis each introduced significant changes and developments to performance practice. Their contributions, taken together, map a trajectory of stylistic evolution closely aligned with tango's increasing social legitimacy and national significance, reflecting a process Blas Matamoro refers to as tango's enculturation.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1910 and 1935, tango violinists expanded the expressive range of the instrument in a highly diverse and inventive array of techniques. While later figures such as De Caro drew upon the earliest innovations of the *Guardia Vieja*, the process was not one of simple stylistic accumulation, nor one that sought to displace the performance practices of stylistic forebears. Nor was it linear, as these musicians' careers largely overlapped with one another. Ponzio, for instance, was professionally active from the early twentieth century until his death in 1934; Bonano is known to have recorded from 1912 to 1914; Roccatagliata performed from 1908 and recorded from 1912 to 1924; and De Caro from 1923 until his final recording session in 1953. Rather than a single stylistic arc, this development could be described as a dynamic network of shared vocabularies based on stylistic tradition. Techniques were introduced, experimented with, adapted, reinterpreted, and eventually

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<sup>4</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 103.

standardised, reflecting changing ensemble dynamics, aesthetic preferences, and technological advancements, notably in the form of the recording industry.

Let us consider some of the ways in which these violinists helped to construct a stylistic tradition of tango performance practice. Percussive techniques, ranging from pizzicato to genre-specific devices such as *chicharra* or *tambor*, formed a key expressive resource across all five violinists studied.

Alcorta's percussive legacy, identified in the accounts we have as 'scratching' and 'tickling' sounds, align with a tradition of techniques grouped as *canyengues* and heard in the playing of contemporary musicians such as the double bassist Leopoldo Thompson. Although there are no known recordings of Alcorta's usage of these techniques, they survive in the playing of David 'Tito' Roccatagliata, who expanded the percussive repertoire through the use of *saltellato*, a type of ricochet bow technique, and the *sirena*, and Julio De Caro, who employed percussion extremely frequently, including the *chicharra*, *tambor*, and *golpe*. Likewise, De Caro also adapted the *sirena*, heard in Roccatagliata's playing, executing the technique in a number of different ways: ascending, descending, on two strings simultaneously, as well as expanding the timing of the figure, even stretching it out to as many as four measures. Furthermore, pizzicato, which Luis Adolfo Sierra identifies as the first trace of interpretative individuality in tango violin playing, is a key stylistic element employed by most of the violinists studied.<sup>5</sup> Notably, Ernesto Ponzio's varied and extensive use of both right-hand pizzicato and *guitarrita*, which extended and transformed the percussive techniques used by performers such as Alcorta, could be considered the most emblematic expressive device on the violin in the *Guardia Vieja*. While occasional right-hand pizzicato can be heard in José Bonano's recordings such as *El jagüel*, Roccatagliata used pizzicato far more frequently, using not only the right-hand pizzicato and *guitarrita* heard in Ponzio's recordings, but also left-hand pizzicato, alternating pizzicato and arco passages, and pizzicato as part of a rhythmic melody, instead of a form of accompaniment. De Caro's pizzicato passages, which include frequent right-hand pizzicato, occasional *guitarrita* and, more rarely, left-hand pizzicato, are similar to those of Roccatagliata.

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<sup>5</sup> Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 16.

Similar ornamentation can be heard in the playing of Ponzio, Bonano, Roccatagliata and De Caro: grace notes, trills, mordents, chromatic neighbour notes, used repeatedly and with flair. Arguably, while these ornaments are more pronounced in the playing of Roccatagliata, and their usage becomes systematised in that of De Caro, the techniques clearly have their roots in earlier performance practice.

Some degree of stylistic continuity can also be heard in their use of lyrical techniques. Bonano, for example, explored the expressive potential of portamento and vibrato, especially at a time that preceded the general adoption of vibrato in tango violin playing. These techniques became more prominent in the recordings of Roccatagliata and De Caro. At the same time, some of the most significant stylistic differences between these performers emerge precisely from their diverse approaches to lyrical expression, particularly in their use of portamento, vibrato, and *fraseo*.

Roccatagliata employed a variety of different types of portamento, including ascending and descending portamenti using the same finger, finger changes on the same note, scoops before the beginning of the measure, as well as portamenti using the departure, or arrival, finger. Like Bonano, his vibrato usage was non-generalized, in that he privileged longer notes, but far more widespread. Perhaps the most significant lyrical technique heard in Roccatagliata's playing is the use of *fraseo*, an expressive melodic flexibility, audible in pieces such as *A la gran muñeca*. While the first traces of *fraseo* can be heard in Roccatagliata, De Caro, in contrast, developed the stylistic device far more. Notably, he linked the usage of portamento to his *fraseo*, which could be described as Gardelian, in that De Caro used *fraseo* in an anticipatory way, creating a slightly anxious feel; the portamenti connected one note to another, with a slightly early arrival.<sup>6</sup> In addition to anticipating the following note in the phrase, De Caro's *fraseo* frequently involves a compression of material, which could be described in today's parlance as *fraseo cerrado*.

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Gardelian-style phrasing, see Omar García Brunelli, "La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva"; García Brunelli, "Análisis del estilo tanguístico de Julio De Caro," 87, 95; and Fabián Russo, *El tango cantado*, 40, 46.

Just as their lyrical practices diversified so too did their use of rhythmical techniques. Short articulation can be heard in Ponzio's *El Entrerriano* and Bonano's *Armenonville*, but Roccatagliata exaggerated the brevity and sharpness of these articulations and played at the extreme frog of the bow, adding a rhythmic drive to the music. Furthermore, he created syncopated rhythmical patterns through the juxtaposition of accented and unaccented notes, a technique that would later be fully standardized by De Caro. Finally, Roccatagliata introduced a key rhythmical technique, the *arrastre*, to tango violin playing; De Caro intensified it, enhancing its energy and rhythmic force. Building upon the short articulations of Bonano, Ponzio and Roccatagliata, as well as Roccatagliata's *arrastre* usage and precise use of accents, De Caro also exaggerated the distinctions between accented and unaccented notes, and distinguished between short and long accents (an accent slurred to a short, unaccented note frequently referred to as a *nota fantasma* or *muteada*).

Rather than a straightforward stylistic lineage, the five violinists examined here reflect a pluralistic network of stylistic elements that were introduced, transformed and codified across a period of dramatic and rapid musical and social change. The violinists not only responded to and engaged with socio-cultural changes; they themselves were vectors of stylistic transformation. To borrow Beatriz Sarlo's formulation, for these musicians, *el futuro era hoy* – the future was already happening in their hands and on their instruments.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Avenues for future research**

#### *Tango Violin Playing after De Caro: the Rise of Virtuosismo*

Perhaps the most crucial area of future research is to address the developments that followed De Caro's standardization and codification of tango violin playing. Violinists such as Cayetano Puglisi,

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<sup>7</sup> Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica*, 44.



Raúl Kaplún, Argentino Galván and Elvino Vardaro, while not necessarily introducing entirely new technical elements, each developed a distinctive, immediately recognizable, personal style.<sup>8</sup> During the 1930s and 1940s, two main trends emerged: the rise of *virtuosismo*, whereby violinists included much more technically challenging and stylistically dazzling material; and the expanded role of the violin as a solo instrument. Again, I would like to explore the playing styles of some of the individuals who were associated with these trends as this involves the analysis of specific recordings, as opposed to a more global approach.

Cayetano Puglisi (1902-1968), born in Sicily and raised in Buenos Aires, benefitted from formal musical training both in Italy and in Argentina. His professional career as a tango musician began in 1917, when he replaced Roccatagliata in the Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo; he performed in Firpo's orchestra and that of Francisco Canaro before forming his own orchestra in 1928.<sup>9</sup> In 1929, his orchestra recorded on Victor, and most of the pieces feature a beautiful violin solo, but the ensemble was short-lived, because he returned to Canaro's orchestra in 1930. In 1940, he joined Juan D'Arienzo's orchestra, where he remained until his death; in D'Arienzo's orchestra, he became famous for his solos on the G string of the violin, known as *la vaca* or the cow in tango parlance.<sup>10</sup> Puglisi's intimate sound quality, his languid vibrato and elastic phrasing made him a standout amongst his contemporaries, though his focus was more on expressiveness than virtuosic display.<sup>11</sup>

Raúl Kaplún (1910-1990), born to Eastern European Jewish immigrant in Buenos Aires, is credited as the first truly virtuoso violinist in tango music, elevating its technical and dramatic possibilities. Although not a prolific recording artist, his recordings, such as his arrangement of Julio De Caro's

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<sup>8</sup> Omar García Brunelli has identified the diversification of personal musical styles in tango music in the early 1930s as a direct consequence of the economic crisis of 1930. In order to be successful in an increasingly competitive market, the musicians sought out stylistic differences. See Omar García Brunelli, "La transición estilística del tango luego de la crisis de 1930."

<sup>9</sup> Pepe and Castro, "El violín en el tango," 16-19; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 102. According to Sierra, Puglisi joined Firpo's orchestra as Roccatagliata's replacement in 1915; in his article on Puglisi, Sierra says that this occurred at the end of 1916. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Cayetano Puglisi: Artista Cabal," 119-120.

<sup>10</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Cayetano Puglisi," 125.

<sup>11</sup> Pepe and Castro, "El violín en el tango," 16-19; Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 103.

*Tierra querida* (1950), highlight his breathtaking technical prowess. He was, however, purely a performer, working in close collaboration with fellow violinist and arranger Argentino Galván.<sup>12</sup> According to Julio Nudler, the two had a symbiotic relationship, notably in the orchestra of Miguel Caló, where Kaplún joined as first violin in 1937.<sup>13</sup> I would like to analyse the relationship between Galván, who had a key role as arranger of many of the most influential orchestras of the 1940s and 1950s including those of Francini-Pontier, Los Astros del Tango, Aníbal Troilo, and Raúl Kaplún as performer. Kaplún would have a strong influence on younger violinists such as Enrique Mario Francini, as well as on contemporaries such as Elvino Vardaro.

Elvino Vardaro (1905-1971) can be considered one of the most influential violinists because of his distinctive, rapid, vibrato, and the elasticity of his timing. His sextets, Sexteto Vardaro-Pugliese (1930) and Sexteto Elvino Vardaro (1933-1937) did not record commercially, but they are nonetheless credited as some of the greatest ensembles in tango history.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the Sexteto Elvino Vardaro was one of the most popular radio ensembles of the 1930s, performing on Radio Fenix.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, there is one surviving recording of Sexteto Elvino Vardaro, *Tigre viejo*, which I would like to analyse in detail. Together with my ensemble Sónico, I had the opportunity to transcribe, perform and record *Tigre viejo* in 2024. Furthermore, his presence in ensembles such as Brighton Jazz, with whom he recorded the famous “Violinomanía” of Argentino Galván in 1940, his own orchestra (1953) and several of the early ensembles of Astor Piazzolla make Vardaro one of the most eminent violinists of the time.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Julio Nudler, *Tango judío*, 46-51; Gaspar Astarita, *Argentino Galván: Talento, creatividad y autenticidad en la música popular argentina* (Academia Nacional del Tango, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Julio Nudler, *Tango judío*, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, “Elvino Vardaro,” *La historia del tango 15: Di Sarli – Vardaro – Gobbi – Goñi* (Ediciones Corregidor, 1980); *Qué sucedió en 7 días*, 23 November 1955.

<sup>15</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 5 February 1934.

<sup>16</sup> Néstor Pinsón, “Elvino Vardaro,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 25 June 2021, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/694/Elvino-Vardaro/>.

These violinists, with their stylistic innovations and great technical capacities, demonstrate how tango violin playing continued to evolve and diversify after De Caro's codification of the genre. Their individual styles and contributions reflect the ongoing interplay between tradition and innovation, underscoring tango's ability to continually adapt while maintaining its cultural essence.

### *Tango Violinists: Artistic Application*

With this study, I have laid the groundwork for significant artistic application. My methodology, in particular, the aural analysis from historical recordings, was intimately informed by my haptic understanding and exploration of the various violin techniques discussed in this thesis. Next – and on the basis of this work – I would like to undertake a significant practice-led study, creating recordings of historical performance practices. Independently of this study, I made a 78-rpm record of four famous tango sextets from the 1920s and 1930s, to be released in early 2025; the recording includes two Julio De Caro transcriptions, in which I apply many of the elements analysed in my De Caro case study. In doing so, I was able to connect historical inquiry directly with practical application, fostering a deeper understanding of how historical techniques can inform and inspire contemporary performance practices. However, the recording was limited in scope, because only four pieces could fit in the roughly fifteen-minute format of the 78 rpm record, and the transcription process was extremely laborious.<sup>17</sup> In the future, I would like to integrate the findings from my thesis, building upon the initial experience of recording, in order to create an album of recordings that explore the styles of the tango violinists featured in this study, as well as those from the 1930s, building on my ongoing research.

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<sup>17</sup> While I am accustomed to transcribing violin parts from early twentieth-century tango recordings, some instruments are extraordinarily challenging to hear, notably the double bass, whose frequencies are often overshadowed by surface noise.

Building upon my discussions of tango as a national symbol of Argentina and the marketing of the music as *música nacional* in Chapter 1, as well as Julio De Caro's nationalistic ambitions discussed in Chapter 4, I would like to explore further how tango performance practice intersects with nationalism. Although I investigated the influence of cultural developments, including nationalism, on performers and their development of performance practice, I would propose the reverse: a closer investigation of the degree to which the development of a musical language on the violin was used as a conscious tool to build a national symbol. This is an under-researched area of study. While authors such as Marta Savigliano and Florencia Garramuño have discussed nationalism, post-colonial theory and tango dance in the nation-building of early-twentieth century Argentina, the music has arguably not been discussed through a nationalistic lens to the same degree.<sup>18</sup> Pablo Palomino touches upon the subject in his recent book exploring the invention of the concept of Latin-American music, an early twentieth-century marketing tool of recording companies such as Victor, where he discusses national popular music policies in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.<sup>19</sup> However, the connections between tango music and nationalism are not the primary focus of his book. Using the violin as a lens, this thesis has explored some of the intersections between early twentieth-century mass immigration, media coverage, and evolving performance practice on the violin intersected during a time of rapid social and cultural change in Argentina. Nationalism, while not a primary focus of this study, emerged as a significant catalyst for the many changes that occurred in tango music, notably after the genre was marketed by the recording industry as *música nacional* in the years following the *centenario* (1910), a period in which Argentina was searching for national symbols. Tango music also developed at the same time as a massive demographic shift in Argentina; by 1914 more than half of Buenos Aires' population was born abroad – not including second-generation immigrants – and these immigrants would change the fabric of society both in Buenos Aires and in Argentina as a whole.<sup>20</sup> In future work, I intend to build

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<sup>18</sup> Marta Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*; Florencia Garramuño, *Primitive Modernities: Tango, Samba and Nation*.

<sup>19</sup> Pablo Palomino, *La invención de la música latinoamericana: Una historia transnacional* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City*, 59.

upon this foundation by placing nationalism at the core of my inquiry, further exploring the intersections between performance practice, immigration and national identity. Some pertinent areas of exploration include the violinists' background, for most of them were either foreign-born, or born to immigrant parents, tango's power as an assimilation mechanism for first- and second-generation Argentines, and larger transnational dialogues surrounding the genre's international diffusion in the twentieth century.

### *Tango Music and Class*

Although the intersection between tango performance practice and social acceptance has been a recurrent narrative throughout my thesis, there are a number of aspects that I would like to explore more thoroughly. For example, as tango gained widespread acceptance, and tango performance spread initially through recordings and then on the radio, intellectual property rights became a very important element of social negotiation. Figures such as Francisco Canaro and Julio De Caro were instrumental in founding and presiding over the Sociedad de Autores, which would become the SADAIC, or the Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores de Música in 1936, so that artists could receive proper copyright and recognition of their work.<sup>21</sup> Both composers were accused, and acquitted, of plagiarism, at various stages of their careers, and exerting intellectual ownership over their artistic property became a key priority for them.<sup>22</sup> Fighting for such rights can be seen as a key element of the middle-classification of tango music; Blas Matamoro, for example, has acknowledged the middle-class aspirations of figures such as Julio De Caro and Osvaldo Fresedo as key aspects of the social ascension of tango music.<sup>23</sup> Ezequiel Adamovsky has shown that the unionising of the work force after 1919 played a crucial role in the rise of the middle-class in Argentina.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, in her recent

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<sup>21</sup> In his memoirs, De Caro says he was present when the Sociedad de Autores in 1918, but that he was omitted from the document, despite signing it. He would later serve as vice-president of the SADAIC. See De Caro, *El tango*, 26. Canaro, who was president of the Sociedad de Autores, the Círculo Argentino de Autores y Compositores de Música (founded in 1930), and later of the SADAIC, dedicates a significant portion of his memoirs to the SADAIC. See Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 243-295.

<sup>22</sup> *La Canción Moderna*, 3 June 1940; *Crítica*, 2 October 1940; *Libre palabra*, 2 October 1940.

<sup>23</sup> Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 106-110.

<sup>24</sup> Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de la clase media argentina*, 137-178.

publication, Kristen McCleary argues that the professionalization of the Argentine theatre industry in the 1910s, and the pursuit of intellectual property rights, is intimately connected with middle-class identity.<sup>25</sup> It would be interesting to situate these arguments with my observations on the professionalization of tango musicians during the same period, as the theatre, music and recording industries had strong links to each other.

### *Tango Music and Gender*

Another area of study requiring more scholarly attention in future is the role of gender in tango music. Historically, tango music has been a male-dominated field. Although there were a number of well-known female tango musicians in the time frame of this thesis, such as the bandoneonist Paquita Bernardo, the singers Azucena Maizani, Rosita Quiroga and Ada Falcón, and the composers Rosita Melo and Lia Acuña de Andreoni, there were no prominent female violin players in the *orquestas típicas* of the time. Although several female tango violinists have risen to prominence in Argentina today, such as Katharina Deissler, professor of tango violin at Escuela de Música Popular de Avallaneda (EMPA), Alicia Alonso, former violinist of the ensemble Astillero, and Christine Brebes, who has played in many ensembles including the Analia Goldberg Cuarteto, this is a more recent phenomenon that, to my knowledge, has not yet been explored academically. In fact, Deissler, Alonso and Brebes are all foreign-born – Deissler is German, Alonso is Spanish, and Brebes American – which has interesting implications for both gender, national identity, and cultural assimilation, beyond the scope of this thesis.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, male-female relations, and the balance of power between them, in tango dancing have received a great deal of scholarly attention in the past twenty years, especially the concept of “queer tango,” a term used to refer to non-heteronormative tango dancing. Some relevant sources include Mercedes Liska’s 2017 book *Argentine Queer Tango: Dance and*

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<sup>25</sup> Kristen McCleary, *Staging Buenos Aires*, 141-166.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix A of this thesis.

*Sexuality Politics in Buenos Aires*, as well as a 2008 article by Sirena Pellarolo.<sup>27</sup> Finally, tango music(ians) and homosexuality is also an understudied area. Perhaps the most prominent scholar of homosexuality and tango in Argentina is Jorge Salessi, but his focus lies primarily on public health policies and societal attitudes towards sexuality and gender.<sup>28</sup> Other scholars, such as Jeffrey Tobin, have addressed homosocial desire in tango lyrics.<sup>29</sup> However, to my knowledge, the roles of gender and sexuality in tango music, and their influence on performance practice, have not been specifically addressed. While this thesis did not focus on gender, future research could build on its methodological foundation, particularly aural analysis and archival work, to explore how tango performance was shaped by social-cultural dynamics such as gender and sexuality.

### Final words

One of the primary reasons for undertaking this study was to deepen understanding of the stylistic language of violin playing. Existing pedagogic texts primarily focus on *how* to execute techniques on the instrument, but rarely explore *why* these techniques were created in the first place. With this thesis, I hope to provide not only an explanation of what these stylistic elements are and who pioneered them, but also an exploration of why they have become such an integral part of the language of tango. In other words, I believe I have brought forth an argument for the need to understand performance practice from a historical perspective, and not solely from a technical point of view. In the process, I have confirmed my initial hypothesis: that the development of tango violin playing is inseparably tied to the socio-cultural context in which it emerged. This development does not merely reflect musical invention; it is the expression of the times – shaped by the tumultuous

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<sup>27</sup> Mercedes Liska, *Argentine Queer Tango: Dance and Sexuality Politics in Buenos Aires*, trans. Peggy Westwell and Pablo Vila (Lexington Books, 2017); Sirena Pellarolo, “Queering Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Limited Cultural Product,” *Theatre Journal* 60, no. 3 (Oct. 2008): 409-431.

<sup>28</sup> Jorge Salessi, “Medics, Crooks and Tango Queens: The National Appropriation of a Gay Tango,” in *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, ed. Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Estebán Muñoz (Duke University Press, 1997); Jorge Salessi, *Médicos, maleantes y maricas* (Editorial Planeta, 2022).

<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey Tobin, “Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire,” in *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and Sexuality*, ed. William Washabaugh (Berg, 1998).

aspirations, struggles and transformations of early twentieth-century Argentine society. To fully understand one, it is necessary to understand the other.

Ultimately, my hope is that this work has captured not just the technical and historical dimensions of tango violin, but also its great beauty and magic. I leave the reader with the poignant words from Elvino Vardaro's tango *Te llama mi violín*:<sup>30</sup>

Tengo las estrellas  
Y los vientos del confin  
Que cantan en la voz de mi violín

I have the stars  
And the winds from the edge of the world  
That sing in the voice of my violin

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<sup>30</sup> Elvino Vardaro and Cátulo Castillo, *Te llama mi violín*, Todo Tango, accessed 1 December 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/musica/tema/1290/Te-llama-mi-violin/>.



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## Appendix A

### Full Bibliographical Information and Original Quotations

In this appendix, I have included full bibliographical information for all archival materials, which are simply listed by periodical title and date in the thesis. In addition, lengthier discussions and original-language quotations (Spanish and French) are included.

#### Introduction

1. Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia y evolución* (Ediciones Continente, 1960/reprint 1999), 62. “El violín es el más antiguo de los instrumentos en las combinaciones tanguistas.” All translations are my own, with the assistance of translation software DeepL ([www.deepl.com](http://www.deepl.com)) and Google Translate ([translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)).
4. This tango-specific lens mirrors trends already present in other geographic settings. John Rink notes a proliferation of musical professions linked to socio-cultural changes in nineteenth-century Europe, connected to the rise in concert culture, the music publishing industry, pedagogy, and instrument making, as well as to the great expansion of urban middle classes with increasing economic power to spend on leisure activities such as music. Perhaps the main difference between the cities Rink describes and tango music in Buenos Aires is that the professionalisation of tango musicians occurred far more rapidly, and was more directly tied to the increase of tango music in cafés, and the rise of the recording industry in the 1910s. See John Rink, “The Profession of Music,” in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 55-86.
7. According to Omar García Brunelli, 1935 is a turning point in tango music for several reasons. In June 1935, Carlos Gardel died in a plane crash, and his death had massive repercussions upon the development of *tango canción*, as well as the popularity of the cabaret, which saw its apogee in the 1920s and early 1930s. Furthermore, Juan d’Arienzo, known as the “rey del compás” or “king of the beat”, attained enormous popularity with his orchestra, known for its highly rhythmical, but aesthetically simpler, arrangements that marked a clear turning point from the complex sextetos of the *Guardia Nueva*. D’Arienzo’s orchestra sparked a new dance craze that would become known as the *época de oro* or the Golden Era of tango orchestras, a period that lasted from 1935 until 1955. See Omar García Brunelli, “La transición estilística del tango luego de la crisis de 1930,” *XXII Conferencia de la Asociación Argentina de Musicología* (2016).
18. Blas Matamoro, *La ciudad del tango*, 108. “Clase media con pretensiones de status.”
19. Andrés Muñoz, “Julio De Caro afirma que hay que revalorizar la música del tango,” *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942.
32. “Antena,” Red de Historia de los Medios (REHIME), accessed 2 July 2021, <http://www.rehime.com.ar/bases/paginasdecine/index.php/Antena>. “El seminario de radio para el hogar.”
39. Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 25. “Es una frustrada masturbación.”
42. Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 91. “El progreso no consistió, como muchos suponen, en hacer más compleja la música del tango, sino - lo que es muy distinto - en aprovechar de una mejor manera sus elementos propios.”
86. Susana Reinoso, “Vuelve Caras y Caretas,” *La Nación*, 28 May 2005.
91. Andrea Matallana, *Qué saben los pitucos*, 133. “Se organizaban en una doble tarea: la de difundir y publicitar un estilo musical.”
93. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
95. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913; Yacaré, “‘El imperio del tango’ en el arrabal – en el café – en el conventillo – en la sociedad – en el ‘cabaret’,” *Crítica*, 18 July 1915.
129. “Yira... Yira...” *Crónica*, 15 November 1931.
160. Marsili, “Reflexión,” 101: “En el tango, el hecho de juzgar lo que es tango y lo que no lo es forma parte de su historia. De esta manera, los juicios o discusiones sobre su nivel de autenticidad existieron de manera permanente desde la Guardia Vieja.”

161. Sargento Pita, "El tango criollo," *Caras y caretas*, 7 February 1903; "Viejo tanguero," *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
171. García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo," 163. "Para el género el concepto de fraseo tiene una fuerte carga *emic*."
202. Personal communication with Omar García Brunelli, 4 September 2024. "Así se hace. Hay que escuchar todo y las grabaciones hablan."
208. AHIRA: Archivo Histórico de Revistas Argentinas, "Archivo de revistas," accessed 25 June 2021, <https://ahira.com/ar/revistas>; Biblioteca nacional de España, "Hemeroteca Digital," accessed 23 June 2021, <http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/>; Bibliothèque Nationale de France, "Les principaux quotidiens," Gallica, accessed 23 June 2021, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/presse-et-revues/les-principaux-quotidiens>; Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, "Cultural Magazines of Latin America," accessed 23 June 2021, [https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/collections/lateinamerikanische-kulturzeitschriften/-/DC%3Alateinamerikanischekulturzeitschriften\\*+AND+ISANCHOR%3Atrue/1/SORT\\_TITLE/MD\\_PLA\\_CEPUBLISH%3ABuenos+Aires/](https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/collections/lateinamerikanische-kulturzeitschriften/-/DC%3Alateinamerikanischekulturzeitschriften*+AND+ISANCHOR%3Atrue/1/SORT_TITLE/MD_PLA_CEPUBLISH%3ABuenos+Aires/); Remote Electronic Resources, British Library, "Latin American Newspapers Series 1" and "Latin American Newspapers Series 2," accessed 25 June 2021, <https://eresources.remote.bl.uk>.
209. In Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras; Academia Nacional del Tango de la República Argentina; Academia Porteña del Lunfardo; Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación; Biblioteca de la Universidad Católica de Argentina; Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno; Gourmet Musical Ediciones; Instituto de Investigación Musicológica "Carlos Vega"; Instituto Nacional de Música (INAMU), archivo de Fermín Barnard; Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores de Música. In Berlin: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut.

## Chapter One: Tangomania

1. Quoted in Tomás De Lara and Inés Leonilda Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango en la literatura argentina* (Educaciones Culturales Argentinas, 1961), 221. "... Las contorciones del tango, ese reptil de lupanar, tan injustamente llamado argentino en los momentos de su boga desvergonzada."
2. Goyo Cuello, "El éxito del tango," *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912. "Ya no es sólo cereales y ganado en pie ó congelado lo que exporta nuestro país á Europa, también nos damos el lujo de importar costumbres. El tango, el baile orillero, ha tenido los honores de ponerse de moda en los salones europeos."
4. Hugo Lamas and Enrique Binda, *El tango en la sociedad porteña, 1880-1920* (Abrazos, 2019), 270. "Parecía significar además la consagración del tango por lo más elevado de la sociedad".
14. Quote of Carlos Vega, in Kasey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 9. "Molde extranjero, factura local."
19. "Historia del teatro en Buenos Aires," *El País*, 26 July 1901. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 124. "Hoy no hay autorzuelo del género [zarzuela criolla] que no intercale en sus piezas el vulgarísimo y poco elegante baile de negros."
20. Juan Álvarez, *Orígenes de la música argentina*. (Lightning Source UK Ltd, 1908, reprint 2020), 76 "Es curioso como la música de los africanos ha dejado entre nosotros huellas más profundas que su sangre. Hoy que casi no hay negros, siguen resonando *zambas* y *milongas*, *habaneras* y *tangos*, con la especialidad que estos últimos han resultado ser la música más furiosamente criolla que por el momento se conoce."
21. Quote of Felix Luna. Quoted in Donald S. Castro, "The Sainete Porteño, 1890-1935: The Image of Jews in the Argentine Popular Theater" *Studies in Latin American and Popular Culture* 21 (2002): 30. "Hasta las flores se van agringando."
26. Álvarez, *Orígenes*, 20. "Un amasijo de lo existente".
28. Robert Scott, "El tango," *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 166. "El tango no es música nacional, no ha sido nunca música criolla. La vigüela clásica del gaucho no fue jamás profanada por el tango en esta tierra."
34. "El carnaval en las calles," *Caras y Caretas*, 15 February 1902; Vega, *Estudios*, 120-1. "Inexacta y gustosa creencia general."
35. Sargento Pita, "El tango criollo," *Caras y Caretas*, 7 February 1903. "Las habaneras acompasadas y somnolientas conquistaron fácilmente al perezoso compadrito, que ya se deleitaba con el lúbrico zarandeo de la milonga, y éste y aquéllas, fundiéndose, engendraron el tango plebeyo cuyos pininos ensayan hoy en la vereda de los conventillos."
36. Tallón, *El tango*, chapter 2. "Una buena parte de los músicos y bailarines vernáculos de la época eran ellos mismos compadritos *canfinfleros*."

37. Sargento Pita, "El tango criollo," *Caras y Caretas*, 7 February 1903.
43. "En los teatros/Opera," *El País*, 21 February 1904, 3 and 22 February 1904. "Como en los anteriores bailes, el tango fue la danza preferida por la concurrencia que asistió anoche" and "El 'tango'... fue[...] bailado[...] con soltura por nuestra juventud elegante..."
44. Robert Scott, "El tango," *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 165. "El tango no solamente ha infectado los lugares nacionales, sino que también los centros frecuentados por predominante elemento extranjero... El tango ha corrompido el gusto del público y el gusto del público ha corrompido la producción de los autores."
45. "Opera," *La Nación*, 6 February 1910. "[Las élites] debían abandonar el tango a quienes tienen por derecho de nacimiento de sangre el poder bailarlo, o por lo menos no abusar de él. ... Al César lo que es del César y el tango al orillero."
48. Ema Cibotti, "El tango argentino como genuina expresión de las clases medias" in *Escritos sobre tango, volumen 2: Cultura Rioplatense, Patrimonio de la humanidad*, ed. Teresita Lencina (Centro 'feca Ediciones, 2011), 99. "Aproximadamente 500.000 piezas musicales, que se asociaban a la presencia de numerosos conservatorios oficiales y mucho más, particulares, organizados en casas de familia por los maestros de música. La alfabetización musical de la población era un dato indiscutible..."
53. Goyo Cuello, "El éxito del tango," *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.
55. Pesce, "La guardia vieja," 330. "La industria del disco se había afirmado como un gran negocio en la misma época en que el tango comenzaba a afirmarse en toda la ciudad... El tango se había convertido en un posible producto comerciable."
73. "Lettre de l'ouvreuse," *Comœdia*, 19 September 1910. "Miss Meg Villars, qui nous révélera d'abord un voluptueux tango argentin dont la vue sera interdite aux spectateurs âgés de moins de quinze ans, puis une 'danse rouge' d'Ambrosini, au cours de laquelle son habille partenaire Albert Brouette la jette à terre, la piétine... Demandez la manière de traiter les femmes comme elles le méritent!"
74. "Choses et autres," *La Vie Parisienne*, 22 June 1912.
77. Juan José Soiza Reilly, "Los apaches: Buenos Aires tenebroso," *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912. "¿Apaches? ¿Existen en Buenos Aires? – Abundan. Poco a poco, se van aclimatando. Lentamente introducen en nuestra ciudad sus bárbaras costumbres. Algunos traen consigo, de Francia, sus mujeres. Otros las conquistan aquí."
81. Elizabeth Coquart and Philippe Huet, *Mistinguett: La Reine des Années Folles* (Albin Michel, 1996), 65. "La danse met en scène un couple des faubourgs: un mauvais garçon, un 'apache' comme on dit alors, et sa gagueuse. L'homme domine, la femme encaisse (seulement les coups)... Et la valse s'achève par une méchante correction que le Jules inflige à sa Julie, toujours amoureuse."
83. "C'est la danse nouvelle... le tango," *L'Excelsior*, 26 January 1911. "C'est la danse nouvelle... le tango [...] Et le tango va-t-il faire fureur cette saison à Paris ? La célèbre danse espagnole (sic) le serait, paraît-il, adaptée au goût parisien et les amateurs de valse y trouveraient un agrément de nouveauté. ... C'est Mlle Mistinguett, l'amusante artiste, et M. Robert, qui ont bien voulu se charger de la présenter".
84. "Une nouvelle danse: le tango Argentin, importée de l'Amérique du Sud et dansée par Mlle Mistinguett," *Comœdia*, 27 February 1911.
86. Hess, *Le tango*, 36. "[Le tango] va alors gagner chaque semaine une audience nouvelle. C'est la subversion. Tant qu'il était présenté comme une danse exotique, une curiosité ethnographique, il n'avait pas suscité de réaction. Mais son introduction dans les bals du monde ... bouleverse la société".
88. "Concours de Tango et de danses nouvelles," *L'Excelsior*, 2 May 1911. "Il aura lieu le 26 mai à minuit et demi, au théâtre Femina. Nos lecteurs savent déjà que nous voulons donner au Tango venu des Amériques et aux danses nouvelles la consécration parisienne qui leur manque encore en instituant un concours qui permet de comparer toutes ces danses et de juger ceux qui les pratiquent le mieux."
89. "Concours de tango et de danses nouvelles," *L'Excelsior*, 24 April 1911.
90. "Le Tango à Paris," *L'Excelsior*, 28 May 1911.
91. "Concours de tango," *Comœdia*, 24 August 1911; "Grand Concours de tango," *L'Aurore*, 24 August 1911; Marsin, "Bal Tabarin," *L'Aurore*, 24 August 1911.
92. "Jardin de Paris," *Comœdia*, 23 August 1911. "Pour le plus grand plaisir de toutes les notabilités parisiennes et étrangères qui, chaque soir, se retrouvent dans le bel établissement des Champs-Élysées."
93. T-O Fraste, "Un peu de géographie," *La Vie Parisienne*, 10 February 1912. "Tous les salons se disputent le même professeur de tango, chacun d'eux se souciant moins d'être le dernier où l'on cause que le premier où l'on ose..."
94. "Hommage aux danses mortes," *Femina*, 15 April 1913. "Le professeur de Tango est le roi du jour. Il est de tradition française de faire une situation exceptionnelle aux maîtres à danser."
95. Carlos Bareiro Pereyra, "El tango en París," *Fray Mocho*, 28 March 1913. "Cobra 1.200 francos mensuales como profesor en la Academia Rhynal, la más conocida de París, en la que trabaja dos horas por día; 30 o

- 40 francos en el Restaurant Abbaye por cada soirée, sin contar las propinas que a veces suman más que la paga, y luego, cenas, champagne y la mar... Véase si la profesión es o no envidiable.”
96. Claude Chenneval, “Le boston américain est la meilleure danse,” *L'Excelsior*, 26 August 1912. “Ce n’est pas de la danse, c’est de la décadence... Plus de tango... ce n’est pas convenable. Ce n’est pas gracieux.”
  97. André de Fouquières, “Les danses à la mode,” *Femina*, 15 January 1913. “Le principe est celui-ci: toute danse est susceptible d’une double interprétation: une interprétation vulgaire, et alors elle se réfugie dans les cabarets de Montmartre ou endroits analogues, et une interprétation distinguée, harmonieuse, conforme aux règles de la bonne compagnie. La simple valse peut devenir une danse écœurante dans certains bals de Grenelle ou de Montrouge: le ‘tango’ est une des plus jolies choses que je puisse rêver, alors qu’il est pratiqué, avec mesure, comme je le vois tous les jours dans les salons où je fréquente.”
  98. André de Fouquières, “Les danses nouvelles: le tango,” *Femina*, 2 February 1913. “Le tango c’est la danse des fameux gauchos... ces rudes hommes ne peuvent évidemment se contenter des manières précieuses de nos salons... Aussi le tango est une danse qui ne peut être importée directement. Il faut lui faire subir à la douane une sérieuse visite et y apporter des modifications radicales.”
  99. Sem, “Les possédées,” *Le Journal*, 23 April 1913. “Cette névrose a fait de terribles progrès. Par une marche foudroyante, elle s’est répandue sur tout Paris, a envahi les salons, les théâtres, les bars, les cabarets de nuit, les grands hôtels, et les guinguettes. Il y a des thés-tango, des expositions-tango, des tango-conférences. La moitié de Paris frotte l’autre. La ville entière est entrée en branle: elle a le tango dans la peau”.
  100. Sem, “Les possédées,” *Le Journal*, 10 May 1913. « Et quand il retraversera l’Océan, vous ne le reconnaîtrez plus, belles mesdames de Buenos-Ayres, votre tango de las ranas. Il vous reviendra paré de toutes les grâces de Paris, parfumé, ondulé, adorablement chiffonné, article de la rue de la Paix.”
  101. “Parlons tango,” *Comœdia*, 11 May 1913.
  102. “Les projets de M. Jacques Charles,” *Comœdia*, 12 July 1913. “l’Olympia ne cessera d’être le rendez-vous de ce que tout Paris compte de personnalités mondaines.”
  103. Sem, “Tangoville,” *L'Illustration*, 16 August 1913. “Partout où les Parisiens se sont installés, aux quatre coins de la France, ils ont amené avec eux le germe de cette maladie dansante...”
  104. Franc-Nohain, “La Tangomanie,” *Femina*, 15 July 1913. “Ce qui est particulier au tango, et ce qui, ayons le courage de le dire... [provoque] quelque légitime inquiétude, c’est son caractère obsédant... Chacun a son avis sur le tango, ou quand il n’en a pas, il feint d’en avoir... la tangomanie apparaît avec tous les caractères essentiels d’une maladie douce, certes, mais incurable”.
  105. Jean Richepin, “Dissertation de J. Richepin sur le tango,” *L'Excelsior*, 26 October 1913.
  106. “Echos,” *L'Humanité*, 10 January 1914.
  107. “La danse du pape,” *L'Aurore*, 6 February 1914.
  108. “El tango argentino en París,” *El Hogar*, 20 December 1911. Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, 208. “El baile a la moda es el tango argentino, que ha llegado a bailarse tanto como el vals. Como se ve, los salones aristocráticos de la gran capital acogen con entusiasmo un baile que aquí, por su pésima tradición, no es ni siquiera nombrado en los salones, donde los bailes nacionales no han gozado nunca de favor alguno. ¿París, que todo lo impone, acabara por aceptar en nuestra buena sociedad el tango argentino?”
  109. Nicasio Pajares, “Su Majestad El Tango,” *El Mundo Argentino*, 20 March 1912. “El tango argentino está de moda en París; el tango argentino ha merecido la consagración poética de famosos vates y los elogios, en prosa, de insignes literatos, y los bombos entusiastas de notables periodistas. Además el tango argentino...es argentino, según dicen... Por sobre el pericón, baile ingenuo y gracioso, pintoresco, bello de veras y genuinamente nacional; por sobre “el gato” y el “malambo” está el tango; reina é impera; es el gran tirano, principalmente desde que lo han puesto de moda en París ... Es grosera mente pornográfico y ni siquiera es un baile representativo. El tango es un producto híbrido, una degeneración de suburbio. No es un baile de tradición y espíritu nacionales: no tiene alma nacional... El tango no es un baile popular nacional, es bonaerense, y ni siquiera lo es en absoluto: es, como se queda dicho de suburbio.”
  110. Nicasio Pajares, “Su Majestad El Tango,” *El Mundo Argentino*, 20 March 1912. “Pero aunque nos sea doloroso, hemos de confesar que varias veces nos han ... vuelto á percibir durante las noches de carnaval en los bailes de la Opera, Apolo y Victoria. En fin: que hemos cometido la idiotez de rendir pleito homenaje al tirano actual, á Su Majestad El Tango.”
  111. Goyo Cuello, “El éxito de tango,” *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912. “Ya no es cereales y ganando en pie o congelado lo que exporta nuestro país a Europa, también nos damos el lujo de importar costumbres. El tango, el baile orillero, ha tenido los honores de ponerse de moda en los salones europeos... La Argentina se ha puesto de moda, y más que a la riqueza que exportamos de nuestro suelo, se debe a ese baile tan popular, que nosotros teníamos casi olvidado... El tango está triunfante, revive, se ha puesto de moda; París y Londres lo han consagrado. A bailarlo, pues, no sea que con el transcurso del tiempo nos lo devuelvan de Europa como los cueros y las lanas con su made in Germany.” In the last sentence, the

- author is referring to the fact that Argentina exported raw materials, like cattle and sheep, to Europe, and imported the final product, like leather and wool (and presumably a refined version of the tango).
112. Goyo Cuello, "El éxito de tango," *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912. "Del gran éxito del tango entre nosotros, es prueba el hecho de que las casas de música los editan de preferencia á otras composiciones, y algunas han vendido millones de ejemplares, y ahora más, desde que el tango se ha hecho un artículo de exportación. Solamente para París y Londres salen por cada correo algunos millares de ejemplares, pues parece que cada día se generaliza más esta danza argentina."
  113. Quoted in De Lara and Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango*, 210. "Ser tanguista en París es más que ser diplomático o embajador..."
  114. R.I.Z., "Academia de tango," *Caras y Caretas*, 9 August 1913. "Desde que se ha puesto de moda en Londres, París, y Nueva York, el tango, nosotros, que no sabíamos el valor de ese baile y lo teníamos para usufructo de compadritos y demás gente orillera, nos hemos apresurado a dignificarle y a hacerle los honores de danza aristocrática para que adquiriera corrección y pueda presentarse dignamente en los salones. El señor Carlos Herrera, doctor en tangología como ha podido demostrarlo públicamente... tomó con todo celo la delicada tarea de afinar el tango y al efecto, instaló una academia donde por un método teórico-práctico de su invención, puede el más torpe danzarín, quedar en condiciones de hacer quebradas, contoneos y pasos floreos en pocas lecciones.... Los clientes más constantes son aquellos o aquellas que se hallan en víspera de emprender viaje a París, pues saben que inherente al título de argentino está el bailar el tango para la admiración de los noctámbulos que concurren a los cabarés".
  115. "Tangos y couplets," *La Nación*, 3 June 1913. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 268. "El tango corresponde entre nosotros a una clase inferior y a un momento de transición promiscua.... Que el tango nos vuelva consagrado por París, no es una razón para que lo adoptemos como la última palabra del "chic" y del buen tono."
  116. Viejo Tanguero, "El tango," *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
  117. Viejo Tanguero, "El tango," *Crítica*, 22 September 1913. "Esta es la historia real del baile que acaba de resurgir a la vida pública, adornándose con oropeles de papel picado, para trasponer el Atlántico, imponerse en el extranjero y regresar luego a la patria con mantos de púrpura y laureles de cartón".
  118. Viejo Tanguero, "El tango," *Crítica*, 22 September 1913. "Acicalado con la estirada indumentaria del impecable frac y gentiles manos enguantadas."
  119. "El concurso de tangos," *Fray Mocho*, 3 October 1913.
  120. "El concurso de tangos," *Fray Mocho*, 3 October 1913. "Lo cierto es que el público le dispensó a "El tony" una acogida favorable y que él es uno de aquellos tangos muy criollos, capaces de hacerles quebrar las corbas a un fraile, sea su autor compatriota de la Marsellesa".
  121. "El tango en la academia," *La Nación*, 23 November 1913. Quoted in full in Carozzi, "Europa," 19. "El tango no es un baile nacional, como tampoco la prostitución que lo engendra. No son, en efecto, criollas sino por excepción, las pensionistas de los burdeles donde ha nacido. Aceptarlo como nuestro, porque así lo rotularon en París, fuera caer en el servilismo más despreciable."
  122. "El tango argentino," *La Nación*, 21 December 1913. Quoted in full in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 198-199. "Hay en París por lo menos un salón donde no se baila el tango argentino y ese salón es el de la legación argentina."
  123. César Viale, "El tango en el extranjero," *Caras y Caretas*, 16 May 1914. "El capricho de Terpsichore... tomando al acaso – al parecer – una danza que se dice nuestra; entre gallos y media noche, la saca del peringundin, la da boga entre la "muchachada" que pasea; la muñe de pasaporte, la implanta y la aclimata, en el París noctámbulo, primero; más tarde, en el salón de tono; se difunde, se universaliza después; la loan, la detractan; discuten los prelados si es o no pecado; vuelve al Plata más o menos transfigurada; hay niñas de la 'crème' (sic) que, desafiando el comentario, lucen corriditas, cortes y 'media-lunas'; y tal como con las lanas, y los cueros, aquí se producen, en el Viejo Mundo se las industrializa, y recién de vuelta es que las aprovechamos... ¿El tango es criollo o no lo es?... De todos modos – se dijo – si no es propiamente un baile de pura cepa nacional, el tango, de donde quiera que viniere, carta de ciudadanía lleva, y es con tal etiqueta que ha paseado el mundo..."
  124. Goyo Cuello, "El éxito de tango," *Caras y Caretas*, 20 July 1912.
  130. Robert Scott, "El tango," *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. Quoted in Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 165. "[Hoy] no hay café con orquesta cuyo programa no esté formado con perturbador predominio de tangos."
  137. Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango*. "Al Jockey Club PROGRESISTA INSTITUCION El mas (sic) alto exponente de cultura De la Sociabilidad Argentina DEDICA Este modestísimo trabajo De didáctica musical Fruto de largos años de estudio".
  138. Bevilacqua, *Escuela del tango*. "Nuestro tango... se caracteriza en su propia significación, la que establece por consiguiente el ritmo del Tango Argentino". In French, "le tango...se caractérise dans sa propre signification, qui, par conséquent, établit le rythme du véritable Tango Argentino." And finally, in Italian:

“Il tango... si caratterizza d'un modo speciale assoluto, ciò che stabilisce l'andamento del vero Tango Argentino.”

## Chapter Two: Early Tango Violinists

1. Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violín en el tango,” *Cuadernos de tanguendo* 3, 15; Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas de la Guardia Vieja,” *La historia del tango 3: La Guardia Vieja*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 411-417.
3. Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 466. “Su estilo... no evolucionó, o no quiso evolucionar.”
8. Yacaré, “‘El imperio del tango’ en el arrabal – en el café – en el conventillo – en la sociedad – en el ‘cabaret’,” *Crítica*, 18 July 1915.
10. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
13. “Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino,” *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928; Clemente A. Moreno, “Mientras ‘el pibe’ tocaba el violín, otros robaban carteras en la recova,” *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.
14. Ré-fa-si, “Con la música a otra parte: Ponzio,” *La Canción Moderna*, 25 June 1928; Juan José Soiza Reilly, “El alma del tango criollo a través de medio siglo de existencia,” *Caras y Caretas*, 22 August 1931.
15. “Con Ernesto Ponzio la música popular porteña pierde una de sus figuras más queridas y representativas,” *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.
18. Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309-311. “El ‘Pibe’ Ernesto fue un compadrito... Se hizo compañero de “tauras” y malevos que buscaban empeñosamente su amistad. Hizo un culto del coraje y del amor...”
23. “Casa Tagini: ‘Pacho’ y su orquesta típica,” *Fray Mocho*, 30 August 1912; “Lea lo que dice el afamado profesor de Bandoleón (sic) JUAN MAGLIO “PACHO”, *Fray Mocho*, 21 March 1913.
31. Clemente A. Moreno, “Mientras ‘El pibe’ tocaba el violín, otros robaban carteras en la recova,” *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.
33. “Las tesis del Conservatorio Williams,” *Disonancias*, October-November 1928.
37. Gastón Talamón, “Músicos Argentinos: Alberto Williams,” *La Revista de Música* año II, no. 11, 1929, 214.
38. “Las tesis del Conservatorio Williams,” *Disonancias*, October-November 1928.
39. “Lo que vale estudiar en el Conservatorio Williams,” *Disonancias*, January-February 1929.
41. Ernesto de la Fuente, “Los reyes del tango: Una entrevista con Juan de Dios Filiberto, autor de ‘El pañuelito,’ ‘Langosta’ y ‘Cuando llora la milonga’,” *Caras y Caretas*, 17 November 1928.
46. Viejo Tanguero. “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
52. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
54. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
63. Briand, *Crónicas*, 103. “Como muchos otros músicos populares, era ‘protegido’ por las mujeres que conquistaba. Cuentan que se peleaban por *trabajar* para él”. The word “trabajar” is italicised in the text.
66. The article Andrews refers to is “El carnaval antiguo: Los candomberos,” in *Caras y Caretas*, 15 February 1902.
67. Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 130. “...Entre mujeres de la peor facha, compadraje profesional temible y ambiente espeso de humo, polvo y tufo alcohólico”.
68. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
69. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913. “Indiferentes a cualquier crítica, no reparaban en codearse y hasta trenzarse en una de fierro a fierro con cualquier compadrito pendenciero.”
70. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
71. Briand, *Crónicas*, 101-102. “Se hizo famoso por la “rascada” que producía su instrumento, la que se decía era un recurso para disimular la escasa fidelidad de su maltrecho violín.”
81. Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 187. “Que haya existido un personaje de tal nombre y poco meritorias habilidades violinísticas, por supuesto es posible. Pero de allí a poseer trascendencia, haber sido fundamental para el género, es totalmente otra cosa.”
83. Viejo Tanguero, “El tango, su evolución y su historia,” *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
94. Nicolás Pepe and Néstor Casco, “El violín en el tango,” 7. “...Ernesto Ponzio, síntesis de la primitiva generación de los precursores.”
97. Fueye Querido, “Músicos fundamentales del tango: El pibe Ernesto,” 137. “Con más buena voluntad que conocimientos pedagógicos”.
101. Ré-fa-si. “Con la música a otra parte: Ponzio,” *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.
102. Fueye Querido, “Músicos fundamentales del tango: El pibe Ernesto,” 141. “Que hacía un culto de coraje y de la amistad”.



103. Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 9. "Profesional solamente de la música, pero frecuentador impenitente del sórdido mundillo de la mala vida".
104. "Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928. "La sociedad con sus prejuicios y la familia con sus cobardías me miraban como al diablo".
105. Briand, *Crónicas*, 80. "No sólo se destacaba en Ponzio su viril apostura sino que su vestimenta denotaba una excesiva preocupación en el planchado..."
106. "Con Ernesto Ponzio la música popular porteña pierde una de sus figuras más queridas y representativas," *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.
107. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 19. *Cafés de verano*, also known as *restaurantes-recreos* were spaces that functioned as restaurants for families during the day, and in the evening concerts. See *Antología del tango rioplatense* 30; Carlos Vega, *Estudios para los orígenes del tango*, 119. Lamas and Binda have traced the concessionaries of the restaurant: Hansen ran the venue until he died in 1892, then Enrique Lamarque, (1893-1897?), then Sebastián Monich (1897- 1903), Anselmo Tarana (1903-1908) and finally the company Payot y Aquiles Giardini. The café was demolished on 16 March 1912. See Lamas and Binda, *El tango en la sociedad*, 292-293.
111. Tallón, *El tango en sus etapas musicales prohibidas*, chapter 3. "Intimidad de 'El Cívico y 'La Moreira'. "Lo de Hansen, en Palermo, era una mezcla de prostíbulo suntuario y de restaurante (sic). Un comercio precursor...del cabaret proceloso..."
113. Clemente A. Moreno, "Mientras "el pibe" tocaba el violín, otros robaban carteras en la recova," *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933. "Toda la gente "bien" de Buenos Aires pasaba por lo de Hansen, donde, para que sepan, nadie bailaba... Hasta Adelina Patti, una noche, vistiendo una soberbia "toilette" se hizo ver por allí".
114. Clemente A. Moreno, "Mientras "el pibe" tocaba el violín, otros robaban carteras en la recova," *Sintonía*, 24 June 1933.
119. Scott, "El tango", *La Argentina*, 28 October 1907. "No hay café con orquesta cuyo programa no esté formado con perturbador predominio de tangos..."
128. Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 10. "Todos los instrumentos lo hacían rigurosamente el unísono, sin insinuación alguna de matices, ni de pasajes reservados al lucimiento de determinados instrumentos".
136. Sierra, "Ernesto Ponzio, genio y figura del viejo tango," 16. "El pizzicato es el primer rasgo de individualidad del violín en la ejecución orquestal del tango, paternidad que corresponde exclusivamente a Ernesto Ponzio. Evidentemente, quienes tuvimos oportunidad de conocer muy de cerca, y valorar los encantos interpretativos de la singular modalidad de ejecución del "pibe" Ernesto, creemos que ninguno de los más importantes continuadores en la utilización del interesante recurso interpretativo del violín en el tango - Tito Roccatagliata primero, y Julio De Caro después - alcanzó la frescura y la sugestión, tan identificada con las esencias propias del tango, que lograba Ernesto Ponzio, en la vibración canyenguera de sus dedos punzantes en la viscera sonora del noble instrumento que tanto admiramos."
140. Pepe and Casco, "El violín en el tango," 14-15. "[Ponzio] empezó a hacer música, hacer música es un decir, puesto que era más percusión, ruidos extraños y payasadas lo que hacía con el desdichado instrumento. Casi no quedó sorprendido al principio, más pronto reaccionó y con indignación justificada, al ver y oír su instrumento tan mal tratado, intentó agredir a Ernesto Ponzio".
141. Briand, *Crónicas*, 80. "Los dedos de su mano derecha parecían asir apenas el arco cuyas intensas elipses surcaban el aire con capricho de vuelo de abeja".
143. Pesce, "Protagonistas," 466. "Acrobacias que intentaba con el arco."
156. "Con Ernesto Ponzio la música popular porteña pierde una de sus figuras más queridas y representativas," *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934. "...Nuestros más calificados creadores del repertorio nacional".
157. "Con Ernesto Ponzio la música popular porteña pierde una de sus figuras más queridas y representativas," *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934. "Su nombre al pie de una obra de factura y ritmo popular, era garantía de belleza, éxito indudable y muchas satisfacciones para los amantes de la musa criolla."
166. "Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.
167. Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 309. "... Gustaba del tango bravo, fuerte, risueño. Gustaba de él mismo".
168. Quoted in Pesce, "Protagonistas," 466-467. "Dedico este primer tango argentino, con letra y pizzicato, a todos los músicos de mi patria, como un sincero homenaje de la Guardia Vieja a la brillante juventud de hoy."
169. Gobello, *Breve historia*, 20. "El primer tango propiamente dicho."
170. "Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.
175. "Con Ernesto Ponzio la música popular porteña pierde una de sus figuras más queridas y representativas," *Sintonía*, 27 October 1934.
176. "Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928. "Debe seguirse la trayectoria del tango antiguo. El de la guardia vieja, aparte de su valor intrínseco, posee el de la evocación,

- del recuerdo y la tradición, principios esenciales de toda obra de arte.” In the same article, he also refers to the “vieja guardia”, suggesting that he may have used the terms interchangeably. It should also be noted that *guardia vieja* is written in lower case in the article, whereas normally the term is capitalized today.
177. “Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino,” *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.
  182. “Nuevos discos ‘Victor’,” *Caras y Caretas*, 28 September 1918.
  183. “Nuevos discos ‘Nacional’,” *Caras y Caretas*, 16 October 1920.
  185. Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 79, 89. According to Binda, Maglio’s orchestra also recorded seventy recordings in 1914, but the *Antología del tango rioplatense* states that Maglio’s musicians, including Bonano, left the ensemble in 1913 to create the Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía. In a later series of recordings made with the label ERA, according to the *Antología*, Maglio recorded with a different line-up of musicians. See *Antología del tango rioplatense*, vol. 1, 127.
  188. Oscar Zucchi, “Augusto Berto,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 25 November 2023, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/777/Augusto-Berto/>. Augusto Berto recorded under the name Orquesta típica Augusto P. Berto in 1917, and again in 1922, 1923, and 1924 for the Victor label. According to Zucchi, the violinists were Peregrino Paulos and Horacio Gomila, not José Bonano, at the time. Likewise, according to the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, Berto’s formation in 1915 included Peregrino Paulos and Julio Doutry (violin), Luis Teisseire (flute), and José Sassone (piano). See *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 114. I also consulted Enrique Binda’s “Discografía del sello Atlanta (1912-1917),” Academia.edu, accessed 9 October 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/61806206/Discografia\\_sello\\_Atlanta\\_1912\\_1917\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/61806206/Discografia_sello_Atlanta_1912_1917_por_Enrique_Binda) and only found recordings that Berto made in 1913-1914 with the ensemble, in a period that Doutry was playing, according to several sources (*Antología del tango rioplatense*, 114; Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 121; Zucchi, “Augusto P. Berto”).
  190. Julio De Caro, “Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Juan Maglio (Pacho),” *El Canillita*, October 1954, 40. “Son reales cultores del tango.”
  195. Quoted in García Jiménez, *El tango*, 50. “Los discos que no llevan la firma del señor Juan Maglio, ‘Pacho’, son falsificados.”
  196. “Casa Tagini, Buenos Aires,” *Fray Mocho*, 21 March 1913; “Los discos criollos más notables que existen,” *Caras y Caretas*, 28 March 1914.
  200. There is no established discography of Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía. According to Enrique Binda the ensemble made 21 recordings; I was able to locate records for ten of them. I found these records in Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 134; “Cuarteto Típico Criolla ‘La Armonía’,” Discogs, accessed 16 November 2024, [https://www.discogs.com/artist/8238380-Cuarteto-Típico-Criollo-La-Armonía?srsltid=AfmBOorddBWojSLWznqk1EuljVQxGO9\\_OIIA4tUiEVUM6DWVvsXBN6t](https://www.discogs.com/artist/8238380-Cuarteto-Típico-Criollo-La-Armonía?srsltid=AfmBOorddBWojSLWznqk1EuljVQxGO9_OIIA4tUiEVUM6DWVvsXBN6t); “Homenaje a la Guardia Vieja del tango 1913-1916,” *El tango y sus invitados*, accessed 16 November 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2015/06/homenaje-la-guardia-vieja-del-tango.html>.
  210. Matías Juncal, “Cómo se immortaliza el ruido,” *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912.
  212. Juncal, “Como se immortaliza el ruido,” *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912. “Piano, violín...y tenor. (El violín que se emplea para impresionar, tiene una bocina en lugar de una caja).”
  213. Juncal, “Cómo se immortaliza el ruido,” *Fray Mocho*, 17 May 1912. Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut. Accessed 18 November 2024. <https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863738494/>.
  219. “‘Pacho’ y su orquesta típica hacen bailar todo el mundo,” *Fray Mocho*, 30 August 1912. “Y una infinidad de otros bailables.”
  234. “Ernesto Ponzio, paladín del tango genuino,” *La Canción Moderna*, 9 July 1928.

### Chapter Three: David ‘Tito’ Roccatagliata

3. Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 406. “Tito ES el tango mismo. Hasta su vida es una letra de tango. Y su violín es la voz rectora de este instrumento”.
9. “Repertorio criollo, Casa Tagini,” *Fray Mocho*, 28 March 1913, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, accessed 18 November 2024, [https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863753094/1/LOG\\_0003/](https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/image/863753094/1/LOG_0003/).
10. All of these advertisements can be found in *Caras y Caretas*: “Los discos criollos más notables que existen,” *Caras y Caretas*, 28 March 1914 and 25 April 1914; “Últimas novedades en discos dobles Odeon,” *Caras y Caretas*, 11 July 1914; “Los últimos grandes éxitos de los discos Odeon,” *Caras y Caretas*, 27 March 1915; “Odeon ya llegaron los nuevos discos dobles,” *Caras y Caretas*, 11 November 1916; “Impresiones exclusivas de los discos ‘Odeon’,” *Caras y Caretas*, 25 November 1916; “¡Bailen,

- niños, bailen!,” *Caras y Caretas*, 18 March 1922; “Alegría, arte y distinción,” *Caras y Caretas*, 25 March 1922; “En los hogares modernos,” *Caras y Caretas*, 9 September 1922.
13. “El mundo aparte del tango,” *La Nación*, 14 September 1961.
  14. Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 413. “...Tito estaba demasiado afectado por su pasión alcohólica y no podía concurrir a los estudios”.
  15. Enrique Binda, “La ‘otra’ Orquesta Típica Select,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/374/La-otra-Orquesta-Tipica-Select/>; *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Orquesta Típica Select,” accessed 4 September 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/112203>.
  20. Rubén Pesce, “Principales protagonistas,” 497. “...Sabía adaptar su instrumento a su manera de sentir el tango”.
  29. While Victor ledgers list Lennartz as the OT Select cellist, *Estudios de tango* and Carlos Groppa indicate that German-American player Hermann Meyer recorded on the album instead. However, Hermann Meyer does not appear in the Victor catalogue, only a certain “Harry” Meyer, who recorded on viola for Orquesta Setaro in 1916. Despite the discrepancy in names, it would seem that the cellist was a classical musician without specialist knowledge of tango music. See Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 179; Matallana, *El tango entre dos Américas*, 107; Groppa, “Orquesta típica Select,” 2; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 413; *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Meyer, Harry,” accessed 21 February 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/100963>; *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Lennartz, Alfred,” accessed 21 February 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/327025>.
  32. Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*; Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*; Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Eduardo Arolas, 1913-1917,” Academia.edu, accessed 3 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/61806577/Discografia\\_de\\_Eduardo\\_Arolas\\_1913\\_1917\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/61806577/Discografia_de_Eduardo_Arolas_1913_1917_por_Enrique_Binda); “Discografía Eduardo Arolas,” Tangos 78 RPM, accessed 3 February 2024, <https://www.tangos78rpm.com/mdocs-posts/discografia-eduardo-arolas/>; Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Genaro Espósito 1912-1918,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/61806781/Discografia\\_de\\_Genaro\\_Esp%C3%B3sito\\_1912\\_1918\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/61806781/Discografia_de_Genaro_Esp%C3%B3sito_1912_1918_por_Enrique_Binda); Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Roberto Firpo 1912-1920,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/84976294/Discografia\\_de\\_Roberto\\_Firpo\\_1912\\_20\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/84976294/Discografia_de_Roberto_Firpo_1912_20_por_Enrique_Binda); Enrique Binda, “Discografía de la OT Select,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/63294009/Discografia\\_de\\_la\\_OT\\_Select\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/63294009/Discografia_de_la_OT_Select_por_Enrique_Binda); “Osvaldo Fresedo – Discography,” GuardiaVieja.org, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://tangodiscography.blogspot.com/2023/04/osvaldo-fresedo-discography.html>.
  36. A correlation can be inferred between the Ligurian origins of the name and the predominance of emigrants sailing from Genoa to Buenos Aires. A large community of Ligurians settled in La Boca in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Samuel Bailly has shown that Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires tended to live in neighbourhood-based clusters, with most Genovese and Ligurians in La Boca. See Samuel L. Bailly, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870 to 1914* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 61-2; 129-30; 142-143.
  44. Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 101. “Vivió artísticamente”. “Vivió intensamente, tal vez abusó del placer de vivir y se cansó demasiado pronto.”
  47. Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 417. “En el caso particular de Tito, tampoco puede descartarse para explicar los verdaderos “trances” que surgieron sus improvisaciones, la influencia de la cocaína, droga a la que por esa época comenzó a mostrarse adicto y que provoca, como es sabido, una exaltación de los sentidos...”
  51. Roberto Arlt, “Corrientes por la noche,” *El Mundo*, 26 March 1929. “Caída entre los grandes edificios cúbicos, con panoramas de pollos a «lo spiedo» y salas doradas, y puestos de cocaína, y vestíbulos de teatros ¡qué maravillosamente atorranta es por la noche la calle Corrientes! ¡Qué linda y qué vaga! Más que calle parece una cosa viva, una creación que rezuma cordialidad por todos sus poros; calle nuestra, la sola calle que tiene alma en esta ciudad...”
  67. Both Oscar Zucchi and Fueye Querido discuss this recording. Zucchi lists the label as “Poli-phon”, whereas Fueye Querido writes “Polifón”. See Zucchi, *El tango, el bandoneón y sus intérpretes*, 363; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 408. However, Enrique Binda does not list these recordings in his *Los primeros 25 años*, writing that almost all recordings made of Argentine artists by Polyphon (the true spelling) in 1912 were made in Spain by Alfredo and Flora Gobbi. Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 127. I was not able to locate these recordings, which are lost, according to Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 363.
  69. “Los discos dobles Columbia,” *Fray Mocho*, 25 May 1913.
  70. Genaro Espósito’s discography is complex, because he recorded with different ensembles on the labels Columbia (10 recordings, 1912), Victor (15 recordings, 1912), ERA (45 recordings, 1913-1914), and Atlanta (36 recordings, 1912-1914), with similar names (Orquesta Típica Genaro (Columbia), Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito (Victor), Quinteto Criollo ‘Tano Genaro’ (Atlanta), Cuarteto Genaro Espósito

- (ERA)) but at times with different musicians. Only the Columbia recordings are confirmed to be with Roccatagliata – his photo features in the Casa Tagini catalogue discussed earlier in this chapter (*Fray Mocho*, 28 March 1913). The ERA recordings were made with Julio Doutry on violin, and the Atlanta recordings with Pedro Vicente Festa (see Jorge Palacio, “Genaro Espósito,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/creadores/biografia/697/Genaro-Espósito/>). The musicians on the Victor recording are unknown. See *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito,” accessed 5 September 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/335581>.
73. This ensemble recorded under different names but likely with the same musicians. The Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata recordings, released by Odeon in 1913, are thought to be lost. See Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 124. Also, personal communication to author, 13 April 2023.
  74. Firpo’s orchestra is extremely well-documented. Some key sources include Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 37, 65; Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 52-53; *Antología del tango rioplatense*, 121-122; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 409-411; Néstor Pinsón and Ricardo García Blaya, “Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/544/Orquesta-Tipica-Roberto-Firpo>.
  75. Roccatagliata he left the ensemble at some point in 1917 to form a trio with Eduardo Arolas and Juan Carlos Cobián shortly after Firpo’s orchestra’s return from Montevideo. Ferrazzano took Roccatagliata’s place on first violin and Cayetano Puglisi joined as second violin (see Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 411). Therefore, it is not clear how many of the 61 recordings Firpo’s orchestra made in 1917 included Roccatagliata. The Roberto Firpo discographies I consulted only list years of recording, not specific dates. See “Roberto Firpo Discografía,” *La Milonga di Alvin*, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://milongandoblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/19/roberto-firpo-discografia/>.
  77. Enrique Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 35. “Por razones que no son muy elegantes de comentar”.
  79. The Orquesta Típica Select is extremely well-documented. Some sources include Enrique Binda, “La ‘otra’ Orquesta Típica Select”; Carlos Groppa, “Orquesta Típica Select”; Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 412-417; Andrea Matallana, *El tango entre dos Américas*, 107; Otero, *ABC del tango: Biografías de grandes figuras*, 193.
  81. Fueye Querido, “¡Tito !,” 418; Enrique Haba, “Osvaldo Fresedo”; Mark John, “The Orquesta Típica Fresedo and the Sexteto 1921-1928,” *Osvaldo Fresedo, su viva música y los tiempos de la Guardia Nueva*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.fresedo.de/2021/05/fresedos-famous-time-1923-1928.html>. The ensemble changed significantly after the initial recordings of 1922, and there was a difference between live performance and the recordings. For example, the saxophone player Francisco Ortega performed with the ensemble live, but not on the recording (according to Oscar Zucchi, he performed non-tango repertoire with the orchestra). See Oscar Zucchi, “Orquesta Típica Osvaldo Fresedo,” *Todo Tango*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/498/Orquesta-Tipica-Osvaldo-Fresedo/>. Likewise at times, Manlio Francia was sometimes replaced by Agesilao Ferrazzano. Following the departure of Roccatagliata, Juan Koller, and later Adolfo Muzzi joined the ensemble on violin.
  82. Determining when Roccatagliata left Fresedo’s ensemble is challenging. According to Fueye Querido, he left in late November 1922 alongside Cobián, replaced by Adolfo Muzzi (violin) and José María Rizzutti (piano). On the other hand, Mark John indicates that Roccatagliata left in early 1923. Enrique Haba, in his study of Osvaldo Fresedo, doesn’t include Roccatagliata’s presence in the ensemble at all. See Fueye Querido, “¡Tito!,” 418-419; Mark John, “The Orquesta Típica Fresedo”; Enrique Haba, “Osvaldo Fresedo,” 3. Unfortunately, the Victor ledgers do not specify who performed as part of the ensemble. *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Orquesta Típica Fresedo,” accessed September 5, 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/335598>.
  98. Groppa, “Orquesta típica Select,” 2. “Han entrado en la mitología tanguera.” It is not known if the orchestra continued to perform together after the recording session in Camden, New Jersey. They are thought to have disbanded when Roccatagliata, Fresedo and Delfino returned to Argentina following the recording. However, Enrique Binda has recently discovered a certain Orquesta típica Columbia, recording for the Columbia label (Columbia had ceased recordings in Argentina in 1914, but began to record again between 1920 and 1921) in late 1920 or early 1921; the repertoire is identical to that of Orquesta típica Select. Binda suggests that the similarity between the albums, recorded in different settings and with different settings, suggests the presence of written arrangements. See Enrique Binda, “La ‘otra’ Orquesta típica Select.” However, it is not possible to establish a definitive link between the two ensembles (there is no information about who played on the Columbia album), nor was I able to locate these Orquesta típica Columbia recordings.
  105. De Bériot, *Méthode*, 215.” Vif, doux, trainé”.
  153. It sounds like both violinists play the figure completely in unison, so I have only transcribed one violin part here. Due to the poor sound quality of the recording, I was unable to determine whether Roccatagliata



plays the *arrastre* figures by himself, or whether the second violin part also includes them. At this early stage, the most important thing is to determine that an *arrastre* can be heard. In tango performance practice, *arrastres* are frequently played by more than one member of the ensemble simultaneously, in order to reinforce the effect.

181. The cello includes a small grace note in measure 82, but otherwise the two versions of the countermelody are identical. In the third iteration of the section, the piano plays the countermelody, not the cello. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, both the second violinist and cellist in Orquesta Típica Select were U.S.-based musicians. The use of musicians who were not specialized in tango music and lack of variation in repeated material in their parts may indicate the presence of written arrangements, although these are not known to survive. See Enrique Binda, “La ‘otra’ Orquesta Típica Select.”

## Chapter Four: Julio De Caro

4. Andrés Muñoz, “Julio De Caro afirma que hay que revalorizar la música del tango,” *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942. “El tango también es música,”; “Datos interesantes de los artistas de radio,” *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; “El fox-trot desaloja al TANGO, y si éste no se renueva y ennoblece perderá la BATALLA: Julio De Caro está tratando en LR4 de dar verdadero carácter sinfónico a la canción popular,” *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934.
7. Héctor and Luis Bates, *La historia del tango*, 169. “Julio De Caro pertenece, por su edad, por su actuación y por su obra, a la nueva generación de los compositores argentinos, ateniéndonos a la distinción que hace nuestro público entre los de la “guardia vieja” y los modernos A nuestro juicio es él el punto final de los primeros y tal vez constituya el de la partida a los últimos...”
10. In his autobiography, De Caro claims that he first performed at age 15 in Arturo de Bassi’s orchestra, and that his first professional experience was in 1917 as part of Eduardo Arolas’ orchestra (De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 18; 21-25). However, Luis Adolfo Sierra states that De Caro’s first professional engagement was as part of Ricardo Brignolo’s ensemble at the café TVO in Barracas. He joined Arolas’ orchestra the following year. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, “La escuela Decareana,” in *La historia del tango 7: La época Decareana*, ed. Manuel Pampin (Ediciones Corregidor, 1977), 1054-6. Nicolás Lefcovich states the same in his *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*, 11, but he likely consulted Sierra, as he refers to him on the same page. Gobello, *Breve historia*, 105; Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*.
11. Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*, 11-16; Marino E. Ricardi, *Discografía de Julio De Caro y su orquesta* (Marino E. Ricardo, 2001); Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Juan Carlos Cobián 1917-1944,” Academia.edu, accessed 13 August 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/64133048/Discografia\\_de\\_Juan\\_Carlos\\_Cobian\\_1917\\_44\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/64133048/Discografia_de_Juan_Carlos_Cobian_1917_44_por_Enrique_Binda); *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Cobián, Juan Carlos,” accessed 13 August 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/111277>. The four recordings made as part of Los Virtuosos were the result of a competition held by *Sintonía*: the readers of the magazine voted for the best musicians. Those chosen were Julio De Caro (violin 1); Elvino Vardaro (violin 2); Pedro Maffia (bandoneon 1); Ciriaco Ortiz (bandoneon 2); and Francisco De Caro (piano). However, due to concert obligations, Maffia was unable to join, and Ortiz played bandoneon 1, and Carlos Marcucci bandoneon 2. See ““Los virtuosos del tango’ han desatado una tempestad de votos,” *Sintonía*, 17 September 1936; “Los componentes de la fórmula De Caro-Maffia-Ortiz-Vardaro-De Caro, fueron ungidos por el público,” *Radiolandia*, 29 October 1936; “El 15 debutan ‘Los Virtuosos del tango’ en Radio El Mundo,” *Radiolandia*, 4 November 1936; and José María Otero, “Los virtuosos,” Tangos al Bardo, last modified 1 August 2016, <https://tangosalbardo.blogspot.com/2016/08/los-virtuosos.html>.
12. Known as Sexteto Juan Carlos Cobián, the ensemble recorded under the name “Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián,” likely due to the enlarged string section used during the recordings; the recordings included violinists Remo and Astor Bolognini, as well as Ferrazzano and De Caro. De Caro, *El tango*, 33. Although De Caro’s individual style is not distinguishable in the 1923 Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián recordings, notably due to the enlarged string section in the recordings, there are several aspects, notably the use of portamenti and countermelodies, that connect to techniques later heard in De Caro’s sextet.
13. From 1924 until 12 April 1926, the sextet recorded under the name *Orquesta Típica De Caro*. The name changed to *Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica* with the recordings *Agua corriente* (Victor BAVE 796-1) and *La revancha* (Victor BAVE 797-2), both recorded on 11 May 1926. Curiously, although the ensemble first began to record electronically on 12 April 1926, heralding a major change in recording methods, the new name was only a month later. This change was not consistently reflected in Victor’s advertising: a July 1926 advertisement in *Caras y Caretas* shows the new name, while a September 1926 ad in the same

- magazine indicates *Orquesta Típica De Caro* for the exact same recordings. De Caro reverted back to the earlier name, *Orquesta Típica De Caro*, when he switched to the Brunswick label in 1929. Upon returning to Victor in 1934, he again adopted the name *Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica*. For a comparison, see the DAHR entries for *Quince abril* (12 April 1926) and *Agua corriente* (11 May 1926), where the name change is clearly visible on the record labels. *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Victor matrix BAVE-772. Quince abril / Orquesta Típica de Caro," accessed 10 May 2025, [https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004993/BAVE-772-Quince\\_abriles](https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600004993/BAVE-772-Quince_abriles); *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Victor matrix BAVE-796. Agua corriente / Orquesta Típica de Caro," accessed 10 May 2025, [https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600005017/BAVE-796-Agua\\_corriente](https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/600005017/BAVE-796-Agua_corriente); "Nuevos discos Victor para julio," *Caras y Caretas*, 10 July 1926; "Julio De Caro, genial intérprete de la música típica nacional," *Caras y Caretas*, 25 September 1926.
15. Omar García Brunelli, *Discografía básica del tango: Su historia a través de las grabaciones (1905-2010)* (Gourmet Musical, 2010), 63. "Se trata de una etapa fundamental del conjunto y fundacional para la historia posterior del tango."
  16. "El Fox-trot desaloja al tango," *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934.
  17. Although De Caro did not comment himself on why he returned to his earlier stylistic roots, press reception from the time suggests that his *tango sinfónico* projects were not completely successful. See the scathing editorial in *Sintonía*, which describes De Caro's *típica sinfónica* as a disappointment ("Una desilusión bien cara le causó De Caro," *Sintonía*, 22 September 1934); or another, which describes the *Típica "Gigante"* as "more interesting in its probabilities than its outcomes" ("Se presenta en Radio El Mundo La Típica 'Gigante'," *Sintonía*, 16 May 1936); or that of *Radiolandia*, which described De Caro's *tango sinfónico* project as an "acceptable symphonic concert. But it is not tango... and cannot be presented as such" ("Reflexiones sobre el concierto de Julio De Caro," *Radiolandia*, 28 November 1936). "...Un aceptable concierto sinfónico... Pero no es tango y no puede ser presentado como tal."
  19. "Julio De Caro, genial intérprete de la música típica nacional," *Caras y Caretas*, 25 September 1926.
  20. "La guardia vieja y guardia nueva: Vicente Greco y Julio De Caro," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 April 1928.
  21. Ernesto de la Fuente, "Los reyes del tango: con Julio De Caro," *Caras y Caretas*, 5 January 1929.
  22. Some examples of published articles include: Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro: El artista del tango," *La Canción Moderna*, 14 April 1932; Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro ha ganado más de \$300.000 con sus tangos. Confesiones en la penumbra de un corredor," *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933; Jorge Will, "En dos modalidades bien distintas, se toca el tango," *Sintonía*, 30 September 1933; "Julio De Caro y su gran orquesta," *La Canción Moderna*, 27 November 1933; "La gran orquesta de Julio De Caro," *La Canción Moderna*, 22 January 1934; "Julio De Caro hará tangos sinfónicos con cincuenta músicos," *Sintonía*, 18 August 1934; "El fox-trot desaloja al tango..." *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; "Julio De Caro, el simpático compositor y director, opina sobre la modernización del tango," *Sintonía*, 5 January 1935; Ernesto Laur, "¿Hay en realidad un eclipse del tango? Roberto Firpo vs. Julio De Caro," *Caras y Caretas*, 2 March 1935; "Desplazarán al tango en el país del tango, dice Julio De Caro," *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936; "La batalla que libro no me ha dado más que sinsabores...pero seguiré luchando – dice Julio De Caro – convencido de mi honesta posición frente a la música popular," *Radiolandia*, 5 June 1937; "Julio De Caro, temperamento vehemente y agitado siempre por simpáticas inquietudes artísticas," *Antena*, 10 September 1938.
  23. "Julio De Caro afirma que Francisco Canaro está equivocado," *Sintonía*, 26 November 1936; "Francisco Canaro formula declaraciones sobre el tango," *Sintonía*, 19 November 1936.
  24. "La Guardia Vieja y La Guardia Nueva: Julio De Caro y Vicente Greco," *La Canción Moderna*, 9 April 1928; "Virtudes y defectos," *Micrófono*, 02 August 1934; "Y volveremos a escuchar el violín mágico de De Caro," *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.
  25. "Se intensifica la lucha entre los futuros 'Virtuosos del tango'," *Sintonía*, 10 September 1936; "Los 'virtuosos del tango' han desatado una tempestad de votos," *Sintonía*, 17 September 1936, "Los componentes de la fórmula De Caro – Maffia – Ortiz – Vardaro – De Caro, fueron ungidos por el público," *Sintonía*, 29 October 1936.
  26. Luis Adolfo Sierra claims that this meeting occurred in Paris, not Buenos Aires, during De Caro's 1931 tour. See Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1080. However, it is entirely plausible that De Caro met Kreisler in Buenos Aires in 1935; Kreisler performed a series of six recitals in May-June 1935 at the Teatro Colón. I have found a copy of the Kreisler recital program from 4 June 1935: "Kreisler, Fritz – Teatro Colón Program 1935 (b)," Tamino Autographs, accessed 10 October 2024, <https://www.taminoautographs.com/products/kreisler-fritz-teatro-colon-program-1935-b?srsltid=AfmBOopdfGgfZiMTjuIff8009wqyxMfTH7WL7ELitjaFtkpjTqjAWWdw>.
  28. "Julio De Caro vestirá de gala la audición que *Sintonía* ofrecerá mañana por Radio 'El Mundo'," *Sintonía*, 31 March 1938.

30. "Julio De Caro," *Buenos Aires Tango* 6, 21. "Al igual que en el jazz, donde B. Goodman, H. James o Duque (sic) Ellington, han creado efectos y recursos para su música popular, los instrumentistas del tango no se han quedado atrás en tales procedimientos. Y eso es el encantamiento por el cual los violinistas son atrapados en forma total por la escuela verdadera del tango."
31. Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Eduardo Arolas," *El canillita*, May 1954; Julio De Caro, "Un comentario más sobre los orígenes del tango," *El canillita*, June 1954; Julio De Caro, "Un comentario más sobre los orígenes del tango - II," *El canillita*, July 1954; Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Vicente Greco (Garrote)," *El canillita*, August 1954; Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Ángel Villoldo," *El canillita*, September 1954; Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Juan Maglio (Pacho)," *El canillita*, October 1954; Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Rosendo Mendizábal," *El canillita*, November 1954; Julio De Caro, "Páginas de oro para la historia del tango: Domingo Santa Cruz," *El canillita*, December 1954. An article about his own musical ideas was published in October 1954: "Refirmó sus cualidades el maestro Julio De Caro," *El canillita*, October 1954.
44. Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1037-1038. "Efectos todos que siguen perdurando como verdaderas instituciones entre los recursos interpretativos del tango".
50. De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 15. "Hechura del clasicismo."
52. De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 22-24; 108-109. "¿Qué prefieres? ...llegar a ser un buen médico por muy estudioso...o vulgar tanguero...?"
53. Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1050. "Al mismo Don José le agradaba que sus hijos volcaron su íntima vocación artística en un género popular, pero que no ofrecía perspectivas de seria dedicación profesional."
56. "Academia musical DE CARO," *La Canción Moderna*, 30 April 1928.
58. Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro: El artista del tango," *La Canción Moderna*, 14 April 1932.
59. Julio De Caro, *El tango en mis recuerdos*, 16. "Último grito en los métodos."
63. Andrés Muñoz, "Julio De Caro afirma que hay que revalorizar la música del tango," *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942.
66. The increasing presence and popularity of Hollywood films in Argentina also contributed to this feeling. In the 1920s, Sexteto Julio De Caro frequently performed in silent cinemas, especially the Select Lavalle (1924-1929), the Renacimiento and the Petit Splendid, a moment Francisco Canaro describes as the culmination of De Caro's career (Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 311). In the cinema, De Caro's sextet reached a position of extreme prestige; it can be considered one of the primary vectors of Decarismo, as many of the most prominent future tango musicians, such as Orlando Goñi, Aníbal Troilo and Alfredo Gobbi (son) first listened to De Caro in the cinema (See Luis Adolfo Sierra, "La escuela Decareana," 1076-1077). However, after De Caro returned from his European tour in 1931, he discovered that there was less work available in cinemas because of the introduction of talkies, an experience he describes in his memoirs (*El tango*, 96). He also discusses the "war" cinema waged on tango music in the article in *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934. For an ample discussion of the introduction of Hollywood films in Argentina, as well as the proliferation of popular music, see Mathew Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*.
67. Gobello, *Breve historia*, 106. "...Jamás sacrificó la disponibilidad.... De la buena relación entre los pies y los oídos de su público...aprendieron Pugliese, Troilo y otros."
68. Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro: El artista del tango," *La Canción Moderna*, 14 April 1932. "Como tango musicado... Aunque parezca broma, aquí no se hace. Nosotros utilizamos nuestros conocimientos musicales para interpretarlo, con armonía y contrapunto."
69. Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro ha ganado más de \$300.000 con sus tangos...," *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933. "Le quito ese compás bailarín y monótono".
70. Andrés Muñoz, "Julio De Caro afirma que hay que revalorizar la música del tango," *Sintonía*, 21 January 1942. "Mi ideal, el 'leit motiv' de toda mi carrera, fué elevar la jerarquía artística de la música popular... El tango, además de un vehículo de emociones que está íntimamente identificado con el pueblo, también es música. Si, señores, el tango también es música...En este aspecto, sus posibilidades no tienen más limitaciones que las de aquellos que lo cultivan."
71. Articles where he talks about elevating tango music include: "Julio De Caro y su gran orquesta," *La Canción Moderna*, 27 October 1933; "Julio De Caro hará tangos sinfónicos con cincuenta músicos," *Sintonía*, 18 June 1934; "El fox-trot desaloja al tango...," *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; "Julio De Caro, el simpático compositor y director, opina sobre la modernización del tango," *Sintonía* 5 January 1935; Ernesto Laur, "¿Hay en realidad un eclipse del tango?," *Caras y Caretas*, 2 March 1935; "Julio De Caro crítica a Julio De Caro: Nueve respuestas interesantes," *Sintonía*, 11 April 1936; "Desplazarán al tango en el país del tango, dice Julio De Caro," *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936; "Julio De Caro afirma que Francisco De Caro está equivocado," *Sintonía*, 26 November 1936; "La batalla que libro no me ha dado más que

- sinsabores... pero seguiré luchando – dice Julio De Caro – convencido de mi honesta posición frente a la música popular,” *Radiolandia*, 5 June 1937. The list is not exhaustive.
72. Doña Diabla, “Julio De Caro ha ganado...,” *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933. “Mi mayor ambición como argentino y como artista, es hacer que el tango llegue a ser la música respetada como la expresión máxima de nuestra personalidad”.
  73. “Datos interesantes de los artistas de radio,” *Sintonía*, 29 September 1934; “Desplazarán al tango en el país del tango, dice Julio De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936. “Darle armas para que pueda luchar en un pie de igualdad con la música popular de otros países”.
  74. “Julio De Caro es un infatigable obrero del tango,” *Sintonía*, 2 September 1937, “Y es, por otra parte, la única manera de evitar que la música extranjera ‘nos pise el poncho’”. He is referring to the *ponchos* often worn in Argentina.
  75. “Desplazarán al tango en el país del tango, dice Julio De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 24 September 1936. “Yo lograré que el tango no sea algo pobre”.
  76. “Julio De Caro crítica a Julio De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 11 April 1936. “Que nuestra música ciudadana, nuestro porteñísimo tango, sea engalanado de acuerdo a los conceptos y preceptos de la técnica y estética musical. La música popular es el espejo en que se refleja el alma de un pueblo: el tango es el espejo de nuestro pueblo... Yo quiero que el tango de hoy, el tango moderno sea mucho más completo en sus medios de expresión.”
  77. “Julio De Caro, el simpático compositor y director, opina sobre la modernización del tango,” *Sintonía*, 5 January 1935.
  82. “...Y volveremos a escuchar el violín mágico de Julio De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.
  85. Some examples of negative press include “Una desilusión bien cara le causó De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 22 September 1934; “Reflexiones sobre el concierto de Julio De Caro,” *Radiolandia*, 28 November 1936, “Esa música, admirablemente ejecutada, muy bien orquestada, se resume en un aceptable concierto sinfónico. ... Pero no es tango y no puede ser presentado como tal.”
  86. “Julio De Caro, temperamento vehemente y agitado siempre por simpáticas inquietudes artísticas,” *Antena*, 10 September 1938.
  94. De Caro, *El tango*, 51. “Es suyo, y aunque su valor es de 1.000 dólares, si lo acepta, no tendrá que abonar por él ni un centavo; así, le será menos dolorosa la suma que se descontará de sus derechos en el extranjero. Mi mayor anhelo es que sea usted quien lo utilice, y resalten sus lindos solos de violín, en su mayor parte perdidos, por no contar con esta poderosa ayuda.”
  99. The photo on the right is taken from “Y volveremos a escuchar el violín mágico de Julio De Caro,” *Sintonía*, 7 September 1938.
  103. “El reportaje fantástico: habla el violín de Julio De Caro,” *La Canción Moderna*, 16 October 1933.
  104. “Virtudes y defectos,” *Micrófono*, 2 August 1934.
  105. Gustave Fréjaville, “Julio De Caro et ses danseurs,” *Comœdia*, 16 June 1931.
  116. Quoted in Tomás de Lara and Inés Roncetti de Panti, *El tema del tango en la literatura argentina*, 53. “Su estilo es esencialmente melódico: aquello que en De Caro es vivacidad expresional, en Fresedo se torna placidez.”
  119. “Julio De Caro, el estilo más lujoso...,” 255. “Punto de lanza”.
  125. According to Enrique Cadícamo, Cobián also included Lorenzo Olivari and Eduardo Armani in the string section, but De Caro mentions in his autobiography that Lorenzo Olivari performed in the same venue as Cobián’s ensemble (Abdulla Club) but as head of a jazz ensemble, not as part of the recordings. See Cadícamo, *El desconocido Juan Carlos Cobián*, 69. Remo would go on a brilliant classical career in the United States, hired by Arturo Toscanini to lead the NBC Symphony Orchestra in New York. “Remo Bolognini Papers, 1929-1973,” The New York Public Library, accessed 19 August 2024, <https://archives.nypl.org/mus/20374>.
  127. De Caro, *El tango*, 34. “No olvide, De Caro, que toda modificación debe llevar mi visto bueno; hoy salió espléndidamente; mañana...podría ser todo lo contrario.”
  138. De Bériot, 215.” Vif, doux, trainé.”
  140. “Julio De Caro, genial intérprete de la música típica nacional,” *Caras y Caretas*, 25 September 1926. While Oscar Del Priore doesn’t question how the tango got its name, he does mention that it is curious that the tango was dedicated to “don Sebastián Lezica”, and not Finochietto. De Caro does mention in his book that his friend Florencio – not Sebastián – Lezica had asked him to write the tango in honour of Finochietto (De Caro, *El tango*, 46-47), which may explain the dedication. See Oscar Del Priore and Irene Amuchástegui, *Cien tangos fundamentales* (Aguilar, 1998), 113.
  141. De Caro claims he dedicated his tango *Dulce hogar*, which he never recorded, to the prince as a wedding present. Although he doesn’t name the prince by name, (future King) Edward VIII visited Argentina in 1925 as part of a trade visit. See “The Prince in the Argentine (1925),” British Pathé, accessed 10 October 2024, <https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/46493/>. The wedding present dedication of *Dulce hogar* must



- have been in honour of Edward's marriage to Wallis Simpson in 1937. The score of *Dulce hogar* mentions the dedicated to Edward VIII, but not the wedding. Julio De Caro, *Dulce hogar*, Editorial Musical Alfredo Perrotti.
163. Guinot made his transcription in 4/4, not 2/4 like the published score. Tangos in this time period were generally felt in four, but written in two, based on Guardia Vieja practices. In the *Guardia Nueva*, there was a general slowing down of tempi, and today most tangos are written in 4/4 time.
  175. (Definition of *yeite*) quoted in Andrés Serafini, "Yeites de tango: Análisis de gestos musicales y técnicas extendidas en el tango para su utilización creativa y pedagógica," 350. Quote of José Gobello. "Ganga, negocio ventajoso en relación con el poco trabajo que cuesta."
  177. Andrés Serafini, "Yeites de tango," 350. "Escritos o improvisados, se debe conocer el 'código' para interpretarlos, o sea para emitirlos y recibirlos".
  180. Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia y evolución*, 84. "El tango de Julio De Caro está más sujeto a las vicisitudes de la vida ciudadana..."
  182. Viejo Tanguero, "El tango, su evolución y su historia," *Crítica*, 22 September 1913.
  187. Link and Wendland identify the notes I've slurred in the *chicharra* as a form of *escoba*, otherwise known as *cepillo* or brush. To quote them, "De Caro's 1926 recording of 'Derecho viejo' provides a classic example of *escoba*" (Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 130). While *chicharra* is played behind the bridge, on the winding of the strings, *escoba* or *cepillo* is executed on the other side of the bridge: the violinist tilts the stick of the bow towards the bridge and then pulls the bow parallel to the strings towards the bridge, creating a rasping sound. It is impossible to combine *chicharra* and *escoba*, as they are not on the same side of the bridge. I instead suggest that the sounds heard in *Derecho viejo* are produced by extra index-finger pressure in the *chicharra* pattern, creating a form of *arrastre* as the end of the slurred pattern is slightly more accented than the first one.
  189. I have presented a simplified form of the melody in the bandoneons, as well as the in 4 accompaniment, to show the effect of the tambor (they play a duet, and an actual transcription of their notes is far more complex, and besides the purposes of my argument). I have placed the pattern in m. 3 of the section partially in brackets; the sound of the rapid notes at the end of the measure has a different consistency, and I'm not sure it is executed by the violin.
  204. Doña Diabla, "Julio De Caro ha ganado más de \$300.000 con sus tangos..." *Sintonía*, 10 June 1933. "Mi mayor ambición, como argentino y como artista, es hacer que el tango llegue a ser la música respetada como la expresión máxima de nuestra personalidad".

## Conclusion

7. Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica*, 44. "El futuro era hoy."
14. "Elvino Vardaro: Del 'precoz violinista' de 1919 al precursor del 'nuevo tango'," *Qué sucedió en 7 días*, 23 November 1955.
15. "Vardaro está magníficamente," *La Canción Moderna*, 5 February 1934.
22. "¡No ha existido plagio! El fallo del jurado desagrávió a Francisco Canaro," *La Canción Moderna*, 3 June 1940; "No incurrió en plagio musical Julio De Caro," *Crítica*, 2 October 1940; "En la audiencia pública de hoy se sabrá si Julio De Caro plagió el tango 'Fuego'," *Libre palabra*, 2 October 1940.
26. Asaba, herself a tango violinist of Japanese origin, has written about the transnational appeal of tango music, with a focus on Japan, and the rise of tango musicians outside of Argentina. In particular, she has tied the emotional depth of tango music, something she refers to as tango's "aesthetics of emotion," to the spread of tango music in Japan and elsewhere. See Asaba, "Tango, Emotion and Transculturality." Although beyond the scope of gender, the emotional profoundness of tango music might explain why so many non-Argentine musicians are drawn to the genre. This Belgian-American tango violinist certainly believes this to be the case.



## **Appendix B**

### **Historical Periods of Tango Music**

Tango music is generally divided into different historical periods, although there is no consensus in tango music scholarship as to where the divisions between periods should fall.<sup>1</sup> Despite the lack of consensus, it is vital to have knowledge of the major divisions in tango history, as they represent key periods in the interpretation and development of the music. Here I provide a basic overview, having separated the periods according to key dates in tango history.

#### **Guardia Vieja (1880-late 1910s)**

*Guardia Vieja* refers to both to a historical period and performance style.<sup>2</sup> When the expression first appeared in the 1920s, it did not yet refer to tango but was instead used as a way of describing the not-so-distant past: the beginnings of the twentieth century. A few examples include Julio De Caro's 1926 tango *Guardia Vieja* (lyrics by José de Grandis), which does not refer to tango but to the protagonists' youth; and Manuel Romero's 1929 *sainete* *La guardia vieja*, which also refers to the past, rather than specifically to tango.<sup>3</sup> According to Homero Manzi, essayist and tango lyricist Carlos de la Púa first applied the term to tango music, although the year is uncertain.<sup>4</sup> In any case, the very first editions of the magazine *La Canción Moderna* feature "Tangos de la Guardia Vieja" – tango lyrics of (by then) old tangos such as *La cumparsita* or *Alma de bohemio*, as well as a series of articles entitled "La

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<sup>1</sup> The periods I have chosen represent a combination of scholarly views. See José Gobello, *Breve historia crítica del tango*; Hernán Posetti, *El piano en el tango*; Ramiro Gallo, *El violín en el tango*; Oscar Del Priore, *El tango de Villoldo a Piazzolla...y después*; Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*; Omar García Brunelli, *Discografía básica del tango*; Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music*.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to José Gobello's excellent historiographical review of the *Guardia Vieja*. See Gobello, *Breve historia*, 82-87.

<sup>3</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 86.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Gobello, *Breve historia*, 85-87. Gobello himself writes that he could not find evidence of where Carlos de la Púa made the statement. He cites Manzi's preface in Carlos Marcucci and Félix Lipesker's *Primera escuela de bandoneón* (publication date unknown).

Guardia Vieja y la Guardia Nueva,” featuring biographies of performers of yesteryear such as Eduardo Arolas, who had died in 1924, and those of the current day, including Julio De Caro.<sup>5</sup>

According to Rubén Pesce, the term *Guardia Nueva* precedes that of *Guardia Vieja*: it was used in popular music circles to describe the evolutionary currents of 1920s Buenos Aires instead of the term *vanguardia* – used in the 1920s to describe a new intellectual current that was reacting to emerging mass cultural markets, such as popular magazines and novels – and by extension the term *Guardia Vieja* was then applied to those tango musicians who did not belong to the club of innovators.<sup>6</sup> It could be argued that Buenos Aires, having experienced massive cultural, social and political changes in the first two decades of the twentieth century, transforming itself from *la gran aldea* or the big village into the Paris of South America, was a city uniquely aware of its changing cultural landscape; a city, in other words, in thrall to its recently forged modernistic and cosmopolitan identity.<sup>7</sup> *Guardia Nueva* was thus a term used to describe the movers and shakers of 1920s tango music.

As a performance style, identifying the *Guardia Vieja* is somewhat more complex, because it is not a simple matter of ascribing a historical period to the term. Indeed, *Guardia Vieja* is used to describe tangos from around 1900 until the late 1910s (and as far as 1920, according to some sources) it also refers to an interpretational mode that continued well into the 1920s and 1930s: musicians such as Ernesto Ponzio and Juan Carlos Bazán would continue performing in the same musical style throughout their careers, without significant changes.<sup>8</sup> Ponzio and Bazán were so proud to be men of the *Guardia Vieja* that they named their orchestra *Orquesta típica de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán*

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<sup>5</sup> “Tangos de la guardia vieja,” *La Canción Moderna*, 26 March 1928; “Tangos de la guardia vieja” and “La Guardia Vieja y la Guardia Nueva: Carlos Marcucci y Eduardo Arolas,” *La Canción Moderna*, 2 April 1928; “La guardia vieja y la guardia nueva: Vicente Greco y Julio De Caro,” *La Canción Moderna*, 9 April 1928. *Guardia Vieja* is sometimes capitalized and sometimes lowercase in the titles. The articles entitled “La guardia vieja y la guardia nueva” from 2 and 9 April 1928 feature discussions of early tango musicians Eduardo Arolas (2 April) and Vicente Greco (9 April), as well as of contemporary tango musicians Carlos Marcucci (2 April) and Julio De Caro (9 April).

<sup>6</sup> Rubén Pesce, “La Guardia Vieja,” 294; Geraldine Rogers, “Sufragio cultural: masividad y democratización en revistas argentinas de 1920,” *Iberoamericana. América Latina-España-Portugal* (2013): 49-63.

<sup>7</sup> For an extended discussion of Buenos Aires and modernity in the 1920s and 1930s, see the chapter “Buenos Aires, Ciudad Moderna” in Beatriz Sarlo’s *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930*.

<sup>8</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 87.

in 1932.<sup>9</sup> The two *Guardias* overlapped each other: while the interpretative styles of some musicians remained unchanged, those of the so-called *Guardia Nueva* were built upon the technical and stylistic foundations of the *Guardia Vieja*.<sup>10</sup> Finally, as Gobello indicates, the most important distinction between the two *Guardias* is stylistic: as he points out, the interpretations of the same tango, such as *Alma de bohemia* or *El Marne*, can be ascribed to the *Guardia Vieja* or *Nueva* depending on who is interpreting the piece.<sup>11</sup> Although he does not explicitly reference the term, he is referring to the *arreglo*, or arrangement, a reworking of musical composition into a different version, often with structural, melodic and rhythmical changes, which has been the principal form of expression in tango music since the 1920s.<sup>12</sup> With the emergence of arrangements, tango ensembles began to diversify and expand their stylistic language; before these arrangements, little stylistic diversity can be observed between ensembles.<sup>13</sup> As such, compositions such as *El Choclo*, originally written in 1906 by Angel Villoldo and *La Cumparsita*, originally composed in 1916 by G. Matos Rodríguez, have been reworked into hundreds, if not thousands of different arrangements.

Stylistically, *Guardia Vieja* refers to relatively simple harmonic and melodic material. As indicated above, tango was undergoing a series of rapid changes: changing instrumentation, with the introduction of the bandoneon and the piano into the ensemble; the professionalization of tango musicians, accelerated by the emergence of the recording industry in the 1910s; as well as the general slowing down of tango (felt in 4/8 instead of 2/4) can all be evoked.<sup>14</sup> These changes were occurring before a distinction between *Guardias* emerged, and thus it is far too simplistic to ascribe musical evolution solely to the *Guardia Nueva*. Omar García Brunelli, Paula Mesa and Sergio Balderrabano all describe the passage from *Guardia Vieja* to *Guardia Nueva* as one of transition, with a great deal

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<sup>9</sup> Pesce, "Principales protagonistas," 463.

<sup>10</sup> Horacio Ferrer, *El tango: Su historia*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> Gobello, *Breve historia*, 87.

<sup>12</sup> Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*, 122. See the introduction of this thesis for a larger description of the tango arrangement.

<sup>13</sup> Omar García Brunelli, "La transición de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva en el tango."

<sup>14</sup> These changes occurred within the context of the *Guardia Vieja*. As shown, the boundaries between *Guardia Nueva* and *Vieja* are not defined.

of overlap between the two.<sup>15</sup> That being said, it is possible to identify characteristics of interpretations, and tangos, labelled as *Guardia Vieja*: primarily written in 2/4, with a three-part structure, these tangos were primarily marked by a habanera rhythm (dotted quaver, semiquaver, followed by two quavers), a lack of rubato, and a limited range of articulations and effects.<sup>16</sup> Besides the first traces of interpretational effects, a difference between the *Guardias* can be seen in tempo: *Guardia Vieja* tangos were generally rapid and upbeat in nature.

### *Instrumentation in the Guardia Vieja*

The first tango musicians played primarily on portable instruments, such as the guitar, the flute, and, of course, the violin; the introduction of larger instruments such as the piano and the double bass would occur in the first and second decades of the century, respectively, as tango music moved progressively into the caf  s of Buenos Aires.<sup>17</sup> Before this point, tango musicians played in a variety of different settings and locations, such as in *casas de baile*, *academias*, *peringundines*, *caf  s de verano*, or simply on the street, making portability a vital aspect. One of the key changes in instrumentation, however, was the introduction of the bandoneon, which would become the instrument most associated with the genre. Created by Heinrich Band in 1835 in Germany as a form of portable organ that could perform in churches without an organ or accompany dances, the instrument made its way to Argentina by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; according to Luis Adolfo Sierra, the melancholy character of the instrument led to significant changes in the character of tango music, as the music became slower, more serious.<sup>18</sup> The bandoneon would gradually displace the flute in tango ensembles, although the flute can frequently be heard before 1915. Furthermore, by 1910 the *orquesta*

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<sup>15</sup> Paula Mesa and Sergio Balderrabano, "Los elementos constitutivos del tango de la Guardia Vieja en relaci  n a los aportes realizados por m  sicos de formaci  n acad  mica," *II Jornadas de Investigaci  n en Disciplinas Art  sticas y Proyectuales* (La Plata, 2006); Omar Garc  a Brunelli, "La transici  n de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva en el tango."

<sup>16</sup> See Irma Ru  z and N  stor Ce  al, "La estructura del tango," *Antolog  a del tango rioplatense*, 51-88, for a discussion of the structure of tangos (1880-1920). Also, see Paula Mesa and Sergio Balderrabano, "Los elementos constitutivos"; Omar Garc  a Brunelli, "La transici  n de la Guardia Vieja a la Guardia Nueva en el tango."

<sup>17</sup> Jos   Gobello, *Breve historia*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Luis Adolfo Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta t  pica*, 39.

*típica criolla*, later shorted to *orquesta típica*, emerged as the fundamental tango ensemble. The term was coined when Columbia, through their concessionary Casa Tagini, asked bandoneon player Vicente Greco to find a name to distinguish his orchestra from other groups that played popular music in other countries; the term soon became synonymous with tango ensembles.<sup>19</sup> Greco's ensemble included two bandoneons (Vicente Greco, Juan Lorenzo Labissier), two violins (Francisco Canaro, "Palito" Abatte), guitar (Domingo Greco, who also played piano), and flute (Vicente Pecci).<sup>20</sup> Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo, which first recorded in 1913, incorporated the piano (Firpo), as well as the double bass (Leopoldo Thompson) by 1915.<sup>21</sup> These ensembles can be seen as precursor of the *sexteto típico*, which can be considered the key formation of the 1920s (two violins, two bandoneons, piano and double bass). Generally, the *sexteto típico* was also referred to as an *orquesta típica*.

### **Guardia Nueva (roughly 1920-1935)**

The distinction between the Guardia Nueva and the Guardia Vieja is somewhat complex, because many musicians associated with the Guardia Vieja continued to perform, without significant stylistic modification, well into the 1930s. One of the turning points between *Guardias* is Carlos Gardel's *Mi noche triste* (1917), his first recorded tango, because it not only inspired the massive popularity of *tango cantado* from the 1920s on, but also the triggered the emergence of *fraseo*, a type of sung rubato (based on *Porteño* speech patterns) on top of a stable rhythmical accompaniment, that would become a notable element of both instrumental and sung performance practice in tango music.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Pesce, "La Guardia Vieja," 333; Francisco Canaro, *Mis memorias*, 329; Enrique Binda, "La primera grabación de una orquesta típica," *Todo Tango*, accessed 19 March 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/184/La-primer-grabacion-de-una-Orquesta-Tipica/>; "Grandes novedades en Discos Columbia de \$2.50," *Caras y Caretas*, 30 July 1910.

<sup>20</sup> Sierra, *Historia de la orquesta típica*, 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> Néstor Pinson and Ricardo García Blaya, "Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo," *Todo Tango*, accessed 5 September 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/historias/cronica/544/Orquesta-Tipica-Roberto-Firpo/>.

<sup>22</sup> Brunelli, "La transición"; Omar García Brunelli, "La cuestión del fraseo en el tango." *Mi noche triste* is not the first *tango cantado*, but the first sung by Gardel.

Some general observances of practices more associated with the *Guardia Nueva* include: a great expansion of instrumental techniques, due to the increased presence of professional musicians; the emergence of the tango arrangement, mentioned above; a tendency of slowing down (instead of 2/4, 4/8); the emergence of *marcato* in 4 instead of a habanera rhythm; and finally, the development of *tango cantado*, or sung tangos.<sup>23</sup> In this period, singers like Carlos Gardel and Azucena Maizani became major stars. This was the era of the cabaret, and tango for listening, rather than dancing, came to the forefront. Thus, tangos from this time tend to be slower-paced. On the instrumental side, two main currents emerged: the traditionalists, such as Francisco Canaro and Francisco Lomuto, adhered to simple, danceable tango more like the style of the *Guardia Vieja*, while a new, evolutionary school emerged, made up of classically trained musicians such as Julio De Caro, Juan Carlos Cobián and Osvaldo Fresedo.<sup>24</sup> These musicians enriched and introduced many innovations into the genre, including many elements such as *arrastres* and *yeites*, which would become definitive elements in tango music.<sup>25</sup> In particular, De Caro would be the most influential; most subsequent innovators of the genre, such as Aníbal Troilo, Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla, belonged to the “Decarean” school of tango. Though for some authors, such as Kacey Link and Kristen Wendland, this period ends in 1932, the year when Julio De Caro and Osvaldo Fresedo expanded their orchestras, and Miguel Caló formed his orchestra with a specific focus on dancing,<sup>26</sup> in my opinion the end of this period is marked by the death of tango’s first superstar Carlos Gardel in 1935, as well as the inception of Juan d’Arienzo’s orchestra, who would begin the new dance craze of the *época de oro*.

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<sup>23</sup> Mesa and Balderrabano, “Los elementos constitutivos”; García Brunelli, “La transición de la Guardia Nueva.”

<sup>24</sup> De Caro’s father was former director of the Conservatoire of La Scala in Milan; Juan Carlos Cobián studied at the Conservatorio Williams in Bahía Blanca; Fresedo came from a wealthy family and received private training. See Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 46-47; María Susana Azzi, “Multicultural Tango: The Impact and the Contribution of the Italian Immigration to the Tango in Argentina,” 448.

<sup>25</sup> Omar García Brunelli, “La transición de la guardia vieja a la guardia nueva en el tango.”

<sup>26</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 52.



### **Epoca de oro (1935-1955)**

This is the Golden Age of the tango when there were upwards of one thousand *orquesta típicas* in Buenos Aires alone. This was the era of the large dance orchestra; D'Arienzo, *el rey del compás* or “king of the beat” began a dance craze with his rhythmical, aggressive tangos. Indeed, during the *época de oro*, the *orquesta típica* expanded to include four to five violins, four bandoneons, piano and double bass, as well as the occasional inclusion of instruments such as viola and cello. This was also a period of great stylistic demarcation, where many of the primary orchestras performed in distinctive ways. A few of the major orchestras were those of Miguel Caló, Aníbal Troilo, Carlos di Sarli, Osvaldo Pugliese, and Horacio Salgán.<sup>27</sup> The period ended abruptly with the *golpe de estado* of 1955, which ended Perón’s first presidency and ushered in a period of thirty years of political instability (1955-1983).

### **Vanguardia (1955-1990)**

After the *golpe de estado* of 1955 ended Perón’s second presidency, tango underwent a major crisis. The curfews that followed the *golpe* curtailed Porteño nightlife for a time, and the large orchestras that had marked the *Epoca de oro* were no longer financially viable. Furthermore, tango faced a lot of competition from other genres such as rock ‘n roll and jazz, and was no longer as fashionable as it once was. Though a number of large orchestras survived throughout the period, the general trend was towards smaller ensembles such as trios, quartets and quintets. Scholars such as Omar García Brunelli and Andrés Serafini have noted a generation gap in knowledge; whereas tango music was very much based on an oral tradition for most of its history (see: oral tradition), in this time period, the number of tango musicians was significantly reduced, and the tradition was no longer transmitted in the way it had been for the first eighty or so years of its history.<sup>28</sup> The musician most associated with the period was Astor Piazzolla, an iconoclast who attained global fame in the 60s and 70s and who, despite his

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<sup>27</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 53.

<sup>28</sup> Serafini, “Yeites,” 344.

background in traditional tango, introduced many elements from jazz and classical music in a mission to modernize the tango. Alongside Piazzolla were two other composers associated with this period of *vanguardia*: Eduardo Rovira and Horacio Salgán. Despite their artistic endeavours and accomplishments, tango nonetheless underwent a serious decline in this period.

### **Tango de hoy (1990-present)**

The past thirty years have been marked by a tango renaissance. This process began with the enormously popular show *Tango argentino*, which first began in Paris in 1983 before enjoying success on Broadway in New York and in Japan, initiating a global interest in tango dancing (and music).<sup>29</sup> Musically, though the process of renewal generally ended around the time of the death of Astor Piazzolla in 1992, the inception of training programs such as the Escuela de Música Popular de Avellaneda in 1986, Rotterdam Conservatory in 1993, Orquesta Escuela de Tango Emilio Balcarce in 2000, and others, lead to a renewed interest in older periods of tango music.<sup>30</sup> A new generation of musicians expressed an interest in the tango; now there are many composers such as Julián Peralta, Ramiro Gallo, Diego Schissi, Sonia Posetti, ensembles such as El Arranque, Astillero, Juan Pablo Navarro Sexteto, and pedagogues such as Paulina Fain, Ramiro Gallo, Guillermo Rubino and Ignacio Varchausky, all dedicated to restoring and enriching the tango tradition.

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<sup>29</sup> Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 73; Simon Collier, Artemis Cooper, María Susana Azzi and Richard Martin, *¡Tango!: The Dance, the Song, the Story* (Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1995), 186; Héctor Benedetti, *Nueva historia del tango*, 263.

<sup>30</sup> Serafini, “Yeites,” 343-344.

## Appendix C

### Discographies of Violinists

#### Discography of Ernesto Ponzio<sup>1</sup>

| Year | Orchestra Name                            | Piece                | Composer           | Film    | Recording available |
|------|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------|
| 1933 | Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán | Don Juan             | Ernesto Ponzio     | ¡Tango! | x                   |
| 1933 | Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán | El entrerriano       | Rosendo Mendizábal | ¡Tango! | x                   |
| 1933 | Orquesta de la Guardia Vieja Ponzio-Bazán | Yo soy así p'al amor | Lalo Etchegoncelay | ¡Tango! | x                   |

#### Discography of José Bonano<sup>2</sup>

| Year | Orchestra Name               | Piece     | Composer        | Label    | Matrix number | Recording available |
|------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El caburé | Arturo De Bassi | Columbia | 56604         | x                   |

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<sup>1</sup> Discographic information was compiled from: Fueye Querido. "El pibe Ernesto," 147.

<sup>2</sup> Discographic information was compiled from *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Orquesta Típica Juan Maglio ("Pacho")," accessed 15 November 2024, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/114057>; Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*, 79, 89, 134; "Cuarteto Típico Criolla 'La Armonía'," Discogs, accessed 16 November 2024, [https://www.discogs.com/artist/8238380-Cuarteto-Típico-Criollo-La-Armonía?srltid=AfmBOorddBWojSLWznqk1EuIjVQxGO9\\_OiIA4tUiEVUM6DWVvsXBN6t](https://www.discogs.com/artist/8238380-Cuarteto-Típico-Criollo-La-Armonía?srltid=AfmBOorddBWojSLWznqk1EuIjVQxGO9_OiIA4tUiEVUM6DWVvsXBN6t); "Homenaje a la Guardia Vieja del tango 1913-1916," El tango y sus invitados, accessed 16 November 2024, <https://www.eltangoysusinvitados.com/2015/06/homenaje-la-guardia-vieja-del-tango.html>. It is not known when Bonano left the Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho". According to the *Antología del tango rioplatense*, all Pacho's musicians left the ensemble in 1913 to form the Armonía orchestra. I have, however, listed Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"'s 1913 recordings here; I was only able to access two recordings from 1913 (*Zamba* and *Flor de zanahoria*) and Bonano's *violín corneta* can be heard on both recordings.

| Year | Orchestra Name               | Piece                | Composer            | Label    | Matrix number | Recording available |
|------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La catrera           | Arturo De Bassi     | Columbia | 56605         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Armenonville         | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56606         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Independencia        | Alfredo Bevilacqua  | Columbia | 56607         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Emancipación         | Alfredo Bevilacqua  | Columbia | 56608         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Un copetín           | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56609         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La casita            | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56610         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Viento en popa       | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56611         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Recuerdos            | Domingo Santa Cruz  | Columbia | 56612         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Siga la farra        | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56613         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Unión cívica         | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56614         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Cuasi nada           | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56615         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El zurdo             | Juan Maglio         | Columbia | 56616         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Aires criollos       | Domingo Santa Cruz  | Columbia | 56617         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Tan delicaio el niño | Ángel Villoldo      | Columbia | 56627         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | De vuelta al pago    | Armando Chimenti    | Columbia | 56628         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Don Pedro            | Ángel Villoldo      | Columbia | 56629         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Sarita               | Carlos Macchi       | Columbia | 56630         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Las siete palabras   | Ambrosio Radrizzani | Columbia | 56631         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Si me querés decíme  | C. Posadas          | Columbia | 56632         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Recordándote         | Gerardo Metallo     | Columbia | 56633         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | No hay plata         | José Guardó         | Columbia | 56727         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Una fija             | Ángel Villoldo      | Columbia | 56728         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El chiche            | L. Cimino           | Columbia | 56729         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Marconi              | Alfredo Bevilacqua  | Columbia | 56730         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El toto              | Carlos Posadas      | Columbia | 56731         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Iguala y larga       | Carlos Posadas      | Columbia | 56732         | x                   |

| Year | Orchestra Name               | Piece                  | Composer           | Label    | Matrix number | Recording available |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La taquera             | Carlos Minotti     | Columbia | 56733         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El gringo              | Carlos Posadas     | Columbia | 56735         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Ofelia                 | M. A. Torres       | Columbia | 56736         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Juan Carlos            | Jaime V. Casalins  | Columbia | 56737         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Recuerdos de la pampa  | Alfredo Bevilacqua | Columbia | 56738         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Ecos del alma          | Eusebio De Miguel  | Columbia | 56739         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Siempre cariñosa       | Alberto S. Poggi   | Columbia | 56740         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Rodríguez Peña         | Vicente Greco      | Columbia | 56781         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El perverso            | Vicente Greco      | Columbia | 56782         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Entre ríos             | Bartolomé Burlando | Columbia | 56783         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Burlando               | Bartolomé Burlando | Columbia | 56784         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | A ti dedico mis flores | Luis Da Larosa     | Columbia | 56785         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El trasnochador        | Cipriano Nava      | Columbia | 56786         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | ¡Que nene!             | Vicente Greco      | Columbia | 56787         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La viruta              | Vicente Greco      | Columbia | 56788         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Carlitos               | M.A. Torres        | Columbia | 56789         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Venus                  | Alfredo Bevilacqua | Columbia | 56790         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El conquistador        | Arturo De Bassi    | Columbia | 56791         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La patota              | Carlos Minotti     | Columbia | 56792         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El orillero            | Alfredo Bevilacqua | Columbia | 56793         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Los granaderos         | Ernesto Becucci    | Columbia | 56794         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Compínche              | Roberto Firpo      | Columbia | 56795         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La chola               | Roberto Firpo      | Columbia | 56796         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Mi ñatita              | Ángel Villoldo     | Columbia | 56797         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Lluvia de oro          | Emil Waldteufel    | Columbia | 56798         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Brune ou blonde        | Emil Waldteufel    | Columbia | 56800         | x                   |

| Year | Orchestra Name               | Piece                    | Composer           | Label    | Matrix number | Recording available |
|------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Bar el popular           | Alfredo Bevilacqua | Columbia | 56802         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Très jolie               | Emil Waldteufel    | Columbia | 56803         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La plus belle            | Emil Waldteufel    | Columbia | 56804         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Les sirènes              | Emil Waldteufel    | Columbia | 56805         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Vertige                  | Rodolphe Berger    | Columbia | 56806         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Adelante los que quedan  | L. Ríos            | Columbia | 56807         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El reservado             | Carlos Macchi      | Columbia | 56808         | x                   |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Herminia                 | A. Corte Real      | Columbia | 56809         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La gaucha Manuela        | Roberto Firpo      | Columbia | 56810         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Granada                  |                    | Columbia | 57130         |                     |
| 1912 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Estilos y vidalitas      |                    | Columbia | 57174         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El cachafaz              | Manuel Aróztegui   | Columbia | 57195         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El apache argentino      | Manuel Aróztegui   | Columbia | 57196         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La tardecita             | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57197         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Jeanne                   | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57198         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Adelita                  | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57205         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | American Cirque Exelsior | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57206         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | 13                       | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57207         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El alero                 | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57208         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La machona               | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57209         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Tacuari                  | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57210         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | La chitita               | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57217         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Toma...mate              | Juan Maglio        | Columbia | 57218         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | Jagüel                   | Carlos Posadas     | Columbia | 57219         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El eléctrico             | Vicente Greco      | Columbia | 57220         |                     |
| 1913 | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho" | El espiente              | Osvaldo Fresedo    | Columbia | 57221         |                     |

| Year      | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                | Composer              | Label                     | Matrix number | Recording available |
|-----------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Chile                | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57227         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | María Celestina      | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57228         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Flor de... zanahoria | Francisco Miraglia    | Columbia                  | 57229         | x                   |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | ¿Qué plancha?        | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57232         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Corazones amantes    | Salvador Di Benedetto | Columbia                  | 57233         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | María Esther         | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57237         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Horas de hastio      | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57238         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Zamba                | Juan Maglio           | Columbia                  | 57239         | x                   |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | La taruguita         | Francisco Miraglia    | Columbia                  | 57240         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Irene                | Francisco Miraglia    | Columbia                  | 57241         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Cosas y cositas      | Francisco Miraglia    | Columbia                  | 57242         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | El amor que rie      | ?                     | Columbia                  | 57249         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | ¿Quién dijo yo?      | Carlos Minotti        | Columbia                  | 57250         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | La pebetita          | Francisco Miraglia    | Columbia                  | 57251         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Amor eterno          | Carlos Minotti        | Columbia                  | 57252         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | ¿Antes o después?    | Carlos Minotti        | Columbia                  | 57264         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Soko                 | John Arnols           | Columbia                  | 57265         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Bajo los sauces      | Carlos Minotti        | Columbia                  | 57267         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Dos almas en una     | Carlos Minotti        | Columbia                  | 57268         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Retirao              | Carlos Posadas        | Columbia                  | 57312         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | Cuarteto Pacho       | Mauricio Sorin        | Columbia                  | 57314         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | El flaco             | Carlos Posadas        | Columbia                  | 57315         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | El simpático         | Carlos Posadas        | Columbia                  | 57316         |                     |
| 1913      | Cuarteto Juan Maglio "Pacho"       | As de oro            | ?                     | Columbia                  | 57317         |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | Andresito            | Carlos Macchi         | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3036          |                     |

| Year      | Orchestra Name                     | Piece               | Composer          | Label                     | Matrix number | Recording available |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | De mi pago          | José Bonano       | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3038          |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | Susana              | Leopoldo Thompson | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3045          |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | El jagüel           | Carlos Posadas    | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 7018          | x                   |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | Limay               | Leopoldo Thompson | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | ?             |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | El apache argentino | Manuel Aróztegui  | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | ?             |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | Pepino              | Carlos Macchi     | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3037          |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | El desastre         | José Bonano       | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3040          |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | Hora triste         | Hora Triste       | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | 3040          |                     |
| 1913-1914 | Cuarteto Típico Criollo La Armonía | San Isidro          | Carlos Macchi     | Tocasolo Sin Rival/Sonora | ?             |                     |



### Discography of David “Tito” Roccatagliata<sup>1</sup>

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                             | Composer            | Label    | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | La tiranita                       | Pedro Sofia         | Columbia | 57132              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | ¡¡Qué gran país!!                 | Esther Isable Seone | Columbia | 57133              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | La picarona                       | Juan I. Pardal      | Columbia | 57134              | x                   |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | La despedida                      | Genaro Espósito     | Columbia | 57166              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | Gente de bien                     | Orfeo Del Giudice   | Columbia | 57167              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | Ché bueno, y cómo te fué          | Antonio Lagomarsino | Columbia | 57170              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | Alsina                            | Antonio Lagomarsino | Columbia | 57171              |                     |
| 1912      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | La montura                        | Genaro Espósito     | Columbia | 57185              | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | Siempre juntitos                  | Roberto Firpo       | Columbia | 57168-1            | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica de Genaro Espósito | El rezagado                       | Orfeo Del Giudice   | Columbia | 57169-1            | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas     | 25 de mayo                        | Eduardo Arolas      | Odeon    | BA099/533-B        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas     | Aclamación                        | Emil Waldeufel      | Odeon    | BA???              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas     | Aires y bailes populares criollos | ?                   | Odeon    | BA161/535-B        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas     | Delia                             | Eduardo Arolas      | Odeon    | BA007/530-B        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas     | Desalojo de bulín                 | Eduardo Arolas      | Odeon    | BA???/534-B        |                     |

<sup>1</sup> Discographic information was compiled from: Enrique Binda, *Los primeros 25 años*; Marina Cañardo, *Fábricas de músicas*; Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Eduardo Arolas, 1913-1917,” Academia.edu, accessed 3 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/61806577/Discografia\\_de\\_Eduardo\\_Arolas\\_1913\\_1917\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/61806577/Discografia_de_Eduardo_Arolas_1913_1917_por_Enrique_Binda); “Discografía Eduardo Arolas,” Tangos 78 RPM, accessed 3 February 2024, <https://www.tangos78rpm.com/mdocs-posts/discografia-eduardo-arolas/>; Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Genaro Espósito 1912-1918,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/61806781/Discografia\\_de\\_Genaro\\_Espósito\\_1912\\_1918\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/61806781/Discografia_de_Genaro_Espósito_1912_1918_por_Enrique_Binda); Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Roberto Firpo 1912-1920,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/84976294/Discografia\\_de\\_Roberto\\_Firpo\\_1912\\_20\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/84976294/Discografia_de_Roberto_Firpo_1912_20_por_Enrique_Binda); Enrique Binda, “Discografía de la OT Select,” Academia.edu, accessed 4 February 2024, [https://www.academia.edu/63294009/Discografia\\_de\\_la\\_OT\\_Select\\_por\\_Enrique\\_Binda](https://www.academia.edu/63294009/Discografia_de_la_OT_Select_por_Enrique_Binda); “Osvaldo Fresedo – Discography,” GuardiaVieja.org, accessed 4 September 2024, <https://tangodiscography.blogspot.com/2023/04/osvaldo-fresedo-discography.html>.

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                 | Piece                 | Composer              | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El alba               | Eduardo Arolas        | Odeon | BA138              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El atareado           | Stockle               | Odeon | BA120/535-A        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El compadrito         | Ángel Di Girolamo     | Odeon | BA???/537-B        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El contrapunto        | Francisco Famiglietti | Odeon | BA???/536-B        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El entrerriano        | Rosendo Mendizábal    | Odeon | BA130/534-A        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El maizal             | Ángel F. Riganti      | Odeon | BA121/535-B        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El pito de parra      | Verona                | Odeon | BA164/538-A        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | El ratero             | Ángel Di Girolamo     | Odeon | BA127              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Elisa                 | Marino García         | Odeon | BA106              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Eres fiel             | NN                    | Odeon | BA126              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Estoy penando         | Vicente Greco         | Odeon | BA???/531-B        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Gran muñeca           | Alfredo Bevilaqua     | Odeon | BA003/532-A        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Hermosa primavera     | Pedro Assereto        | Odeon | BA125/580          |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Jeanne                | Juan Pujol            | Odeon | BA129              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Lágrimas y sonrisas   | Pascual De Gullo      | Odeon | BA095/582          | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Las siete palabras    | Prudencio Aragón      | Odeon | BA006/532-B        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Mefistófeles          | Eduardo Arolas        | Odeon | BA???              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Mi pensamiento        | Pedro Assereto        | Odeon | BA124/580          |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Naju                  | Juan Pujol            | Odeon | BA???/536-A        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Pabellón de las rosas | José Felipetti        | Odeon | BA098/582          | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Qué hacés Arolita     | Ruíz Fernández        | Odeon | BA140              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Recordándote          | Gerardo Metallo       | Odeon | BA096              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Rey de los bordoneos  | Eduardo Arolas        | Odeon | BA005/533-A        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Sarita                | Carlos Macchi         | Odeon | BA136              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Una noche de Garufa   | Eduardo Arolas        | Odeon | BA002              | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Viejo gaucho          | Eduardo Arolas        | Odeon | BA???/537-A        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Viento en popa        | Rosendo Mendizábal    | Odeon | BA???/531-A        |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Centenario            | Roberto Firpo         | JBT   | 8743c              |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas | Curda completa        | Roberto Firpo         | JBT   | 8745c              | x                   |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                        | Piece                    | Composer                     | Label   | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | El 14 de Suipacha        | Eduardo Arolas               | JBT     | 8738c              | x                   |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | El bohemio               | Ángel Villoldo               | JBT     | 8739c              |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | El choclo                | Ángel Villoldo               | JBT     | 8742c              | x                   |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | El perverso              | Vicente Greco                | JBT     | 8741c              |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Germaine                 | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | JBT     | 8734c              | x                   |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | La viruta                | Vicente Greco                | JBT     | 8740c              | x                   |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Loca de amor             | Enrique Caviglia             | JBT     |                    |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Muy agradecido           | Eduardo Arolas               | JBT     | 8736c              | x                   |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Noche de farra           | Roberto Firpo                | JBT     | 8477c              |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Poupée                   | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | JBT     | 8735c              |                     |
| 1913/14   | Orquesta Típica Criolla Arolas        | Una noche de garufa      | Eduardo Arolas               | JBT     | 8733c              | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Criolla Firpo                | De pura cepa             | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon   | BA045/86000        | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Criolla Firpo                | ¿Indio? ¡Sácale el pelo! | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon   | BA086/86.125       | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Criolla Firpo                | Centenario               | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon   | BA087/86.003       | x                   |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata | Viaja a Europa           | Ángel Pastore                | Odeon   | BA066/86.132       |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata | Ponele nombre            | Ricardo Fernández            | Odeon   | BA159/86.133       |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Criolla Roccatagliata | Soñando                  | Ángel Di Fiolamo             | Odeon   | 86.235             |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Tallada                  | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 183-A/65133        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Noche de farra           | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 186-A/65147        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Curda completa           | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 186-B/65148        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Noches de frío           | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 182-A/65149        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | ¿Indio? ¡Sácale el pelo! | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 187-A/65151        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | De madrugada             | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 182-B/65152        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Viento en popa           | Rosendo Mendizábal           | Atlanta | 187-B/65155        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | El entrerriano           | Rosendo Mendizábal           | Atlanta | 183-B/65157        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | De pura cepa             | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 201-A/65166        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Sentimiento criollo      | Roberto Firpo                | Atlanta | 203-A/65167        |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo         | Siga la farra            | Oreste Metetieri             | Atlanta | 203-B/65159        |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                       | Composer                     | Label              | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Galerita                    | Eugenio L. Talasne           | Atlanta            | 181                |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Préndete del brazo, nena    | Ángel Villoldo               | Atlanta            | 181                |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La porota                   | Bernardo Germino             | Atlanta            | 201-B              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Marejada                    | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62736/8            |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma de bohemio             | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 108/19??           |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Barógrafo                   | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 65297              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Brisas del Plata            | Juan Maglio “Pacho”          | ERA                | 62399              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Cuarteto Genaro             | Gerardo Espósito             | ERA                |                    |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De madrugada                | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62377              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Didí                        | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 102/1972           |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Firpito                     | David Roccatagliata          | ERA                | 62379              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Germaine                    | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | ERA                | 62398              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Indiecita                   | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62396              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La tiranita                 | Pedro Sofia                  | ERA                |                    |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Los Guevara                 | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 108 / 109          |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Meta nomás                  | Manuel Lema                  | ERA                | 62380              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche de frío               | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                |                    |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sentimiento criollo         | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                |                    |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Siempre juntitos            | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62427              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Tallada                     | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62381              |                     |
| 1913      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Triste memoria (A Newberry) | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 62425              |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Criolla JBT   | Déjalo que se vaya          | Eduardo Arolas               | Tocasolo Sin Rival | 3.018              |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Criolla JBT   | Cusifay                     | Eduardo Arolas               | Tocasolo Sin Rival | 3.015              |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Criolla JBT   | Los hornos                  | Eduardo Arolas               | Tocasolo Sin Rival | 3.014              |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma gaucha                 | Roberto Firpo                | ERA                | 106                | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Anda quéjate                | Manuel Lema                  | ERA                | 62423              |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                       | Composer      | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El apronte                  | Roberto Firpo | ERA   | 110/1974           | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El bisturí                  | Roberto Firpo | ERA   | 107/1974           |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Toda la vida                | Roberto Firpo | ERA   | 105/1972           |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El amanecer                 | Roberto Firpo | ERA   | 101                |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De pura cepa                | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 045/500-A       | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De madrugada                | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 048             | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Argañaraz (Aquellas farras) | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 037/900-        |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Centenario                  | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 087/520-B       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De pura cepa                | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 113/904-A       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche de Frio               | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 118/901-B       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El amanecer                 | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 329/509-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma de bohemio             | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 349/507-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Los Guevara                 | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 357/511-B          | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El amanecer                 | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 379/907-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Marejada                    | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 11x/902         |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El gallito                  | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 053/505-A       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Indiecita                   | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 050             | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sentimiento criollo         | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 3xx/501-A          | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sentimiento criollo         | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 047             |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Tallada                     | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 085             | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche de farra              | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 046             |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Argañaraz (Aquellas farras) | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 052             |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Curda completa              | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | BA 084/503-B       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Recordando lo pasado        | Roberto Firpo | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De mi flor                  | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 329                | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Barógrafo                   | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 3xx                | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Max Linder                  | M.C. Firpo    | Odeon | 308/507-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma de bohemio             | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 309/507-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El apronte                  | Roberto Firpo | Odeon | 332/511-A          |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece               | Composer                     | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Marejada            | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | BA 049/502-A       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Arhancet            | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El gallito          | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | BA 053/505-A       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Indiecita           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 3xx/501-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche de farra      | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | BA 115/903-A       |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noches de frio      | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 363/525-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | A Newbery           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 3x0                |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma gaucha         | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 353a/517-B         |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Champagne tango     | Manuel Gregorio Aróztegui    | Odeon | 354/517-A          | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Corazón de artista  | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 338/513-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Despedida           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Didi                | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 545/510-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El bisturí          | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 348/512-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El flete            | Vicente Greco                | Odeon | 337                | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El horizonte        | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 333                |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El Solitario        | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 340/509-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Entre dos fuegos    | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | Odeon | 335/513-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Fuegos artificiales | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 269/519-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Germaine            | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | Odeon | 325                | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La biyuya           | L. J. Labissier              | Odeon | 365/523-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La gigolette        | Manuel Aróztegui             | Odeon | 351/514-A          | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La rambla           | Manuel Aróztegui             | Odeon |                    | x                   |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche de frio       | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 363/523-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Que salga el toro   | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 519-B              |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Racing Club         | Vicente Greco                | Odeon | 358/518-A          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Robertito           | Manuel Lema                  | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Siempre juntitos    | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon |                    |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                         | Composer                   | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Toda la vida                  | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 334/510-B          |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Triste memoria (A Newberry)   | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1914      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Una pena                      | Adolfo Rosquellas          | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sueño de virgen               | Pascual De Gullo           | Odeon | BA 130/470-B       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Jamais trop                   | O. Frey                    | Odeon | BA 121/471-A       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El apronte                    | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 511(2)             |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sueño florido                 | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 529-A              |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Mi bandera                    | Pepe y Nicolás             | Odeon | BA 137/529-B       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Amor fugaz                    | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | BA 108/472-B       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Bon Soir                      | Manuel Aróztegui           | Odeon | BA 092/472-A       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El albaicín                   | J. Fellu                   | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El flete                      | Vicente Greco              | Odeon | 337                |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | En el desierto                | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 356/525-A          |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Firpito                       | David Roccatagliata        | Odeon | 362/524-B          |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Homero                        | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 527-A              |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Lágrimas y sonrisas           | Pascual Del Gullo          | Odeon | 367/525-B          |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Los dos corazones             | B. Capria                  | Odeon | BA 139/528-B       |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noche calurosa                | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | 343/524-A          |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Pabellón de las rosas         | José Felipetti             | Odeon | 372/526-B          |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Pochita                       | J. L. Labissier            | Odeon | 528-A              |                     |
| 1915      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sonny Boy                     | De Sylva; Brown; Henderson | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Lo que está bien... está bien | Roberto Firpo              | Odeon | BA 116/493-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La guitarrita                 | Eduardo Arolas             | Odeon | BA 102/493-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El tío soltero                | Juan Maglio "Pacho"        | Odeon | 107/478-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La revoltosa                  | Francisco Lomuto           | Odeon | 110/477-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Quién te iguala               | Michetti                   | Odeon | 111/477-B          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El pajarito                   | G. Condomi                 | Odeon | BA 087/490-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Anatomía                      | Eduardo Arolas             | Odeon | BA 114/490-B       |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                                     | Composer               | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La mano que aprieta                       | Horacio Mackintosh     | Odeon | BA 112/492-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El botija                                 | Juan Carlos Cobián     | Odeon | BA 127/492-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Ando pato                                 | Juan Maglio “Pacho”    | Odeon | 81/494             | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Royal Pigall (Qué has hecho de mi cariño) | Juan Maglio “Pacho”    | Odeon | 80/494-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De mi flor                                | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 307/506-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Alma de bohemio                           | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 349/507-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El amanecer                               | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 329/509-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Didí                                      | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 330/510-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Toda la Vida                              | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 334/510-B          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El solitario                              | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 340/509-B          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Las tres de la mañana                     | G. Robledo             | Odeon | 158-2/440-A        |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Très moutarde                             | Cecil Macklin          | Odeon | BA 124/470-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Flor de una noche                         | Pedro Datta            | Odeon | 55/476-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Azucenas                                  | Aurillaga              | Odeon | 54/476-B           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De raza                                   | Vicente Greco          | Odeon | 479-A              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Cura segura                               | Juan De Díos Filiberto | Odeon | 59/479-B           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Se acabó la yeta                          | R. González            | Odeon | 60/481             |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El ñanduti                                | Domingo Salero         | Odeon | 56/482             |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El pangaré                                | Carlos Gardel          | Odeon | 58/482             |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sans souci                                | Enrique Delfino        | Odeon | 44/483             | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Cara sucia                                | Francisco Canaro       | Odeon | 7/485-A            | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Pica pica                                 | R. Alfaro              | Odeon | 4/85-B             | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Lágrimas                                  | Eduardo Arolas         | Odeon | BA 113/486         |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La trilla                                 | Eduardo Arolas         | Odeon | BA 100/489         |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El espiente                               | Osvaldo Fresedo        | Odeon | 79/495-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El distinguido ciudadano                  | Peregrino Paulos       | Odeon | 82/495-B           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La buseca                                 | A. Ferrari             | Odeon | 496-A              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Boca Juniors Club                         | J. Quevado             | Odeon | 496-B              |                     |



| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                | Composer                     | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Montevideo           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 497-A              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De mi cosecha        | A. Rolla; A. Polito          | Odeon | 497-B              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Qué yeta             | Felipe Ferrari               | Odeon | 498-A              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Tomasito             | Peregrino Paulos             | Odeon | 498-B              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Entre dos fuegos     | Ramón Alberto López Buchardo | Odeon | 366/513-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Corazón de artista   | Pascual De Guyo              | Odeon | 338/513-B          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El flete             | Vicente Greco                | Odeon | 359/515-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Una partida          | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 360/515-B          | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Recordando lo pasado | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 369/526-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La cumparsita        | G. Matos Rodríguez           | Odeon | 45/483-B           | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | A la francesa        | Guido Pacheco Vanzina        | Odeon | BA 101/488-A       | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Club Español         | Rafael Iriarte               | Odeon | BA 103/473-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | De mi majada         | Guido Pacheco Vanzina        | Odeon | BA 104/487-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El 22 (Toto)         | J. M. Spatola                | Odeon | 481-B              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El apronte           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 332/511-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El bisturí           | Roberto Firpo                | Odeon | 377/907-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El jailefe           | Manuel Aróztegui             | Odeon | BA 105/487-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El pochocho          | Alejandro Michetti           | Odeon | BA 115/486-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Enérgica             | A. Ferrari                   | Odeon | 16/499-B           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Hasta luego          | J. Cruz Mateo                | Odeon | BA 109/474-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La gigolette         | Manuel Aróztegui             | Odeon | 361/514-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La huella            | Manuel A. Villanueva         | Odeon | 2/484-A            | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La muñequita         | Gilbert                      | Odeon | BA 126/546-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La pica              | Luis Teisseire               | Odeon | BA 116/488-B       | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La rambla            | Manuel Aróztegui             | Odeon |                    |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La rezongona         | Francisco Lomuto             | Odeon | 499-A              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La timba             | Juan Carlos Bazán            | Odeon | 61/480-B           |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                    | Composer            | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La travesía de los Andes | Pedro Datta         | Odeon | 53/475-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Las golondrinas          | Peregrino Paulos    | Odeon | BA 094/489-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Los Guevara              | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 908-B              |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Montevideo               | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 24/910-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Morfina                  | López García        | Odeon | BA 128/491-A       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Orillas de Plata         | Juan Maglio “Pacho” | Odeon | 109/475-B          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Polo norte               | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 1/484-B            |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Rawson                   | Eduardo Arolas      | Odeon | BA 107/474-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Resaca                   | Fallace             | Odeon | BA 129/491-B       |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sans souci               | Enrique Delfino     | Odeon | 44/483-A           |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sentimiento criollo      | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 3xx/501-A          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sueño de virgen          | Pascual De Gullo    | Odeon | 26a/910-N          |                     |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Va dar que hablar        | Domingo Salemo      | Odeon | BA 179/480-A       | x                   |
| 1916      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | ¿Y qué hay?              | Juan Maglio “Pacho” | Odeon | BA 106/473-N       |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Para hoy                 | Emilio Marchiano    | Odeon | 108/478-B          | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Tierra negra             | Graciano De Leone   | Odeon | 44/573-A           |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Mi noche triste          | Samuel Castriota    | Odeon | 574-A              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Qué noche                | Agustín Bardi       | Odeon | 96/555-B           |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | En la brecha             | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 103/542-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La chiflada (El silbido) | Anselmo Aieta       | Odeon | 122/562-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El loco Julio            | Vásquez             | Odeon | 145/566-A          | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El moro                  | Calos Gardel        | Odeon | 137/563-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Maldito tango            | Osmán Pérez Freire  | Odeon | 153/448-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Por buen camino          | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 134/448-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El horizonte             | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 346/512-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Retintín                 | Eduardo Arolas      | Odeon | 157/567-A          | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Vea ... vea              | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 159/567-B          | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El mareo                 | Juan Carlos Bazán   | Odeon | 154/448-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El bisturí               | Roberto Firpo       | Odeon | 348/512-A          |                     |

| Date/Year | Orchestra Name                | Piece                       | Composer               | Label | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Agua bendita                | Enrique Delfino        | Odeon | 104/542-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Ojos negros                 | Vicente Greco          | Odeon | 156/543-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Sueño florido               | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | BA 132/544-A       |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El estagiario               | M.A. Lasala Álvarez    | Odeon | BA 110/544-B       | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Lunes                       | José Luis Padula       | Odeon | 34/548-A           |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Nueve de julio (9 de julio) | José Luis Padula       | Odeon | 35/548-B           | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Triste separación           | Pascual De Gullo       | Odeon | 119/561-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Mensonges de femme          | A. Susini              | Odeon | 120/561-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El rancho                   | P. Festa               | Odeon | 121/562-B          | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Stud la Pampa               | Félix Scolatti Almeyda | Odeon | 135/563-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Imitando                    | Caldrilla              | Odeon | 123/564-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Gente fina                  | Calos Macchi           | Odeon | 126/564-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Viva el amor                | Buxton                 | Odeon | 124/565-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Re fa si                    | Enrique Delfino        | Odeon | 125/565-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Ida                         | O. Alarcón             | Odeon | 566-B              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La carcajada                | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 148/568-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Derecho viejo               | Eduardo Arolas         | Odeon | 568-B              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | A Firpo                     | Mackintosh             | Odeon | 570-A              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El pillete                  | Graciano De Leone      | Odeon | 162/570-B          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | La doma                     | Pedro Polito           | Odeon | 164/571-A          |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Y'el boyt all again         | Gumble                 | Odeon | 571-B              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Los milongueros             | A.J.D. Jones           | Odeon | 47/573-B           |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Repeluz                     | Graciano De Leone      | Odeon | 574-B              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | El entrerriano              | Rosendo Mendizábal     | Odeon | 42/577-A           | x                   |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Moras, moristas, moras      | Valverde               | Odeon | 577-B              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | American Club               | Emilio Roca            | Odeon | 578-A              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Colosal, colosal            | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 18/578-B           |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Noches orientales           | Ángel Metallo          | Odeon | 897-A              |                     |
| 1917      | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo | Polo norte                  | Roberto Firpo          | Odeon | 898-B              |                     |

| Date/Year  | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                      | Composer              | Label      | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Alma poética               | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 113/547-B          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | El genial                  | De Ambrosio           | Odeon      | 560-N              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | El talento                 | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 135/569-A          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | En la brecha               | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 103/542-A          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Homero                     | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 527-A              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Hoy y mañana               | Sciutti               | Odeon      | BA 125/546-A       |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Ivette                     | Costa Bocca           | Odeon      |                    |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | La duquesa del Bal Tabarin | Lombardo              | Odeon      | BA 123/545-A       |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | La pareja                  | Juan Maglio "Pacho"   | Odeon      | 114/560-A          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | La regalona                | Manuel Aróztegui      | Odeon      | BA 131/545-B       |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Luz mala                   | Graciano De Leone     | Odeon      | 547-A              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Ñata linda                 | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 897-B              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Olas nocturnas             | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 108/881-A          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Olas nocturnas             | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 112a/572-A         |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | The Chin... Chin           | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 579-A              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | The Coon and the Moon      | Dieson                | Odeon      | 579-B              |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Un lamento                 | Graciano De Leone     | Odeon      | 140/569-B          |                     |
| 1917       | Orquesta Típica Roberto Firpo      | Venga otro toro            | Roberto Firpo         | Odeon      | 572-B              |                     |
| 1917       | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián           | Buenos Aires tenebroso     | David Roccatagliata   | Tele-phone | 3066-A             | x                   |
| 1917       | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián           | Amoniáco                   | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Tele-phone | 3066-B             |                     |
| 1917       | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián           | La cumparsita              | G. Matos Rodríguez    | Tele-phone | 3082-A             | x                   |
| 1917       | Trio Fresedo-Tito-Cobián           | Don Pancho                 | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Tele-phone | 3082-B             | x                   |
| 24/08/1920 | Orquesta Típica Select (OT Select) | A la gran muñeca           | Jesús Ventura         | Victor     | B24403-1 / inédita | x                   |
| 24/08/1920 | OT Select                          | Curupayti                  | Augusto Pedro Berto   | Victor     | B24402-2 / 72804-B | x                   |
| 24/08/1920 | OT Select                          | Don Esteban                | Augusto Pedro Berto   | Victor     | B24401-2 / 72804-A | x                   |
| 25/08/1920 | OT Select                          | A la gran muñeca           | Jesús Ventura         | Victor     | B24403-2 / 72805-A | x                   |
| 25/08/1920 | OT Select                          | Locatelli                  | Enrique Pedro Delfino | Victor     | B24404-1 / inédita | x                   |
| 25/08/1920 | OT Select                          | Milonguita                 | Enrique Delfino       | Victor     | B24407-1 / 72811-A | x                   |
| 25/08/1920 | OT Select                          | Pablo                      | José Martínez         | Victor     | B24405-1/ 72807-A  | x                   |

| Date/Year  | Orchestra Name | Piece                     | Composer                  | Label  | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 25/08/1920 | OT Select      | Sábado inglés             | Juan Maglio               | Victor | B24406-1 / 72808-A | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Corrientes y Esmeralda    | Enrique Pedro Delfino     | Victor | B24411-1/ 72896-B  | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Curupayti                 | Augusto Pedro Berto       | Victor | B24402-2/ inédita  | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Mala sangre               | Osvaldo Fresedo           | Victor | B24415-1 / 72805-B | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Melgarejo                 | Antonio Scatasso          | Victor | B24414-1/72832-B   | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Nobleza de arrabal        | Francisco Canaro          | Victor | B24408-2/72810-B   | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Nueve puntos              | Francisco Canaro          | Victor | B24413-1/72832-A   | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | Panchito                  | Osvaldo Fresedo           | Victor | B24409-1/72808-B   | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | San Fernando              | Francisco Pracánico       | Victor | B24412-1/72896-A   | x                   |
| 26/08/1920 | OT Select      | ¡Tiene la palabra!        | Vicente Greco             | Victor | B24410-1/72806-B   | x                   |
| 27/08/1920 | OT Select      | Don Eduardo               | David Roccatagliata       | Victor | B24416-1/72811-B   | x                   |
| 27/08/1920 | OT Select      | Va cayendo gente al baile | Francisco & Julio De Caro | Victor | B24417-1/inédita   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | Color de rosa             | Antonio & Pedro Polito    | Victor | B24421-1/72833-A   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | La mimosa                 | Ricardo González          | Victor | B24419-1/72899-B   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | Por ti llore              | Samuel Castriota          | Victor | B24420-1/72810-A   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | ¡Que...Papita!            | Juan Rodríguez            | Victor | B24423-1/72898-B   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | Quinta esencia            | Francisco Lomuto          | Victor | B24418-2/72901-A   | x                   |
| 28/08/1920 | OT Select      | Viborita                  | Eduardo Arolas            | Victor | B24422-1/72962     | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | El rodeo                  | Agustín Bardi             | Victor | B24428-1/72897-B   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | El sexto                  | Osvaldo Fresedo           | Victor | B24426-1/72809-B   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Entrada libre             | Luis Teisseire            | Victor | B24430-1/72895-A   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Entrada prohibida         | Luis Teisseire            | Victor | B24424-1/72895-B   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | La gallega                | David Roccatagliata       | Victor | B24431-1/72834-B   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Locatelli                 | Enrique Delfino           | Victor | B24404-3/72806-A   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Muñequita                 | Francisco Lomuto          | Victor | B24425-1/72835-B   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Pa' mi solito             | Juan Rodríguez            | Victor | B24427-1/72963-A   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Sin querencia             | Enrique Delfino           | Victor | B24429-1/72964-A   | x                   |
| 30/08/1920 | OT Select      | Va cayendo gente al baile | Francisco & Julio De Caro | Victor | B24417-2/72900-A   | x                   |

| Date/Year  | Orchestra Name          | Piece                 | Composer                           | Label  | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | Belén                 | Augusto Pedro Berto                | Victor | B24433-1/72836-A   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | De la vida milonguera | Augusto Pedro Berto                | Victor | B24438-1/inédita   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | El matecito           | Osvaldo Fresedo                    | Victor | B24434-1/72837-B   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | El selecto            | Ricardo González                   | Victor | B24439-1/72964-B   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | Ilusión               | Manuel Pizarro                     | Victor | B24435-1/inédita   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | La cotorrita          | Samuel Castriota                   | Victor | B24437-1/72807-B   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | ¡Qué noche!           | Agustín Bardi                      | Victor | B24432-1/72809-A   | x                   |
| 31/08/1920 | OT Select               | Un palpito            | Fidel Del Negro                    | Victor | B24436-1/72900-B   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | Anasagasti            | Francisco Canaro                   | Victor | B24443-1/72965-A   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | Criollo viejo         | Osvaldo Fresedo                    | Victor | B24441-1/72833-B   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | De la vida milonguera | Augusto Berto                      | Victor | B24438-3/72836-B   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | El Marne              | Eduardo Arolas                     | Victor | B24440-1/72835-A   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | El pirata             | Francisco Canaro                   | Victor | B24444-1/72963-B   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | El taura              | Agustín Bardi                      | Victor | B24445-1/inédita   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | Ilusión               | Manuel Pizarro                     | Victor | B24435-2/72897-A   | x                   |
| 01/09/1920 | OT Select               | Lengua 'e trapo       | Bernardo Germino                   | Victor | B24442-1/72898-A   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | Alma cansada          | Fidel Del Negro & Bernardo Germino | Victor | B24450-1/72899-A   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | De vuelta al bulín    | Jose Martínez                      | Victor | B24446-1/72834-A   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | El paria              | Juan Rosito                        | Victor | B24449-1/72901-B   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | El taura              | Agustín Bardi                      | Victor | B24445-2/72837-A   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | Lepanto               | José Martínez                      | Victor | B24447-3/72965-B   | x                   |
| 02/09/1920 | OT Select               | Munyinga              | Arturo Vicente De Bassi            | Victor | B24448-1/72962     | x                   |
| 20/04/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Firulete              | Raúl Galmarini                     | Victor | BA-43-5/73368-B    | x                   |
| 24/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Mi refugio            | Juan Carlos Cobián                 | Victor | BA-44-9/73368-A    | x                   |
| 26/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Siete pelos           | Osvaldo Fresedo                    | Victor | BA-45-9/73367-A    | x                   |
| 20/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Snobismo              | Juan Carlos Cobián                 | Victor | BA-48-1/73367-B    | x                   |
| 08/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Sangre azul           | Manlio Francia                     | Victor | BA-57-1/73410      | x                   |
| 23/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Firpo                 | Adolfo R. Avilés                   | Victor | BA-59-2/73413      |                     |

| Date/Year  | Orchestra Name          | Piece                    | Composer              | Label  | Matrix/Disc Number | Recording available |
|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 23/05/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Lina                     | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-61-3/73414-A    | x                   |
| 21/07/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Elegante papirusa        | David Roccatagliata   | Victor | BA-85-4/73508-A    | x                   |
| 15/07/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Mario                    | Juan Carlos Cobián    | Victor | BA-86-1/73514      |                     |
| 15/07/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Gracia porteña           | Salvado Merico        | Victor | BA-87-2/73514      |                     |
| 21/07/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Penando                  | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-88-1/73511-A    | x                   |
| 08/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Razón 5a                 | Eduardo Bianco        | Victor | BA-89-3/73511-B    | x                   |
| 11/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | La copa del olvido       | Enrique Delfino       | Victor | BA-99-2/73506      | x                   |
| 25/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Los dopados              | Juan Carlos Cobián    | Victor | BA-105-3/73552-A   | x                   |
| 25/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | ¡Almita herida!          | Juan Carlos Cobián    | Victor | BA-112-2/73558-A   | x                   |
| 25/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | En Galicia hay una niña  | Enrique Maciel        | Victor | BA-113-2/73557-A   | x                   |
| 25/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | El cisne                 | José María Rizzuti    | Victor | BA-115-2/73558-B   | x                   |
| 25/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Solozos                  | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-104-5/73517-A   | x                   |
| 28/08/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Beso de muerte           | Osmán Pérez Freire    | Victor | BA-107-2/7317-B    | x                   |
| 20/09/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Peligro oculto           | A. A. Loduca          | Victor | BA-116-2/73611-A   | x                   |
| 04/10/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Sol y sombra             | Manlio Francia        | Victor | BA-128-2/73611-B   | x                   |
| 24/10/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Elvirita                 | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-150-5/73702-A   | x                   |
| 09/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Fuego lento              | Manlio Francia        | Victor | BA-155-2/73671-B   | x                   |
| 09/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Ta-te-ti                 | José María Rizzuti    | Victor | BA-156-1/73671-A   | x                   |
| 15/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | El chinchorro            | N. Ferrazzano         | Victor | BA-166-1/73672     | x                   |
| 15/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Reflejos                 | Julián Dibasto        | Victor | BA-167-2/73672     | x                   |
| 27/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | De buen agüero           | L. Piva y H. Piva     | Victor | BA-170-1/73711-B   |                     |
| 27/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Modulando                | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-171-2/73711-A   |                     |
| 28/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | La muñeca                | José María Rizzuti    | Victor | BA-172-1/73702-B   |                     |
| 27/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Por fin solos            | Osvaldo Fresedo       | Victor | BA-179-2/7313-A    | x                   |
| 11/12/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | Queja campera            | Manlio Francia        | Victor | BA-180-2/73772-A   |                     |
| 27/11/1922 | Sexteto Osvaldo Fresedo | ¡Qué rubia papá!         | Lia Acuña de Andreoni | Victor | BA-181-2/73713-B   |                     |
| 7/1/1925   | Orquesta Scatasso       | Traiga un veneno, garçon | Francisco Paya        | Victor | BA-557             | x                   |
| 9/1/1925   | Orquesta Scatasso       | Perdida                  | González d'Andrea     | Victor | BA-554             | x                   |
| 6/3/1925   | Orquesta Scatasso       | Traiga un veneno, garçon | Francisco Paya        | Victor | BA-558             | x                   |

| <b>Date/Year</b> | <b>Orchestra Name</b> | <b>Piece</b>      | <b>Composer</b>            | <b>Label</b> | <b>Matrix/Disc Number</b> | <b>Recording available</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6/3/1925         | Orquesta Scatasso     | Alicia            | Juan Carlos Marambio Catán | Victor       | BA-559                    | x                          |
| 14/4/1925        | Orquesta Scatasso     | Saber vivir       | M. Pereyra                 | Victor       | BA-574                    |                            |
| 14/4/1925        | Orquesta Scatasso     | Corazón de piedra | Carlos Royos               | Victor       | BA-575                    |                            |
| Spring 1925      | Orquesta Scatasso     | Un real al 69     | Salvador Granata           | Victor       | BA-596                    |                            |
| Spring 1925      | Orquesta Scatasso     | Triste regreso    | Antonio Tanturi            | Victor       | BA-597                    |                            |
| Spring 1925      | Orquesta Scatasso     | Chichita          | G. Galluci                 | Victor       | BA-598                    | x                          |
| Spring 1925      | Orquesta Scatasso     | Virgencita        | Fabiano Lozano             | Victor       | BA-599                    | x                          |
| 10/6/1925        | Orquesta Scatasso     | Hola... señorita  | Antonio De Bassi           | Victor       | BA-601                    | x                          |
| 26/5/1925        | Orquesta Scatasso     | Buen amigo        | Julio De Caro              | Victor       | BA-602                    | x                          |



### Discography of Julio De Caro (1923-1934)<sup>1</sup>

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece           | Composer                      | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 05/02/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Polola          | Hugo Rizzi                    | Victor       | BA 206-1      | 73788-B     |
| 06/02/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Una droga       | Juan Carlos Cobián            | Victor       | BA 207-2      | 73788-A     |
| 06/02/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | ¡No me olvides! | Juan Carlos Durán             | Victor       | BA 208-2      | 73794-B     |
| 06/02/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Carita de ángel | Julio De Caro                 | Victor       | BA 209-2      | 73837-A     |
| 09/02/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | La tirana       | Benjamín Tagle Lara           | Victor       | BA 212-2      | 73794-A     |
| 16/03/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | La machona      | Julio De Caro (José De Caro?) | Victor       | BA 246-2      | 73860-B     |
| 22/03/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Sea breve       | Juan Carlos Cobián            | Victor       | BA 254-2      | 73860-A     |
| 27/03/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Plata vieja     | Alejandro Rolla               | Victor       | BA 261-2      | 73862-A     |
| 27/03/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Shusheta        | Juan Carlos Cobián            | Victor       | BA 261-2      | 73862-A     |
| 13/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Adoración       | Eduardo Bianco                | Victor       | BA 256-6      | 73919-A     |
| 23/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | La gringuita    | Luis D'Andrea                 | Victor       | BA 263-2      | 73919-A     |
| 06/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Astor           | Julio De Caro (José De Caro?) | Victor       | BA 266-2      | 73919-B     |
| 06/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Mancha negra    | Lorenzo Oliveri               | Victor       | BA 267-2      | 73970-B     |
| 13/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | La tipa         | Enrique Maciel                | Victor       | BA 273-1      | 73916-B     |
| 26/07/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Gaucho lindo    | Julián Dibasto                | Victor       | BA 274-6      | 77154-A     |
| 03/05/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Mala racha      | Astor Bolognini               | Victor       | BA 279-2      | 73970-A     |
| 23/04/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Virginia        | Lia Acuna de Andreoni         | Victor       | BA 280-1      | 73995-B     |

<sup>11</sup> I had access to all these recordings. Discographic information was compiled from: Nicolás Lefcovich, *Estudio de la discografía de Julio De Caro*; Marino E. Ricardi, *Discografía de Julio De Caro y su orquesta*; Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Juan Carlos Cobián 1917-1944;” and Enrique Binda, “Discografía de Julio De Caro.” I have only listed De Caro’s discography through 1934.

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece           | Composer                              | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 23/05/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Piropos         | Juan Carlos Cobián                    | Victor       | BA 282-2      | 73995-A     |
| 23/05/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Besos brujos    | H. Revagliatta                        | Victor       | BA 285-3      | 73989-A     |
| 23/05/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | El pirata       | N. Ferrazzano                         | Victor       | BA 286-1      | 73989-B     |
| 23/05/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Los picazos     | B. Solari Paravicini                  | Victor       | BA 293-1      | 77022-A     |
| 14/06/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Mujer           | J. C. Cobián                          | Victor       | BA 307-2      | 77022-B     |
| 25/07/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Locura          | A. Guerama                            | Victor       | BA 308-3      | 77154-B     |
| 17/07/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Uvita           | Lorenzo Oliveri                       | Victor       | BA 337-2      | 77103-A     |
| 17/07/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Cantos rodados  | N. Ferrazzano                         | Victor       | BA 338-1      | 77103-B     |
| 25/07/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Cholita         | Eugenio Nobile                        | Victor       | BA 341-1      | 77227-A     |
| 09/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Alma de mujer   | Guillermo Cavazza                     | Victor       | BA 341-3      | 77158-B     |
| 09/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Olvidando       | Manuela Tessera de Marturet           | Victor       | BA 363-1      | 77187-A     |
| 14/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Floreal         | Paquita Bernardo                      | Victor       | BA 364-3      | 77187-B     |
| 09/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Campo ajeno     | Fausto Frontera                       | Victor       | BA 365-1      | 77227-B     |
| 13/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Viaje al norte  | Juan Carlos Cobián                    | Victor       | BA 366-2      | 77258-A     |
| 13/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Tierra andalusa | Huni Haimo                            | Victor       | BA 367-2      | 77258-B     |
| 13/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | La confesión    | Julio De Caro                         | Victor       | BA 368-1      | 77261-A     |
| 14/08/1923 | Orquesta Típica Juan Carlos Cobián | Tapete verde    | Lorenzo Oliveri                       | Victor       | BA 371-2      | 77261-B     |
| 1924       | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Todo corazón    | Julio De Caro & José María Ruffet     | Victor       | BA 515-1      | 79508-B     |
| 1924       | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Pobre Margot    | Julio De Caro                         | Victor       | BA 516-1      | 79512-A     |
| 11/12/1924 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mis lágrimas    | Pedro Maffia                          | Victor       | BA 530-2      | 79519-A     |
| 11/12/1924 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Picardías       | Luis Petrucelli                       | Victor       | BA 531-3      | 79519-B     |
| 11/12/1924 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Triste          | Francisco De Caro & Pedro Maffia      | Victor       | BA 526-6      | 79520-B     |
| 12/05/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Volverás        | Ramon Collazzo & Victor Soliño        | Victor       | BA 591-1      | 79553-B     |
| 12/05/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Buen amigo      | Julio De Caro & Carlos Marambio Catan | Victor       | BA 592-1      | 79553-A     |
| 12/05/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Un silencio     | Antonio Romano & Alberto Celenza      | Victor       | BA 603-2      | 79548-A     |

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Orchestra Name</b>   | <b>Piece</b>       | <b>Composer</b>                          | <b>Record label</b> | <b>Matrix number</b> | <b>Disc number</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 27/05/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La tranquera       | Cipriano Nava                            | Victor              | BA 604-3             | 79548-B            |
| 19/06/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Pura maña          | Pedro Maffia                             | Victor              | BA 612-2             | 79561-A            |
| 19/06/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El rebelde         | Pedro Laurenz, Emilio Marchiano          | Victor              | BA 611-2             | 79561-B            |
| 23/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El monito          | Julio De Caro & Carlos Marambio Catan    | Victor              | BA 672-2             | 79569-A            |
| 23/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Puras plumas       | Edgardo Donato & Victor Soliño           | Victor              | BA 630-2             | 79569-B            |
| 29/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Piramidal          | Enrique Roque                            | Victor              | BA 638-2             | 79576-A            |
| 29/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Dolor              | Díaz Cépeda & Pérez Mores                | Victor              | BA 639-2             | 79576-B            |
| 29/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Blanquita          | Lancellotti                              | Victor              | BA 640-1             | 79577-A            |
| 29/07/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Nobleza            | Alfredo Bevilacqua                       | Victor              | BA 631-2             | 79577-B            |
| 02/09/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Atilio Pelossi     | D'Andrada                                | Victor              | BA 651-3             | 79584-B            |
| 02/09/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Sobre el pucho     | Jose González Castillo & Sebastián Piana | Victor              | BA 652-2             | 79584-A            |
| 21/09/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Muchacho           | Edgardo Donato, Esteban Celedonio Flores | Victor              | BA 662-1             | 79590-B            |
| 21/09/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Te perdono         | Julio De Caro & Pedro Maffia             | Victor              | BA 663-3             | 79590-A            |
| 13/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Beba               | Edgardo Donato                           | Victor              | BA 676-3             | 79595-A            |
| 13/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El abrojoito       | Luis Bernstein & Jesús Fernández Blanco  | Victor              | BA 677-2             | 79595-B            |
| 22/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mujercita triste   | Prospero Cimaglia                        | Victor              | BA 685-2             | 79599-B            |
| 22/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Corazoncito de oro | Edgardo Donato                           | Victor              | BA 684-1             | 79599-A            |
| 22/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La farándula       | Julio De Caro                            | Victor              | BA 686-2             | 79600-A            |
| 22/10/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Canillita          | Carlos Pibernat                          | Victor              | BA 687-3             | 79600-B            |
| 05/11/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Un sueño           | E. Calandrelli                           | Victor              | BA 700-3             | 79607-B            |
| 05/11/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mocosita           | G. Matos Rodríguez & Victor Soliño       | Victor              | BA 701-1             | 79607-A            |
| 17/11/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Una limosnita      | Antonio Cipolla                          | Victor              | BA 708-2             | 79611-A            |
| 17/11/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Huesito            | J. Rostas                                | Victor              | BA 709-2             | 79611-B            |
| 01/12/1925  | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Horas tristes      | Vicente Spina                            | Victor              | BA 717-1             | 79615-A            |

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece             | Composer  | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 01/12/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mis ternuras      | Pedro Maffia                                    | Victor       | BA 718-3      | 79615-B     |
| 16/12/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Primavera         | Julio De Caro                                   | Victor       | BA 726-3      | 79619-A     |
| 16/12/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Alma de bohemio   | Roberto Firpo & Juan Andrés Caruso              | Victor       | BA 727-2      | 79619-B     |
| 30/12/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Chacabuco         | Carlos Hernani Macchi                           | Victor       | BA 737-2      | 79625-A     |
| 30/12/1925 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Ay, Corazón       | Adolfo Mondino & Victor Soliño                  | Victor       | BA 738-2      | 79625-B     |
| 12/01/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Espuma de cabaret | Domingo Renis                                   | Victor       | BA 743-1      | 79628-B     |
| 12/01/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Flor de noche     | Pedro Laurenz & Emilio De Caro                  | Victor       | BA 744-1      | 79628-A     |
| 25/01/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Cachita           | Roque Sillifi                                   | Victor       | BA 751-1      | 79631-A     |
| 25/01/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Ninette           | Alfonso Ramiro Lacueva                          | Victor       | BA 752-1      | 79631-B     |
| 12/04/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mary              | Arturo Fracassi                                 | Victor       | BAVE 769-2    | 79636-A     |
| 12/04/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Feliz viaje       | Pedro Maffia                                    | Victor       | BAVE 770-1    | 79636-B     |
| 12/04/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mis desvelos      | Jaime Bustamante                                | Victor       | BAVE 771-2    | 79637-A     |
| 12/04/1926 | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Quince abriles    | Roberto Dolard                                  | Victor       | BAVE 772-1    | 79637-B     |
| 11/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Agua corriente    | Juan Rodríguez                                  | Victor       | BAVE 796-1    | 79654-A     |
| 11/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La revancha       | Pedro Laurenz                                   | Victor       | BAVE 797-2    | 79654-B     |
| 20/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Populacha         | Alberto Celenza & Antonio Romano                | Victor       | BAVE 807-2    | 79660-A     |
| 20/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Son grupos        | Gerardo Matos Rodríguez & E. C. Flores          | Victor       | BAVE 808-1    | 79660-B     |
| 20/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mala senda        | E. Wiurnos                                      | Victor       | BAVE 809-2    | 79661-B     |
| 20/05/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Fuiste            | H. La Rocca                                     | Victor       | BAVE 810-2    | 79661-A     |
| 09/06/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Ivette            | E. Costa, J.A. Rocca & Pascual Contursi         | Victor       | BAVE 833-2    | 79673-A     |
| 09/06/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La rayuela        | Julio De Caro                                   | Victor       | BAVE 834-1    | 79673-B     |
| 16/06/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Alla en el bajo   | A. Magaldi, P. Noda, I. R. Aguilar, G. M. Massa | Victor       | BAVE 843-1    | 79677-A     |
| 16/06/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Morondanga        | Eduardo Patero Castro                           | Victor       | BAVE 844-2    | 79677-B     |
| 15/07/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Recuerdo          | Alfredo Pelaia                                  | Victor       | BAVE 876-2    | 79693-B     |

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                 | Composer                                | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 15/07/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Don Goyo              | Luis Bernstein                          | Victor       | BAVE 877-2    | 79693-A     |
| 04/08/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | En el lago de Palermo | Julio De Caro                           | Victor       | BAVE 900-1    | 79706-B     |
| 04/08/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Derecho viejo         | Eduardo Arolas                          | Victor       | BAVE 901-1    | 79706-A     |
| 07/09/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La plegaria           | Emilio De Caro                          | Victor       | BAVE 919-2    | 79717-A     |
| 07/09/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mosca brava           | D. Pereyra                              | Victor       | BAVE 920-1    | 79717-B     |
| 23/09/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Chiquilina            | Orlando Romanelli                       | Victor       | BAVE 948-2    | 79728-B     |
| 23/09/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Obrerita              | A. Russo                                | Victor       | BAVE 947-2    | 79728-A     |
| 06/10/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mala jugada           | M. D'Andrea                             | Victor       | BAVE 962-1    | 79736-B     |
| 06/10/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Guardia vieja         | J. De Caro, Jose P. De Grandis          | Victor       | BAVE 963-1    | 79736-A     |
| 15/11/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | ¡Pato... cua, cua!    | Juan Rodríguez                          | Victor       | BAVE 997-2    | 79753-A     |
| 15/11/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Sentencia             | Pedro Maffia & Esteban Celedonio Flores | Victor       | BAVE 998-1    | 79753-B     |
| 29/11/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Coperito              | Adolfo A. Mondino                       | Victor       | BAVE 1022-2   | 79766-A     |
| 29/11/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Sueño azul            | Francisco De Caro & Mario César Gomila  | Victor       | BAVE 1023-2   | 79766-B     |
| 09/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Recuerdo              | Osvaldo Pugliese & Eduardo Moreno       | Victor       | BAVE 1046-2   | 79778-B     |
| 09/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | ¡Qué noche!           | Agustín Bardi                           | Victor       | BAVE 1047-1   | 79778-A     |
| 16/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Risa loca             | Pedro Laurenz & Jose De Grandis         | Victor       | BAVE 1065-2   | 79788-B     |
| 16/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Farolito de mi barrio | Emilio Pollet & Jose De Grandis         | Victor       | BAVE 1066-2   | 79788-A     |
| 20/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Don Esteban           | Augusto Berto                           | Victor       | BAVE 1069-1   | 79789-B     |
| 20/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Cabecita de aserrín   | Elio Rieti                              | Victor       | BAVE 1068-1   | 79789-A     |
| 28/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Lorenzo               | Agustín Bardi                           | Victor       | BAVE 1077-2   | 79793-B     |
| 28/12/1926 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La casita está triste | Jose De Grandis & Luis Bernstein        | Victor       | BAVE 1076-2   | 79793-A     |
| 09/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Noches de arrabal     | Juan Bauer                              | Victor       | BAVE 1124-2   | 79812-A     |
| 09/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Quejas de bandoneón   | Juan de Dios Filiberto                  | Victor       | BAVE 1125-1   | 79812-B     |
| 21/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mía                   | Maqueira                                | Victor       | BAVE 1142-1   | 79820-B     |
| 21/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Maula                 | A. Mondino & Victor Soliño              | Victor       | BAVE 1143-2   | 79820-A     |

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                    | Composer                                    | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 29/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Nobleza de arrabal       | Francisco Canaro & Juan Andrés Caruso       | Victor       | BAVE 1156-1   | 79827-A     |
| 29/03/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Parlamento               | Julio De Caro & Richard Russo               | Victor       | BAVE 1157-1   | 79827-B     |
| 11/04/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Corazón mío              | Edgardo Donato                              | Victor       | BAVE 1168-2   | 79833-A     |
| 11/04/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Corazón herido           | Francisco De Caro & Dupuy                   | Victor       | BAVE 1169-1   | 79833-B     |
| 12/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El baqueano              | Agustín Bardi                               | Victor       | BAVE 1418-2   | 79923-A     |
| 12/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Copacabana               | Julio De Caro & A. Rubio Penades            | Victor       | BAVE 1419-1   | 79923-B     |
| 12/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Tierra querida           | Julio De Caro & Luis Diaz                   | Victor       | BAVE 1420-1   | 79924-B     |
| 12/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Amurado                  | Pedro Laurenz, Pedro Maffia & J. De Grandis | Victor       | BAVE 1421-2   | 79924-A     |
| 13/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mala junta               | Julio De Caro, Pedro Laurenz & Juan Velich  | Victor       | BAVE 1422-1   | 79925-A     |
| 13/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Flores negras            | Francisco De Caro & Mario César Gomila      | Victor       | BAVE 1423-1   | 79925-B     |
| 13/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Gallo ciego              | Agustín Bardi                               | Victor       | BAVE 1486-2   | 79937-A     |
| 13/09/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mi ranchito              | Salvador Grupillo                           | Victor       | BAVE 1487-2   | 79937-B     |
| 27/10/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El inolvidable           | Aida Alohari                                | Victor       | BAVE 1504-?   | 79446-?     |
| 27/10/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Olympia (Rio de Janeiro) | Julio De Caro & Juan Andrés Caruso          | Victor       | BAVE 1505-?   | 79946-?     |
| 24/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Quiéreme más             | Jose Quevedo                                | Victor       | BAVE 1514-2   | 79951-A     |
| 24/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Pasionaria               | Manlio Francia                              | Victor       | BAVE 1515-2   | 79951-B     |
| 24/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Cortesanita              | Manuel Parada & Enrique Dizeo               | Victor       | BAVE 1516-2   | 79952-A     |
| 24/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Bulincito amigo          | Arturo Bettoni                              | Victor       | BAVE 1517-2   | 79952-B     |
| 28/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | T. B. C.                 | Edgardo Donato, T. Fontaina & V. Soliño     | Victor       | BAVE 1522-2   | 79955-B     |
| 28/11/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Gigolo                   | Emilio y Alberto De Caro                    | Victor       | BAVE 1523-1   | 79955-A     |
| 01/12/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Cata                     | Julio De Caro & M. Rubio Penade             | Victor       | BAVE 1528-2   | 79958-A     |
| 01/12/1927 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El Pillete               | Graciano De Leone                           | Victor       | BAVE 1529-2   | 79958-B     |
| 02/02/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El Malevo                | Julio De Caro & Mario Castro                | Victor       | BAVE 1638-2   | 79993-A     |

| Date       | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                | Composer                                    | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 02/02/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Color de rosa        | Pedro y Antonio Polito                      | Victor       | BAVE 1639-2   | 79993-B     |
| 28/02/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Primer agua          | Francisco De Caro & Mario Castro            | Victor       | BAVE 1670-2   | 80809-A     |
| 28/02/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Berretín             | Pedro Laurenz & E. Cadícamo                 | Victor       | BAVE 1671-1   | 80809-B     |
| 28/03/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Maipo                | Eduardo Arolas                              | Victor       | 44022-1       | 80821-A     |
| 28/03/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Lágrimas de arrabal  | Jose Pecora & Luis Rubinstein               | Victor       | 44023-1       | 80821-B     |
| 30/04/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Sollozos             | Emilio & Osvaldo Nicolás Fresedo            | Victor       | 44050-4       | 80835-A     |
| 30/04/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Con todo amor        | P. Ramallo                                  | Victor       | 44051-3       | 80835-B     |
| 30/04/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Vayan saliendo       | Victor Pedro Donato                         | Victor       | 44052-2       | 80836-A     |
| 30/04/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mediodía             | Manuel Buzón & Esteban Celedonio Flores     | Victor       | 44053-1       | 80836-B     |
| 13/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mundo argentino      | Julio De Caro & Richard Russo               | Victor       | 44150-2       | 80885-A     |
| 13/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El taita             | Salvador Grupillo                           | Victor       | 44151-2       | 80885-B     |
| 18/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Aromas               | Emilio & Osvaldo Fresedo                    | Victor       | 44166-2       | 80893-A     |
| 18/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La otra noche        | Antonio Romano                              | Victor       | 44167-1       | 80893-B     |
| 28/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Amarguras            | Pedro M. Maffia                             | Victor       | 44192-1       | 80906-A     |
| 28/06/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Colombina (Teresita) | Julio & Francisco De Caro, Enrique Cadícamo | Victor       | 44193-2       | 80906-B     |
| 19/07/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El monito            | Julio De Caro & Carlos Marambio Catán       | Victor       | 44224-2       | 80922-A     |
| 19/07/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | La última cita       | Agustín Bardi & Francisco García Giménez    | Victor       | 44225-2       | 80922-B     |
| 10/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Carro viejo          | Fernando Montoni & Máximo Orsi              | Victor       | 44258-1       | 80939-A     |
| 10/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Acordate gil         | A. Bacciale                                 | Victor       | 44259-1       | 80939-B     |
| 14/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Adiós pueblo         | Agustín Bardi                               | Victor       | 44264-2       | 80942-A     |
| 14/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Criollo de ley       | Henry Binstrock                             | Victor       | 44265-2       | 80942-B     |
| 14/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Quimeras             | Eugenio Nobile                              | Victor       | 44266-2       | 80943-A     |
| 14/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Ojos brujos          | Miguel Dramacket                            | Victor       | 44267-2       | 80943-B     |
| 27/08/1928 | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mala pinta           | Julio & Francisco De Caro                   | Victor       | 44276-2       | 80948-A     |

| Date              | Orchestra Name                     | Piece                 | Composer                           | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 27/08/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Añorando              | Alfonso y Pedro Gagliano           | Victor       | 44277-2       | 80948-B     |
| 14/09/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Loca bohemia          | Francisco De Caro & Dante Linyera  | Victor       | 44294-2       | 80957-A     |
| 14/09/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Mal de amores         | Pedro Laurenz                      | Victor       | 44295-2       | 80957-B     |
| 17/09/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Pobre cantor          | Raúl Ruíz Moreno                   | Victor       | 44298-2       | 80959-A     |
| 17/09/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Orgullo criollo       | Julio De Caro, Pedro Laurenz       | Victor       | 44299-2       | 80959-B     |
| 10/10/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Vengan muchachos      | Manuel Aróztegui & Luis Rubinstein | Victor       | 44322-2       | 80971-A     |
| 10/10/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Maliciosa             | Luis Petruccelli                   | Victor       | 44323-2       | 80971-B     |
| 16/11/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Boedo                 | Julio De Caro, Dante A. Linyera    | Victor       | 44378-1       | 80999-A     |
| 16/11/1928        | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Candilejas            | E. Ursini                          | Victor       | 44379-2       | 80999-B     |
| 1929 <sup>2</sup> | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Yo me quiero divertir | Julio De Caro & Dante Linyera      | Brunswick    | 17            | 1201-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Boca Abierta          | Adolfo Mondino & Victor Soliño     | Brunswick    | 24            | 1201-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Fantasías             | Manlio Francia                     | Brunswick    | 19            | 1202-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Dos Lunares           | Francisco De Caro & Luis Mario     | Brunswick    | 21            | 1202-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Luz Mala              | Graciano De Leone                  | Brunswick    | 28            | 1203-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | El Diente             | Julio De Caro                      | Brunswick    | 25            | 1203-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | ¡Gaucha!...           | Pedro Laurenz                      | Brunswick    | 67            | 1204-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Victoria!             | Enrique Santos Discépolo           | Brunswick    | 71            | 1204-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Moulin Rouge          | Julio De Caro & Luis Mario         | Brunswick    | 69            | 1205-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Semameton             | Luis Petrucelli                    | Brunswick    | 118           | 1205-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Puro Apronte          | Domingo Platerotti & Félix Villa   | Brunswick    | 156           | 1206-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Suerte Perra          | Elio Rietti & Enrique P. Maroni    | Brunswick    | 158           | 1206-B      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mussette              | Lucio Demare                       | Brunswick    | 122           | 1207-A      |
| 1929              | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Flor de milonga       | E. Radone                          | Brunswick    | 120           | 1207-B      |

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<sup>2</sup> There are no specific dates for the Brunswick recordings, only years.



| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                    | Composer                              | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Corazón                  | Ciriaco Ortiz                         | Brunswick    | 199           | 1208-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Rosita                   | Julio De Caro & Lito Bayardo          | Brunswick    | 201           | 1208-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Don Quijote              | Vicente Pierre                        | Brunswick    | 422           | 1209-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | No me olvides<br>Corazón | Agustín Minotti & F. Cozzitorti       | Brunswick    | 419           | 1209-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El Pibe Chacarita        | Agustín & Emilio Magaldi, Pedro Noda  | Brunswick    | 307           | 1210-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Aquel Don Juan           | Francisco Brancatti & Rafael Sánchez  | Brunswick    | 305           | 1210-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mal Agüero               | Graciano De Leone                     | Brunswick    | 301           | 1211-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Neglige                  | Vicente Sciarreta                     | Brunswick    | 303           | 1211-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El Buey Solo             | Agustín Bardi                         | Brunswick    | 300           | 1212-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Anda con tus amigos      | Alberto Sánchez & César Vedani        | Brunswick    | 298           | 1212-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Loro Viejo               | Adolfo R. Aviles                      | Brunswick    | 394           | 1213-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Recoveco                 | Luis D'Andres & S. Bozzano            | Brunswick    | 395           | 1213-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Amanecer                 | Luis Nicolás Vizca                    | Brunswick    | 379           | 1214-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mi Churrasca             | Miguel Padula, Norraca                | Brunswick    | 382           | 1214-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | De Antaño                | Pedro Laurenz                         | Brunswick    | 375           | 1215-A      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Un Poema                 | Francisco De Caro                     | Brunswick    | 378           | 1215-B      |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tierra Adentro           | Julio De Caro & Atilio Supparo        | Brunswick    | 228           | 3-A         |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La Cumparsita            | Gerardo Mattos Rodríguez              | Brunswick    | 911           | 6-A         |
| 1929 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Amelia                   | Julio De Caro                         | Brunswick    | 886           | 6-B         |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Batida Nocturna          | Julio De Caro                         | Brunswick    | 424           | 1216-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Solterona                | S. Barcino & F.A. Zeballos            | Brunswick    | 425           | 1216-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Filigrana                | P. Barraschi                          | Brunswick    | 428           | 1217-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Buen Amigo               | Julio De Caro & Carlos Marambio Catán | Brunswick    | 430           | 1217-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Rodríguez Peña           | Vicente Greco                         | Brunswick    | 466           | 1218-A      |

| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                         | Composer                                   | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Dónde estás, corazón?         | Augusto Berto & J. Martínez Serrano        | Brunswick    | 469           | 1218-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Un Copetín                    | Juan Maglio & Jose A. Fernández Perrussini | Brunswick    | 480           | 1219-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Adiós Arrabal                 | Juan Bauer & Carlos Lenci                  | Brunswick    | 479           | 1219-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Jueves (Día de moda)          | Udelino Toranzo & Rafael Rossi             | Brunswick    | 492           | 1220-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Corazón... Cállate un poco    | Armando Baliotti & G. Ginzo                | Brunswick    | 491           | 1220-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Ilusión de Pierrot            | Julio De Caro, Luis Diaz                   | Brunswick    | 515           | 1221-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Qué alegría!                 | Eustaquio Laurenz                          | Brunswick    | 512           | 1221-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Como nos divertimos!         | Julio De Caro, Dante A. Linyera            | Brunswick    | 536           | 1222-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Yo me quiero suicidar         | Agustín Carlos Minotti, F. Cozzi Tenti     | Brunswick    | 539           | 1222-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mentiras de amor              | Francisco De Caro & Manuel Meaños          | Brunswick    | 557           | 1223-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Coqueta                       | Francisco De Caro & Pedro Laurenz          | Brunswick    | 559           | 1223-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Anocheciendo                  | Pintin Castellanos                         | Brunswick    | 660           | 1224-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Romántica ternura             | A.R. Esperanza                             | Brunswick    | 658           | 1224-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Siempre te quise (Maria Rosa) | S. Bullion                                 | Brunswick    | 717           | 1225-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Engrupido                     | Adolfo Mondino                             | Brunswick    | 672           | 1225-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tan... tan... cartero         | Domingo Vivas & Alfredo Roldan             | Brunswick    | 698           | 1226-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Aunque no quieras             | E. Ferraro                                 | Brunswick    | 700           | 1226-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | De rompe y raja               | Julio De Caro                              | Brunswick    | 719           | 1227-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Cuando comprendas             | A. Sussini                                 | Brunswick    | 689           | 1227-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Mi tormento                   | S. Bailon                                  | Brunswick    | 713           | 1228-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Misa maleva                   | D. Failache, M. Villanueva                 | Brunswick    | 779           | 1228-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Corazón malevo                | J. Vanni                                   | Brunswick    | 781           | 1229-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Vení Chinita                  | A. Fernández                               | Brunswick    | 716           | 1229-B      |

| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                      | Composer                                     | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El entrerriano             | Rosendo Mendizábal                           | Brunswick    | 856           | 1230-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Deja que te cuente         | Pascual Collazzo                             | Brunswick    | 842           | 1230-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Muchachito grande          | Alfonso La Cueva & R. Vega                   | Brunswick    | 813           | 1231-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Sin amor                   | Antonio Rodio                                | Brunswick    | 843           | 1231-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Loco berretín              | Pascual Clausi                               | Brunswick    | 804           | 1232-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Soñador                    | Armando Baliotti                             | Brunswick    | 806           | 1232-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Espuma de mar              | S. Meinvielle, A.J. Rodríguez & San Clemente | Brunswick    | 937           | 1233-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El Pillete                 | Graciano De Leone                            | Brunswick    | 888           | 1233-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Vieja escuela de mi barrio | César Vedani & Nasso                         | Brunswick    | 969           | 1234-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Lágrimas                   | A. Ceballos                                  | Brunswick    | 814           | 1234-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Che, Panete!...           | Andrés Domenech, Bertonasco, Martioni        | Brunswick    | 934           | 1235-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tata viejo                 | Ricardo Arancibia Rodríguez                  | Brunswick    | 913           | 1235-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Chinche bonete             | Antonio Corrado                              | Brunswick    | 909           | 1236-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El último adiós            | José De Caro, V. Tagliacozzo & L. Rubinstein | Brunswick    | 1011          | 1236-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Luz y sombra               | A. Gentile & A. Supparo                      | Brunswick    | 1056          | 1237-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Malas lenguas              | Past & Red                                   | Brunswick    | 1058          | 1237-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Carbonada criolla          | B. Machado                                   | Brunswick    | 1030          | 1238-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Del pasado                 | A. Magaldi, Pedro Noda & Enrique Cadícamo    | Brunswick    | 1032          | 1238-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Narciso negro              | Pascual Martínez                             | Brunswick    | 1014          | 1239-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | A la francesa              | A. Monaco, Dante Linyera                     | Brunswick    | 1148          | 1239-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Balcón florido             | V. Catalano                                  | Brunswick    | 1174          | 1240-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Canción del olvido         | Rafael Sánchez & Francisco Brancatti         | Brunswick    | 1088          | 1240-B      |

| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                       | Composer                                  | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Gaucha noble                | Salvador Grupillo, Manuel A. Meaños       | Brunswick    | 1067          | 1241-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Aflojaste tiburón           | Adolfo Mondino & E. Bianchi               | Brunswick    | 1070          | 1241-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Noche de estío              | D. F. Rossano                             | Brunswick    | 1188          | 1242-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Maliciosa                   | Luis Petruccelli                          | Brunswick    | 1150          | 1242-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Antojos                     | R. Aguilar Costa                          | Brunswick    | 1135          | 1243-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Yo se tu drama              | Vicente Fiorentino                        | Brunswick    | 1132          | 1243-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Loca Ilusión                | Julio De Caro, A. Rodríguez Bustamante    | Brunswick    | 1231          | 1244-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tradición                   | Fausto Frontera & Enrique Cadícamo        | Brunswick    | 1215          | 1244-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Calandria (Deja el bodegón) | C. Enrique & Enrique Cadícamo             | Brunswick    | 1249          | 1245-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Yira... yira!              | Enrique Santos Discépolo                  | Brunswick    | 1233          | 1245-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Chique                      | Ricardo Luis Brignolo                     | Brunswick    | 1313          | 1246-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Te vas a arrepentir         | F. Molinari                               | Brunswick    | 1277          | 1246-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Derecho viejo               | Eduardo Arolas                            | Brunswick    | 1252          | 1247-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Mi queja!                  | Julio De Caro, Francisco De Caro          | Brunswick    | 1329          | 1247-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El penado 14                | A. Magaldi, P. Noda & Carlos Pesce        | Brunswick    | 1344          | 1248-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Zorrita maula               | A. Magaldi, P. Noda & Francisco Branzatti | Brunswick    | 1345          | 1248-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Qué Noche!                 | Agustín Bardi                             | Brunswick    | 1361          | 1249-B      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Alma de indio               | Augusto Gentile & Pedro Numa Córdoba      | Brunswick    | 1364          | 1249-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Gotas de acíbar             | W. F. Boasso Lepori                       | Brunswick    | 1384          | 1250-A      |
| 1930 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Ay Mamita                   | Julio De Caro & Manuel A. Meaños          | Brunswick    | 1385          | 1250-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El baqueano                 | Agustín Bardi                             | Brunswick    | 1457          | 1251-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Caripavo                    | Osvaldo Penzoni                           | Brunswick    | 1444          | 1251-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Noctámbulo                  | Armando Baliotti & Luis Rubinstein        | Brunswick    | 1481          | 1252-A      |

| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                      | Composer   | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tu violín                  | Jose Traviglia, Learte Carroli & Armando Taggini | Brunswick    | 1482          | 1252-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Quedan tuitos invitados    | Julio De Caro                                    | Brunswick    | 1489          | 1253-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La mazorca                 | Julio & Francisco De Caro                        | Brunswick    | 1518          | 1253-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Todo el año es Carnaval    | Julio De Caro & Dante Linyera                    | Brunswick    | 1571          | 1254-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Viejo amigo                | Julio De Caro & Máximo Vago                      | Brunswick    | 1586          | 1254-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Miguelito                  | Agustín Carlos Minotti                           | Brunswick    | 1539          | 1255-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Muñequita de cristal       | Ramón J. Pontón                                  | Brunswick    | 1535          | 1255-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Páginas muertas            | Francisco De Caro & Mario César Gomila           | Brunswick    | 1583          | 1256-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Sin tacha                  | Pedro Laurenz                                    | Brunswick    | 1572          | 1256-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La refalada                | Julio De Caro                                    | Brunswick    | 1619          | 1257-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Oiga, Don Ramón            | C. F. Bravo                                      | Brunswick    | 1629          | 1257-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Cuento de amor             | Juan Rezzano & D'Andrea                          | Brunswick    | 1091          | 1258-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Che! Pascual              | Jose Maria Rizzutti                              | Brunswick    | 1599          | 1258-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Lamento reo                | Emilio & Alberto De Caro                         | Brunswick    | 1617          | 1259-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | No es pa' ponerse a llorar | Francisco Canosa & Enrique Dizeo                 | Brunswick    | 1628          | 1259-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tené cuidado               | Rodolfo Sciammarella                             | Brunswick    | 1650          | 1260-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El baño                    | Julio De caro                                    | Brunswick    | 1636          | 1260-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Caminito al bajo           | Manuel Parada, José de la Vega, Enrique Maroni   | Brunswick    | 1660          | 1261-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La partida                 | Vicente Sciarretta                               | Brunswick    | 1651          | 1261-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Hasta la vuelta            | Francisco Pracánico, Máximo Vago                 | Brunswick    | 1647          | 1262-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Noche calurosa             | Julio De Caro                                    | Brunswick    | 1682          | 1262-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Con cariño                 | Alejandro Scarpino                               | Brunswick    | 2113          | 1263-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Día de fiesta              | Julio De Caro, Máximo Vago                       | Brunswick    | 2116          | 1263-A      |

| Date | Orchestra Name          | Piece                       | Composer                               | Record label | Matrix number | Disc number |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | A pan y agua                | Juan Carlos Cobián                     | Brunswick    | 2128          | 1264-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | El redomón                  | Pedro Giménez                          | Brunswick    | 2146          | 1264-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | ¡Despierta, Chinita mía...! | J. Arzalla & E. Dautuoni               | Brunswick    | 2130          | 1265-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Luna de miel                | Julio De Caro, Mario César Gomila      | Brunswick    | 2114          | 1265-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Tuve un sueño               | Pedro Laurenz                          | Brunswick    | 2188          | 1266-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Sueño de juventud           | Enrique Santos Discépolo               | Brunswick    | 2164          | 1266-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Repeluz                     | Graciano de Leone                      | Brunswick    | 2185          | 1267-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Che, Vieja, pasa un mate    | Lito Bayardo, L. Lomascola             | Brunswick    | 2250          | 1267-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Milongueando                | J. Ricciardi                           | Brunswick    | 2303          | 1268-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Desengaño                   | Julio De Caro, Mario César Gomila      | Brunswick    | 2269          | 1268-B      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Flor de trébol              | Juan Rezzano                           | Brunswick    | 2367          | 1269-A      |
| 1931 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La serenata de ayer         | Manuel Buzón & Ismael R. Aguilar       | Brunswick    | 2318          | 1269-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Côte d'Azur                 | Julio De Caro & Luis Díaz              | Brunswick    | BKP 4437      | 1270-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La sufrida                  | Pedro Giménez                          | Brunswick    | BKP 4450      | 1270-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Lejos del rancho            | Pedro Polito                           | Brunswick    | BKP 4448      | 1271-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La casita de mis viejos     | Juan Carlos Cobián                     | Brunswick    | 2317          | 1271-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | La revancha                 | Pedro Laurenz                          | Brunswick    | BKP 4447      | 1272-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Pucha que va lindo          | Julio De Caro                          | Brunswick    | BKP 4440      | 1272-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Como una sombra             | A. Pecoraro                            | Brunswick    | 2516          | 1273-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Jamás podré olvidarte       | Julio De Caro, Mario César Gomila      | Brunswick    | 2400          | 1273-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Hasta el otro Carnaval      | Julio De Caro & Dante Linyera          | Brunswick    | BKP 4439      | 1274-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Soségate Micaela            | Domingo Plaaterotti & Esteban C.Flores | Brunswick    | 2473          | 1274-B      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Hermana                     | Miguel Caló & Mario César Gomila       | Brunswick    | 2416          | 1275-A      |
| 1932 | Orquesta Típica De Caro | Patria querida              | Jose Niesow & Carlos Arce              | Brunswick    | 2575          | 1275-B      |

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Orchestra Name</b>              | <b>Piece</b>                      | <b>Composer</b>                                 | <b>Record label</b> | <b>Matrix number</b> | <b>Disc number</b> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Bártolo toca la flauta            | Richard Russo & A. S. Vignoli                   | Brunswick           | 2562                 | 1276-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mi mujer es una fiera             | E. Yaravi                                       | Brunswick           | 2450                 | 1276-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Souvenir                          | Armando Blasco                                  | Brunswick           | 2456                 | 1277-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | No importa, te perdono            | Vicente Salerno, Geremias Juan Romero           | Brunswick           | 2579                 | 1277-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | El Zorzal                         | Julio De Caro                                   | Brunswick           | 2614                 | 1278-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Esquelas                          | Francisco De Caro, Pedro Laurenz & M. C. Gomila | Brunswick           | 2563                 | 1278-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Remolacha                         | Julio De Caro                                   | Brunswick           | 2646                 | 1279-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Taponazo                          | F. Clauso & Armando Juan Taggini                | Brunswick           | 2417                 | 1279-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | La fiesta de Santa Rosa           | Francisco Brancatti                             | Brunswick           | 2648                 | 1280-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Mujer de fuego                    | César Oetrone, Oscar Peenter                    | Brunswick           | 2612                 | 1280-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Quien dijo miedo                  | Julio De Caro, Enrique Cadícamo                 | Brunswick           | 2514                 | 1281-B             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Catita                            | Leopoldo Thompson                               | Brunswick           | 2471                 | 1281-A             |
| 1932        | Orquesta Típica De Caro            | Volver a vivir                    | Julio De Caro, A. Hely                          | Brunswick           | 0                    | 1643-B             |
| 04/01/1934  | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | El arranque                       | Julio De Caro & Mario César Gomila              | Victor              | 0                    | 37626-A            |
| 04/01/1934  | Julio De Caro y su Orquesta Típica | Las catorce provincias argentinas | Julio De Caro                                   | Victor              | 0                    | 37626-B            |