

The art of DJing

Printable, summarized version of Eduardo Lazarowski's presentations
at the CAT Cincinnati Tango Marathon
April 30th & 31st 2017



Disclaim: This material is presented only for educational purposes and has no commercial value. It reflects the author understanding of the facts and it should be taken just as an incomplete guide to stimulate the reader interest in the field

Sources and references

La Historia del Tango. Collection of 20 volumes. Various authors. Corregidor, Buenos Aires, 1976

Breve Historia Crítica del Tango. José Gobello. Corregidor 1999

El Tango. Horacio Salas. Emece, Buenos Aires 2004

Historia de la Orquesta Típica. Luis Adolfo Sierra. Corregidor. Buenos Aires, 2010

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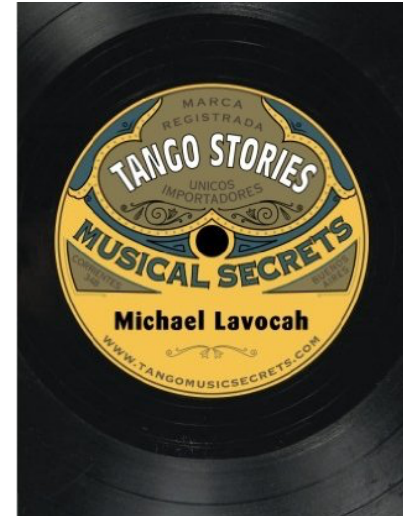
Useful books to consult

Tango Stories: Musical Secrets

by Michael Lavocah

Norwich, England

2012



Encyclopedia of Tango

by Gabriel Valiente

Lexington KY US

2014

**Encyclopedia
of Tango**

Gabriel Valiente

Useful links

***El Corte* Tango DJ Manual**

by Arnoud de Graaff, Michiel Lombaers, and Eric Jeurissen

www.gotango.ru/DJmanual2011.pdf

Tango DJing –by Michael Lavocah

<http://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/481/Tango-DJing-Part-1:-Music-for-dancing/>

<http://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/483/Tango-Djing-Part-2:-Tanda-construction/>

<http://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/510/Tango-DJing-Part-3:-Shaping-the-evening/>

The King of the milonga –History of the milongas and Djing in Buenos Aires

<http://tanzbar.dk/the-kings-of-the-milonga-la-nacion/>

Interview to Felix Picherno

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXIAziV8yFo>

A few dates to take into account



- 1985 Invention of the gramophone (by Emile Berling)
- 1911 First (acoustic) tango recording; Orquesta Típica Vicente Greco
- 1925 Electric recording (paste discs in 78 rpm)
- 1951 First tango long play (Carlos Di Sarli, Music Hall)
- 1960 Magnetic recording (tapes)
- 1970 Stereo vinyl records re-editing old mono-tracks
- 1985 Compact disks (CD)

The art of DJing

Part 1: *Fundamentals of tango music for dancers*

- Rhythm, melody, and harmony in tango dance
- The major periods of tango music (Old Guard vs. Golden Age)
- The orchestra singer

Part 2: *How to build a play list*

- Primary and secondary orchestras. The forgotten orchestras
- Behind the console of the DJs in Buenos Aires
- Create your tandas. Build your playlist

Elements of tango music

Rhythm: Metric movement of patterned recurrence of a beat or accent. Most tangos are played as four beats per bar. The first and third beats are strong, while the second and fourth are weak. *Rhythm is the most fundamental element of tango dance.*

Syncopation: a rhythmic emphasis is placed where there normally would not be one. Syncopation is also playing strong (off-beat) between beats.

Melody: Succession of sounds and silences that develops in a linear sequence and that has its own identity and musical meaning

Harmony: Elements of melodic character, complementary but independent of the main melody. *Polyphony:* Many voices, each of them expressing its own musical idea in harmony with the other voices

Classification of the Orchestras based on Style

While all orchestras exhibit a rhythmic backbone to appeal to dancers, their styles vary according to rhythmic strength, melodic interceptions, and complexity of harmonic arrangements

<i>Strong beat</i>		<i>Less strong beat</i>	
		<i>Melody</i>	<i>Harmony</i>
Canaro		Fresedo	De Caro
Lomuto		Caló	Pugliese
Donato		Di Sarli	Troilo
D'Arienzo			Demare
Biagi	D'Agostino		Laurenz
Tanturi (Castillo)	De Angelis		Gobbi
Rodriguez	Tanturi (Campos)		

Classification of the Orchestras based on Style

The *traditionalist* school (initiated by Canaro) maintains the choppy, heavily rhythmic style of Old Guard trios and quartets.
The Evolutionist school (initiated by Firpo's melodic arrangements and expanded by De Caro and Fresedo) incorporates elements of classic/erudite music into tango

Traditionalists

*predominantly
rhythmic*

1930s { **Francisco Canaro**
Edgardo Donato
Francisco Lomuto
Alfredo Carabelli
Orquesta Tipica Victor

1940s { Juan D'Arienzo
Rodolfo Biagi
Ricardo Tanturi
Alfredo De Angelis
Angel D'Agostino
Enrique Rodriguez
Ricardo Malerba

Evolutionists

*Rhythmic but with frequent melodic
and harmonic orchestrations*

Roberto Firpo
Julio De Caro
Osvaldo Fresedo

Carlos D Sarli
Anibal Troilo
Osvaldo Pugliese
Pedro Laurenz
Miguel Calo
Lucio Demare
Alfredo Gobbi

1930s { Francisco Canaro
Edgardo Donato
Francisco Lomuto
Alfredo Carabelli
Orquesta Tipica Victor
Osvaldo Fresedo

The music of the '20s & '30s:

- Is 5-7 BPM slower than that of the '40
- Is linear, invite to short steps
- Easy to predict
- The choreography is rather simple

1940s { Juan D'Arienzo
Rodolfo Biagi
Ricardo Tanturi
Alfredo De Angelis
Angel D'Agostino
Enrique Rodriguez
Ricardo Malerba
Carlos D Sarli
Aníbal Troilo
Osvaldo Pugliese
Pedro Laurenz
Miguel Caló
Lucio Demare
Alfredo Gobbi

The music of the '40s & '50s:

- Is Energetic, Extravert
- Invite to complex choreographic arrangements
- The embrace is no longer simple, is artistic

The “milonga” (social dance) emerged as massive phenomenon during the 40s...

The period between ~1937 to 1955 is known as the Golden Age or just The Forties

The music of the Golden Age continue energizing the milongas of the 3rd millennium

The Forties

Three factors contributed to the massive appealing of tango dance in 1940:

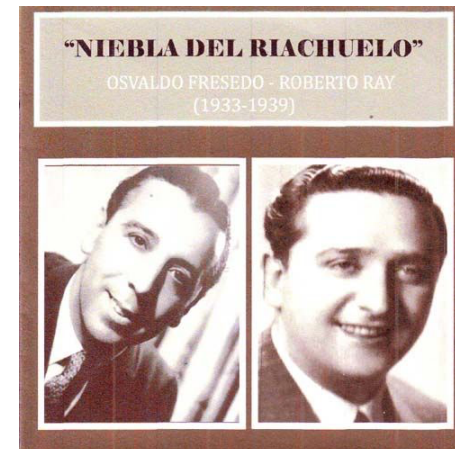
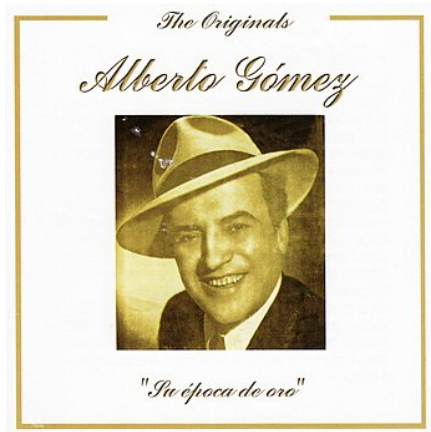
- The technical quality of a new generation of musicians and their insertion into the popular strata
- The surge of young musicians/composers (e.g. Troilo, Pugliese, Di Sarli) and poets (e.g. Homero Manzi, Homero Expósito)
- The preponderant role of the vocalist and **the re-invention of the Tango Canción (Tango Song)**

The singers of the 30s

- Nasal sound
- Strictly adjusted to the orchestra tempo
- Purity of the language
- Neutral voice, monotonous, voided of feeling. No major stylistic differences between singers



O.T. Victor / Ernesto Fama



Oswaldo Fresedo / Roberto Ray

The singers of the 40s

Orchestra and singer functioned as a unity. The singer delivered personality

- Singing with the soul, natural (street) language with frequent (but not always) use of lunfardo slang
- Phrasing in harmony –but not necessarily on tempo with the instruments
- Distinctive voices: Echagüe, rhythmic; Fiorentino, melodic; Berón, romantic, Castillo, bully. Morán, dramatic

D'Arienzo-Echagüe



Troilo-Fiorentino



Di Sarli-Rufino



Pugliese-Chanel-Morán



Caló-Berón



Tanturi-Castillo



De Angelis-Martel-Dante



D'Agostino-Vargas

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DJ's dilemma

What to play?

- More than 30,000 tangos have been recorded by >200 orchestras, but ...
- Only 1,500 -2,000 tangos (T, M and W) by <30 orchestras are danced in modern milongas

Classification of Orchestras Based on # of recorded tracks

<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>tracks</u>
Canaro	3798
Firpo	2862
Fresedo	1252
DArienzo	963
Lomuto	958
De Angelis	551
Pugliese	473
Troilo	454
O. T. Victor	446
De Caro	417
Caló	384
Varela	383
Donato	355
Rodriguez	354
Di Sarli	349
Biagi	187
Demare	83
Laurenz	68
Gobbi	82
Malerba	42

Number of tangos played by DJs during the Tango Dance World Championship. Buenos Aires 2015

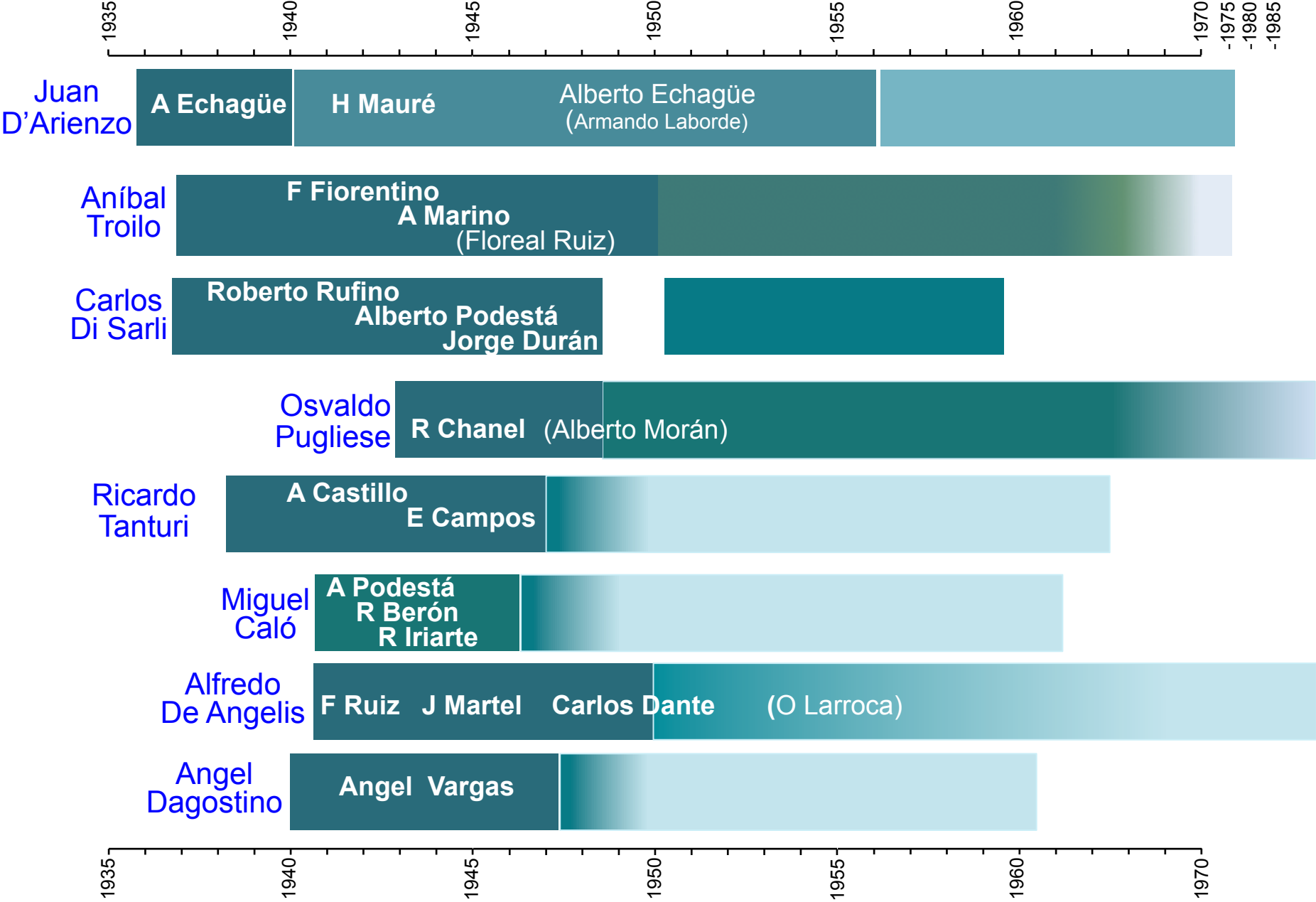
Posted on FB by the *Club de Musicalizadores de Tango*

Carlos Di Sarli	27
Juan D'Arienzo	20
Ricardo Tanturi	18
Osvaldo Pugliese	17
Anibal Troilo	12
Miguel Calo	12
Osvaldo Fresedo	7
Lucio Demare	7
Angel D'Agostino	6
Alfredo De Angelis	5
Rodolfo Biagi	5
Pedro Laurenz	4
Enrique Rodriguez	4
Francisco Canaro	2
Edgardo Donato	2
Riccardo Malerba	2
Alfredo Gobbi	1
OTV	1
Total	152

Suggested classification based on legacy and popularity

Primary	<div>Juan D'Arienzo Carlos Di Sarli Aníbal Troilo Osvaldo Pugliese</div>	The bread and butter of the milonga Must be played at every milonga
Secondary	<div>Ricardo Tanturi Miguel Caló Alfredo De Ángelis Angel D'Agostino Osvaldo Fresedo Rodolfo Biagi Enrique Rodríguez</div>	Always played
Old guard	<div>Francisco Canaro Edgardo Donato O. Tipica Victor</div>	Great for <i>waltzes</i> and <i>milongas</i> . Be cautious with tangos, they could bring the energy down
Forgotten (but not forgettable)	<div>Pedro Laurenz Lucio Demare Alfredo Gobbi Ricardo Malerba José García Hector Varela*</div>	Great orchestras, but not well-known (*and even resisted) by some DJs

Periods of orchestra's popularity in nowadays milongas. Rating is indicated form high (dark green) to low (light green).
Their most (and second most) popular singers are indicated with white fonts within approximate years of their tenure



Combining **T**angos, **M**ilongas, **W**alses (and **C**ortinas) (by 6 different **orch**estras)

A • TTTT C TTTT C TTTT C MMM C TTTT C WWWC

B • TTTT C TTTT C MMM C TTTT C TTTT C WWWC


$$16\ T + 3M + 3W + 6C = 70\ \text{minutes}$$

TIPS

- Know your music
- Know the level of dancers and their preferences. Ask the organizer for suggestions
- Start your playlist with a well-known, energetic tanda, e.g., D'Arienzo, Di Sarli
- Watch the audience, pay attention to the dancers' feet
- Be dynamic, keep the energy high but balanced
- Be ready for a “change of mind” in your play list. Always have back up tandas!

Within Tandas:

- One orchestra per tanda.
- Same period of the orchestra, if possible, same year. Be aware of different versions of the same tango by the same orchestra (different periods)
- Do not combine instrumental with sung tangos (with exceptions)
- Do not combine singers in one tanda (with exceptions)

More tips

- Don't lose your concentration: you may not be able to dance much when you DJ
- One or two tango tandas of the '30s is enough!!!
- Do not abuse with the music of the 1950's. **Be careful with the singers of the '50s.**
- Don't be afraid of playing Di Sarli and D'Arienzo 2, 3 times through the night
- Don't play:
 - Soloist tango singers (Gardel, Goyeneche, Julio Sosa, etc)
 - Vanguard tango (Piazzolla, Rovira, Salgan, L. Federico, Stamponi, Stampone, etc)
 - Fantasy tango, e.g., Mariano Mores (great for stage but not for social dance)
- **Do not re-invent the wheel. The best tango music *for dancers* has been invented >70 years ago!**

Cortinas

- Should be clearly different from the tanda
- Nice energy
- Should get dancers off the floor
- Be remembered by your tandas not by your cortinas

External factors

- Audio system: get there early and run a test
- Light and temperature have an impact
- Interruptions and special moments during the milonga: have a plan to get back into the flow
- Gender balance: watch out for leaders exhaustion

The DJ's role is to please the dancers with
quality music

Be generous

It is not about you
it is about the dancers