THE DEVIL’S HORN AND THE MUSIC OF THE BROTHEL

APPROACHING ADAPTATION AND PERFORMANCE OF TANGO FOR THE
CLASSICAL SAXOPHONIST

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music
The University of Sydney

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October 2015
Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to establish a concise and well-considered approach to the performance of tango music by a classical saxophonist. It explores the significance of adaptation to a saxophonist by investigating the integral role it has had on the performance, promotion and education throughout the instrument’s history. To this end, this thesis also traces the tradition of adaptation in Western Classical music.

When approaching the adaptation of tango it is important to recognise the differences in the music’s culture. We are ultimately changing the context of the music by arranging it for another instrument. Therefore, a fervent discussion of the issues surrounding the idea of schizophonic mimesis are explored in an effort to maintain due respect for the original composition while bringing something new to it. The impact of *schizophonic mimesis* on our audience’s expectations, the stylisation of music, and the respect to the tradition of the other culture are discussed, and establish the need for a well-informed and stylistic approach. To help address the various issues, this thesis gives a historical account of, what we will refer to as the tango’s ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ stylistic traits, and will propose a new approach to saxophone tango performance through a series of established and novel techniques.
Monday, 15 September 2014

Dr Daniel Rojas
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Dear Daniel

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved your project entitled “Transcribing Tango repertoire for the concert saxophonist.”

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project No.: 2014/037
Approval Date: 22 August 2014
First Annual Report Due: 22 August 2015
Authorised Personnel: Rojas Daniel; Jonathan Byrnes

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HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

Condition/s of Approval

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.
- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.
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1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.

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Yours sincerely

Professor Glen Davis  
Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.
I would like express my sincere gratitude to all those who made this thesis possible. A doctoral thesis is no small undertaking and without the support and commitment from a number of people, this work could not have been achieved.

Firstly, a huge thank you to my research supervisor, Dr. Daniel Rojas who has been a great educator, supporter, advisor and friend over the past 3 years. Thank you also to Dr. Michael Duke for his continued support, guidance and inspiration during my candidature.

I am indebted to Daniel Wallace-Crabbe, Maggie Ferguson, Juan Maria Solare, Fernando Muslera, and Jorge Retamoza for their time and valuable knowledge. My sincere gratitude must also go to Fernando Lerman and Emiliano Barri, who kindly welcomed me into the saxophone community in Buenos Aires and guided my exploration of Argentinian culture.

Thank you to all my family and friends who have been incredibly supportive throughout the past 3 years.

A very special thanks must go to my wife Carmen Nieves. Without her this undertaking would never have started. She is a constant source of support and has always believed in me.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

The saxophone has, by necessity, adapted a body of repertoire that was originally written for other instruments from a variety of genres since its invention in 1844. These adaptations, conceived as transcriptions and arrangements, have formed an integral part of sculpting the saxophone’s repertoire to date. Used to expand repertoire, as educational tools and to promote the instrument, this body of repertoire has helped shape saxophonists into well-rounded and informed musicians. There are a number of challenges encountered throughout the process of adaptation. There are the obvious difficulties surrounding the differences of instrumentation; for example, issues of range and tessitura, balance, articulation and breathing. Furthermore, when aspiring to realise an informed adaptation, the need arises to thoroughly research the historical context, performance styles, culture and significant figures pertinent to the relevant genre, composer and composition. These aspects are considered as elements of performance practice, an understanding of which leads to a more fruitful appreciation of the music.

Saxophonists of diverse backgrounds have sought to explore the myriad of Latin American musical traditions throughout the vast geographic, historic and demographic terrain this region offers. This includes the Argentinian tango tradition. The poetic nature of this music and dance heritage has been a source of great interest in the classical community and it is not uncommon to see tango programmed in solo, chamber and orchestral concerts. Adaptations of tangos from the earliest forms through to the more recent nuevo tango (new tango) have offered saxophonists the opportunity to access this exciting music and have motivated composers to write for the instrument.

This thesis seeks to discover new approaches and establish a clearer understanding of the performance of tango music for the saxophone. A number of significant and relevant vehicles are used to achieve this: an investigation into the conventions and history of transcription; historic performance practice; a discussion of schizophrenic mimesis (the term Feld (1994) employs to refer to the phenomena that occurs when a cultural artefact is removed from its original source and utilised elsewhere); and, an assessment of saxophone techniques and their possible implementation. With reference to the interviews with the composers, arrangers and performers that participated in this study, I seek to illustrate the
conventions of this genre. An informed approach to the performance conventions of the tango allows the saxophonist to better execute adaptations and new works.

**Terminology**

It is important to clarify arcane terminology that has either changed or been employed ambiguously throughout the history of the tango. I will use the term *adaptation* throughout this thesis to describe, in the most general manner, the undertaking of reworking an existing work for a different instrumentation than originally intended. The application of terms such as ‘transcription’ and ‘arrangement’ will be used to qualify the means of a given adaptation.

The definitions that Feruccio Busoni (1866-1924) applies to transcription and arrangement will clarify these various types of adaptation. This is further explained in Chapter 3. ‘Transcription’ will be used to describe a note-for-note adaptation; a specific translation of a work that maintains as much of the original work as possible in the transfer of the musical content to the new instrumentation.¹ ‘Arrangement’ will be used to describe an adaptation of a work where a more liberal approach has been taken, particularly the addition or omission of parts, a complete change in the instrumentation and setting.

'Classical saxophonist' will be used to define the musical style, and pedagogical background of a saxophonist educated within the classical tradition. In my empirical observation as a saxophone educator, I have observed that from an early stage, a saxophone student will usually begin to focus on a technique that will either be appropriate for jazz or classical music. The tutor, based on his/her own musical background, will commonly prescribe the direction in technical development. Technical considerations (particularly regarding embouchure²), as well as the aesthetic and artistic preferences of the tutor may determine the musical direction of the young musician. Jazz and classical approaches will depend on the way the instrument is setup by way of the mouthpiece and reed combinations. It is, however, possible and sufficiently common for a saxophonist to perform in both genres. Nevertheless, the approach of playing classical

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¹ ‘Transcription’ can also be used as a term to describe the act of notating a work through aural scrutiny, however throughout this thesis this term will not be used in this context.

² The embouchure is the use of facial muscles and the shaping of the lips to the mouthpiece of woodwind instruments, originally a French term it has become widely accepted as the international term for the positioning of the mouth.
saxophone is inherently different to that of jazz, from a stylistic and technical perspective. Further to the aforementioned, the use of the phrase, ‘classical saxophonist’ will therefore refer to a saxophonist who has studied in the classical western music tradition, with the relevant equipment set up accordingly.

There is an ample usage of terminology that is specific to tango, much of which is in Spanish. This terminology is related to particular stylistic traits and performance practices as well as historical periods and influences. Definitions and translation of these terms will be given in the course of this thesis and in the Glossary (Appendix A).

**Purpose of the study**

It is my view that a music educator and performer should seek to be well informed about the broader issues pertinent to his/her craft. This encompasses an awareness of the historical and cultural context, understanding the stylistic performance traits, and an awareness of traditional and modern approaches to performing on the instrument. This is particularly crucial for a saxophonist due to the diversity of the repertoire that was written specifically for the instrument as well as adapted.

When adapting a work to be performed on the saxophone, we need to establish how to approach the interpretation of the work. This will not only enhance the performance but also lead to a more productive understanding of the genre that respects its musical and cultural attributes. Acknowledging the instrument’s limitations and characteristics, and extending these boundaries are crucial elements to the success of the performance, which can potentially lead to the creation of further repertoire.

Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to develop a concise method or approach that looks at the interpretation from different perspectives, covering the important discussion of authenticity and the act of translating music of another tradition as well as giving a clear and succinct approach to the performance practise of the genre. The study also investigates various alternatives with which the saxophone can recreate important tango conventions through the use of extended techniques and new concepts of saxophone performance. Consequently, I hope the thesis expands our understanding of tango performance with the particular focus being on the saxophone.
Need for the study

Tango uses the western notation system as well as an aural and oral means to disseminate music. A vast array of stylistic performance characteristics have, therefore, not been inherited through annotated scores but through listening, playing experience and verbal instruction. Without knowledge of these characteristics it is impossible to perform the genre in an effective and true way. Whilst much research has been carried out in the performance practice of tango, the need for further stylistic interpretation non-tango classical musician remains pertinent. A musician who is informed in these practices will engage with greater sensitivity, confidence and integrity in the tango tradition.

This thesis is, to my knowledge, the first attempt that deals with how the classical saxophonist can negotiate the performance and pedagogical objectives of tango. There are a number of theses that deal with a non-specific assortment of Latin American genres relating to classical saxophone. There are also two books on stylistic and technical approaches to tango written from a jazz saxophone perspective.

This investigation is overdue as tango becomes increasingly favoured within the classical saxophone community, and as compositions of this genre gradually become incorporated in to the standard repertoire.

The use of recently circulated extended techniques help to mimic percussive effects from other instruments and features such as the growl and multi-phonics can be used to suggest the extremities of the bandoneon’s timbral capacity. These have hitherto not been discussed in academic or even instructional method books in relation to this genre.

Method of investigation

Data was collected through a number of secondary academic sources including journals, books, and published and unpublished theses. Instructional manuals were drawn upon for their content regarding performance practice, and an understanding of those elements that lay beyond the scope of the score.

I held a number of interviews with performers, arrangers and composers who are longstanding and avid proponents of tango. These participants offered a meaningful insight into important matters that are, at best, difficult to be found through other means. These participants were: Australian prominent tango musicians Maggie Ferguson and
Daniel Wallace-Crabbe; and Argentinian composers and performers Jorge Retamoza, Juan Maria Solare and Fernando Muslera.

A survey was used to gain insight into the existing performance approaches and the views of saxophonists regarding tango. This survey was carried out with Australian and international participants through survey-monkey and made it accessible via the following highly transited Facebook groups: ‘Classical Saxophone’ and ‘Angel’s Concert Saxophone Information Central’. A hard copy of this survey, however, was used with participants in Argentina.

Prominent published works in the saxophone tango repertoire, particularly *Histoire du Tango* and *Etudes Tanguistiques* composed by Astor Piazzolla, were analysed to ascertain how concepts have been notated and how these can be better presented in notation.

My own experiences as a saxophonist, on the concert stage and the recording studio, and in the tango and contemporary music community have informed my understanding of the instrument and its relation to the genre. An important exploratory trip to the educational, performance and dance venues of Buenos Aires proved to be a useful experience to gain a better appreciation and understanding of the cultural significance of the tango in its birthplace. By immersing myself within the local culture, I sought to understand the profound value of this music to its people, and the sensitivity and need for accurate representation of the music.

**Scope and limitations of the research**

The study is specifically aimed at classically educated musicians approaching the tango style. Jazz and popular music were enormous influence on many tango musicians, such as Piazzolla. Topics relating to Latin jazz and improvisation are not relevant to this thesis.

This thesis focuses on the understanding of the tango genre and how the saxophone can be used within it to provide the reader with the knowledge that will enable them to interpret the music.

**Relevant existing literature**

The polemics of transcription have been researched and explored in many different musical contexts and are relevant to this thesis. Steven Feld has written numerous journal
articles about the impact of translating music from one culture to another (see 1994, 1996, 2000).

Feld (1996) is an ethnomusicological study of the polemics of cross-cultural amalgamation of music. He examines the issues of borrowing cultural artefacts in a discussion of the Pygmy’s connection with the forest, the function music plays in their society, and how foreign commercial use of their music has impacted its meaning and function. The topic of *schizophrenic mimesis* is relevant to this thesis because it explores pertinent issues of globalisation, stylisation and audience expectation.

Tango has gained enormous popularity in recent years, which has led to an abundance of scholarly literature. Much of this literature is targeted towards critical historical and cultural perspectives of the art form in sources as Azzi (1995) and Azzi and Collier (2000). These sources offer insights into the way the tango has developed and informs us of key figures within the style. Furthermore, they provide information about the place of tango within Argentinian culture.

Gorin (2001) contains a number of interviews with Astor Piazzolla that divulge information on how his compositions were received within the broader tango community.

Much academic literature exists, particularly in the form of post-graduate research theses regarding the performance practice of what I will later refer to as ‘intangible’ tango traits. Drago (2008), Quinoñes (2013), Link (2013) and Löfdahl (2012) explore the significant characteristics of tango. Drago (2008) highlights the importance of instrumentation, stylistic performance techniques and the history of the tango. As conductor himself, Drago examines Piazzolla’s orchestral music; he offers a concise and useful connection to the early history of tango that helped establish Piazzolla’s style.

Tango method books by Salgán (2001) and Fain (2010) also contribute to the vast literature on tango interpretation. Salgán is considered one of the greatest performers and composers in tango history. He is, therefore, in a position to deliver a historically informed and comprehensive account of a wide range of tango elements. He takes a highly practical approach, however, emphasising that the intent of this course is on, ‘the performance of the tango rather than an exhaustive study of its history’, and hence it dwells on those aspects ‘which are useful to the performer’ (Salgan 2001: 19).

Fain (2010) builds on Salgán’s method offering an in-depth study of those musical elements penned by the composer (such as melody, rhythm, harmony, and instrumentation), and how these should be approached. Fain clearly defines a body of
highly relevant terminology and illustrates these with appropriate musical examples. As a flute player, her method focuses on the performance practice of tango on the flute. The flute was used in the very early years of the tango but from 1910’s was replaced by the bandoneon (see Chapter 2). Her method, however, is a pertinent source for this thesis because it examines the interpretation of tango from the perspective of an instrument not typical of tangos present instrumentation.

Monk (2013) and Retamoza (2014) are new methods that have been published, which focus on the performance practice of tango on the saxophone. Monk’s method investigates the technical and conceptual challenges faced by saxophonists wanting to perform within a tradition tango ensemble setting. He tackles the technical challenges of the saxophone’s approach with specific exercises in embouchure, flexibility, harmonics, the altissimo register and articulation. These exercises help in the development of creating a ‘flexible tango sound’ on the saxophone. Monk also investigates the conceptual and stylistic aspects of tango performance through a review of the development of the tango in a historical context, and through the discussion of the performance practices of rhythm and melody. A large portion of Monk’s method offers tools to help improvisation within the tango; this aspect of the literature whilst very informative and interesting is not relevant to the discussion of this thesis.

The literature presented above provides a platform for this thesis. It does not, however, present these discussions with any great degree of relevance to the classical idiom or to the approach of the classical saxophonist.
Chapter 2. Historical Background

That’s your field! Give up symphonic music and dedicate your energies to the tangos.
Nadia Boulanger (cited in Spyket 1992: 71)

Many classical musicians first discover the allure and passion of tango music through the repertoire of one of its greatest exponents, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), who combined the exoticism of a novel musical culture with classical music. Piazzolla’s works for classical performers such as Mstislav Rostropovich (1927-2007) have led to an awareness of Piazzolla in the classical context. Piazzolla’s popularity can be attributed to, at least in part, his unconventional uses of rhythm and harmony, as well as his charismatic performances. Perhaps more significantly are his influences from a range of vastly different musical traditions, primarily jazz, baroque and the avant-garde. This fusion became known as nuevo tango.

This chapter establishes the value attributable to a broad historical understanding of tango and introduces significant exponents that enabled the development of tango as a musical genre. Furthermore, the internationalisation of tango is discussed throughout this chapter tracing its vast diaspora. This occurred throughout tango’s history from its early connection with European heritage, its exportation to Paris, the United Kingdom and Germany; and, of course, later through Hollywood.

This chapter also explores the connection between tango and politics. In 2009, tango was listed as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This has, unsurprisingly, become a source of pride and cultural identity in Argentina.

To perform and adapt tango works with conviction and respect, it is paramount to establish both, a concise cognizance of the history, and a comprehensive understanding of key periods and personalities of the tango heritage. Through an engagement with the historical developments of the tango, along with it various sub-genres, more informed stylistic choices can be made when arranging and performing in this style.
The etymology of tango

The term, tango, has an intriguing history. Historically, it has had a number of uses. The precise origin of this term has been the source of great speculation, with a degree of consensus that it may derive from either an African or European background. Drummond informs us that, ‘the word tango comes from the Latin word tangere, to touch. But, it seems more likely that the term tango actually comes from Africa with the onomatopoeic tambo (from drum) and tango (enclosed place) in several languages of Western Africa’ (Drummond 2006: 165).

As the African slaves travelled to Latin America, tango became a word that referred to a place where slaves gathered to dance. In Argentina the word became a generic reference to black dances, which would soon evolve to parody the black identity amongst the white community, as Chasteen reveals:

In sum, from the 1860s-1890s tango meant above all a caricature of black identity. Most tangos were blackface tangos. This was at least the most common documentable meaning of the word and certainly the word’s main meaning among whites. (Chasteen 2004: 64)

It was not until the late 19th Century that historical sources apply the term ‘tango’ to the Argentinean dance we are now familiar with.

Demography in Buenos Aires

It is difficult to place exact dates for the beginning of the tango because, as a dance and music genre, it ‘sprang from the poor and the disadvantaged, in tenement blocks and on street corners, amongst people whose lives usually leave little trace in the history books’ (Denniston 2014: 1). This demographic sector of Argentinian society found its place in bars and brothels at the outskirts of Buenos Aires.3 Due to such morally objectionable establishments and practices there is minimal primary documentation of tango’s early heritage. As this chapter will point out, the international expansion of tango at the beginning of the 20th Century became a catalyst for the proliferation of written accounts.

In the mid 19th Century, Buenos Aires was a small town on the furthest pocket of the former Spanish Empire, covering less than half the area it does now and struggling financially (Bridger, 2013: 48). The introduction of the first railway in 1857 revolutionised

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3 That now form part of the metropolitan area of the capital city.
Buenos Aires, allowing for the transportation of goods and people to and from other cities throughout Latin America, in particular Santiago, Chile. The city began to boom and became the destination of many European men searching for a better life and the promise of employment in the various primary industries that were proliferating. According to Ferrer ‘the census of 1887 showed the population of Buenos Aires was half native and half immigrants’ (1999: 42). This created a large diversity of cultures within the city leading to a melting pot of musical styles. Baily reports that, ‘In 1869 the population [of Buenos Aires] was a total of 18000 people and by 1914 the population was 1.5 million’ (1980: 32). Seventy per cent of the population of Buenos Aires in the later part of the 19th Century were male. This gender imbalance resulted from men from Europe seeking their fortunes; or heads of families arriving to earn enough money to pay for the rest of the family to arrive (Drago 2008: 10).

These demographic circumstances contributed to the thriving development of prostitution in the city. As Manuel reports:

The shortage of women intensified traditional machismo, leading to the male domination of public life, a weakened family structure and the emergence of brothels which by 1900 employed some 20,000 to 30,000 prostitutes. (Manuel 1988: 60)

The formative years

As I mentioned at the onset of this chapter, there is much debate regarding the origins of tango. The development of the Cuban Habanera, the introduction of the Andalusian tango from Spain, the importance of the payadas (music from the interior of Argentina), and the value of African slave rhythms, all had a large influence on the tango. Megenney explains that the exact history of the tango’s formative years may never be discovered:

Given the lack of concrete socio-historical evidence, in addition to the dynamic nature of linguistic diachronic evolution, the enigma surrounding both the social development of the tango as well as the etymology of the word itself, may be lost to those of us who would be bold enough to attempt time travel to the past to gather information. (Megenney 2003: 44)

Megenney believes that tango criollo, one of the more primitive forms of the tango we know today was associated with social inequality and was created as a reaction to the milonga. The milonga was a musical practice that derived from African rhythms and danced by the indigenous population and the black slaves during the mid 19th Century. At
this time the immigrant population did not embrace the milonga. This was due to prejudice and the nature and complexity of the dance:

This clash of cultures included the derision imparted by the native population including the blacks, on the immigrants or gringos, who believed they were superior to the natives, yet were unable to mimic the dance steps performed by the latter. Such an imposition on the dominant class of immigrants would have produced a reaction on their part to change the music and choreography of the milonga to suit their idea of white superiority. (Megenney 2003: 42)

Tango criollo was formed in the 1880s in the arrabales (suburbs) on the outskirts of the city. The arrabales were places where men of all different nationalities and backgrounds would mingle (French 2007: 217). The bands, known as conjuntos, would provide music. Conjuntos featured a trio of flute, guitar and violin. The following is a brief description of the this prominent ensemble during this period:

The trios were perfectly adapted to the conditions of the period, being easy to transport (as musicians were badly paid they were forced to play several venues a night). They were also small and portable enough for their owners to turn tail when the police arrived on one of their raids – a frequent occurrence’ (Fain 2010: 118).

Old Guard – Guardia Vieja (1880-1915)

Tango Criollo would soon evolve into a style of tango that we recognise today. Manuel states that the Guardia Vieja (Old Guard) tango emerged as the ‘archetypal expression of the male condition in the arrabales’ (Manuel 1988: 60). The music featured aggressive moves in the dance, and misogynistic lyrics. A great example of this is En el bosque de la China (in China’s bush). The lyrics of this song are provocative, using double entendres to infer to an engagement with an indigenous prostitute, who were seen to look like Chinese women.

By the late 19th Century the music travelled out of the arrabales into the academias, which were the newly established dance academies in the city. Soon the academias developed into a place of dancing and gambling, where women were hired as dance partners and as prostitutes (Megenney 2003: 42). Tangos also moved into peringundines, a type of café where waitresses could be hired as dancers and presumably prostitutes. Over time the tangos were moved from these places of ill repute into bordellos near the ports of Buenos Aires (Stavans 2014: 31).
Besides providing men with sexual services, the bordellos also provided entertainment. An *orquesta típica criolla* (the name given to the local ensemble providing the music during this period) would perform while the owners of the bordello paraded and danced with the ladies as a way of advertising them. The men would get their chance to dance with the ladies.

The *orquesta típica criolla* initially presented the same instrumentation as the *conjuntos* but with the inclusion of the recently imported German concertina named the bandoneon. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the bandoneon would play a significant role in the direction of tango. Link explains that, ‘by 1910, composers had established tango as a musical genre and developed common musical characteristics in the areas of instrumentation, structure and rhythm’ (2013: 25). Initially, the bandoneon was designed as a portable church organ for German congregations and later brought to Buenos Aires by German immigrants.

During the 1910s Juan Maglio (1880-1934), otherwise known as Pacho became one of the first virtuoso bandoneonists who expanded the popularity of the bandoneon and of the genre through his recordings. ‘Pacho would play bandoneon solos that were very popular with live audiences and so they were recorded, reaching top sales for those times’ (Finkelmann, 1970: 28).

The *Guardia Vieja* tango happened to coincide historically with the introduction of modern day recording. The phonograph invented in the late 19th Century allowed for music to be transported into the homes. These recordings helped bring the tango from a marginalised social environment to the broader audiences who were beginning to embrace this genre. During the *Guardia Vieja*, musicians such as Juan Maglio, Rosendo Mendizaba I (1868-1913), Angel Villoldo (1861-1919) and Roberto Firpo (1884-1969) began recording and releasing tangos with great commercial success.

Tango during this era was characterised by a pronounced rhythm and a constant tempo along with simple embellishments to the melody. These features are discussed further in Chapter 5.

**The first internationalisation – societal acceptance (1913-1914)**

The novelty of the tango as a dance and musical genre invaded Paris and London in 1913-1914, as Europe was entering war. With the news of the success of tango overseas, the
genre that was once frowned upon now infiltrated the upper socio-economic echelons of Argentinian society: ‘Although the dance was moving under its own power from slum to the center of Buenos Aires in the early 1910s, its conquering of Paris accelerated and amplified this shift’ (Goertzen and Azzi 1999:68).

The wealthier population organised social gatherings for each other with music at the centrepiece of their entertainment in a period that would become known as the Tangomania era. Torres, however, highlights that there was a shift in the dance during this time that accounts for such unforeseen success. He points out that, ‘The tango [in Europe] was a more restrained version of the dance and caught on in ballrooms, society teas and in dance schools’ (Torres 2013: 396). This craze soon became internationalised and through its acceptance beyond the marginalised sectors of society gained popularity in Germany, France and the USA.

**Gardel and the Tango Canción (1917-1925)**

Carlos Gardel (1890-1935) is one of the most famous names of the tango genre and is considered by many as the founder of the Tango Canción (tango song) style. Gardel was initially an urban singer of folklore music but sang in the rural migrant styles of the payadores (folk music from the interior of Argentina). He established himself in this tradition with over 100 folk song recordings. In 1917, Gardel recorded his first tango song, *Mi noche Triste*, which proved overwhelmingly successful (Foster, M. Lockhart and D. Lockhart 1998: 123).

The *tango canción* added a dimension of nostalgia and longing to a genre that had been predominantly humorous and rhythmic. Balderston illustrates this, ‘The first tango song that we know of was “Mi noche triste” (My sad night) by Gardel. This lyric inaugurated a new narrative of failed romance told by a man in an intimate and confessional form’ (1997:201).

A second round of international stardom of the tango occurred during this time. Gardel became renowned globally for promoting the music of Argentina. Through his audio releases and appearances in Hollywood movies, he greatly contributed to the acceptance of tango across all social classes of Buenos Aires and to the international diaspora of this genre.

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4 such as that of *El Choclo* (The Corn Cob)
Gardel’s influence was so unprecedented in the history of tango that he is now considered an Argentinian icon. The 11th December was made a national holiday to commemorate his birth. Azzi writes that, ‘For porteños, [Gardel] represents the ideal man, personifying the rise of the tango itself from its roots in the arrabal to the heights of fashionable society’ (Azzi 1995: 122).

La Nueva Guardia - DeCarean Era – Julio de Caro (1925-1940)

A newfound respect for tango within Buenos Aires was established between 1925-1940 due to its international success. By the 1920’s classically trained musicians began to take the tango into new complexity, bringing about a more formal musical framework. One of the most notable figures was Julio de Caro. To illustrate his significance, Salgán named the years 1925-1940, as the Decarean Era as a tribute to the great influence de Caro had on the genre (2001: 26).

A bandoneonist of great virtuosity, de Caro introduced the variación to the form of the tango. As I will discuss further in Chapter 5, the variación is a cadenza-like passage of rapid notes; it is a display of virtuosity usually performed at the end of the tango by the bandoneonist. De Caro also brought a new approach to lyricism through his flexible and expressive phrasing known as fraseo, an extended form of rubato where the melody is not played as scored but stretched stylistically throughout beats. Salgán explains that, ‘The Decarean period represented a new advance in progression of the tango which consisted of ideas and ways of playing that were deeply lyrical’ (2001: 26).

At this time the orquesta típica became the staple ensemble of instruments. Initially created by de Caro with his Sexteto de Julio de Caro the orquesta típica it contained two violins, two bandoneons, piano and double bass (Link 2013: 29). The orquesta típica allowed the bandoneons to perform both accompaniment and melodic functions (Fain 2010: 118).

De Caro is also considered one of the first composers to implement the arrastre, a dragging gesture towards the first and third beats (see Chapter 5) (Fain, 2010: 116). De Caro brought many of what are considered tango elements to the fore during this time. As Piazzolla affirms:

[De Caro] redeemed for me what was most important: the matter of rhythm, taste. Above all, he reinvigorated the rhythm, the percussion, the accentuation, which for me is the more important interpretation of tango, it gives it the swing. (Speratti 1969: 97)
La Epoca de Oro (Golden Age), between 1940 and 1955 is a title used to retrospectively describe the period during which tango was at its height. Its popularity was increased by the nationalistic agenda of Argentine President, General Perón during the 1940s, which decreed that, ‘all radio stations play Argentine music at least 50 per cent of the time’ (Foster, M. Lockhart and D. Lockhart 1998: 124). The dance could be seen in the salones de baile, milongas and cafés as well as the theatres. Venues increased in size and so did the size of the orquestas. Salgán informs us that, ‘The typical orchestras of the 1940s included: four violins, viola, cello, double bass, four bandoneons and the piano’ (2001: 26). The Golden Age is considered the time of the great orchestras and a time of great development. As Monk describes, ‘This generation of musicians taps the full potential of their possibilities to exploit and develop the interpretative options of the typical tango orchestra’ (2013: 43).

Great orchestras led by tango greats such as: Juan D’Arienzo (1900-1976), Carlos Di Sarli (1903-1960), Aníbal Troilo (1914-1975), Alfredo Gobbi (1912-1965), Osvaldo Pugliese (1905-1995) and Horacio Salgán (1916- ) all brought different elements to the tango creating their own distinct sounds. These elements are summarised in Figure 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orchestra</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julio De Caro Sextet</td>
<td>* Bandoneon Variations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Violin Counter melodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Arrastres toward the 1st and 3rd beats.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Bandoneon soli</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Piano solos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan D’Arienzo Orchestra</td>
<td>* Bandoneons and violins play together</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Vigorous rhythm-based orchestra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Basses and pianoplay staccato</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Fast staccato variaciones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlos di Sarli Orchestra</td>
<td>* Slurred bass lines</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>* Violins predominant over bandoneons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Ornamentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aníbal Troilo Orchestra</td>
<td>* Broad lines of phrasing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Strings play lower than bandoneons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfredo Gobbi</td>
<td>* Violin in solo in almost all pieces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Piano performs clusters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osvaldo Pugliese Orchestra</td>
<td>* Yumba</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Typical solo from first violin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Piano solos</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Displaced ternary accentuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horacio Salgán</td>
<td>* Piano as leader of the band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Rich countermelodies</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 2.1 – List of tango orchestra’s and their features. (Fain 2010: 116-117)
The Vanguard Era – Vanguardia (1955-Present)

The coup that ousted Perón in 1955 marked the end of the great Golden Age of tango. The change in political climate within Argentina had a disastrous impact on tango, generally losing favour with the population. Tango had developed nationalistic associations having become an integral part of Argentineans cultural identity, which was tied up with Perón’s political party. Consequently, it lost popularity and was forced from the large dance halls to the clandestine nightclubs.

The conditions were ripe for introduction of the avant-garde into tango. For many tango musicians this signified a break from mainstream popular music into art music. Great tango composers such as Osmar Maderna began to include classical music influence and jazz into their compositions (Monk 2009: 44). The greatest exponent of this era was Astor Piazzolla.

Piazzolla and Nuevo Tango

Astor Piazzolla’s unique style of tango, now referred to as Nuevo Tango (New Tango), was the culmination of jazz, classical (specifically baroque) and avant-garde music. As Monk describes, ‘Astor Piazzolla’s unique style is based on a highly personalised harmonic and melodic language…that features elements stemming from contemporary and classical music as well as jazz plus a number of certain distinctive rhythmic cells’ (Monk 2009: 44).

Piazzolla, a highly regarded bandoneon player, learned his trade in the tango orchestras of Buenos Aires alongside some of the biggest tango names of the time such as Aníbal Troilo. As tango began to decline in Buenos Aires in the 1950s, Piazzolla lost engagement with the genre and decided to pursue studies in classical music. In 1954 he moved to Paris to study classical composition with the renowned pedagogue and composer, Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979). This had a significant impact on Piazzolla’s life and consequently for the historical development of tango. His studies in classical music enabled him to establish a unique vocabulary that included a solid foundation in baroque harmony and classical form. Boulanger was not convinced by Piazzolla’s compositional efforts but when she discovered he was adept with tango, she urged him to master the music in which he had developed a solid foundation. The following is a description of this crucial moment:
Boulanger was not at all impressed with his laborious compositions. But one day his friends mentioned to Mademoiselle that he improvised tangos and played them better than anyone else. Then she insisted that he demonstrate for her what he could do in this form. After she had listened to him for a long time she told him in all earnestness: ‘That’s your field! Give up symphonic music and dedicate your energies to the tangos.’ (Spyket 1992: 71)

Another defining moment happened for Piazzolla whilst in Paris, directly after Boulanger had attempted to send him back to Buenos Aires:

One night his compatriot Luis Adolfo Sierra took him to hear a jazz octet led by the great saxophonist Gerry Mulligan. Piazzolla stated: “the happiness on stage...it wasn’t like the tango bands...which seemed like funeral corteges, gathering of the embittered. Here it was like a party, the sax played, the drums played, the whole thing was passed over to the trombone … and they were happy. There was a leader and arrangements, but there was also a wide margin for improvisation; everyone could both enjoy it and shine.” (Azzi and Collier 2000: 55)

The influence of Mulligans band, along with his studies with Nadia Boulanger and his stay in Paris inspired the creation of Piazzolla’s famous octet that would go on to enjoy years international stardom. Piazzolla would continue exploration in tango by creating a complex and avant-garde approach to rhythmic morphing. He took the standard rhythmic structures of tango and experimented with them with varying novel metric structures. This new tango was not well received by the tango community because the melodies, metre and form were unfamiliar to dancers. Over time Piazzolla was eventually accepted in his homeland and is now considered a national icon.

The history of saxophone in tango

Piazzolla would attempt to use saxophones in his tango ensembles prior to using the instrument as a soloist but with limited success. Piazzolla describes how the saxophone was not suitable in his attempts of including the saxophone in the tango ensemble:

I enjoyed how the Stan Kenton orchestra sounded, the rhythm it had, that was what I wanted to do, work similar harmonies but with a difference: in place of brass I had strings and bandoneons. When I used trumpets, trombones, and saxes, it was horrendous. (Gorin, 2001: 47)

The absence of the saxophone in tango ensembles during this time is surprising considering the extent of saxophone use in other Latin American music styles of the time. As an example the saxophone was an integral part of the mambo, a genre that was
booming in the 1950s led by Perez Prado. As quoted in Nat Hentoffs Prado Tells How the Mambo Made it (1954) ‘The interpretation of the mambo is based on the saxophones. They carry the basic rhythm pattern’ (as cited in Firmat 1995: 209)

Piazzolla’s collaboration with baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan is without doubt the largest defining moment of saxophone in tango music’s history to date. Recorded in 1974, twenty years after Piazzolla first heard Mulligan, the album uses the saxophone as a secondary soloist to the bandoneon, in a way assuming the role of the violin.

**Conclusion**

This historical background provides knowledge to the classical performer and arranger of important moments within the tango story. This should provide an understanding of particular traits of the style and the value of globalisation on the tango.
Chapter 3. The Significance of Adaptation To The Classical Saxophonist

If one strives only to be authentic, it will never be convincing. If one is convincing what is offered will leave an authentic impression.

Aurelia Saxophone Quartet

This chapter discusses the significance of adaptation for the classical saxophonist. It examines the function adaptation has had on the expanding repertoire for the saxophone as well as its value in pedagogy. This chapter also offers a concise history of the success and demise of adaptation through Western Music history, exploring the attitudes of composer’s from the baroque period through to those who perform with period instruments. This chapter investigates the differing methods used in musical adaptations: note for note transcriptions; orchestrations and arrangements.

What is adaptation?

Transcription, arrangement, adaptation, transposition, orchestration and re-creation are words that possess independent, positive or negative connotations that have been used to label the change of a work of art to another context, genre, instrument or need.

The Harvard dictionary of music defines arrangement as: 'The adaptation of a composition for a medium different from that for which it was originally composed, usually with the intention of preserving the essentials of the musical substance' (Randel 2003: 58).

Types of adaptation

There are a number of approaches to adaptation, which depend on the goal of the performer. Feruccio Busoni (1866-1924) adopted three separate terms for the contrasting ways of adapting a work: Transkription or Übertragung (transcription) indicates the reworking of a piece for a new instrument; Bearbeitung (arrangement) refers to a more invasive reworking of a work by another composer; and Nachdichtung (paraphrase) the
quotation from and reinterpretation of one or multiple excerpts from one or more compositions within the context of newly composed musical material (Knyt 2010: 224).

The term transcription can be used to describe the act of altering a given original score by transposing the music note for note and adjusting it for another instrument. Donington explains that:

Transcription has come to mean adapting a piece of music which was originally written for one instrument or group of instruments so that it may be performed on a different instrument or group of instruments. (Donington 1975: 327)

The aim of a transcription is to maintain as much of the detail of the original work as possible. This is achieved by avoiding excessive manipulations to the score in turn preserving the music’s essence. Alterations may be required to perform the piece as accurately as possible whilst taking into account the limitations of the instrument in question. The goal is, however, to make a musically appropriate and convincing result that maintains the original musical intentions. By limiting the adjustments within the transcription one can provide a score that is as close to what the composer had ‘intended’ as possible.

An arrangement unlike a transcription allows a greater flexibility in the adjustment of the work. Reworking the composition so that it fits with a new instrument group or ensemble by altering its key, changing expressive markings and even relocating the parts into different voices within the ensemble. The arrangement transfers the original musical intentions, into a new context through more elaborate manipulations of the original score, providing a new experience for the audience.

From the perspective of a classical saxophonist

Adaptations for saxophone have been used as a constant foundation for pedagogical purposes, a readily available source for repertoire and have helped shape the instrument’s profile especially in the classical genre. The views surrounding transcription and arrangement are particularly significant to a saxophonist, because transcribed music has been an integral part of our repertoire since the instrument’s inception in 1844. Cairns informs us that Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), a close friend of Adolphe Sax (1814-1893) (the inventor of the saxophone), completed the first ever adaptation for saxophone.5 This

5 Chant Sacre which was adapted from a section (the Hymn) of the 1828, Prix d’Rome cantata, Herminie in 1844 which utilized six wind instruments by the Belgian instrument maker Adolphe Sax (Cairns, 2003: 299).
featured the bass saxophone performed by Sax and is the first known performance of the saxophone (Cairns 2003: 299).

**A History of saxophone adaptations**

Sax used arrangements to promote the saxophone to composers that he thought could raise the instrument to a broad acceptance and critical acclaim. Sax envisioned the saxophone to be an orchestral instrument that would help to blend the woodwind and brass sections while capable of performing a solo role. He hoped that great composers of his era would write solo repertoire for it and include it in their orchestral works. Berlioz, an advocate of the saxophone emphatically supported Sax’s objectives asserting that the Saxophone is:

> an instrument whose tone colour is between that of the brass and the woodwinds. But it even reminds one, though more remotely, of the sound of the strings. I think its main advantage is the greatly varied beauty in its different possibilities of expression. At one time deeply quiet, at another full of emotion; dreamy, melancholic, sometimes with the hush of an echo.... I do not know of any instrument having this specific tone-quality, bordering on the limits of the audible. (Cottrell, 2012: 44)

Further evidence of Berlioz admiration of the saxophone can be seen in *A Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration*:

> These new voices given to the orchestra, possess most rare and precious qualities. Soft and penetrating in the higher part, full and rich in the lower part, their medium has something profoundly expressive. It is, in short, a quality of tone sui generis, presenting vague analogies with the sounds of the violoncello, of the clarinet and *corno inglese*, and invested with a brazen tinge which imparts a peculiar accent. (Berlioz 1858: 233)

Aside from a few small feature roles by composers such as Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) and Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881), the saxophone remained excised from the orchestral environment. Consequently, it was not incorporated into the staple instrumentation of the symphony orchestra and its creator’s intention remained unfulfilled. The saxophone established place in military bands and from this gained great popularity. Due to this, repertoire was needed for the growing saxophone community. Transcriptions were used as the solo repertoire for the instrument was still in its infancy. Oxford explains that, ‘the process of transcription is not new to saxophonists, since the instrument was invented in the 1840s and it took some time for the solo
repertoire to grow’ (2001: 23).

In 1866, Sax established the first saxophone class at the Paris Conservatoire. Along with having many works written for the saxophone, Sax continued to transcribe in order to help promote the instrument not only to composers but also to interest students in his class. These transcriptions were also of great pedagogical use to the students of the time. It was not only Sax who arranged works for the saxophone during the 19th Century. Thomas Ryan performed transcriptions on the saxophone for the Boston Mendelssohn Quintet Club, of which he was a founding member as early as 1862, performing operatic and classical favourites such as Schubert’s Serenade, selections from Verdi’s Il Travotore and Donizetti’s Lucia de Lammermoor (Hemke 1975: 392).

Because of the ongoing scarcity of original works concert artists from the subsequent generation such as Cecil Leeson (1902-1989), Marcel Mule (1901-2001) and Sigurd Rascher (1907-2001) adapted music of earlier periods to the saxophone. These adaptations led to great works being written for the saxophone (Liley 2001: 56). Specific examples of this are the concerto by Edmund von Borck (1906-1944), which was written after Rascher performed solo Bach repertoire for him as well as the Rascher Quartet who most notably performed Bach chorales for Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) leading to his composition Xas.

Adaptation in education

Adaptations have also served as a useful asset to saxophone pedagogy. Marcel Mule (1901-2001), successor to Sax at the Paris Conservatoire⁶ adapted a substantial collection of works for his students. These works have been published in numerous volumes and are still available today. The Pieces Celebres feature short works by Gluck, Lully and Mendelssohn as well as complete sonata by Bach and Handel (Etheridge 2008: 15). Mule stated in an interview with American born, Eugene Rousseau (b. 1932) that:

[The] Music of Bach and Handel, all music of the eighteenth century provides rich examples of ornamentation, staccato, and legato style, various tempi, and the forms of that era... Without these kinds of transcriptions the saxophonist cannot develop his foundation in musical styles. Thus the use of transcription is musically proper and educationally indispensable (Rousseau 1982: 91)

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⁶ A gap of almost 74 years, Sax was forced to leave the Paris Conservatoire due to both financial issues stimulated by his legal issues with the patent of the instruments as well as continuing to fight health problems. Adolphe Sax suffered from lip cancer in 1856-1858 and many say he never fully recovered his saxophone playing abilities.
Adaptations of music have become such an integral part of the classical saxophone education that they can be seen as requirements for exams throughout the world, both at a school and tertiary level. Studying and performing music from other eras, prior to the instruments invention is vital in becoming a well-rounded and informed performer. Therefore, many education systems require the study of music that may be outside of the particular instruments history. One Antipodean reveals that, ‘Here in Australia, eighteenth-century transcriptions are required at all levels of the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB)’ (Russoniello 2006: 21).

The validity of transcriptions for saxophone is evident through their vast inclusion within the saxophones history of repertoire and education as discussed above. Saxophonists are accustomed to performing adaptations as a way of furthering their musical understanding and to expand their choices in repertoire.

A history of adaptation in classical music

Investigating adaptation from a classical perspective is significant to the research of this thesis as it is important to examine the perspective and musical culture that the adapting musician is versed in. By investigating the historical context of adaptation in the Western Classical tradition we are able to establish the importance and value of the music’s essence over instrumentation. Embracing the fundamental characteristic of the music is paramount to the successful portrayal of the composer’s intention. As will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, understanding the essence of the music is extremely important when approaching a genre outside of the tradition the performers regular style.

From as early as the 14th Century, works were being adapted and altered to suit different combinations of instruments and situations. Liturgical music was typically restricted to the use of voice in the medieval and renaissance eras and the organ in baroque times. Vernacular drama and other non-liturgical religious music, however, were not restricted to voice and organ. There is no question that instruments were used in these circumstances, as there is documentation of musicians being paid. Scores, however, were not labelled with instrumentation and would have been altered to suit the instruments available for a particular performance (Duffin 2000: 253). Many works were transcribed and arranged for whatever instruments were at hand. Even as early as the 1600’s vocal polyphony in the forms of motets, madrigals and chansons were being adapted for keyboard instruments and lutes (Oxford 2001: 26).
As music began to be more widely published in the 18th Century, works were also adapted for financial incentive. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) himself was a seasoned transcriber of his own works for other musical forces: for example his sonatas and partitas for solo violin; BWV 1001-1006; Violin Concerto in A minor BWV 1041; Violin Concerto in E Major BWV 1042; and his Flute Sonata BWV 1034.

Aside from transcribing his own works for other instruments Bach was also responsible for transcribing the works of Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) for financial gain. Prince Johann Ernst who heard the Vivaldi concertos during a tour to Amsterdam and was expected to return to Weimer with much fine Italian and French music commissioned Bach to transcribe the Vivaldi Concerti op.3 no. 8 and op.3 no 11 which are titled by Bach as Concerto in C BWV 594 and Concerto in C BWV 596 (Jones 2007: 143).

Frequent performances of baroque works during the 19th Century and early part of the 20th Century led to a revival of the Baroque era. Exposure to this music was the highest priority, bringing old and forgotten music back to fashion. Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) has been labelled as the man responsible for the revival of the baroque era: ‘The year was 1829, the scene Berlin, and the protagonist a twenty-year-old Mendelssohn’ (Siblin 2009: 68).

His performance of Johann Sebastian Bach’s St Matthews Passion was performed with a full sized orchestra and choir typical of the early romantic era. Mendelssohn adapted the baroque work to suit the orchestra that his audience would be accustomed to. ‘During the Romantic period the orchestra would more than double in size, encouraged by the emergence of public concerts’ and the introduction of more instruments was sought to help ‘evoke orchestral colouration and emotional expressiveness’ (Murray 2004: 831). As the work was performed with this modernised and enlarged orchestra it is considered as an adaptation of the original. A full Romantic period-sized orchestra and choir would not have been the instrumentation that Bach had intended or perceived of his work.

Later in 1838, for a performance of Bach’s Orchestral Suite no.3 in Leipzig, Mendelssohn gave the first trumpet part to a clarinettist and his performances of Bach’s Mass in B Minor had large sections of the trumpet parts either altered with octave displacement or rearranged to other instruments (Koehler 2014: 80). Mendelssohn’s aim was not to establish a replication of the music but to express the music to the people with the tools and knowledge that he and his audience were accustomed to.
Pablo Casals (1876-1973), one of the leading figures in the performance of baroque music during the 20th Century was not against the notion of transcribing or adapting the music. In the 1950s renowned conductor Pablo Casals was left at the last minute without a trumpeter to perform J.S. Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto no.2. Desperate Casals called upon Mule to perform the part on the soprano saxophone. (Rousseau 2012: 45)

Mule gives his first hand account of how Casals felt about this adaptation and the performance of the soprano saxophone.

I can tell you his impression of the saxophone playing the trumpet part! I had not even finished the first measure when he shouted while continuing to conduct, ‘Bravo Monsieur!’ (Rousseau 2012: 63)

At this time the historical performance movement was becoming popular and for many it was a revelation to hear the saxophone performing the music of Bach (Rousseau 2012: 73). Casals saw that the saxophone was an instrument that could perform the clarion (baroque trumpet) part of this concerto with much more ease than that of the trumpeters of the time. In the 1950s trumpets differed greatly from the clarion. They had a different mouthpiece, valves and bore size. Consequently, the performance of baroque works during this time posed technical demands that surpassed the trumpet’s capabilities at the time. As the period instrument movement was still in its infancy a replica of a baroque trumpet would not have even been considered.

It is not just music of the baroque era that we see adapted throughout the Western Classical tradition. Works throughout the classical and romantic eras were adapted for various instruments and ensembles. Orchestration became a way of exploring different tonal possibilities of works. Lawson supports this, ‘The justification for orchestral transcription is to gain dynamic subtlety and clarity’ (Lawson 2003: 110).

A great example of a successful orchestration or orchestral transcription is Modest Mussorgsky’s (1839-1881) Pictures at an Exhibition. Ravel despite the attractions of Mussorgsky’s solo piano work created the ‘masterpiece that deserves its prominent position in the repertory’ Lawson (2003: 111).

**Adverse views**

Adaptations of works began to receive a hostile reception in the middle of the 19th Century. Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827), for example, believed that the composer was the only one who had the right to transcribe their music:
I firmly maintain that only Mozart himself could translate his works from the keyboard to other instruments, and Haydn could do this too – and without wishing to compare myself to these two great men, I claim the same about my keyboard sonatas. (cited in Lockwood 2003: 11)

These hostile attitudes to adaptation became more prevalent in the 20th Century. It was a time when performers began to strive for artistic perfection and the composer’s intent became paramount. As Knyt reveals:

What had been an accepted compositional practice [that of transcriptions and arrangements] in the nineteenth century became aesthetically questionable in the early twentieth century, a time period when compositional originality – novelty of ideas and musical material was highly prized. (Knyt 2010: 225)

An approach to performance that holds sacred the composer’s ink leads to an unwillingness to negate the composer’s intent to explore the possibilities of adaptation. Lawson states, ‘Today’s overwhelming authority of the score, demanding fidelity and accuracy at all costs, is not at all characteristic of the history of performance as a whole’ (Lawson 2003: 4).

This view was not only held by composers of the time but also by the audience, and the concert promoters and organisers. Busoni was famous for both his mastery of the piano as a result of his performances of Franz Liszt’s work, and the abundance of his own arrangements and compositions. In a letter to his wife in 1895 Busoni attests to the opposition to the programming of transcriptions in Milan.

The Board of the society for which I am playing is very highly esteemed. The Directors are very conscientious (so they say) and permit no transcriptions in their programme. I was obliged therefore, to withdraw the Tannhäuser Overture. But when I said that the Bach organ fugue was also a transcription they said it would be better not to mention that in the programme. (Ley 1975: 12)

Composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) did not take kindly to Busoni’s arrangement of his Klavierstück Op.11 No.2. Schoenberg sent the work to Busoni for his input and Busoni sent back an arranged version of the work stating he had ‘rescored’ the piece. In Busoni’s own words, ‘I have penetrated so deeply and closely to your thoughts that I myself was irresistibly urged to translate your intentions into sound’ (Beaumont 1987: 386).

Schoenberg disagreed and took offence at Busoni’s adaptation. He corresponded back to Busoni:
I fear that a transcription, would either introduce what I avoid, either fundamentally or according to my preferences; add what I myself – within the limits of my personality – would never have devised, thus what is foreign or unattainable to me; omit what I would find necessary, or improve where I am and must remain imperfect. Thus a transcription would be bound to do me violence whether it helps or hinders my work. (Beaumont 1987: 386)

The argument between Busoni and Schoenberg is a simple example of the feuds that can be established through the act of adapting a work. These feuds became even more prevalent with the introduction of period instruments and the period performance music.

The challenges for adaptation and authenticity

The ideas of performance practice and the authentic model have scared off those who wish to adapt music for another instrument as Nightingale asserts, ‘No performer enjoys being accused of the destruction of timeless art, and, such accusations have contributed to reluctance among saxophonists to perform transcribed music. (2000: 3)

The accusations Nightingale speaks of come from a sector of the musical community that is adverse to adaptation for any number of reasons particularly those who feel that adaptation contradicts what they believe to be the authentic modes of performing a work. For the sake of illustration I would like to draw upon the period performance movement.

The second revival of the baroque period introduced the use of period instruments and the establishment of period conventions. This period commonly referred to as the period performance movement aims for authenticity by placing the ideals of the composer at the forefront of the performance. Understanding the composer’s intent is one of the greatest challenges of authentic performance. For this reason it important to clarify the meaning of authenticity. As Will Crutchfield notes, ‘the word authenticity has many meanings. It may refer to the fidelity to the composer’s intentions, or the composer’s text’ (1998: 25).

Crutchfield’s definition alludes to the challenges faced with authentic performance practice. The interpretation of the score should not be regarded as the only means of discovering the composer’s intent. Brown states, ‘it was Arnold Dolmetsch more than anyone else who was committed to the idea that performers should try to play music in the way its composers intended, He, more than anyone else, is the founding father of the ‘cult of authenticity’ (Cited in Wilson 2014: 39).
The period performance movement not only highly value the composer’s intent but also aims to perform the music within the historical context of the time, that is, by using period instruments. It regards these two parameters as an authentic approach, explained by Crutchfield:

The performers of the early music movement embrace in large measure the ‘intention of the composer idea of authenticity’, augmenting it with the notion that the conventions the composer was accustomed...This gives rise to the museum model, the precise reconstruction of sounds as near as possible to those heard by the composer. (in Kenyon 1998: 24)

By establishing the museum model of authenticity, the period performance movement rejects any approach taken that does not adhere to the instruments available to the composer at the time of composition. According to Crutchfield, by performing the music on a modern or an alternative instrument, the modern performer is not respecting the ‘composer idea of authenticity’.

I’d like to place these concepts into a historical context. As early as the 1930’s musicians were considering period instruments to be integral to the composer’s intent and were investigating the value of authentic performance practices. Landowska argued the validity of period performance practices and their value to the composer’s intent over that of modern instrument performance. She explained that ‘the harpsichord revealed qualities in the music that modern instruments never can, and she felt that she had to learn to play on original instruments and study old treatises if she were to do justice to the music’ (Restout and Hawkins 1969: 355).

The historical performance period has established a great deal of resources and knowledge regarding composer’s intent. The historical background that we now have access to, is in part due to the large study done within this movement leading to a thorough understanding of not only the practices of the time but also the conventions such as instrumentation and musical setting. Kenyon articulates the value of the historical performance movement: ‘No change has more profoundly influenced the development of our music-making during the last two decades than the growth of the historical performance movement’ (Kenyon 1998: 1).

However, I would like to draw a clear distinction between the musical composition and the medium on which this was composed. Music in the baroque period was not necessarily strictly intended for a particular instrumentation as in more recent times. Instruments could be interchangeable and composers often arranged the music themselves for other instruments as stated earlier in this chapter. Therefore, the value of the
composition is based more on the musical concepts than the medium that was used. Period instrument enthusiasts make a concerted attempt to equate the importance of the medium to the work itself however I assert that the core of the musical idea can have a more profound value to the music and the composer than the instrument they chose to create it with.

The accusations and adverse view towards those who arrange of the period performance movement is demonstrated by the importance placed on the musical medium and does not hold the spirit or essence of the music as the paramount value of it.

As Busoni eloquently states:

> The spirit of an art work, the measure of emotion of humanity that is in it – these remain unchanged in value through changing years, the form which these are assumed the manner of their expression and the flavour of the epoch which gave them birth are transient and age rapidly’ (Busoni 1907: 2)

**Conclusion**

This chapter has established the significance of adaptation for a classical saxophonist by investigating the role it has had throughout the instruments history. The tradition of adaptation throughout Western Classical music has been presented and as seen in the examples, approached for many different reasons. The aptitude of the performer, supply of the correct instrumentation, financial incentive and traditions of the time, have all been valid reasons for performing music on an instrument not originally designated for the work. I assert that the value of the music’s spirit and essence founded in the expression of the music far out way the views of the performance period, that hold sacred the composer’s ink and the conventions of the time. As van Hauwe poetically asserts in his liner to Aurelia Saxophone Quartet’s recording of Domenico Scarlatti’s work, if:

> You start with composer’s spirit, his emotional impulses, it is much easier to approach his world, and you can search for possible ‘authentic’ spiritual affinities.... Then the saxophone, like any other instrument, comes into its own. (van Hauwe 1998: 4)
Chapter 4. Translating Music of Other Traditions

Chapter 3 discussed the attitudes, debates and relevance of adaptation for the concert saxophonist within the Western Classical tradition. This chapter examines the perception and reception of music that falls outside this tradition with particular focus on tango. With reference to the issues of translating music of another tradition, I will address a number of questions beginning with what defines world music and how this relates to tango. What are the issues surrounding schizophonic mimesis, of context, education and stylisation of genre? In what way are these issues reflected in our audience expectations and how do they affect our approach? The relevance of these topics relate to the challenges faced when negotiating music of other cultures. By not examining these issues an adaptation of a work may fail to portray the essence of the music and can be insensitive to the genre’s heritage.

A daunting task

For a classically trained musician, approaching music outside of the parameters of the Western Classical tradition can be a daunting task. Fears are established through a lack of understanding of the genre’s performance characteristics. These traits are imbedded within the aural and oral traditions and are not notated with the same conventions of a classical score. These performance practices contain a different vocabulary to those of the classical tradition. It is therefore essential that the classical musician consider the musical gestures, practices, audience expectations and history of the genre. The effect on the music’s culture our adaption may have should be researched and considered so that a respectful and sincere adaptation can be created.

Music that is outside of the Western Classical tradition has been labelled in a number of ways, including ‘ethnic music’, ‘folk music’ and ‘world music’. World music has become common parlance to refer generically to an array of non-Western and non-classical genres by commercial and academic communities.
World Music

*World music* is a term that was first used in the 1960s by academics to promote the study of musical diversity. A phrase that is less cumbersome than *ethnomusicology*, its initial use was ‘to refer to the study of non-Western musics and musics of ethnic minority’ (Feld 2000: 146). Further interest in these traditions ensued and an increase in academic research led to the awareness of genres that were previously little known by Western musicologists. Netti explains how the study of world music aims to promote a broader and more inclusive understanding of music within the given community:

> Ethnomusicologists try to bring an understanding of their musics to their own society, believing that the teaching of their subject will in a small way promote intercultural—maybe even international—understanding, building respect for the traditions of the world’s societies. (Netti 1983: 15)

The novel label, ‘world music’, also generated a greater commercial currency to a new musical genre. Adopted by the British commercial sector in the 1980s after Paul Simon’s very successful *Graceland* album, the term ‘world music’ was used to give a ‘new means for marketing other music through a unified generic name’ (Connell and Gibson 2004: 349). However, in contrast to the objectives of academics to promote the study of musical diversity, the commercial use of this label was to unify all non-western popular music into one sellable commodity.

The promotion of the term *world music* as non-western popular music is exemplified by Guilbault who defines world music as, ‘Music that is outside “normal” Anglo-American sources and mainly from tropical countries because the attraction of *world music* is seen to lie in its use of rhythm’ (Guilbault 2001: 176). The attraction of the music mentioned by Guilbault alludes to the value of the music as a commodity rather than that of a distinct cultural feature.

The term, *world music*, polarises academia because musical traditions that are understood as non-Western continue to be ‘routinely partitioned from those of the west’ (Feld 2000: 146). This separation is seen because non-Western music requires different skills and methods of study than that of the usual Western Classical education system. Due to the increasing rift between *world music* and Western European art music, debate has ensued over the value and respect regarding the terminology.

World music is often considered as ‘lesser music’ since our lack of understanding of what defines music often detracts from the validity of music outside of the Western
Classical tradition. Netti explains the common misconception of music requires it to contain the following criteria: notation, complexity, structure, be composed and be aesthetically pleasing (1983: 13-19).

In many ways this description negates the validity of world music. Non-western popular music, whilst often aesthetically pleasing, does not contain many of the misconceptions listed above. In many cases it is not notated, and is not considered to have the same complexity as the western art music tradition alluded to above. Popular music, however, brings with it its own set of traits, such as the use of improvisation and an aural or oral dissemination that leads to an extensive use of performance practices that are characteristic to the styles. These points help to validate the study of popular music.

While the term ‘world music’ is threatened with volatile perceptions as described above, it is widely used to refer to popular music outside of the Western tradition. In this way it can be useful in defining a musical culture that is separate to that of classical saxophonist.

Is tango world music?

Does the term ‘world music’ apply to tango? As much non-Western music, tango is often labelled as world music but with some serious qualifications. Tango has had a long history of amalgamations with non-western popular, folk and classical musics. Therefore, restricting tango to such overused and simplistic labels can misrepresent the music’s richness and heritage.

Tango’s connection to dance, aural tradition and extensive performance practices describe it as a popular music. However, its use of notation, the complexity of the music and European instrumentation signify the influence of classical music (see Chapter 5).

Tango is undoubtedly in many ways popular music. Born and developed as both an independent musical force and a dance form, the tango has been part of popular culture in Buenos Aires since its creation. Although often seen on the concert stage or classical recording, the tango is at home in the popular dance halls of Buenos Aires.

Tango’s connection to folk music (the music of the payadores) mentioned in Chapter 2 establishes another facet to the tango’s complex foundation. Aside from the deep influence folk music had on the tango’s musical content, tango also uses the aural tradition for passing on elements of the music. This is a defining characteristic of folk music as Bohlman explains: ‘So strong is the correlation of oral tradition with folk music that most
definitions treat oral tradition as fundamental to folk music’ (Bohlman 1988: 14). This point alone would be sufficient enough to divorce tango from the classical culture; however, it is important to clarify that whilst tango uses the aural tradition to disseminate the extensive performance practices of the genre, the composer passes on the content of the music to the performer through western notation.

Another facet of the tango that establishes its connection to the western art tradition is its instrumentation and the way that instrumentation is used. The tango’s orquesta típica contains instruments founded in the western art music tradition such as the piano, violin and double bass. Interestingly similar to classical music it does not use percussion as a tool of providing the beat, but as a way of enriching the tonal palate.

Through this material it is evident that the tango is a unique art form that cannot be placed under one fixed term. Its multifaceted foundation with influences from the Western tradition, folkloric styles and popular music, separate tango from other genres and perhaps contributed to its success globally.

Understanding the complexity of adapting tango as a genre that in some ways is outside of the Western tradition requires further research into the connection of world music and globalisation. As Bohlman informs us, ‘World music is inseparable from another equally difficult to define phenomenon of our age, globalization’ (Bohlman 2002: iii).

**The internationalisation of music**

European countries, particularly the United Kingdom and Spain, ‘discovered’ and settled countries with vastly different cultures and, consequently, divergent musical traditions. The internationalisation of music has been an enriching process that has introduced people to differing thoughts, values, beliefs and traditions. Now, music of nearly every ethnic group can be heard live or through audio recording on all four corners of the globe. We have a vast new repertoire of tools for composition and a greater understanding of different musical fundamentals thanks to the immense number of musical genres at our disposal.

The positivity of music’s internationalisation is evident in the influence that non-Western music has had on the classical tradition. Many classical composers have been heavily influenced by world music and folk styles. Carl Daulhaus states that the use of folk music in art music was a technique ‘no different in principle from the exoticism or historicism of the nineteenth century’ , and that both folklorism and exoticism were a
'process of gathering heterogeneous material from exotic sources and incorporating them into art music (cited in Frigyesi 1998: 53). Classical composers such as Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904), Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), Bela Bartok (1881-1945), Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Percy Grainger (1882-1961) are all renowned for the integration of folk and world music into their compositions.

Globalisation has obviously had a ubiquitous impact on music. Its impact on musical forms began on a small scale with the printing press but was intensified by the technology of sound recording. Mazlish and Iriye explain the change that was occurring at the beginning of the 20th century:

What had been an age old business – the meeting and commingling of different musical cultures – that occurred infrequently and sporadically since it was dependent upon the migration of human groups was now [in the 20th century], poised to become a common event on a world wide scale. (Mazlish and Iriye 2005: 224)

In the 20th Century, and since the invention of music recording with the phonograph, music has become increasingly accessible. This accessibility continues to grow as technology improves. Initially, and until recent times even, with the introduction of sound recording, music travelled around the world at a slower rate, with live performances, scores and later the sending of recordings. Since, however, the introduction of the Internet, followed by digital download and now streaming, music can be made available to everyone around the world within seconds of its creation. Martinez confirms this, ‘The fact is that music is spread online much easier than through CD’s, which allows for different artists to be heard by much more people’ (Martinez 2014). It is now unreasonable to believe that music will not become even more globally distributed with time.

The impact of globalisation on music has led to cross-cultural pursuits of great success. It has allowed a fertile exchange of knowledge and creative practices amongst artists on a global scale. Because of this, many classical musicians have become aware of exotic and unfamiliar music that has inspired the creation of new adaptations.

Musical context

Adaptation, as I defined in Chapter 3, refers to the altering of the musical context of a given work. Even when approaching music within the genre we are accustomed to, the issues of the music’s context should be examined. In 1952 Hindemith claimed that all
music ought to be performed with the means of production that were in use when the
composer gave it to his contemporaries but also recognised the limitations to such an
approach:

Our spirit life is not identical with that of our ancestors, and therefore their
music, even if restored with utter technical perfection, can never have for us
precisely the same meaning it had for them. (cited in Lawson 2003: 14)

Hindemith alludes to the way we hear music within any given context through time. Our
understanding and appreciation of music is inherently linked to our era. The meaning we
draw from the music will be different depending on our own experiences and values. The
reception of Igor Stravinsky’s ballet, The Rite of Spring (1913), exemplifies how time alters
the music’s perception and context. The Rite of Spring was profoundly unfamiliar and
challenging for the audience at the time it was composed to the extent that the premiere
resulted in one of the most famous riots within classical music. It is now regularly
performed by leading orchestras around the world and is considered to be the beginning
of the modernist language.

Siblin describes the value of appropriate context by rhetorically posing the question,
‘Can listening to a piece of music on an iPod in an air-conditioned room, with a
knowledge of rock, jazz, and salsa ever really be the same as hearing it during the
eighteenth century in the candlelit castle of one’s Master Serene Highness?’ (Siblin 2009:
118).

One further example drawn from tango history illustrates the present argument. It
is difficult, for us to hear the influential tango composer, Pugliese, as the innovator he was
after hearing subsequent innovative tangos. Pugliese does not sound innovative and
adventurous to us in the 21st Century because we are familiar with the more recent work
of other innovators such as Astor Piazzolla.

The context of music can be altered not only through time but also through culture.
Performing a work outside of a musical tradition’s cultural context comes with its own
specific challenges.

**Schizophonic mimesis**

The concept of *schizophonic mimesis* speaks directly about the concerns of removing a
culture’s music from its local context. This term refers to the act of altering the context of
music through cultural displacement. In Steven Feld’s own words, *schizophonic mimeses* is
defined as, ‘The use, circulation, and absorption of sound recordings...split from their source through the chain of audio productions, circulation and consumption’ (Feld 1996: 13). Feld has made many contributions to the impact of creating music outside of its cultural context. In another article, Feld explains the etymology of the term *schizophonic mimesis* by quoting the Canadian composer Murray Schafer’s 1977 definition of the term *schizophonia*. He posits that, ‘*Schizophrenia* refers to the split between an original sound and its electro-acoustical transmission or reproduction’ (Feld 1994: 258). Schafer used this term to express anxiety towards technology regarding the complexities created by sound reproduction. Feld’s view differs to Schafer’s as he is using the term to establish a change in the music’s culture and how this impacts on that music.

Feld puts *schizophrenic mimesis* into context by referring to the use of Pygmy folk music in popular works by performer/composers such as Herbie Hancock. Feld believes that a great indignity to the original source is created by schizophrenic mimesis:

For anthropologists and ethnomusicologists the most profoundly ironic and complicated aspect of the situation is the contrast between the musical stories told by pygmy pop and those told by the documentary recordings upon which these copies draw and depend. The documentary records emphasise a vast repertory of musical forms and performance styles, including complex and original polyphonic and polyrhythmic practices. Yet what of this diverse musical invention forms the basis for its global pop representation? In most popular instances it is a single untexted vocalization. (Feld 1996: 26)

Feld is explaining that music when taken from its cultural context can be approximated and stylised to a point where that it no longer represents its initial source.

**Stylised music**

While schizophrenic mimesis has led to awareness of other cultures and can serve as a broader fount of musical inspiration (as explained previously), it can also challenge the ideals of authentic performance, resulting in music that is stylised and approximated. This characterisation of a culture’s music can create suspicious attitudes towards processes of adaptation. Generalising and approximating the music de-intensifies its characteristics, and does not value the music’s cultural strengths.

As an example, the music of the Pygmy people is created within a social context and has a particular function within the cultural society. By removing it, approximating it and incorporating it within a different musical context, the composer/arranger/performer are doing a moral injustice to the music. Feld believes that schizophrenic mimesis highlights
'the turbulent morality of today’s increasingly blurred and contested lines between forms of musical invasion and forms of cultural exchange’ (Feld 1996: 1).

Often the stylisation of a genre leads to ignorance of the music’s true characteristics because we are hearing not an original version from a traditional source but an uninformed replica. Replicas can demonstrate a lack of cultural engagement with the repertoire of that tradition. Adaptations are very prone to this and it is important therefore, that the arranger and performer verse themselves in the music’s traditions. The concept of stylised performances in tango can be seen as early as the 1910s. Goertzen and Azzi explain how that tango changed even in Argentina as it became more appreciated in the upper class of the French city, ‘Endorsement from abroad, especially from Paris, boosted upper-class domestic appreciation of the tango. This changed the tango into a more clean and less ‘sexual’ art form’ (Goertzen and Azzi 1999: 68).

The globalisation of music and inherent stylisation are intrinsically linked to economic growth. A global awareness of a product leads to larger popularity and a higher supply need. World music has become a commodity and with this the music has become more and more stylised. Globalisation does not prioritise or understand cultural diversity but has a simple premise: we are all consumers.

Tango was initially created as live entertainment and was not considered a commodity until the beginning of publication and its globalisation. Tobin explains how the stylised tango became a global commodity. ‘Once appropriated by high society tango became a spicy but acceptable form of entertainment and a commodity suitable for packaging and distribution by the international show business industry, which pumped out tango records, dance handbooks, films, fashion and stars’ (Tobin 1992: 238).

It is impossible to avoid the stylisation of music, and it should not be feared. Stylisation of genres is part of the development of the music and results in the creation of particular traits within the style. It also helps to promote and expand the awareness of the genre.

The point of including the discussion of stylisation and schizophrenic mimesis within this thesis is to highlight the importance of a well-researched and considered approach when approaching music outside of our own traditions. By doing this a culturally informed arranger will create an adaptation that holds true to the music’s integrity and brings a fruitful work to the repertoire.
Tango’s cultural value

Tango has a high cultural value throughout Argentina and specifically within Buenos Aires. Listed as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage, tango is a defining characteristic of the Argentinian people and has become a crucial part of their tourism industry.

Traditionalist Views

There is a strong sentiment surrounding certain cultural values of tango. This has led to a degree of rigidity in the tango scene, particularly amongst the more conservatively minded dancers and musicians. The tango has historically grown as both a form of music and a form of dance. Traditionally the music was designed to be danced. A considerable segment of tango audiences have little or no inclination to merely listen without at some point participating as dancers. This attitude has grown in recent years as the tango dance has had a global revival thanks to Hollywood and Broadway. Squires explains that the movie Scent of a Woman, and the two broadway shows Tango Argentino and Tango x 2, ‘have helped repopularise the tango, widening its appeal, bringing it to the attention of a large audience, and making its subtleties attractive to a generation bred on “heavy metal”.’ (Squires 1994: 50).

The traditional views of the conservative minds can be seen in the hostility held towards Piazzolla. Piazzolla revolutionised the tango and presented it as an art form that was not just for dancing but could also be simply listened to. Traditionalists who had adjusted to the gradual evolutionary developments of the tango were hostile toward any abrupt departure from tango’s roots. As Gannon and Pillai inform us: ‘Piazzolla’s innovations evoked strong emotions, including outright hatred from many traditionalists who believed he was destroying the tango by changing it’ (Gannon and Pillai 2013: 571).

The rigidity of the traditional views held by some tango enthusiasts can be illustrated in Monk’s disdainful words: ‘that the “pure-bred” tangueros frown upon us for performing tango on the saxophone’ (Monk 2013: 13).

I have experienced the traditionalist views first hand. In my own CD launch in Enschede, The Netherlands, a local tango enthusiast vigorously approached me and asserted that what I performed was not tango. In her opinion, it lacked the ‘emotion of the bandoneon’ and the ‘dance of the accompanying instruments’.
Monk’s comment and my anecdote illustrate the kind of reasons that highlight the importance of understanding the function and purpose of the adaptation. Who is the intended audience and in what musical context will we be presenting our adaptation to?

**The audience expectation**

I have argued at length in favour of establishing an informed knowledge of the genre to avoid promoting the stylisation of the music. I have asserted that audiences will be expecting an interpretation that displays the true characteristics of the genre. In saying this, no matter how much care is given to the cultural sensitivities and music’s traits, arranging tango for the saxophone will necessarily have an impact on the perception of the music. Tango has a distinct sound that is not only developed through its musical characteristics but also through the sound of the tango orchestras. A genre that has a standardised instrumentation inherently obtains a sound that will be altered and changed with the inclusion of a new tone colour. As Monk states, ‘We need to bear in mind that the very essence already finds itself faced with considerable changes due to the inclusion of a tone colour as different and unfamiliar as that of the saxophone’ (Monk 2013: 9).

Therefore, our aim should not be to deliver an exact copy of a tango but to try to enhance the audience’s experiences with something new. We are attempting to develop the composition with a unique instrument that brings something additional to the performance without subtracting the music’s substance.

It is of course important to value our audience’s expectations, however there is also great merit in challenging them.

**Conclusion**

By understanding our audience expectations, and respecting and researching the traits of the genre we can successfully approach the adaptation of a work that previously existed in another musical context. There are inherent problems encountered when adapting the tango; however, there are also many favourable outcomes. If the correct considerations are made, a saxophonist can embark on a new musical language that will be satisfying and pleasing not only to the musician but to the audience as well.
Furthermore, an improvement of musical skills will be achieved for the performer, a stronger grasp on those elements that are fundamental within the tango. Those elements will be explained in detail in the next chapter. Although it seems unnecessary to attempt to reach an expert status with an entire music’s tradition to perform a work in that genre, it is, however, essential to become adept with the various tangible and intangible elements of this tradition, which are the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter 5. The Essence of Tango

In order to play or arrange a tango, we should interpret the meaning and the emotional content of its music. One should determine whether it has to do with a melodic theme or a rhythmic theme, and try to feel what the composer was trying to convey through the piece in order to then complete it with the most fitting accompaniment.

Horacio Salgán (2001: 24)

This chapter aims to expand the knowledge of the characteristics of tango to better enable the classical musician’s approach to the style. The essence of the tango’s musical tradition will be explained with reference to tangible and intangible characteristics. Tango’s aural tradition will be explained. This aural tradition clarifies why the understanding of its traits is so integral to the performance of the genre. This chapter will then examine a historical perspective of the musical elements of tango such as: rhythm, fraseo, ornamentation, instrumentation and articulation, and discuss ways they should be approached to establish a concise approach to the style.

The essence of music: the tangible and intangible

The essence of a musical tradition can be divided into two separate categories, the tangible and intangible. On the one hand, the tangible elements are those penned by the composer such as rhythmic cells, harmonic language, role of instrumentation, melodic structure. On the other hand, the intangible elements are those brought to fruition by the performer; that is, the performance practices or conventions associated with a given tradition. In many cases the intangible characteristics are defined by how the performer implements the tangible elements in their approach to the composition. Both as an arranger and performer the classical musician should research this essence within the new-targeted genre and aim to apply it within the adapted work. This will establish an approach that is representative of the traditions of the style.

Jazz repertoire, for example, often uses specific harmonic language, with the use of extended chords and distinctive harmonic progressions (such as ii – V – I progressions). The jazz approach to performing the rhythmic writing, known as swing is also a
characteristic fundamental to jazz. By understanding these elements the performer can better represent the genre.

Tango music has many different elements that distinguish it from other genres. It is the particular approach to, and recurring inclusion of a set recognisable rhythmic cells, specific instrumentation, and a unique phrasing method, that make tango unique. These elements have developed and evolved through time, enabling the genre to remain ever changing yet still recognisably tango. As Shifres posits:

Particularly in relation to the tango, execution of the style is an undisputed engine of development of the genre, both through performance and composition, since many of the features that characterise the different stylistic trend of the tango come from interpretive traditions. (Shifres 2008: 1)

When approaching the adaptation of tango music from a classical music perspective it is necessary to study and understand these tangible and intangible elements of the genre. Once a thorough understanding of these elements is achieved, the essence becomes clear. One can then assess and subsequently establish ways to recreate and realise these elements into the new context of the adaptation. An adaptation created without a firm grounding of the musical essence will lack clarity and substance within the critique of the specialists.

While tangible elements of tango can be established through research and the study of scores, understanding the intangible elements of tango requires an aural understanding of the genre’s conventions.

Knowledge of the historic and current musical practices will assist the performer to create a more stylistically informed performance. These are the intangible elements that evolve through time. Whilst not always printed on the published score, they serve to define the genre. As explained above, tango has developed a set of tools or elements that create the tango’s individual sound. These elements can be put under the umbrella of the genres performance practices.

**The oral tradition: an aural approach**

Intangible elements are communicated orally and aurally. The passing on of knowledge through verbal communication is regarded as the oral tradition, whereas the aural approach is the undertaking of active listening. Crutchfield defines that the conviction,
passion, grace, confidence and stylish freedom of great and cultivated performers of the past cannot be ‘reclaimed from treaties nor extrapolated from crucial editions’ (1988: 25). According to him, it is important to investigate the music not just from treatise and scores but also through aural engagement. An active ear will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the features of tango. Shifres informs that the arrangement constitutes a mixed area of written and aural elements (2008: 1). It is clear that tango has developed through both, written and oral means of transmission. These two means of conveying ones musical ideas should be considered when interpreting the stylistic dimensions of this music.

Unlike classical music ‘where the text is the music to be followed, tango music scores are flexible’ (Quiñones 2011: 4). Quiñones argues that in classical music the score takes precedence and dictates the way we perform the music. Conversely, in tango the score serves as a guide where a large degree of the performance is reliant on knowledge of the style and its characteristics.

In the classical tradition, a clear notation system has developed over the past four hundred years that informs the performer of both the musical language and the expressive tools. This concept of notation expanded dramatically with the introduction of the printing press, allowing composers to widely disperse their music. Tango, whilst using the score to pass on details such as notes, fundamental rhythm and harmony, uses the aural tradition to disseminate the expressive characteristics of the music.

It is therefore, difficult for a classical musician to approach the tango without a solid foundation of the music’s underlying traits. The unwritten concepts of the music such as articulation, dynamics and other expressive techniques that are assumed knowledge within the aurally based traditions will be lost if not investigated by the classical musician.

Bruce Baugh argues that by reading a score, classical musicians are subservient to its directions. Using rock music as a comparison he explains that rock musicians are freer in their interpretation:

Classical works are appreciated primarily for their forms, and the focus of attention in this music falls more on the work than the performance. The performer is subservient to the score she follows. By contrast, in rock music the performance is the object of attention and it is enjoyed and valued for its nonformal properties. The musicians usually have no score to direct them, and the sonic effects at which they aim are not ones that could be notated easily. (cited in Davies 1999: 193)
This view, a common view amongst critics, is debunked by Davies in his journal by explaining that the nuances of performance through timbre, attack, decay, phrasing and rhythmic articulation are also essential to classical performance and are not notated within the score (Davies 1999: 198). Meaning, that classical music also requires a certain level of interpretation.

Baugh’s argument does have some standing. Critically, the classical musician has become reliant on the score, requiring it to give clear directions not only through basic notation but also through expressive techniques such as dynamics, articulation and phrasing suggestion. These concepts of notation are rarely seen in tango scores and are left to the performer’s freedom. This freedom is guided by the performer’s knowledge of performance practices, historical traits and social contexts of the genre.

Seeger explains the combination of using notation and an extensive set of expressive tools learnt aurally stating that,

Our conventional notation is practically prescriptive in character…It does not tell us as much about how music sounds as how to make it sound. Yet no one can make it sound as the writer of the notation intended unless in addition to a knowledge of the tradition of writing he has also a knowledge of the aural tradition associated with it. (Seeger 1958: 186)

The value of aural study in tango is evident if we adopt Seeger’s view that the score can only inform us of certain things about music. It cannot tell us how the music should sound.

During our interview, Solare explained that reading the score is merely the first step; it informs us of the notes that are needed to play. The crucial second step is listening to a recording. He also expressed the great value in listening to many recordings so that a replication of another performance is not created. These views were supported in interviews that I carried out with both Fernando Muslera and Daniel Wallace-Crabbe. Fernando Muslera stated that ‘it’s amazing the advantage of the recording. I think when a classical musician wants to approach music that has popular music influences, they should research and listen to the music first of all.’ Daniel Wallace-Crabbe asserts that, ‘There is no substitute for listening and notating what you hear from recordings. As well, it is important to search for a bit of guidance, but listening is the best way to start, learning how the music comes together.’

When approaching the adaptation of any work for a classical musician it is important to consider how the work can most clearly be notated for the performer. A
clearly notated work will result in a more successful performance, where the performer will have a well-defined understanding of the arranger’s ideas and concepts. Over-notation can be perilous, leading to an unclear score that is difficult to comprehend. The score should be easy to read and allow the performer freedom for interpretation yet give concise direction.

The need for a clear score is expressed by Salgán who establishes the fear of performing tango comes from a lack of available arrangements and deficiency of understanding of tangos traits.

Many excellent musicians have a desire to play tangos. However, they often consider it impossible to achieve a good performance within the flavour and character of the tango, given that there are no arrangements available and because they are not familiar with standard performance practices in the genre. (Salgan 2001: 59)

**Performance practices in constant evolution**

Composer Juan Maria Solare believes firmly in the evolution of music and believes that the tango like any continuing style continues to change, grow and develop: ‘If you define [tango] too narrowly you might cut the wings of the tango’s evolution… Everything I can say now has to be done in this sense, like a photograph of the tango of the 40s or 50s or beginning. We must leave the doors open to evolution.’ The concept of music being in evolution reminds us that the characteristics, particularly regarding the intangible expressive elements, are ever changing. Fashion in performance changes and what is considered appropriate now may be different in years to come. Therefore, it is vital to continue active listening and absorption within a musical genre.

Having established the value of the tangible and intangible traits of tango, and having discussed how one can study and learn them, this chapter will turn to an examination of the specific traits in detail.

**Rhythm**

Various interviews held in 2014-15 with prominent tango enthusiasts both in Argentina and abroad, have revealed that particular rhythmic traits are ubiquitously and readily discussed. The uses of these rhythmic cells are characteristic of the tango genre. During his interview, Jorge Retamoza stated that:
[Tango] is more rhythmic than jazz, its music based on more than just the eighth notes…. Tango is more in the semiquavers. The change and variation of the time in the music is important because in tango you have only three variations of rhythm. The 3,3,2, the marcado and the yumba. Nothing more, so you need to work with the rhythmic aspect.

For Maggie Ferguson, one of Australia’s most prominent tango musicians, ‘tango’s main elements are rhythm and melody. Rhythm is constant but will always be subordinate to expression, which in most cases is melody.’ Daniel Wallace-Crabbe, who lectures in Latin American music at the Australian institute of Music (AIM) stated that the essence of tango is, ‘the way of phrasing the melodies in a very rhythmic way. The contrast of rhythm and expression.’

Rhythm is highly prized within many Latin music genres. At a fundamental level the use of syncopation and beat displacement are crucial to the rhythmic cells of Latin styles, and these rhythmic cells are manipulated and explored in very intelligent ways somewhat like the harmony of the classical style. The highly advanced approach to rhythmic change and syncopation comes from the African rhythmic heritage found in most Latin styles. As Morales explains:

> Whilst European song forms and instrumentation were essential to the creation of Latin music in the new world, African music is central to the evolution of the major styles….A central characteristic of Latin music is the widespread use of syncopation. (Morales, 2003: xvii)

Each Latin American music genre is unique because of the varied combinations of this syncopated rhythmic language from Africa and the influence from the indigenous and European immigrants.

The value placed on the rhythmic tradition is an inherent result of the cultural connection of dance to the Latin American people. The salsa, rumba, merengue, candombe, cumbia, choro, samba and, of course, the tango are all dance styles of music that possess unique rhythmic cells because of the fusion of the African and indigenous music traditions.

Tango, unlike other dance genres does not conventionally use percussion instruments to establish the rhythm. Monk explains the lack of percussion instrument in the tango ensemble:

> Tango is such a rhythmic genre in itself that paradoxically it does not always call for additional percussion. Its rhythm is actually created and established by each one of the instruments included in the ensemble. (Monk 2013: 25)
The very first tangos performed during the late 19th Century until 1905 considered as the Guardia Vieja era featured a ‘usual line-up of flute, violin and guitar. These trios played tangos, milongas and vals with their typical rhythm redolent of the habanera on which they were modelled (Fain, 2010: 118).

As a more varied palate of instrumentation was introduced, the rhythmic drive of the music and its percussive ways were brought into fruition by each of the individual instruments. This is discussed later in this chapter where the specific instrument percussion is discussed.

The first rhythmic cell to be adopted by the tango during the Guardia Vieja period was the habanera rhythm in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1 - Habanera rhythmic figure](image)

The habanera rhythm was also present in the Cuban habanera, the milonga and the tango Andaluz. This fact has led to some conjecture of the origin and history of this rhythm within tango. The milonga-originated in the Rio de Plata area of Argentina and Uruguay in the last quarter of the 19th Century and for this reason can be considered a ‘cousin of the tango’ (Salgan 2001: 22). Milongas were common songs sung amongst the Argentinian, Southern Brazilian and Uruguayan gauchos (Latin American equivalent of cowboys) who lived on the pampas around the 1870s (Herrera-Sabok, 2012: 1066), which used this characteristic accompaniment figure.

Vega believes the habanera rhythm within tango does not come from the influence of the milonga, but from Europe, with influences from Cuba. Vega recounts the following:

Most certainly originating from the English Country Dance we find it warmly received in France toward the end of the 17th Century; later it heads to America, where it is transformed into the Cuban contradanza in the 19th Century. This produces two sub-species: one of them, the 2/4, later results in the Habanera.... The Habanera is taken to Europe and is widely accepted; the stylized version is then converted into a ballroom dance, arriving in Rio de La Plata, where it is taken in as one of the celebrated dances.... This complex

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8 It is important to note that the habanera rhythm is also defined by its pitch contour, but because I am highlighting its rhythmic function I have not illustrated this in this figure.
process of coming and going will be repeated several times during the course of the period which our analysis will cover. (as cited in Salgán, 2001: 19)

Vega offers this concise history of the habanera rhythm, which in part amplifies the internationalisation of music even before the creation of the genre now known as the tango, explaining that tango’s first rhythmic accompaniment was the habanera, a form stylized in Europe with connection to the Americas. Encompassing styles such as the contradanza, the tango Andaluz, the zarzuela, and the milonga.

It is intriguing to see the habanera rhythm used in the classical music context both in Georges Bizet’s (1838-1875) opera Carmen in which the lead character sings the famous habanera, as well as Maurice Ravel’s (1875-1937) Piece en forme de habanera.

Great early tango composers such as Angel Villodo, Eduardo Arolas, Agustín Vardi and Robert Firpo all used this habanera rhythm to great effect. For example, in Figure 5.2, we observe Angel Villodo’s use of the habanera rhythm and its function as the accompanying rhythmic cell in ‘El Choclo’:

![Figure 5.2 - Excerpt from Angel Villodo – ‘El Choclo’](image)

The habanera rhythm soon developed and variations of its style became popular to tango composers. This graph from Alves Music of the Peoples World displays the many variations of the Habanera rhythm that are seen throughout Latin American Music (Alves 2002:156).
We see the most common variation of the habanera rhythm as variation 1 in the graph. This rhythm is often referred to as the *tresillo* (in Cuban music) or the 3+3+2 pattern. The 3+3+2 pattern is created by tying the second note of the habanera cell to the third, by doing so less strength is give to the 3rd quaver of the bar, creating more rhythmic tension and syncopation.

![Figure 5.1 - Habanera rhythmic figure](image1.png)

![Figure 5.4 - The tresillo](image2.png)

Can also be notated as

![Figure 5.5 - Tresillo alternate notation 1.](image3.png)

Or

![Figure 5.6 - Tresillo alternate notation 2.](image4.png)

Looking at Alves’ graph once again we see Variation 2 as the subsequent common rhythmic cell used. This is called the *syncopa* rhythm.
This rhythm creates syncopation by adding a strong note on the second semiquaver of the bar. In this way it differs greatly to the 3+3+2 as the syncopa creates rhythmic tension with the addition of a note where the 3+3+2 is subtracting notes.

Salgán stresses that the introduction of the ‘four’ enabled the tango to be distinguishable from its relative the milonga. He points out that, ‘The transcending change of accompaniment occurred when the accompaniment of four beats alternated with the Habanera rhythm’ (Salgán 2001: 22-23).

The marcado is the placement of one note on each quaver of the bar, notated as such.\(^9\)

The marcado is a non-syncopated rhythm that emphasises importance to each beat of the bar. It is important to clarify early that the Spanish word marcado meaning marked should not be confused with the Italian word marcato also meaning marked. The Italian term is used in music to signify an approach to articulation, whereas the Spanish marcado is used to represent a rhythmic cell. Marcado rhythms are often performed with marcato articulation, particularly on beats one and three but do not necessarily require it.

Vega informs us, the first recorded use of the tango marcado is seen in the orchestra of Eduardo Arolas:

The analysed recordings of this orchestra present peculiarities in their performance which distinguish it from other [orchestas típicas]…..it’s the unmistakeable scheme of four eight[h] notes in its rhythmic foundations, generally played without emphasis. (as cited in Salgán 2001: 23)

\(^9\) Originally tango music was scored in the metre 2/4. This metre came from the influence of the Cuban Habanera, always scored in 2/4. With the introduction of the ‘four’ otherwise labelled the marcado the tango was then converted to 4/8. Whilst arguably 2/4 and 4/8 are considered to be the same as they are both divided into 4 quavers, the 4/8 time signature gives a clearer indication to the performer that the music should be felt in 4 rather than that of 2. Nowadays the tango uses the time signature of 4/4.
Phrasing - Fraseo

It is important to note that the discussion of rhythm and rhythmic cells so far has focused on their role as accompanying figures. Approaching rhythm in the melodic realm requires further consideration by the performer. The execution of melody treats rhythm with considerable nuances that are not precisely notated. As such, these require interpretation by the performer. The interpretation comes from knowledge of the performance practices resulting in melodic rhythm being an intangible element. As Fernando Muslera noted, ‘the interesting thing about tango music, I think, is it has to do with these two things: the technical elements such as rhythm with syncopa, marcado and arrastre; and the fraseo, that has to do with the way you listen to the music.’

The contrast between the rhythmic elements discussed above and the expressive dimensions of the genre is one of the defining characteristics of the tango genre. As Fain informs us, ‘An expressive phrase will often appear immediately after a rhythmic phrase and one part of the orchestra will often play expressively at the same time as another group of instruments is playing rhythmically’ (Fain 2010: 10).

Unlike the stability in tempo and consistency of the rhythmic cell in the accompaniment, the rhythm of the melodic line should be altered to ‘phrase’ the musical idea. This is called fraseo in the Argentinian tango and is an essential element to the genre. Fraseo is an intangible element of tango that is rarely scored. It is controlled not by the way in which the composer notates the melody but by how the performer adjusts the rhythm of the melody to suit their musical phrasing.

For fraseo to be effective in the melody, the remainder of the ensemble must keep the rhythmic and metric stability. Ferguson illustrates this, ‘So when an instrument has a solo, for example the violin, you will find that [the tango] is constant behind in its rhythmic sense, but the violin can play rubato over a stable rhythmic motif. Expression is what makes a tango.’

Classical musicians are trained to phrase a melody so that it makes melodic sense in its context and gives conviction to the musical statement. Using rubato to emphasise particular notes within a phrase or to express one’s emotions is a common concept for the classically trained musician. Salgán supports the similarity between this approach and tango fraseo explaining that, ‘[tango fraseo] coincides, of course, with those subtleties used in works of the romantic period, for example those of Frederick Chopin, though naturally with a different kind of phrasing’ (Salgán 2001: 41). The extent to which the melodic
material is altered is far greater in the tango *fraseo*. Rhythms are altered and often changed beyond recognition.

Fain offers a very clear definition: ‘*Frased* is the action of saying the melody by modifying its rhythm and adding intentions in order to bring out the expressive meaning of the music’ (Fain 2010: 17). Therefore, the rhythmic values notated by the composer are given as a guide and not as a strict rule for the performer. If the phrasing was to be precisely written it would cause the notation to look unduly convoluted, deploying complex rhythmic devices such as multiple tuplets and notes of uncommon duration. **Figure 5.9** illustrates a typical melody on the published score alongside a possible *fraseo* of this melody.

![Figure 5.9 - Excerpt from Lucio Demare – ‘Malena’. (Fain 2010: 17)](image)

*Frased* has been described as ‘instrumental rubato’ by Kutnowski, who offers insight in to how *fraseo* developed. He claims it originates from ‘the lyrics of the tango...all good singers introduced some kind of rhythmic, melodic or dynamic distortion, whether in agreement or not with the natural accents of the words’ (Kutnowski 2002: 1).

There are several different ways to phrase in tango depending on the type of tango and which era it comes from. If we consider there are rhythmic tangos, melodic tangos, lazy tangos (*tangos atorrrantes*), solemn tango and others as Monk suggests then it is important to understand each style (Monk 2013: 39). This can only successfully be achieved through immersing ourselves in the tango of the genre’s we hope to perform.

*Frased* can be broken down in to two distinct types. *Frased Básico*, where the phrasing occurs within one bar. As Fain states, ‘Frased Básico is fraseo that modifies the written rhythm but respects the 1st and 3rd beats of the bar as points of arrival’ (2010:18). This contrasts with *Frased Extendido* where we phrase over several bars often delaying the arrival of the first beat. Fain states, ‘Over the course of tango’s history, fraseos were
gradually stretched until they reached a kind of *fraseo* in which the melody no longer respects the arrivals at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats of the bar’ (Fain 2010: 27)

**Figure 5.10** shows a notated rhythm and some alternate options for *fraseo* within the Basic *Fraseo* context.

![Original notation and executions of Fraseo](image)

*Figure 5.10 – Executions of Fraseo based on original notation.*

A pertinent example of *Fraseo Básico* is the opening of the melody from Carlos Gardel’s *Por Una Cabeza*. Notated as 4 straight semiquavers.

![Excerpt from Carlos Gardel – ‘Por Una Cabeza’ with fraseo spelling](image)

*Figure 5.11 – Excerpt from Carlos Gardel – ‘Por Una Cabeza’ with fraseo spelling.*

*Fraseo Extendido* is the act of delaying or anticipating the arrival of the first beat of a bar. Developed by stretching the *fraseo básico*, the *fraseo extendido* creates extra tension in the music both rhythmically and harmonically as seen in **Figure 5.12**
It is important to note that the *fraseo* should be achieved through musical freedom and performer interpretation. *Fraseo* should not be arbitrary or always the same. The combinations are limitless and should always be used as a way of expressing the musical climaxes or directions within a phrase.

The guide given above represents options for *fraseo* and should not be considered as rules or restrictions. The most effective way to fully understand and comprehend *fraseo*, in my experience, is through active listening. An aural understanding of a wide range of tango music from its beginning to the *Tango Nuevo* will lead to a clearer approach to *fraseo*.

**Ornamentation - Adornos**

To help extend the expression within the *fraseo* melody ornamentation is often added. The use of different ornamental techniques such as mordents, trills, *frullata*, *glissandi* and *arrastre* help to establish the important beats or notes of the melody and accompaniment. These are referred to as *adornos*. *Adornos* are often notated in adaptations for the Western market but are rarely seen in original tango scores.

**Basic ornamentation**

*Mordents*

Mordents are used to highlight a moment in the melody. Fain points out that the mordent’s form and duration are not stipulated and are left to the performer’s discretion. (2010: 71)

The mordent displayed in **Figure 5.13** became a common feature during the *Guadia Vieja* and was played stretched out like a triplet as seen in **Figure 5.14**.

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*Figure 5.12 - Excerpt from Virgilio Expósito – ‘Naranjo en flor’. (Fain 2013: 27)*
As the tango developed and the use of piano and bandoneon became common, the mordent developed into a crushed note. On melodic instruments that can only play one note at a time the three notes are to be played in quick succession displayed in Figure 5.15.

For the piano and bandoneon however, the two notes are played as a cluster, simultaneously to create dissonance on the note. Fain describes this: ‘Today the mordent is played more closed, the mordent being thought of as “tra”, strongly accenting the note. On the piano the notes are now played simultaneously’ (Fain 2010: 71).

When the mordent is performed in the upper register on the piano it is called *la campanitas* (little bells) explained by Salgan, ‘The *campanitas* is a dissonance where you have [an interval of a] 2nd at the beginning of each accented note often performed in the tresillo rhythm’ (Salgán, 2001: 61). Salgán believes that the *campanitas* are used to fill in the gaps of the music. In this circumstance the mordent is used as a *yeite* explained later in the chapter.

**Glissandi**

The glissandi are tools used by the violins within the *orquesta típica* to join two notes together in a very legato fashion. A slide up or down the fingerboard creates *portamenti* that is not note specific but arrives on a consonant note of the chord. When notated a straight line is drawn between the two notes, seen in Figure 5.16 (Salgán 2001: 88). If it is a slide from a non-specific starting note a simple line up to the desired note is written.
Glissandi are also used frequently on the piano either in contrary motion leading to a down beat, or chromatically between two notes of a melody.

Figure 5.16 – Glissando notation. (Salgán 2001: 88)

The variación

Julio de Caro was the first musician to introduce the variación (variaciones, plural) into the tango, as Finkielman informs us: ‘According to Luis Adolfo Sierra and other tango historians, the de Caro orchestra marked a real revolution in tango playing. The orchestra incorporated new musical techniques such as the variations’ (Finkielman 1970: 92). The variación is a virtuosic showing of the melody usually performed at the end of the tango work, as the closing element in the structure. Traditionally performed by the bandoneon, the variaciones brought a new virtuosic skill set to the orquesta típicas of La Nueva Guardia (1925-1940), leading into the La Epoca de Oro (1940-1955). By the end of the La Epoca de Oro the variaciones were being performed by all four bandoneons of the orquesta and created a veritable climax to the end of the work.

Salgán believes that Moresco’s variation of La Cumparsita is the most famous of all variations. (Salgán, 2001: 41). A fragment of the variation is illustrated here in Figure 5.17

Figure 5.17 – Excerpt from Luis Moresco’s Variation - ‘La Cumparsita’.

Articulation

Articulation is another important element to the expression of tango music. Articulation refers to the way a note is started, that is the attack of the beginning of the note. With the use of various articulation methods we can express music in different ways from smooth, to short and detached, and also emphasised. Terms such as staccato (short), tenuto (long)
legato (smooth), slur (connected), accent (emphasis) and marcato (marked) are all used to define the way the note should be produced.

In the classical tradition articulation is marked on the score with a set of symbols. These symbols represent the attack of the note and indicate to the performer how the note should be performed. In tango however, the choice of articulation is left to the freedom of the performer who is guided by the traditions of the genre. By leaving the choices of articulation up to the performer, the composer is allowing for an interpretation to be made. This interpretation leads to an individual expression that is influenced by the historic foundations. Ferguson expresses the importance of articulation within tango music by stating, ‘It all comes down to articulation and being able to express a phrase’.

Besides notation there are other aspects of articulation that differ greatly in tango compared to classical music. The two fundamental differences are the strength of the accent and the dryness of the staccato. These two elements are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 where I propose how to create these effects using the saxophone. It is however, important to discuss the way these two forms of articulation can be incorporated into the music.

The accent, in tango is used to accentuate the rhythmic units and syncopation of the music. As Fain states, ‘The accent is a rhythmic event that helps to highlight the accentuation of the bar. As a result the accent usually picks out the down beats’ (2010: 13). The most common accentuation seen in tango and the one that is most audibly appreciated is the marcato accent usually played in conjunction with the marcado rhythm. There is an abundance of scholarly writing that associates the strength and aggression of the marcato with the act of performing the bandoneon. By bouncing the bandoneon on the knee, a very strong accent is placed on the note. This indicates that the accent should be strong and aggressive, in a way bouncing on the beat.

In contrast to the accent, which is given great emphasis, the staccato often succeeding the accent is played incredibly short and at a softer dynamic. This creates a ghosting effect that is often heard in jazz, where a note is muted or barely audible. By performing the staccato note soft and extremely short, the accent is perceived to be even louder and aggressive than it may be.

Typical patterns of articulation have developed over the history of the tango and become traits of the genre. Outside of the long legato used in a lyrical melody, the use of
the combination of the accent and staccato is typical in a series of quavers. Displayed in Figure 5.18 are four examples of possible articulation patterns that can be used.

![Figure 5.18 - Executions of articulation.](image)

Whilst these examples are commonly used throughout tango the specific implementation of them should be considered and discussed within the ensemble, so that a cohesive approach to articulation can be met. Mastering this kind of technique however, is a key towards the mastery of tango articulations.

In tango we often see the combination of an accompaniment that is short and accented in contrast to the melody, which is smooth and slurred. This is a common feature as the rhythmic characteristics presented earlier are presented together with a lyrical melody using fraseo. This can be particularly challenging for a pianist if they are performing both the accompaniment and melodic rolls. Salgán warns pianists to, ‘watch out for cases in which one hand plays lured and the other hand places staccato’ (2001: 59).

**Arrastre**

An ornamental technique crucial to the tango sound is the *arrastre*. The *arrastre* creates tension and release leading up to an important beat. The term *arrastre* literally means ‘to drag’ in Spanish and denotes an accented gesture placed on the beat or half-beat of an anticipatory note to the beginning of the following bar. Its main function is either to initiate a phrase or connect one to another. Within the dance tradition, the *arrastre* is resembled by the act of pushing the partner’s foot across the floor, in a forceful dragging motion.

As a tangible trait the *arrastre* is usually notated in the score. It does however, like many of tango’s tangible traits, require a particular way of performance, in turn making it an intangible element. As Drago describes ‘it is difficult to say whether the *arrastre* should be treated as a performance practice or as a special tango effect’ (Drago 2008: 17). The *arrastre* requires the performer to drag to the first beat by delaying the beginning of the
arrastre and then accelerating to make the beat just in time. Ignacio Varchausky the creator and director of the Orquesta Escuela de Tango Emilio Balcarce clarifies this.

The arrastre is generally played with a slight delay with respect to the tempo of the piece. This generates a feeling of expectation and desire, almost physical in quality, for the arrastre to reach the last note and return to correct time. This delay in execution, when realized makes the work swing in tango terms. (cited in Thompson 2005: 183)

The arrastre is a trait adopted by the tango first seen in the milonga. Pugliese confirms that the arrastre was implemented into the tango genre in the early stages of its development. Tango has a feature from the influence of folklore Pampa, which is dragging 10(cited in Shifres 2008: 65).

According to Salgán the arrastre is the beginning of a syncopation or marcado anticipating the attack. It is used when anticipating the bass note only, or also when anticipating both the bass note and the chord. The arrastre can be considered as almost a percussion effect, since when using it one is not aiming for tonal clarity but rather the opposite: a rhythmic effect of imprecise tone (2001: 87-89).

It is for this reason presented by Salgán that the arrastre has been notated in many different ways. In some instances a simple glissando is presented in the score, in other scores the arrastre may be notated as a series of semiquavers or demi-semiquavers, other instances present it as a simple quaver upbeat. The notation is therefore a guide to the composer to perform the upbeat leading into the downbeat with the traditional drag.

The arrastre’s notation also differs depending on which instrument is performing it. The arrastre began as a technique of the bandoneon initially used by Pedro Maffia (1899-1967) in the mid 1930s (Kutnowski 2002: 36). It gradually became a characteristic trait of the tango, and was soon adopted by other instruments within the ensemble. Usually relegated to the accompaniment instruments, the arrastre is therefore, not a specific instrumental trait and can be performed by any instrument that is presenting the accompaniment.

When performing the arrastre on the bandoneon, ‘one pushes a combination of buttons and starts opening the bellows, soon thereafter stretching them energetically and stopping the movement, then the arrastre is the result’ (Drago 2008: 65). In this case the notation would be a simple line, illustrated in Figure 5.19.

10 Authors translation
For each instrument a slightly different technique and notation is required. For the double bass player bowing the arrastre, the performer uses a down-bow at the frog end of the bow. Salgán clarifies the technique stating that, ‘Very little bow should be use[d] – the idea is that the sounds [should] be short, well-marked and separate[d]’ (2001: 88). The notation in this circumstance would be the same as for the bandoneon as the arrastre is being created merely through a variation in the notes dynamic.

If performing the arrastre with pizzicato on the double bass the technique and notation required are different. The pizzicato action can not create an increase in velocity with only one attack, therefore, a minimum of two notes are needed to create the drag effect. In this case, a series of semiquaver notes are notated and each are performed with a separate pizzicato.

The word yumba is often used as an alternative to the arrastre. This onomatopoeic word signifies the dragging of the arrastre as the yum and the arrival of the next note as the ba.

The arrastre or yumba is hard to label as a particular technique because it is used in a rhythmic, expressive and percussive way, it is the transition from something that is very unclear, to something that is very clear, the beginning of a heavily accented note. As Drago informs us, ‘A good way to describe the arrastre is as a transition from ind-definition to definition’ (Drago 2008: 64).

**Instrumentation**

Tango does not require a particular set of instrumentation to be deemed tango, however historically; particular instruments have become symbols of the music. The history of the tango’s instrumentation is covered in Chapter 2 where I discussed the evolution of the tango ensemble from a trio known as the conjuntos until the development of the orquesta típicas, which at their height included 4 bandoneons, 4 violins, piano, double bass and in some instances, viola, cello, and bass clarinet also.
Tango’s influence from the Western Classical music tradition is evident through its instrumentation and the roles these instruments usually, although not always, perform in. Within the *orquesta tipica* each instrument performs a specific function in relation to the texture of the music. The violins are used most frequently in a melodic sense, providing the music’s lyrical melodies, often harmonising these with the bandoneon. The double bass holds a supporting role, accompanying and providing the bass line that delivers not only the tonality but also the rhythmic drive of the work. The piano supports both of these instruments by providing the harmonic language and also being used as melodic instrument and to support the bass.

As explained by Link, ‘The violins and bandoneons often perform a melodic role. The piano and double bass often play the accompaniment and thus function both harmonically and rhythmically. The instruments, however, frequently change roles and take turns functioning melodically, harmonically and rhythmically’ (Link 2013: 21).

Link expresses that while the instruments often perform in the roles they are historically matched to, tango’s chamber music style enables them to adapt other roles in the ensemble providing contrast and interest for the audience.

Perhaps the instrument that is most pertinent to the discussion is the bandoneon. It is an instrument that is unique to the tango and has helped to establish many of the tango’s characteristics as discussed throughout this chapter.

**The bandoneon**

The history of the bandoneon and its inclusion into the tango are covered in Chapter 2. What is important to discuss here is the prominence the bandoneon has had in establishing what we now consider to be the tango sound. Wallace-Crabbe views the bandoneon as one of the defining characteristics of tango, and states that ‘whilst its not the only thing that is fundamental to the genre, the bandoneon is very special with its relationship to the style.’

The bandoneon’s role in influencing and establishing the performance of tango is evident through the way the tango is articulated, as discussed earlier in this chapter. One feature of the instrument that has not been discussed yet is its expressive nature. The bandoneon is a wind instrument, that although different to the wind instruments we are more familiar with which use the performers breathe to create the sound, the bandoneon uses its bellows.
As a wind instrument it is able to use the air to create not just the note, but also the subtleties of dynamics that many other instruments such as the piano are incapable of creating. Solare views this fact as one of the reasons the bandoneon is so characteristic of the style: ‘It’s ability to create variation of dynamics, such as the crescendo and decrescendo is something the piano cant do, and this is part of the richness in the tango that should be explored.’ For this reason, the saxophone may be an ideal choice to interpret the bandoneons characteristics, sharing the ability to express music with use of subtle dynamic variation.

Salgán also establishes the bandoneon’s expressive nature as a reason for its suitability for the genre, ‘[The bandoneon] arrived in Argentina and was somehow transformed into the instrument and image of the tango where, through its expressiveness, it is apt for stating anything the tango needs to convey’ (Salgán 2001: 91).

Besides its adeptness for expression, the bandoneon is often referred to as a crucial element of the tango because of its peculiar tone quality. The bandoneon originated in Germany as a portable accompanying instrument for choirs, and is now only represented in the tango genre. It has not infiltrated any other musical style (perhaps because the instrument is so difficult to play) and therefore its unique tone immediately indicates to the listener the genre of the music. It is for this reason the bandoneon has become an inherent symbol of the genre. As Retamoza suggests: ‘I think it's a symbol of the music, perhaps as the saxophone is a symbol of jazz.’

Juan Maria Solare continues this view suggesting that, ‘The bandoneon might be the typical sound of the tango in the beginning but must not be the definition of the tango music’.

It is interesting to note that whilst the bandoneon has influenced so many of the tango’s intricate tangible and intangible traits, it was used initially because it was the instrument available. It was not designed to perform the style, the style was in a way designed to be performed on the bandoneon. Solare believes that, ‘it could have been another instrument and maybe the history of the tango could be very different.’

For these reasons, the bandoneon has historically been a very important and valued instrument within the genre. It has become a symbol of the style because of its uniqueness and has through its characteristics, developed and established many of the tangible and intangible elements of the tango. It is not however, an essential ingredient in the creation
of an effective tango performance. This chapter has established that the way in which we perform the characteristics of the genre will determine the success of our endeavour.

**Extended ornamentation - yeites**

Another important element to the tango is the use of percussive sounds as tools for communicating expression, rhythm and articulation. These sounds known as yeites are an intangible element of the music that makes the tango unique to other genres. Commonly improvised, the yeites bring spontaneity to the music that enthrals audiences. The effects are often shared and mimicked by each instrument within the ensemble. The violin has developed a collection of its own yeites that have become indicative of the tango sound.

These effects can be approximated when approaching an adaptation with another instrument, however the adapting musician should consider approaching their instrument in new and innovative ways to develop their own set of yeites. Fain believes that each instrument requires its own method to promote a unique set of yeites:

> It should be noted that every instrumental in the language of tango utilizes specific techniques and resources to enhance the expressiveness and variety of the sound and each instrument therefore requires a method of its own that lets the player incorporate knowledge of the genre point by point. (Fain 2010: 6)

The use of extended techniques on the saxophone can create a myriad of sounds that both copy the yeites of other instruments and establish its own vocabulary. These sounds will be explored in Chapter 6. Figure 5.20 gives some examples of yeites used by the orquesta típica instruments and how they are produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Yeites</th>
<th>Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Campanitas (little bells)</td>
<td>2 notes played in the upper register simultaneously at either forte or piano. The two notes are usually seen as a dissonant 2nd, or as an octave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Lija (sandpaper) sometimes referred to as chicharra</td>
<td>To play behind the bridge with the frog of the bow. Produces a scratching effect, that is often used within a rhythmic pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambor (snare drum)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The violinist places the middle finger of the left hand between the g and d strings. The right hand then plucks the G string at the fingerboard. This creates a very dry pizzicato that resembles the sound of a snare drum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Látigo (whip)</td>
<td></td>
<td>A ascending or descending rapid glissando that emulates the sound of a whip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano, Violin, Double Bass, Bandoneon</td>
<td>Góipe (knock)</td>
<td>created by knocking the instrument with the knuckles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.20 – Table of yeites.
Conclusion

This chapter has established that whilst tango uses notation, its characteristic traits, both tangible and intangible are disseminated through an aural tradition. Because of this, the classical musician must become adept in this language to truly represent the musical style. This chapter has not only examined these characteristics, but has also developed an understanding for the classical musician to communicate them. By establishing these fundamental characteristics into the classical musicians language, a classical musician’s approach to a tango performance will be a considered one. The next chapter will explore the specific ways the saxophone can transmit these characteristics.
Chapter 6. Performing Tango on the Saxophone

This chapter ultimately aims to establish the skills that will enable saxophonists to investigate the works more closely, and find innovative and unique approaches to enhance their own adaptations of the genre. It explores the ways in which the saxophone can be used as a vehicle to express the idiomatic language of tango. Because the saxophone is extraneous to tango, we need to ascertain the manner in which it can be effectively integrated into the genre. With reference to some of the existing adaptations, I will demonstrate how past arrangers have tackled the issues that performers typically encounter. The significance of these existing adaptations is examined with the aid of a survey of 53 participants. The survey confirms the popularity of tango amongst the concert saxophone community and thus warrants critical reflection and discussion of the challenges we face when arranging and performing tango repertoire. In order to establish a concise approach to playing the tango for the concert saxophonist, this chapter will explore the following topics:

- The integration of the saxophone within the idiom and ensemble
- Concepts of sound
- Effective approaches to articulation
- Expressive techniques

An awareness of the techniques that were developed throughout the history of the tango will help determine how adaptation can function in the present. This chapter will close with a brief discussion of yeites to illustrate how a set of musical elements that help define the stylistic characteristics of the tango can be reapplied in a completely new instrumental context.

Existing adaptations

Many classical saxophonists are introduced to tango through the works of Astor Piazzolla. Claude Delangle (1953- ), who is the Professor of Saxophone at the Paris Conservatoire, transcribed Piazzolla’s Etudes Tanguistiques with the composer’s approval. This is reputed to be one of the most performed tango adaptations for the saxophone. These works, along with Voirpy arrangement of Piazzolla’s Histoire du Tango, and Piazzolla’s collaboration
with jazz baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, have established a bridge between tango and classical saxophonists.

Saxophonists interested in performing tango have, however, had few options but to turn to such published arrangements in the absence of the composer’s direct contribution to the repertoire for this medium. Some enterprising musicians and ensembles have made their own arrangements. **Figure 6.1** reveals that 79% of survey participants used a published adaptation in their performance of tango, while a significant number of participants opted for the latter. These arrangements are not abundant and in many cases, not readily available.

**Who did the arrangement?**

![Bar chart showing the source of tango arrangements.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published arrangement</td>
<td>79.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td>32.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of the ensemble</td>
<td>35.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned / Requested</td>
<td>5.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.1 - Source of Tango Arrangement.**

**Figure 6.2** shows that all survey participants have engaged with Piazzolla’s music ahead of several other established personalities in the history of the tango.
Figure 6.2 – Tango Composers that have been Transcribed and Performed by survey participants.

While the existing adaptations of two key works by Piazzolla, *Histoire du Tango* and *Etudes Tanguistiques* are additions to the saxophone repertoire, they are essentially works that are created for the classical market. These compositions do not necessarily require knowledge of the stylistic nuances of the tango, nor do they demand the application of specific saxophone techniques to highlight these nuances. The focus of the present chapter is, therefore, on how specific techniques that are possible on the saxophone can be used to capture the stylistic traits of the tango.
Piazzolla’s Etudes Tanguistiques

Piazzolla conceived the Etudes Tanguistiques for solo flute. This is a study in technique and in style that challenge the flautist with an array of idiomatic tango gestures, nuances and complex rhythms. Delangle performed his arrangement of the Etudes Tanguistiques in 1977 for Piazzolla and received his blessing to incorporate them into the saxophone repertoire. This arrangement has since become an integral part of saxophone study and holds its place as standard repertoire within the tertiary education system. Despite Delangle’s arrangement having altered very little to the original flute score, (some articulation changes and the removal of semiquaver passages in the altissimo register) this work is an excellent pedagogical resource because it challenges the saxophonist’s technique by demanding difficult fingering and tonguing in fast passages, and exploring the altissimo register. Furthermore, these etudes generate interest in the tango idiom and challenge saxophonists to execute the nuances in the interpretation of Nuevo Tango.

Voirpy’s adaptation of Histoire du Tango

Voirpy’s arrangement of Piazzolla’s Histoire du Tango for saxophone quartet has also become a staple in the chamber music repertoire for saxophone. Histoire du Tango was conceived as a classical work that makes extensive use of tango language. To this end, Voirpy incorporates a range of saxophone techniques such as key clicks, altissimo, double-tonguing and slap tongue (which will be further discussed in detail below). To use Busoni’s terminology, Voirpy’s creative arrangement would be considered a Bearbeitung: work that has had many alterations to it for its new instrumentation but retaining the composition’s fundamental language and purpose.

Integration

These examples of tango have now become such an integral part of the concert saxophonist’s vocabulary that a wider understanding of the style is due. In this section, I will posit that to create an innovative yet suitable adaptation of a tango work, the saxophonist requires familiarity with the tangible and intangible elements discussed in Chapter 5, and a clear way to execute these on the saxophone.
It is important to highlight the saxophone’s role within the new adaptation and consider how the instrument’s design, possibilities and limitations will potentially affect the original timbre of a composition. To this end, the saxophone can seek to mimic the timbres of traditional tango instrument, and acquire an adequate tango vocabulary of its own. I don’t believe that the saxophone should merely be utilised as a means to impersonate other instruments because its rich and varied sonic properties suggest a far greater number of possibilities. In my interview with Juan Maria Solare, he spoke of the value of developing the tango vocabulary for the saxophone, ‘The techniques used by original instruments are specific to them and whilst we can attempt to recreate them it is also important to use the characteristics of the saxophone to help create its own unique voice.’

Monk, however, questions the extent to which we should alter the original sound. He has ‘always been striving for the integration of the saxophone into tango without altering the essence of the music itself’. He believes in translating the language of the tango for the instrument he loves, the saxophone, asserting that,

We need to bear in mind that the very essence of tango already finds itself faced with considerable changes due to the inclusion of a tone colour as different and unfamiliar as that of the saxophone; therefore, why should we try to make any more changes to it? (Monk, 2013: 9)

Monk and Solare create an interesting point of discussion. The sound of the tango is fundamentally changed by the inclusion of a new tone colour not usually heard within the genre. It is important then, to establish whether the saxophone should have its own place within the tango, as a distinctive novel presence. Alternatively, should we attempt to mimic and replicate the timbre and idiomatic gestures of the traditional instruments? I believe we need to adopt both these concepts. By applying specific saxophone techniques to suggest the idiomatic language readily executable by instruments typically associated with tango—such as articulation, percussive gestures, and ways of expressively presenting melodies—we can create a sound that approximates many of the tangos idiomatic instruments. By including the saxophone in tango, we are necessarily affecting the sound and cannot expect to completely mimic nor disguise this change. We are, therefore, at the point where we can develop a new and innovative approach for the saxophone to utilise its own capacities to further enhance the performance of tango, thus giving the saxophone a unique and enriching presence in this genre.
The role of the saxophone

The saxophone has historically played a solo role within ensembles and is rarely seen in a supporting function. This is particularly evident in the orchestral environment where the saxophone often adopts the role of soloist. The saxophone possesses a timbre that is uncommon in the orchestra and is thus considered as a foreign instrument that requires a specific reason for its inclusion. Cottrell reveals that, ‘The particular role ascribed to the saxophone by many twentieth-century orchestral composers, who frequently use the instrument as a distinctive soloistic colour within the ensemble has its roots in the explorations of orchestra colour’ (Cottrell 2013: 101). It is only in rare occasions that the saxophone is truly integrated into the orchestra as an equal member, typically assigned supporting roles in loud and dense passages such as Leonard Bernstein’s ‘Mambo’ from Westside Story.

Similarly, the saxophone stands out sonically in the tango. As such, it is inevitable that many composers and arrangers have used it as a solo instrument accompanied by the more traditional tango instruments. Monk discloses that, ‘of the examples I have listened to the saxophone assumes the role which is totally melodic in nature, just like that of a singer’ (Monk 2013: 10).

Australian tango composer and arranger Daniel Wallace-Crabbe offers a different view. By concertedly blending the saxophone into the tango ensemble, Wallace-Crabbe not only creates a subtle change in the ensemble’s overall sound template, he assigns the saxophone with a supporting role and the occasional counter-melody or solo. He states,

I was trying to use the saxophone in a different way. I was trying to give the saxophone a supporting function. Picking out the melodies sometimes but really giving it independent counter lines, that were independent from the main voices.’ Wallace-Crabbe explained that in his situation the use of the accordion [substituting the bandoneon] and the violin were already acting as the melodic instruments in his ensemble. Those instruments are already well defined in their roles in the tango tradition; altering this by using the saxophone would ‘turn the whole thing upside down’.

Wallace-Crabbe proceeded to explain that the saxophone, in his circumstance could not play harmonised lines because it was louder, and this would upset the balance. He established the function of the saxophone in his ensemble by looking at the way Piazzolla treated the electric guitar in his works, ‘Its not necessarily chordal, it plays lines in the middle of the voicing. I was trying to use the sax in this way’.
Maggie Fergusson uses saxophones and other non-traditional instruments in her arrangements for the ensemble *TangoOz* for more pragmatic reasons. As a group that is designed as an educational vehicle, she believes in including participants who play any instrument (to the appropriate level) who is interested in learning about the genre. Fergusson uses these instruments in a number of ways:

The saxophone specifically can play a harmony role to the bandoneon, or if the player has a great sound and is particularly soloistically inclined, they can replace the bandoneon. Also, having two saxophones playing double stops from the violin parts works, with only intonation being a problematic point.

Fergusson establishes that the saxophone can be used not only as an additional voice to the ensemble but also within many functions, imitating and replacing existing parts. She concluded our interview by revealing the value she places on inclusive education, and idiomatic execution. She revealed that, ‘I need to try to find a way for whoever is passionate about learning tango to join the ensemble. It all comes down to articulation and being able to express a phrase’.

While the saxophone inherently brings a novel tone colour to an environment where it has commonly played a soloistic role, the ability for it to effectively blend in an ensemble is testament to its adeptness in an accompanying and supportive role. One should not feel restricted in using the saxophone in any role within the tango context provided that it is a role physically capable of the instrument.

**Developing the ‘tango sound’**

Similar to the flute and other wind instruments one of biggest challenges for performing tango is to ‘unlearn’ some of the technical and musical approaches inherent in formal classical music education. Every genre requires its own set of techniques and stylistic conventions that need to be learned and developed. Fain explains that, ‘If we do no specific technical work to bring out these differences we will sound technically correct but without the characteristic of the genre’ (Fain 2010: 46). It is important, therefore, to establish techniques that will enable us to tackle the myriad of challenges within the new genre. These challenges include: tone; vibrato, articulation, range, and embellishments.
Tone

Tone quality

The tone quality is at the forefront of a saxophone player’s mind. The ease at which this tone quality can be varied on the saxophone permits a wide range of tonal possibilities that are in many ways linked to different genres of music. As Teal states, ‘The saxophone is probably capable of producing more variety in tone quality than any other wind instrument. It is an instrument of great flexibility’ (Teal 1963: 46). The saxophonist can explore this vast palette of tone production through the various aspects of his/her instrument’s setup and the exploration of further technical possibilities.

The concept of tone refers to the particular type of tone a player aims to produce consistent to the genre he/she is involved in. That is, the kind of tone that is created by the equipment used (primarily the mouthpiece) and the embouchure. The vast array of saxophone mouthpieces available enables the performer to select a mouthpiece that will assist them in producing their concept of tone, be it a jazz, salsa, popular music or classical tone. Londeix states that the ‘mouthpiece choice reflects, above all, the tonality desired’ (1997: 2).

Mouthpieces are designed to produce a range of sounds, clear or ‘textured’\(^\text{11}\), dark or bright. They aid the execution of particular techniques and assist with projection. Although the mouthpiece is integral to the creation of the sound, if the embouchure is not developed or suited to the particular equipment chosen then the desired sound will not be attained. As Londeix explains, ‘Having a good embouchure gives one the ability to play with facility in all registers with the desired timbre, and in most extreme dynamic ranges’ (1997: 10). The parameter of lip pressure, air stream, point of contact with the reed, the angle of the air stream and the force of the air are all elements related to embouchure.

Weiss and Netti say that, ‘Describing the saxophone sound is a boundless affair. If one observes the saxophone in the classical art music of the 19\(^\text{th}\) and 20\(^\text{th}\) centuries and in contemporary avant-garde music, in jazz or also in popular and folk music, an enormous versatility becomes evident’ (2010: 157). A popular musician will typically use a bright mouthpiece setup with a firm embouchure to create a well-projected and clear sound. For jazz saxophonists, a more open mouthpiece that allows for a greater variation in tonal colour and a more relaxed embouchure that produces an airy tone quality is often desired.

\(^{11}\) Some teachers use terms such as ‘textured’, ‘focused’ and ‘velvety’ to describe certain added dimensions in timbral production.
Classical saxophonists use darker mouthpieces that have a small tip opening to allow for a homogenous sound that is easy to control in all registers. The classical saxophonist is aiming for a tone that is flexible within the orchestral spectrum, a deep resonance but also with focus and texture to the sound.

Because the saxophone is not often used in tango music, a particular preference for sound and techniques for creating such a sound have not yet been established. Should tango saxophone have a particular tonal concept? Monk believes that, ‘the sound of the saxophone in tango should be different to that typical of other styles, it should be an amalgamation of them all, obtaining a tone that unites the saxophone’s pureness as we find it in classical music and its ductility in jazz will allow us to be more easily integrated in the tango ensemble’ (2013: 13). To this end, the instrumentalist is advised to aim for a tone that is varied and flexible, particular if adapting an existing work. With a flexible approach to tone the saxophonist can vary the timbre of the sound to blend better with the instrument(s) it is performing with, or imitate the one it has replaced. Londeix supports this notion, ‘The saxophonist should be advised against having a solitary fixed timbre, no matter how beautiful or pleasing it may be, but should have at his disposal a palette of different sonorities’ (1997: 31). Later, he insists that, ‘The saxophone is an instrument with a naturally rich tonal colour, and its timbre is endowed with many harmonics or partials, allowing for great homogeneity’ (Londeix 1989: 44).

To achieve this variation of timbre the classical saxophonist may experiment with subtle changes in embouchure and tongue position. It is also very important to remain aware of intonation when working on tonal variation because any changes to embouchure, airflow or direction can effect tuning. In choosing a mouthpiece for performing tango repertoire, I would advise that the instrumentalist select a mouthpiece over which he/she has great control so as to achieve the tonal variation required, with the application of a solid technique. In most cases this will be the regular mouthpiece used.

**Vibrato**

Vibrato can also be effectively employed to alter the saxophone’s sound. According to Londeix, ‘Vibrato has been used sparingly by wind instrumentalists until the beginning of the twentieth century’ (Londeix 1989: 66). It was Marcel Mule, however, who introduced the use of vibrato in the performance of the classical saxophone in the 1930s. Mule performed with the greatest prowess seen at the time and possessed a unique, expressive,
controlled and resonant vibrato. In 1998, three years before his death, Mule was interviewed by his successor at the Paris Conservatoire, Claude Delangle. Mule recounted how he began to use vibrato in his performances.

Claude Delangle: My purpose here is to transmit a heritage of vibrato. You have often talked to me about the circumstances, which led you to use vibrato on the saxophone. Could you recall them here in a chronological way?

Marcel Mule: From 1923, little by little I began to perform jazz, I succeeded in finding the undulating vibrato favoured in jazz. I was considered as a good jazz instrumentalist. I continued to play at the Garde without any undulation in the sound…… In 1928, at the Opéra-Comique, a ballet was written by a good musician, a pianist who knew me as a Jazz saxophonist. He wrote ‘fox trots’, one blues and other dances. In the blues, he had written a very expressive solo for the saxophone. I immediately formed an opinion about it. During the rehearsal, I played as I do normally, as if I had played Werther, not any other way. Then he said to me: ‘I have written very expressive, that means with vibrato’. I said to him: ‘but here we are not used to play like that, this is a symphony orchestra, not a “jazz orchestra.” ’It does not matter, just play like you do normally in jazz.’ It made me think and while moderating it a bit, progressively, I have utilised vibrato elsewhere.

Vibrato can be used in two different ways: as a feature of the tone, usually a constant fast vibrato with a narrow undulation; and as an expressive tool, wider and non-continuous (Londeix 1989: 67).

Vibrato as a feature of the saxophonist’s tone was very popular between the 1930s-1960s. Nowadays the constant wavering of the tone is deemed out dated, and vibrato is more commonly seen as a tool of expression, used sparingly on specific notes that require extra colour. Londeix reflects on his use of vibrato in the past,

I like using vibrato, even if, today, I find that I went too far in my use of it in the 1960’s. The wide, old-fashioned vibrato gives a sense of overdone pathos to music. I disapprove of my own excesses in this area. It is not only out of fashion, it sounds ridiculous. (cited in Umble 2000: 156).

He proceeds to explain that vibrato should now be used as an expressive tool, stating that, ‘It is through the intelligent and selective use of vibrato that a phrase becomes particularly expressive’.

For saxophonists there are 3 different techniques for producing vibrato: one utilises pitch, another alters the timbre, and the other the intensity. Pitch vibrato is achieved by rapidly altering of the notes pitch. This is achieved on the saxophone by raising and lowering the lower jaw, in turn applying more and less pressure to the reed. Kyle Horch states that, ‘By far the most commonly used method, varying slightly the pressure of the
jaw on the reed, makes the pitch of the note relatively sharper or flatter (Horch 1998: 80). Violinists use pitch vibrato by shaking the left hand sliding the finger up and down slightly on the string.

Timbral vibrato is the variation of a notes tone through colour, brighter to darker. Brass players often use timbral vibrato. To create this vibrato the saxophonist moves the position of his tongue up and down altering the aural cavity. By doing so the note becomes darker and brighter. This technique is not used as often as it is very difficult to control the regularity of the undulations.

Intensity vibrato is altering the notes dynamic level to give a shaping to the note. As Toff explains, these are created by ‘the isometric action of the abdominal muscles and diaphragm pushing against each other. This causes a very slight undulation of the air column increasing and decreasing pressure that alters the dynamic of the note’ (Toff 1985: 110).

Vibrato in tango is not used in the same way as in classical music. As such, to achieve an idiomatic approach to the kind of vibrato used in tango, the saxophonist may opt to use the types of vibrato that are most suggestive of the instrument that is being emulated. Tango violinists and flautists primarily use vibrato on long notes at the climaxes of phrases. Vibrato is not used as a consistent part of the tone but rather as an expressive technique and a means to add colour and significance to certain parts of a phrase. The vibrato used by violinists is commonly wider and slower than in classical music. When emulating violin vibrato I recommend using pitch vibrato to enable the wide and slow undulations typically heard in violin performance. By contrast, flautists necessarily use intensity vibrato due to their physical design. Hence, when emulating flute vibrato, my suggestion is to use intensity vibrato on the saxophone. For bandonean lines, an intensity vibrato is also appropriate since the bandoneon is incapable of altering the pitch of the note.

For all these emulations, it recommended that we do not overuse vibrato as a concept of tone but rather to demonstrate the nuances of the stylistic traits of the tango. In Monk’s words, ‘In terms of style, vibrato should neither be performed too fast nor too extensively in tango’ (2013: 122).
Growl and flutter tongue

There are other ways of affecting tone to emphasise a musical idea. The ‘growl’ is a technique that is used frequently in jazz and rock to create a rough and visceral effect. This technique is achieved by disturbing the airflow by singing or ‘roaring’ a note being played. Roach provides further details, ‘The pitch differences and the disturbance to the air column generate a rough tone particularly suitable to rock and roll. The growl can be effective in adding more projection to the sound’ (1998: 92).

There are techniques that were originally played by the flute in tango that can also be employed by the saxophone. Singing and playing on the flute—a similar concept to growl—can be used in tango to ‘obtain a distorted sound at a moment of expressive force and to add tension to a phrase’ (Fain 2010: 98).

Frullato or flutter tongue is a tone technique that was used by flautist during the Guardia Vieja to highlight a note of importance, or as an embellishment tool. The effect is achieved by rolling the tongue on the roof of the mouth while playing, introducing a disturbance to the sound somewhat like that of the growl (Roach, 1998: 92). The frullato can also be used to replicate the tremolo effect used by violinists. This technique is useful to embellish passages made up of repeated notes or appoggiaturas.

Subtone

Literally meaning ‘below tone’, a subtone refers to the production of a very soft sound where the natural overtones are reduced, usually seen in the lower register of the saxophone. Jazz and classical saxophonists approach the production of subtones differently. In jazz, a subtone refers to the ‘airy, breathy way of playing lower tones as is resembled in Dextor Gordon and Ben Websters playing’ (Weiss and Netti 2010: 165). This is produced by releasing the tension on the reed by relaxing the lower jaw and protruding the bottom lip.

Classical saxophonists, on the other hand, aim to create a tone that, while weak in overtones, retains the purity of sound. Placing the tongue on the reed to dampen its vibrations creates a subtone that is dull yet still clear. Classical saxophonists produce subtones by applying great pressure to the reed with the lower lip or the tongue (Londeix 1997: 32). Subtones are a useful technique when required to play at very soft dynamics or execute an accompanying role. By reducing the upperpartials of the sound it is easier to
blend with other instruments and create a hum like sound that is not intrusive to the melody line.

Range and altissimo register
The saxophone has a limited range of merely two and a half octaves. Not surprisingly, the effective use of the saxophone’s range is indeed one of the great challenges for an arranger. **Figure 6.3** indicates both the written and sounding pitches of the saxophone family.

![Figure 6.3 - The ranges of the saxophone family, written and sounding pitches.](image)

This can restrict our approach to adapting melodies performed by tango instruments, all of which have ranges larger than four octaves. Although we have a family of saxophones at our disposal with a combined range of five octaves it is usually impractical to change instruments during a musical phrase. Often we have to alter a melody to perform it within our restricted range. The best way to alter the melody is to adjust the octave of the phrase or part of the phrase that exceeds our range. In many cases a simple octave change done with consideration can be achieved, however, often this will interrupt the musical shape and create an unsatisfactory result.
While the saxophone is constructed with a 2 and a half octave range scored up to the high F#, it is capable of producing a further extension to the range through the use of the altissimo register. Altissimo, translated as ‘very high’ is the register of the saxophone above the keyed range and is produced by over-blowing specific fingerings. The altissimo register can be produced by altering the tongue position in different vowel shapes and applying pressure to the reed (Delangle and Michat 1998: 176). By performing these overtones, we can create a four-octave range.

Saxophonists have used Altissimo since the early 20th Century. H. Benne Henton (1867-1938) a performer of early 20th Century light and popular music, nick-named the ‘Paganini of Saxophone’, is considered to be the first soloist to make virtuosic use of the extended altissimo register as early as the 1910s (Cottrell, 2013: 161). In the classical setting Sigurd Rascher (1907-2001), one of the most influential and successful saxophonists of the mid-20th century was a great exponent of the altissimo range. Many concerti were written for him that explored this range, which includes the Concertino de Camera (1939) by Jacques Ibert and the Concerto by Lars-Erik Larsson (Dryer-Beers 1998: 42). Rascher’s Top Tones book is still considered the standard for education of the altissimo range. Rascher gives clear and concise information on using the overtones of the instrument to produce the higher register. Figure 6.4 is a photo of Rascher with an early A. Sax saxophone and a keyless saxophone made especially for him to demonstrate the overtones on the saxophone.

![Figure 6.4 – Sigurd Rascher with a keyless saxophone.](image)

Even with Rascher a great exponent of the altissimo range and the numerous compositions that use it, the technique remained a gimmick in the classical saxophone community and
has only in recent years become a fundamental of saxophone performance and education. Londeix states that, ‘Although altissimo is commonly used today, it remains difficult for a number of saxophonists. The best advice for composers is, outside of pieces that display virtuosity, to use the altissimo register moderately or at least with caution’ (Londeix 1989: 5).

The altissimo register has become a staple technique amongst the well-developed performer and many new works and adaptations require the ability to play in this register. While there are challenges with legato, intonation, and consistency for the saxophonist, it is now a range that should be mastered. With a well-established altissimo facility expected amongst performing saxophonists, arrangers can now approach the register to better transcribe the melodies of instruments with larger ranges.

Circular breathing
Breathing is another area that requires careful consideration when adapting a work for the saxophone. Tango music, often has very long melodic lines performed by the bandoneon or the violin. In order to approach these long phrases the saxophonist can circular breathe in order to play continuously without stopping. ‘The technique of circular breathing consists of continuous playing, with the pressure of air held in the mouth through the puffing of the cheeks, while at the same time replenishing the air supply in the lungs by breathing in through the nose’ (Londeix 1997: 9).

Articulation
Articulation is one of the greatest challenges faced by a classical saxophonist when establishing a tango sound and is an imperative element in the interpretation of tango (Retamoza 2014: 15). The articulation or the ‘attack’ of the note will differ from instrument to instrument. Wind instruments have a very similar approach to articulation, that being the contact of the tongue on either the roof of the mouth, the teeth, or the reed. The use of the tongue allows for a fast action that enhances the clarity of the note.

When we compare the techniques of articulation for clarinet, flute and saxophone we can see a very similar approach between them given that they are all wind instruments. An early influential and useful treatise on articulation is Quantz’s Versuch einer Answeisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen, which was first published in 1752. He divided his approach to articulation into three syllables that depict the motion of the
tongue to create the desired detachment. These are *di, tiri* and *didll*. Quantz indicated that, with small changes, the same approach to articulation could be applied to the bassoon and the oboe (Quantz, 1752/1966: 72).\(^{12}\) His methods can be extended to the saxophone. Quantz states that, ‘Since some notes must be tipped firmly and others gently, it is important to remember that *ti* is used for short, equal, lively and quick notes. *Di* on the contrary, must be used when the melody is slow, and even when it is gay, provided that it is still pleasing and sustained’ (Quantz 1752/1966: 72).

Unlike the flute, saxophone articulation depends largely on the tongues contact with the reed. The pronunciation of *ti* and *di* syllable on the saxophone will achieve different values of clarity. Accessing vocabulary the saxophone can develop a diverse range of articulation, ranging from a crisp attack to a subtle attack. The use of different syllables not only affects the attack of the note but also the length. *Ti* syllables are more effective for a short crisp note, *di* is more suitable for an emphasized note and *li* is used for legato tonguing. **Figure 6.5** shows this in detail.

![Different syllables for tonguing different articulations.](image)

As classical musicians, saxophonists are taught to minimise the audibility of the tongue achieved by using the tip of the tongue on the tip of the reed with minimal pressure. Horch explains his approach to the technique ‘The technique is quite simple: a spot very close to, but not absolutely on, the tip of the tongue touches the tip of the reed just at the moment the airflow begins, and comes away again, allowing the reed to vibrate freely during the sustain period of the note’ (Horch 1998:82). His description makes a strong connection between the air and the tongue. A constant airflow by supporting from the diaphragm allows for a fast moving tongue and consistent sound quality during the act of articulating.

The challenges faced for the classical saxophonist or for that matter any classically trained wind player is unlearning the gentle approach they have studied in order to

\(^{12}\) Please note that I have cited Quantz’s original publication but using Reilly’s translation of 1966.
develop a technique that makes the tongue more audible. The louder attack on the note will imitate the ‘punchier’ attack of the tango sound.

To achieve this level of attack at the beginning of the note, the saxophonist has to strike the tongue against the reed with greater pressure, in turn pushing the reed against the mouthpiece to produce a tongued sound. Monk further proposes the use of the hard tongue particularly for accented notes and a soft tongue for non-accented notes. These are illustrated in Figure 6.6.

![Figure 6.6 - Different syllables for tonguing different articulations. (Monk 2013: 23)](image)

**Accents**

The **accent** plays an important role within the tango genre and is founded in the act of starting a strong beat with the bandoneon. The bandoneon is a wind instrument that produces its sound by stretching and contracting the bellows of the instrument. The most common performance technique used when performing the tango on the bandoneon is to bounce the instrument on the knees or thighs. By bouncing the instrument a very strong attack is given to the start of the note. The bellows then fall by force of gravity, playing the subsequent notes with far less force and pressure (Fain 2010: 37). Piazzolla recommends exaggerating the accents in *Etudes Tanguistiques* to emulate the bandoneon’s style. (Piazzolla 1987: ii).

By using a more forceful thrust of air from the diaphragm and enabling this with a harder tongue action, an accent similar to the tango can be achieved on the saxophone. Subsequently, by releasing the air after the initial forceful thrust and not supporting the next note we mimic the softer second note.

**Staccato**

The staccato for classical saxophonists is created by a new diaphragm push on each note. Often in fast passages this is not possible and so the use of the ‘dry’ staccato is implemented. The dry staccato is best explained by Horch: ‘It is sometimes necessary, however to end notes by stopping the reed’s vibration by placing the tongue on the tip of
the reed, as in the syllable TAT” (Horch 1998: 82). This technique is usually used only in fast passages by classical saxophonists. In contrast jazz and popular saxophonists use the dry staccato for any length or speed of note, creating a note with no resonance from the body of the instrument.

To create the short, dry staccato required in tango music this technique is the most effective. Stopping the note with the tongue rather than an air-stopped note will create the shortest possible staccato and reduce the resonance of the instrument.

The saxophone is considered one of the most difficult wind instruments to rapidly articulate (Cottrell 2013: 165). This is because of the size of the reed and the amount of air needed to continue its vibration. ‘The normal upper limit of speed lies approximately at four semiquavers = 120-132 beats per minute’ (Weiss and Netti 2010: 145).

**Double staccato**

In many cases of tango adaptation particularly when transcribing bandoneon variation parts, the tempo of the music will require a faster articulation speed than that achieved by the regular staccato on the saxophone. The act of double-tonguing can be used in order to clearly articulate notes in excess of the speed of the single tongue. According to Weiss and Netti (2010: 145), it is possible to reach a rate of double-tonguing of about four semiquavers at 160-184 beats per minute.

Double-tonguing was used by many popular saxophonists during the vaudeville era but never became a standardised technique by classical musicians. It is a technique that is still neglected in many University and College teaching studios, since such a minimal amount of repertoire requires this skill. When adapting tango, however, the technique becomes an essential skill to master.

Double-tonguing is achieved by alternating the tongues connection with the reed and the roof of the mouth. Monk provides the following instructions, ‘The tip of the tongue is placed on the tip of the reed and the back of the tongue is placed against the palate’ (2013: 24). By producing this tika-tika movement with the tongue, the double-tongue can be effectively realised.

When adapting the music of the violin in tango, we have to consider alternative ways to replicate the many various techniques the violinist has for articulation. Retamoza states that, ‘Stringed instruments have different ways of playing and articulating because of the facility of the bowing and plucking’ (2014: 15).
**Pizzicato**

Mimicking the pizzicato on saxophone has been a challenge faced by many saxophonists when approaching the adaptation of string music. A saxophonist can use a short staccato note replace the pizzicato. This does not, however, give the note the percussive attack so characteristic of the pizzicato. Another technique the saxophonist can adopt is the slap tongue, which is a form of percussive attack similar to the string pizzicato (Cottrell 2013: 158). Rudy Weidoeft (1893-1940) in the Vaudeville era initially used slap tongue as a gimmick. Since that time it has been a frequently used technique in both contemporary saxophone repertoire and adaptations.

The slap tongue creates a percussive effect at the beginning of the note very similar to the strong pizzicato used by violinist in tango ensembles. Weiss and Netti reveal that, ‘The slap is a strong marcato and can be performed as a short staccato comparable to the Bartok pizzicato of the string, but can also be the attack of a longer note’ (2010: 146).

There are many different techniques to produce the slap tongue. Roach suggests ‘laying the tongue flat on the reed prior to starting a note, and, after bringing the air pressure to the mouthpiece smartly release the tongue in a downwards movement’ (Roach 1998: 91). Alternatively, Monk (2013: 123) suggests that, ‘creating a suction effect by holding the tongue against the reed and rapidly pulling it backwards’. In my personal experience the most effective way of producing the slap is to adopt the anchor tongue technique. Anchor tonguing is when the tip of the tongue is pushed hard against the bottom teeth and the middle of the tongue strikes the reed. If this is done with solid air support a crisp slap can be achieved and the note can still be produced afterwards.

Aside from resembling the pizzicato, the slap tongue technique can be used as an effective percussive sound throughout tango. Used without resonance the slap can be an effective way to replicate the violins ‘tambor’ sound, a drum like tap produced on the violin. It can also be used to emulate the tapping of the bandoneon (Monk 2013: 123).

**Embellishments**

Embellishments are regularly used throughout the tango to add interest and individuality to a melody. Features such as the *arrastre* are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and establish some of the fundamental performance practices of tango. It is therefore important that we
search for a way that the saxophone can successfully emulate these essential elements of the tango.

**Glissando**

The glissando is a feature that can be used by the saxophone as a way of displaying the *arrastre* as well as the flexibility of a violins melodic playing and *látigo*. There are two forms of glissando that can be produced by the saxophone: the slide, achieved by manipulating the embouchure, oral cavity and tongue; and the finger glissando, executed by the fingerings. These two forms can also be combined when a glissando of larger intervals is required.

To emulate the slide motion of an ascending *arrastre*, the saxophonist can finger the destination note, and then relax the embouchure before blowing. As the sound is produced the embouchure should gradually tighten, creating a scooping sound. As Monk confirms, ‘In order to imitate the sound of a bass, it is necessary to change the embouchure: first, cover a larger part of the mouthpiece to produce a strong attach at the beginning of the note and then withdraw your mouth rapidly to return to the normal position’ (2013: 34). This is using the slide form of glissando to mimic the *arrastre* of the double bass. In the lower register the glissando for saxophone is much more difficult and this technique will require persistence and experimentation.

The finger glissando can be used for an *arrastre*. If we wish to slide up a low run but drag the notes together we can blur the pitches by moving the fingers slowly between each note. This technique is particularly effective in ascending motion.

By combining the finger glissando and the slide glissando we can mimic the violins *látigo* or whip sound. In this case, in the upper register, the use of the oral cavity and tongue are required to slide the note ascending into the upper register. This is most successfully achieved when performing above the notated high G. By using the vowel sounds. Creating the vowel sounds ahh-ee as we tighten our embouchure and slowly move our fingers will create an effective glissando.

**Multiphonics**

The production of more than one note at a time on the saxophone is called a multiphonic, which by ‘Using certain fingerings, several sounds can be produced simultaneously’ (Delangle and Michat 1998: 180). While the idea of playing chords on the saxophone is
appealing to many, in most cases the multiphonics do not create a consonant sound but a dissonant sound that is an approximation of pitches varying in degrees of microtonality. The multiphonic has been used in two songs I recorded, namely Juan-Maria Solare’s Tengo un Tango and Daniel Rojas Llévame to mimic the tone colour of the bandoneon (Byrnes 2015). Monk states ‘This technique can be used to imitate, or join in, the clusters played by the bandoneon’ (2013:122).

**New yeites for the saxophone**

Aside from the above-mentioned techniques, the saxophone brings a range of new and unique sounds to the tango that can potentially allow the saxophone to contribute to the development of this genre. As I stated in **Chapter 5**, yeites are the diverse percussive sounds created by various instruments of the tango ensemble.

**Key clicks**
The keys on the saxophone are relatively large and seated with a leather pad against a large open tone hole. Each open key (depending on its location on the instrument) ranges from 3mm to 15mm in distance away from its closed position. When the key is closed the size of the key, the force used to close it and the resonance of the saxophone tube create a popping noise known as key clicks. This explains why often when we hear saxophone we can hear a lot of noise from the mechanism. Many contemporary composers have taken advantage of this idiomatic trait of the saxophone and included key clicks as percussive effects in their works. In tango we can use this mechanical noise to our advantage. By tapping the keys, particularly in the lower register we can create the percussive effect that can be used as our own yeite. Voirpy explores the use of key clicks in the baritone saxophone part of his quartet arrangement of Piazzolla’s Histoire du Tango.

![Figure 6.7 – Excerpt from Piazzolla – Histoire du Tango, Baritone Saxophone part.](image-url)
It is important to note that the resonating pitch of the key click will not be the same as the notated pitch unless the mouthpiece is sealed by placing the tongue against the reed.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has established a wide array of techniques that can assist the saxophonist in developing a sound and creating an approach that will fit the tango sound spectrum. By exploring the contemporary techniques of the instrument, we are able to establish a way of effectively emulating other instruments’ techniques. The incorporation of these techniques into a tango arrangement enhances the sonic experience of the listener and ensures that the fundamental tangible and intangible qualities of tango are realised.
Conclusion

This thesis has established a systematic and concise approach for the interpretation of the tango idiom for the classical saxophonist. It has highlighted the significance of adaption within the saxophone community by examining the integral function it has had on performance, promotion and education throughout the short but extensive history of the instrument.

The tradition of adaptation throughout Western Classical music has been presented with reference to examples from the 15th Century to the modern day. Views of hostility towards transcription have been placed against valid reasons for adaptation. Reasons for this are as follows: the aptitude of the performer; lack of supply of instrumentation; financial incentive and aspiration. This thesis has ascertained that the value of the music’s essence founded in the expression of the music outweigh the views of the historical performance movement.

One of the greatest challenges deliberated in this thesis is the act of translating music of one tradition to another. The polemic discussion of schizophrenic mimesis and how this impacts our audience expectations, the stylisation of music and the respect to the tradition of the other culture, clearly established the need for an informed approach. By historically accounting for these tangible and intangible elements of the tango, this thesis has established a useful source for any classical musician wishing to perform the style.

This thesis has resulted in a new approach for the performance of tango for classically trained saxophonists, which in part applies a series of contemporary techniques to execute idiomatic gestures. To my knowledge, it is the first to investigate the performance of the tango idiom by the classical saxophonist and has, therefore, opened a discussion for further investigation.

Finally, this thesis has established the conventions of the tango style in the current moment. It is important to remember that any genre is in a constant evolution and therefore, the performance perspectives may change over time. They will, however, always conserve the essence that makes tango so internationally coveted.
Sources Cited


Westview Press.


Appendix A – Glossary

**Academias** – Dance hall and schools in Buenos Aires.

**Adornos** – Ornamentation or Adornments.

**Altissimo** – A very high range of the saxophone above the keyed range, using harmonics.

**Arrabales** – Suburbs lying on the outskirts of a city or town, usually impoverished areas.

**Arrastre** – The drag. A term to signify the dragging of a note or beat, also used in dance to signify the dragging of the foot.

**Bandoneon** – A German concertina instrument that has become integral to the development and history of tango.

**Básico** - Basic

**Campanitas** – Little Bells. An adornment used by the piano in tango.

**Conjunctos** – Small musical ensembles used at the beginning of the tangos history.

**Contradanza** – Contradance, a style of dance originating from the 18th century.

**Diaphragm** – A muscle that separates the thoracic cavity from the abdominal cavity. Used to push air out of the body.

**Extendido** - Extended

**Fraseo** – A term for a particular phrasing technique used in tango.

**Frullata** – The act of flutter tonguing, or rolling the r syllable.

**Gauchos** – Latin American equivalent to the Cowboy.

**Glissandi** – Sliding between notes or a group of notes.
**Golpe** – Knock. Created by any instrument, the performer knocks the instrument to create a percussive effect.

**Guardia Vieja** – A period of tango known as the Old Guard,

**Habanera** – A rhythm and a Cuban style of dance from the 19th century.

**La Epoca de Oro** – A period of tango known as The Golden Age (1940-1955).

**Látigo** – A fast and high Glissando performed by the violin that emulates the sound of a whip.

**Legato** – To perform notes joined together or smoothly.

**Lija** – Sandpaper. An effect created by the violins by using the bow on the opposite side of the bridge.

**Marcado** – A tango term to signify a strong four feel in the bar.

**Marcato** – An Italian term meaning ‘marked’.

**Milonga** – A dance style, as well as the name for the venue where tangos and milongas are danced.

**Mordent** – An embellishment established in the Baroque period, it signifies to play up to the next note and back.

**Pampas** – The rural lowlands of South America, similar to plains.

**Payadas** – Traditional music from the interior of Argentina.

**Peringundines** – A type of café in Buenos Aires in at the turn of the 20th century

**Pizzicato** – To pluck the strings.

**Rubato** – The temporary disregarding of strict tempo to allow an expressive quickening or slackening, usually without altering the overall tempo.

**Slap Tongue** – A percussive saxophone technique created by hitting the tongue against the reed.
**Staccato** – A short and detached note.

**Subtone** – Beneath tone, a muted tone that removes the upper partials of a note

**Tambor** – An instrumental effect in tango that represents the drum.

**Tangere** – To touch.

**Tango Canción** – Tango Song, first established by Carlos Gardel

**Tango Criollo** – A primitive form of the music we now call Tango.

**Tangueros** – Tango enthusiasts.

**Tenuto** – A note that is held for its full value, or stretched.

**Tresillo** – A rhythmic ostinato in Cuban music, it is the same as the 3+3+2 tango rhythm

**Vanguardia** - A period of tango known as the Vanguard Era (1955-)

**Variación** – A variation performed at the end of a tango by either the bandoneon or violin.

**Vibrato** – A pulsating effect to the sound.

**Yeites** – Extended techniques used by tango instrumentalists, often in the form of percussive sounds.

**Yumba** – An onomatopoeic word for arrastre.

**Zarzuela** – A Spanish lyric-dramatic genre that alternates between spoken and sung scenes.
Appendix B – Survey Questions

Transcribing tango repertoire for the concert saxophonist. A survey for research

Jonathan Byrnes 200108443. DMA

As part of my DMA research I am investigating the ways of transcribing tango repertoire for the concert saxophonist. I am approaching some of the leading performers/educators and composers of saxophone throughout the world to contribute to the study. My aim is to investigate the ways in which tango music can be arranged and performed on the saxophone. The study will look at both existing transcriptions as well as develop new approaches to most effectively transcribe and aide performance of this music. Your input will be extremely useful to discovering how and why this music is performed/arranged and composed for the saxophone.

Returning this survey indicated your consent to take part in the study.

1) Are you a saxophone performer, composer or arranger?

2) Do you have experience in the performing/composing or arranging tango repertoire?
   If so which works/composers?

3) What tango repertoire pieces or composers do you believe are the most representative of the genre?

4) In what environment did you perform these works?

5) What was the instrumentation of the ensemble?
6) What do you think are the idiomatic elements of tango music and how did you incorporate these into your performance/composition or arrangement?

7) What are your motivations for performing/composing or arranging tango music?

8) Would you be interested in being contacted for possible interviews and demonstration interviews? Y/N

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in my research.
Appendix C – Interview prompt questions

I. Musical interpretations of selected works
   a. Prompt question: Are there any sections of this work that require a further exploration of the tango tradition.
   b. What further considerations does the performer need to take to effectively perform compositions tango that have been transcribed for saxophone?

II. Extended techniques.
   a. What saxophone techniques do you feel best emulate the extended techniques (including the idiomatic percussive sounds) of tango of the flute and violin?
   b. How did you develop these techniques?

III. Instrumentation concepts
   a. Do you feel that you need to perform with traditional tango instruments such as the bandoneon to give an authentic interpretation of the music?
   b. Which of the saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone) do you feel is most suited to the style of tango? Why?
EXTERNAL RESEARCH SAFETY PROTOCOL

- The researcher will be conducting interviews alone or, when required, with a local interpreter/translator, however the supervisor considers that the safeguards provided in this safety protocol are sufficient to manage the safety risks.

- The researcher has confirmed there is mobile phone coverage in the areas where the research will take place, has access to global roaming and will take his mobile phone to every interview.

- The researcher will provide a schedule to his supervisor of the date, time and place of all interviews. He will confirm the safe completion of each interview by mobile telephone or email with his supervisor. Daily contact during the interview times will be made with the supervisor.

- The researcher has confirmed that there are currently ‘high degree of caution’ status from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for many of the Latin American countries required for this research. He has subscribed to the travel advice to receive email updates each time the travel warning is reissued. He will also register with the Australian Consulate in each country upon arrival and be constantly covered by travel insurance.

- As the interviews may take place in a private home, the researcher will take steps to ensure that he is able to leave at any time. This includes only entering ‘public’ areas of the house where possible (such as kitchens and living rooms), ensuring that the exit route is clearly known.

- This safety protocol has been agreed and accepted by the researcher and the supervisor.

[Signature of student researcher and supervisor provided.]

Mr. Jonathan Byrnes  
Student Researcher

/Dr. Daniel Rojas  
Supervisor

Transcribing tango repertoire for the Concert Saxophonist. J Byrnes 200108443
Version 1 131031