

Tango. Scientific Publications of the author

Laguna, Alejandro. 2021."Graciela González: Bodily experience and generational change in traditional tango". *European Review Of Artistic Studies* 12 (1):1-17.

Abstract (English Version)

The study of body gestures and the participatory construction of the movements of the 'old' argentine milongueros is hampered by the fact that their protagonists are no longer alive. This work investigates both themes in an indirect way, conducting a semi-directed interview with the relevant teacher and dancer Graciela González, who since the 80's had as master and was dance partner of Norberto 'Pupi' Castello, one of the myths of the milonga 'porteña'. González describes some of the lesser known gestural and intentional characteristics of these 'old' milongueros, and explains how some of these characteristics have been softened as a result of generational changes and the speed of communications brought about by social media.

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Laguna, Alejandro. 2020."Biomechanical Analysis and Metric Interpretation of 'Walking' in Tango Dance." *European Review Of Artistic Studies* 11 (4): 1-20.

Abstract

During the 20th century, tango dancers affirmed that their choreographic figures were an extension of the "spontaneous street walk" further adding that it was important to "walk with cadence" and know how to "keep the beat of the music". In this paper we try to address the material meaning of these valuable popular assertions that, to this date, have not merited sufficient substantiated research. We comparatively analyze the cycle of human walking and tango walking from a biomechanical and kinesthetic perspective. Preliminary results show that (i) the tango step has a particular internal rhythm and micro timing that can be characterized by the periodic alternation of a series of dichotomous categories; (ii) there is a biomechanical foundation for a strong-weak hierarchy in the structure of the gait and its relation to the isochronous marking of its music. These findings have implications in the teaching and learning of tango, in that they contribute to improve the way in which we observe, analyze and metrically situate details of the tango walk. Finally, evidence is presented that reveals that walking structure was an antecedent of the isochronous marking of tango music.

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Laguna, Alejandro. 2020."Tango. De automatismos y biomecánica hacia la intencionalidad expresiva del caminar." I Simposio ICTM LatCar. *Tiempo Identidad y Memoria*. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, México (42).

Abstract

The kinesthetic, intersubjective and musical aspects of the Tango dance are organized from the motor action of walking understood as a progression from which all its figures, the communication of the couple and the link with music. The workshop aims to address three components of the gestural identity of tango, walking, hugging and participatory building of the couple. The work guided by a professional Tango dancer, proposes to the participants to inquire bodily as, one of the most decisive actions of human evolution has become the structural core of Tango movements. Participants will be led to

explore through very simple exercises, what this transformation consists of, what body elements of the action are maintained and what elements vary. We will seek to experience what the sensations of the change in the automaticity and spontaneity of walking towards an intentional and expressive action consist of. At the same time, it is intended that participants can experience the links of these three components with the binary metric structure of tango (strong-weak-relationship). Finally, we are going to observe with great sense how, when joining two bodies in a hug, a new movement system is generated from which the notions of weight and displacement linked to the rhythm of Tango emerge. The body practice of the participants will be based on qualitative and quantitative evidence obtained in previous works of the author.

Laguna, Alejandro. 2019. "Cuando el cuerpo es música al bailar. Entrevista a Claudio Villagra." *Epistemos Revista de Estudios en Música, Cognición y Cultura* 7(2):102-114. <https://doi.org/10.24215/18530494e012>

Abstract

Claudio Villagra is a tango dancer with a recognized national and international trajectory that he learned with old deceased milongueros, who has managed to master both the traditional milonga style and stage performance. The interview directs Villagra to describe the stylistic features of Traditional Tango (TT) from the felt perspective of the kinesthetic and musical experience of his body. The author challenges the interviewed to translate his feelings in terms of notions and categories that illuminate some procedural aspects of the TT that the ancient milongueros have failed to verbalize. In parallel, Villagra makes a retrospective of the transformations that the TT has been suffering in the last 25 years. This interview is part of a larger study that aims to keep alive the body legacy of the former milongueros in the neighborhoods of Villa Urquiza and Saavedra.

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Laguna, Alejandro. 2019. "Graciela González: Experiencia corporal y cambio generacional en el tango tradicional." *European Review Of Artistic Studies* 10 (3):1-15. <https://doi.org/10.37334/eras.v10i3.210>

Abstract (Spanish Version).

El estudio del gesto corporal y la construcción participativa de los movimientos de los 'viejos' milongueros argentinos se ve obstaculizado por el hecho de que sus protagonistas ya no están vivos. Este trabajo investiga ambos temas de manera indirecta, realizando una entrevista semidirigida con la maestra y bailarina Graciela González, quien desde los años 80 tuvo como maestro y fue pareja de baile de Norberto 'Pupi' Castello, uno de los mitos de la milonga 'porteña'. González describe algunas de las características gestuales e intencionales menos conocidas de estos 'viejos' milongueros, y explica cómo algunas de estas características se han perdido como resultado de los cambios

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Laguna, Alejandro. 2018. "Milena Plebs. Tango y Pensamiento Crítico". *Epistemos Revista de Estudios en Música, Cognición y Cultura* 6 (1): 97-108. <https://doi.org/10.21932/epistemos.6.4192.1>

Abstract

Milena Plebs is the feminine personality of tango that has most influenced the resurgence of tango, the evolution of choreography and the critical thinking of

dance. On December 7 and being in Lisbon, Milena gives me this interview describing relevant aspects of her artistic and pedagogical career. During the interview Milena recounts how her experiences in dance and music were since her adolescence, her time at the Workshop and the Contemporary Dance Company of the General San Martin Theater (TGSM) and her iconic participation in the famous show *Tango Argentino* founding milestone of tango in the 80's. Milena will also describe her experiences in Buenos Aires milonga and how was the transition from contemporary dance to tango dance and the choreographic creation of the *Tango x 2* show with the dancer Miguel Ángel Zotto and later creations as *Tunes* that integrates traditional tango and contemporary dance. The author directs the interview by challenging the artist to describe perspectives of artistic expression and communication hoping they can be a source of incentive for the work of other researchers.

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Laguna, Alejandro. Participatory Embodiment of the Musical Metric in Argentinian Tango. In Richard Parncutt and Sabrina Sattmann (Eds., 2018). *ICMPC15/ESCOM10: Abstract book (electronic)*.(p.60). Graz, Austria: Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz.

Abstract

Tango is a dance system of dynamic movement in which two bodies embrace each other while walking and moving in different directions as they hear the music. Recent studies (Laguna, 2018) have 'quantitative' analysed the rhythmic structure of the tango step according to the biomechanical analysis of the gait cycle, and have demonstrated that there is a strong relation between the movement of the couple and the tango music around the hierarchical periodicity of the musical metric and its strong-weak relation. Although, during the learning of tango, a part is reserved for the individual practice of the movements, the construction of meaning of the dance emerges from a 'kinesthetic' (Sheets-Johnstone, 2012) and haptic experience of the interaction and socialization of the couple while dancing. From an enactive perspective, the search for coordination and the creation of meaning would be given by the ability to regulate, as a dynamic unit, the internal and relational states of the interactions with the environment (Di Paolo, 2016). The purpose of the demonstration is to show why the participatory creation of meaning that occurs with the interacting couple cannot be understood from the sums of the partners's individual steps.

The demonstration is performed by a couple of professional dancers from Argentina who exhibit in real-time the qualitative analysis of the participatory construction that occurs in the interaction. The analysis is based on a methodology that articulates the kinesthetic perception of movements with the categories of biomechanical analysis and metric structure.

The methodological application has an impact on the Tango practice, since the analysis reveals strategies that improve the way of observing, understanding, and verbalizing the 'musical' (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2008) and 'intentional' (Stern, 2010) details in the heartfelt construction of the dancing with the music. Ontological issues such as the link between street walking and tango walking –referred to by the milongueros since the 40s– can be evaluated more solidly when analyzing the processes of transformation from the street-step to the individual tango-step, and towards the tango-step of the couple. Likewise, both the kinesthetic identification of the strong-weak relationship and the metric hierarchy in-the-step of Tango allow for a more vertical understanding of rhythm versus the usual horizontal understanding and the 'counting' conception of dance movements. This knowledge, when

embodied, turns the (propositional and non-propositional) communication between dancers and musicians richer and more adjusted.

To show how the strong-weak periodicity of the music and the subtle details of the expressiveness are represented in the body of the dancer. The presented conclusions reinforce all the pedagogical conceptions that sustain the focus and the development of the rhythm in the physical-corporal movement and contribute to a more multi-modal and interactive learning of the dance and of the listening of Tango.

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