The Boundaries of Modern Jazz Composition: Interaction between Tango and Jazz Music

Evgeniya Kozhevnikova

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THE BOUNDARIES OF MODERN JAZZ COMPOSITION:
INTERACTION BETWEEN TANGO AND JAZZ MUSIC

by

Evgeniya Kozhevnikova

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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THE BOUNDARIES OF MODERN JAZZ COMPOSITION:
INTERACTION BETWEEN TANGO AND JAZZ MUSIC

Evgeniya Kozhevnikova, M.M.

Western Michigan University, 2019

The history of jazz music is not very long in comparison to the history of music in general – from the end of the 19th century until present. This period, however, is very dense in terms of musical influences and became especially denser recently because of globalization.

Several researchers explored the jazz influences in the music of Astor Piazzolla, whom renovated traditional tango. While Piazzolla is considered a tango composer, some jazz bands use Piazzolla’s music as jazz standards and create compositions with traditional elements of jazz, such as improvisation. There are also composers influenced by tango music who write new compositions combining tango and jazz.

This paper investigates how tango interacts with jazz and reflects on the topic of stylistic borders. It provides a detailed musical analysis of several jazz-tango pieces, including two versions of “Violentango” and “Counterpoint” by Astor Piazzolla performed in traditional and jazz interpretation, Pablo Ziegler’s original composition from a Grammy-awarded album Jazz Tango, and my original jazz-tango suite Tango at the Fingertips completed as a part of this research.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars do not consider jazz and tango to be “serious” music. However, in the recent decades both of these styles have proven that they deserve serious critical attention and performances in large venues. David Ake writes that “a large contingent of musicians, writers, and educators has worked to reverse early perceptions of jazz as a vulgar entertainment, arguing instead for its acceptance as art music.”¹ The authors of the book Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts agree that “jazz was ultimately destined for elite status as art music.”² Still, plenty of scholars underestimate the value of jazz. This research paper aims to illustrate that jazz-tango, as a part of jazz style, should be considered art music.

John Roberts³ analyzed recordings that represent the interaction between Latin music and jazz from the 1880s to 1990s. The topic of this research is more specific and limited only to the interaction between tango and jazz music. That allows to narrow down the field of research because Latin music is very broad, but also gives an opportunity to spend more time on remarkable musical examples and to provide a detailed analysis of them.

Several researchers including David Lucas Gómez, Thomas Fontes Saboga, and Eunyoung Koh, analyzed the influence of jazz on the music of Astor Piazzolla, a creator of

¹ David Ake, Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time since Bebop (Berkeley: University of California, 2010), 54.
² Luca Cerchiari, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 35.
Nuevo tango (new tango). This research sums up and develops their findings by adding the aspect of tango influence on jazz, especially at the early stage of it. Therefore, this paper reflects on the idea of mutual interaction between tango and jazz. The purpose of this paper is to provide an acknowledgment of the music on the border of these two styles.

It is worth mentioning, that the year I started to work on this topic, an important event happened in the musical world: Pablo Ziegler, a pianist who played with Astor Piazzolla, won a Grammy Award for his album Jazz Tango in the category “Latin Jazz.” This is evidence that currently these two styles still successfully interact with each other.

My personal interest in this topic started with the piece “Tango d’Adieu” (Farewell Tango), which I wrote in 2015 for a jazz piano trio to perform at my graduate recital at the Russian State Professional Pedagogical University. Originally, it was inspired by the works of Astor Piazzolla and by the project “Jazz Tangeros,” in which my piano professor, Platon Gazeleridi, was involved. His ensemble blended tango compositions with jazz improvisations. Instead of tangos, it would be jazz standards, with the usual introduction, theme, solos, trading between the soloists, and returning to the theme. That fusion of styles appeals to me greatly. Mixing jazz with tango might be less popular than mixing it with bossa nova, or Afro-Cuban style. Still, the representatives of this fusion can be found in different periods of music, starting with the beginning of the 20th century.

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5 Pablo Ziegler, Jazz Tango, performed by Pablo Ziegler, Hector Del Curto, and Claudio Ragazzi, recorded live in 2015, New York: Zoho Music, 2017, CD.
This research paper consists of three chapters. The first chapter covers the history of tango and jazz, and the parallels in developing of these styles. Both of them started as an ethnic music, mostly for lower classes, as entertainment. Both of them, at some point, became a style for upper classes, for listening, rather than for dancing. Later on, tango and jazz blended with other styles, such as pop, rock, and electronic.

The second chapter covers the analysis of the particular compositions that may be considered as jazz tango. It is a question of personal choice whether or not to consider Piazzolla’s ensemble playing with the jazz musicians Chick Corea, Gary Burton, and Danilo Perez, as jazz tango. This question comes because it is not obvious if it is merely enough to add jazz musicians to tango music to get jazz tango.

The third chapter covers the analysis of my original jazz tango suite *Tango at the Fingertips*, for violin, alto saxophone, and rhythm-section. While it is hard to be objective and independent in analyzing one’s own compositions, it is worth doing. It helps to understand where my music belongs, what audience it is for, and, therefore, how I should promote it.

Pablo Ziegler in the interview says that he started to play Piazzolla’s music because it was different from traditional tango. Later, he went back to tango roots and used them as a base for improvisation, like a jazz standard. Today, both Piazzolla’s and Ziegler’s music is programmed in concert halls. It is highly intellectual, complex, beautiful, and definitely not “cheap.” Therefore, it is worth studying and appreciating. Hopefully, this research will help to

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bring scholarly attention to the blend of jazz and tango, which happened during the 20th century and still continues.
CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TANGO AND JAZZ

Tango: History and Definitions

Tango is a traditional Argentinean music that incorporates elements from different cultures. As the authors of Tracing Tangueros, Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, note, tango is “developed from a fusion of art forms existing in the cultural melting pot of Argentina.”8 Fernando Gonzales says that “tango is a music of paradoxes,” born in the city of Buenos Aires where African, European, and indigenous cultures blend with each other.9 Because tango is a fusion, it is hard to articulate a clear definition of it. Roberts calls tango “the world’s best-known dance after waltz,”10 but it does not necessarily have to be only for dancing.

Although agreeing about the African roots of the word “tango,” scholars argue about the original meaning of it. For instance, here is the range of what this word could mean: “drum,” “second funeral,” “festival,” or “dance.”11 Originating in Argentina as music for lower classes, in the 1910s tango came to France and became popular among the aristocracy.

The tempo and meter of tango can be different. Link and Wendland write: “as tango genre developed, it separated into three distinct musical characters that tangueros refer to as tres ritmos (literally ‘three rhythms’), namely, tango (4/4), milonga (2/4), and waltz (3/4).”12

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10 Roberts, Latin Jazz, 258.
11 Link and Wendland, Tracing Tangueros, 8-9.
12 Ibid., 28.
Payada and habanera are the closest relatives to tango. Roberts defines habanera as a Cuban dance, which provided the rhythmic basis of tango and had a great influence on jazz. Particularly, pianists of early jazz period used it a lot in the left hand.

Link and Wendland define payada as an “improvised song duel” during which “two payadores sing improvised stanzas alternating between question and answer accompanied by guitar.” What is important to notice in this context, is that payada originally included the element of improvisation, while tango did not. It is hard to say if Astor Piazzolla took the idea of improvising from payada, or from the jazz musicians he played with.

The instrumentation of tango differs in various periods of time. It started as guitar music, then it continued with ensembles that contained guitar, flute, violin, and bandoneon. Later, the ensembles became larger and transformed into orquesta típica criolla (typical creole orchestra), which contained two violins, two bandoneons, piano, and double bass. Present day, there are practically no limitations in the instrumentation of tango. Fusions of electronic tango music exist, in addition to acoustic compositions.

Different genres and styles affected tango. Jazz had one of the most significant influences on the development of tango and led to the creation of Nuevo tango (new tango), a style associated with the name of Astor Piazzolla. Piazzolla aimed to “renovate popular tango, to maintain its essence, to introduce new rhythms, new harmonies, new tone colors, and forms.” Today his music is one of the most performed worldwide. Piazzolla’s name is so much associated with tango now that Link and Wendland rise a question: “what could one possibly do

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13 Roberts, Latin Jazz, 254.
14 Link and Wendland, Tracing Tangueros, 8.
16 Ibid., 227.
with tango after Piazzolla?” Still, many composers continue to develop tango and make new fusions.

**Jazz: History and Definitions**

There are various definitions of jazz, depending on one’s musical taste and background. In 1991, Scott DeVeaux wrote an essay about jazz, which is probably one of the most cited among scholars. He states that jazz “lies not in any one style, or any one cultural or historical context, but in that which links all these things together into a seamless continuum.” Therefore, it is really difficult to define jazz. As Mike Heffley writes, jazz “has been invented and reinvented all along.” Larry Kart states that jazz has an “ability to transform itself.” One can say that the rhythm and feel of swing is a particular trait of jazz, but there are examples of jazz music with a different rhythmic feel (straight eighths instead of triplets). Stuart Nicholson points out that “jazz is being reimagined through the process of transculturation”. Because of globalization, jazz has been transformed in many different ways.

The borders between jazz and other musical styles sometimes are not very clear. In the book *Jazz Cultures*, David Ake quotes a jazz historian Mark Gridley: “Don’t assume that anyone understands the differences between jazz and pop.” The same can be applied to the border

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17 Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros*, 82.
18 Scott DeVeaux, "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 525-60.
22 Mark Gridley quoted in David Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002), 45.
between jazz and Latin music. It is a matter of personal choice whether or not Latin jazz can be viewed as a part of jazz in the broader meaning or as a separate style. The authors of the book *Jazz/Not Jazz* devote a chapter to the interactions between Latin music and jazz. They introduce the term “intercultural space” that is characterized by the “dialogue of influence.”

Most scholars agree that the history of jazz spans around one hundred years. In the book *The Contradictions of Jazz*, Paul Rinzler writes that “the history of jazz has been so varied that in one century it has paralleled (or even surpassed) the diversity of the entire history of common practice music from approximately 1600 to 1900.” There is a lack of historical recordings of early jazz, because the technology was not yet well-developed. In *The History of Jazz*, Ted Gioia gives an example of Jelly Roll Morton playing “Maple Leaf Rag” by Scott Joplin in two different ways: in the tradition of Missouri ragtime and in New Orleans “jazz-inflected approach.” Gioia states that “the line between ragtime and jazz was so fine that the two terms were often used interchangeably.” Martin Williams takes a different approach by stating that ragtime is “a separate movement,” “not a kind of crude, pre-jazz.” In the same time, Williams included Scott Joplin’s ragtime in *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, his compilation published in 1973. Therefore, contradictions happen even among jazz historians and scholars.

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24 Ibid., 92.
It is likely that even for a person with a classical background, ragtime would seem like jazz because of its characteristic harmonies. As a foreigner, I can say that the perception of jazz abroad is much different than it is in the United States. For instance, in many music schools in Russia, ragtime is considered to be a part of jazz. Most of the time, ragtime compositions were written down and published. Later, jazz became more improvised and often unpublished. Therefore, many pianists start to learn jazz from ragtime because that is the most available printed “jazz” music.

Jazz was born in the United States, but it is a mixture of musical traditions. Most scholars mention African-American influences in jazz. Roberts expands the definition of jazz to the fusion of Afro-Euro-Latino-American music. He points that the exact proportions of those styles do not matter. The influence of Latin music on jazz might be less compared to African music, but it is enough to study it.

In Learning to Listen, Gary Burton, a jazz musician who played with Piazzolla’s ensemble, reflects on the similarities between jazz and tango within the melody and the harmony. He states that tango does not rely on improvisation, which creates the major difference between these two styles. However, this statement about improvisation is arguable. A jazz piece can be completely composed, as well as a tango piece may contain an element of improvisation. Therefore, one cannot rely on improvisation as a distinguished trait of the musical style.

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30 To clarify, a music school in Russia is an establishment of additional education for kids and teenagers from 6 to 18 years old, not a higher educational establishment.
31 Roberts, Latin Jazz, x.
32 Burton, Learning to Listen, 323.
Interactions Between Early Jazz and Tango

Norman Wika writes that “tango has been involved with American jazz as long as it has existed.” In 1913, habanera became very popular because of the musical comedy “The Sunshine Girl.” Since tango was based on faster habanera, it gained its popularity, as well. Roberts states that the influence of tango on early jazz was huge, if one considers rag-time as a pre-jazz style, rather than a separate stream. Among jazz compositions of this period, the author mentions “Tango Rag” by Abe Olman, “Everybody Tango” by Raul Pratt, “Chicken Tango” by John Stark, “Tango Tea” by Ed Hallaway, and “Tango Land” by Henry C. Lodge.

“Tango Land” by Lodge was popular enough at the time to appear on an Edison cylinder recording. The left hand line is based on habanera rhythm (Figure 1). Stylistically, it sounds more like a tango rather than a ragtime, though Lodge was a well-known master of ragtime. In “Tango Land,” some harmonies, such as major chords with added ninths and sixths, can be associated with jazz. Yet, it is likely a predecessor of jazz music, since the majority of the harmonies are simply minor or major triads.

Figure 1. Left hand part in “Tango Land” by Henry Lodge. Hereafter transcribed by author

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34 Roberts, Latin Jazz, 19-21.
36 Roberts, Latin Jazz, 21.
Several compositions by Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton \(^{37}\) also represent the interactions between jazz and tango. Roberts describes “Jelly Roll” Morton as a jazz pianist who was very engaged in playing “habanera/tango-bass solo piano pieces.” \(^{38}\) His composition “New Orleans Joys” \(^{39}\) (recorded in 1923) employs habanera/tango rhythm (Figure 2) in the left hand.

![Figure 2. Rhythmic pattern in the left hand in “New Orleans Joys” by Morton](image)

The habanera rhythm is interrupted at 0:55 for a short solo in the left hand, and then it returns again. Then, a short four-bar solo of the left hand happens again and is followed by the riff up to 1:31. “New Orleans Joys” has a 12-bar form blues as its basis, with an introduction and variations.

Roberts mentions the composition recorded in 1929 by Spencer Williams \(^{40}\) “I’m Going to Take My Bimbo Back to the Bamboo Isle” \(^{41}\) as an example of the rhythm section that uses tango riff. Still, it does not exploit habanera rhythm as much as the previous two examples.

Between the 1930s-1940s, jazz was more affected by styles from Cuba, such as rhumba. Later, Afro-Cuban style completely replaced tango influences of the early jazz. Roberts classifies the 1950s as the period of jazz interacting with mambo, another Latin style. \(^{42}\) During the same

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\(^{37}\) Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton (1890 – 1941).
\(^{40}\) Spencer Williams (1889 – 1965).
\(^{41}\) Spencer Williams, "I’m Going to Take My Bimbo Back to the Bamboo Isle", posted September 28, 2014, accessed January 14, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g2q9tZKqko.
\(^{42}\) Roberts, *Latin Jazz*, 85.
period, Astor Piazzolla created an ensemble that led him into the fusion of tango and jazz. This fusion is discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

JAZZ-TANGO COMPOSITIONS BY ASTOR PIAZZOLLA AND PABLO ZIEGLER

Astor Piazzolla and Nuevo Tango

Nowadays, the name of Astor Piazzolla is associated with tango more than anyone else. However, his music was not a traditional tango. Deborah Schwartz-Kates says that Astor Piazzolla’s music blends tango, jazz, and classical idioms.\(^{43}\) While he was not the first composer mixing different styles of music, this blend brought him worldwide recognition and made him an icon.

As Matthew Karush writes, before Piazzolla blended jazz and tango, his predecessor Julio De Caro “sought to elevate tango’s musicality by broadening its use of harmony and counterpoint and, later, by creating a symphonic tango, but his image as an innovator and modernizer was informed by jazz.”\(^{44}\) Therefore, the idea of using jazz elements in tango did not start with Piazzolla, but made that his own style.

Piazzolla says in his memoir that he enjoyed jazz, including the music of Stan Kenton, Art Tatum, and Oscar Peterson.\(^{45}\) In addition, he worked with outstanding jazz musicians, such as Gary Burton and Gerry Mulligan. His pianist, Pablo Ziegler, came from a jazz background. All these factors influenced Piazzolla’s musical style. The mixing of jazz and tango did not end

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\(^{45}\) Piazzolla, Gorin, and Gonzalez, *Astor Piazzolla*, 47.
after Piazzolla’s death. Due to their widespread popularity, Piazzolla’s works served as a basis for many jazz arrangements, and led to original pieces that mix jazz and tango.

**Two Versions of “Violentango” by Astor Piazzolla**

This section provides the comparative analysis of two different versions of “Violentango” by Astor Piazzolla (recorded in 1974 and 1986). The purpose of this comparative analysis is to highlight jazz influences in the music by Astor Piazzolla. In addition, the goal is to understand how the appearance of jazz musicians on the later version of “Violentango” changed the form and the character of it.

The original version of “Violentango” appeared on the album titled *Libertango* in 1974. For this album, Piazzolla made his compositions around three minutes long to fit radio format, which was a request of his agent. The length of “Violentango” is three minutes and thirty seconds. The length of its “jazz” version, which was recorded at the Montreux Jazz Festival, is over six minutes. It involved the jazz musicians Chick Corea, Danilo Perez, and Gary Burton, in addition to Astor Piazzolla’s ensemble.

In the memoir, Piazzolla says that his music is mostly related to tango, not to the “jazz-rock fusion.” Therefore, it is fascinating to listen to a composition where Piazzolla shares the stage with Chick Corea, who is well known for his fusion of jazz and rock.

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The original piece starts with eight measures of introduction in C-sharp minor. Drums play quasi-solo episodes every two measures in a question-response form. The usage of drums was not typical for tango before Piazzolla. This trait brings his music closer to jazz.

The bass riff (Figure 3) anticipates the two-measure basic idea that appears in the melody in Section A (Figure 4). In Section A, the harmony moves down step by step, prolonging A minor. The motif stays the same rhythmically, but changes melodically, emphasizing the harmony.

![Drums response](image)

**Figure 3. Bass riff from “Violentango” by Astor Piazzolla**

![Lead sheet](image)

**Figure 4. The Lead sheet of Section A in “Violentango” by Astor Piazzolla**

Table 1 reflects the overall structure of “Violentango.” Some sections continue without significant borders. For example, there is no obvious break between Section B and Section A. Section B uses the same thematic material as the beginning, but the harmonic rhythm is different (the chords change twice as fast, every two beats).
Table 1. Musical content of “Violentango” in Piazzolla’s original version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on Recording</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 – 0:14</td>
<td>Introduction: 8 measures on C-sharp minor chord; bass riff anticipates the rhythm and the melody of the main theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:14 – 0:28</td>
<td>Section A: two-measure basic idea appears in the introduction; the main theme changes melodically every two measures, while its rhythm stays the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:28 – 0:54</td>
<td>Section B: the content is close to Section A, it can be viewed as a continuation; the harmonies from the main theme play in double-time. A minor is a key-center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:54 – 1:20</td>
<td>Section C: unexpected harmonic shift to F minor. A chromatic ascending line from F minor to F-sharp minor, and then, G minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20 – 2:07</td>
<td>Section D: contrasting lyrical melody; harmonies are based on ii-V progressions and the circle of fifths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:07 – 2:59</td>
<td>Section A1: the theme in A minor from Section A repeats only with bandoneon, bass, and percussion; each repeat adds an instrument as a counterpoint (sounds improvised, but can be written).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:59 – 3:26</td>
<td>Section A2: the theme in F minor (unexpected shift) develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:26 – 3:29</td>
<td>Coda is based on the main motif (in F minor).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Section C, Piazzolla explores different keys areas, which are far from A minor. The shifts from one key area to another are immediate, without a leading chord. In section D, Piazzolla uses ii-V harmonic progressions that were typical for many jazz standards. For instance, the harmonic progression from 1:34 to 1:46 (Figure 5) is the same as in “Autumn Leaves”50 (Figure 6), a song written by Joseph Cosma in 1945. The next section is a variation of the theme, which adds counterpoint voices. Some parts of this section might be improvised because Piazzolla encouraged his musicians to have their own interpretations of the written parts. The last section unexpectedly shifts to F minor with the coda in the same key.

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The main difference in the “jazz” version of “Violentango” (Table 2) is the addition of solo sections by Gary Burton (vibraphone), Chick Corea, and Danilo Perez (both on piano). It is interesting to notice that Burton plays closer to tango manner, while Perez uses more jazz phrases. At some point, the piano “duel” between Corea and Perez sounds out of character. Therefore, in this version the blend between jazz and tango does not happen organically.

Table 2. Musical content of “Violentango” in “jazz” version at Montreux Festival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on Recording</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 – 0:15</td>
<td>Introduction: same as in the original version, C-sharp minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:15 – 0:27</td>
<td>Section A: same as in the original version, A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:27 – 0:53</td>
<td>Section B: same as in the original version, A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:53 – 1:19</td>
<td>Section C: same as in the original version, shift to F minor, F-sharp minor, G minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:19 – 2:04</td>
<td>Section D: same as in the original version, harmonic progression leads to D minor, then returns back to A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:04 – 2:17</td>
<td>Section A1: same as in the original version, A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:17 – 3:33</td>
<td>Section A2: Gary Burton’s solo on the harmony of Section A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:33 – 5:44</td>
<td>Section A3: Danilo Perez and Chick Corea have a “duel” on piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:44 – 6:09</td>
<td>Section A4: the theme in F minor, same as in the original version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:09 – 6:13</td>
<td>Coda is based on the main motif (in F minor).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pablo Aslan Quintet playing Piazzolla’s "Counterpoint": Musical analysis

In 2007, reviewing Pablo Aslan’s CD Ed Hazell states: “Jazz-tango may not garner much publicity, but the excitement and beauty of music more than compensates for its lack of exposure.” 51  After Astor Piazzolla’s death in 1990, a large number of musicians, including the ones who played with him, continued to successfully mix tango and jazz. Compared to other sub-styles of Latin jazz, the blend of tango and jazz is not the most popular one, yet it is very significant.

Hazell says: “We’re in a golden age of jazz-tango fusion, and bassist Pablo Aslan is one of the main reasons.” 52  Born in Argentina, Pablo Aslan is currently living in New York. 53  He is one of the bassists who played with Astor Piazzolla. Aslan is also a bandleader, researcher, and educator. His recordings include Avantango (2004), Buenos Aires Tango Standards (2007), Tango Grill 54 (2009), Tango Jazz: Live at Jazz at Lincoln Center with Paquito D’Rivera (2010), and Piazzolla in Brooklyn (2011). While all of these recordings are worth listening, Piazzolla in Brooklyn deserves special attention. This project was based on the works from Take me dancing! recorded by Astor Piazzolla’s ensemble in 1959. 55

Take me dancing! was an intent to bridge jazz with tango. Besides Piazzolla’s original compositions, it contained jazz standards “Laura” by David Raksin and “Lullaby of Birdland” by

52 Hazell, 57.
53 Pablo Aslan’s biography is available online: http://www.pabloaslan.com/pablo/.
54 Nominated for a Grammy for Best Latin Jazz Album.
55 In the discography of recordings by Astor Piazzolla, the original name of this album is LLevame Bailando. It was published only in 1994, after Piazzolla’s death. The full discography is available in Piazzolla, Gorin, and Gonzalez, Astor Piazzolla, 221-48.
George Shearing. Piazzolla considered this album as a total failure and never came back to it. More than fifty years after the album was created, Pablo Aslan “rediscovered” it and recorded his own project *Piazzolla in Brooklyn and the rebirth of jazz tango*, which received very positive feedback. The secret of success was that Aslan’s band is equally great in jazz and tango music, so Piazzolla’s music in Aslan’s interpretation sounds more organic than original tracks. Fernando González writes in the liner notes to Aslan’s album:

> The transcriptions of the original arrangements by Piazzolla for nine of the pieces in *Take Me Dancing* became the road map for *Piazzolla in Brooklyn*. And for the journey, Aslan not only had Piazzolla as a guide, but also something that *el maestro* didn’t have: a group of musically bilingual players (including Piazzolla’s grandson, drummer Daniel “Pipi” Piazzolla), as knowledgeable and comfortable with the vocabulary, syntax, and rhythms of tango as they are with jazz.57

I chose “Counterpoint”, a composition that seemed the most interesting to analyze and compare with the original version. Piazzolla’s composition is two minutes and fifteen seconds in length, while Aslan’s version is over four minutes. Additional improvisational sections in Aslan’s version allow the listener to enjoy the material for a longer duration than the original.

“Counterpoint” starts with two measures of the basic idea in bass register (Figure 7). The theme prolongs A minor. In the original version, the motif is accompanied by the bass playing a quarter note line, along with Latin-style percussion (bongo plus guiro).

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Aslan starts the piece with solo double-bass, adding just a bit of percussion. This is very similar to the way Piazzolla introduces the theme in “La Muerte del Angel,” in which the composer starts with the violin playing solo. It creates a fugue-like sense with the further addition of new voices.

The second time the theme goes in the middle register, with D minor as a key center, coming back the third time into A minor. This whole section, with the theme played three times in different registers and instruments, lasts for about 25 seconds in both versions and can be called Section A of the piece. The full structure of Piazzolla’s original piece is reflected in Table 3, and the structure of Pablo Aslan’s version is provided in Table 4.

Table 3. Musical content of “Counterpoint” in original Piazzolla’s version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on recording</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 – 0:25</td>
<td>Section A: fugue-like; the theme goes three times in A minor, D minor, A minor, from lower register to higher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:25 – 0:59</td>
<td>Section B: interlude-like; mostly prolongs A minor, except a short shift to C major and D minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:59 – 1:23</td>
<td>Section C: contrasting lyrical material; 11 measures, mostly prolongs A minor, except a short shift to C major and D minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:23 – 1:48</td>
<td>Section B1: same material as in Section B with a variation played tutti at the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:48 – 2:15</td>
<td>Section C1: same material as in Section C with staying on A minor at the end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B sounds like an interlude, still remaining in A minor. Piazzolla makes a short shift to the relative major, C major, and then a shift to the subdominant key of D minor, using A dominant seventh as a leading chord. In Aslan’s version the drums play a much more complicated part than the percussion part in the original version. His arrangement implies the same harmonies which Piazzolla originally used, but it adds “jazz” extensions, such as 11ths and 13ths in the chord.

Table 4. Musical content of “Counterpoint” in Aslan quintet version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on recording</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 – 0:23</td>
<td>Section A: fugue-like; the theme goes three times in A minor, D minor, A minor, from lower register to higher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:23 – 0:55</td>
<td>Section B: interlude-like; mostly prolongs A minor, except a short shift to C major and D minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:55 – 1:16</td>
<td>Section C: contrasting lyrical material; 11 measures, mostly prolongs A minor, except a short shift to C major and D minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:16 – 2:23</td>
<td>Section B1: based on the harmonies from Section B with the idea of polyphony from Section A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:23 – 2:39</td>
<td>Section C1: same material as in Section C, with piano plays arpeggiated ‘waves’ in the accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:39 – 3:19</td>
<td>Section C2: two choruses of piano improvisation in jazz style on the harmonies of Section C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:19 – 3:44</td>
<td>Section B2: a variation of Section B, similar to Section B1 in the original version. In the first part of the section, piano plays a counterpoint line that did not exist in the original version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:44 – 4:15</td>
<td>Section C3: same material as in Section C with a pedal in A minor at the end (as in the original version).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section C introduces a contrasting lyrical material. It is an 11-measure section, which is rather odd for traditional tango music (with mostly two- or four-measures phrases). In the same fashion to Section B, Piazzolla made two shifts to C major and D minor. Aslan’s version of this section is very close to the original.

In Section B1, Aslan takes the harmony from Section B, and adds the idea of polyphony from Section A. As in the beginning of the piece, this episode starts with solo double-bass,
without drums. The melody sounds improvised in a tango manner. Bandoneon joins in the second “chorus” with a line that starts similarly to the beginning of the bass part and to the theme in Section A, but it goes then into a different direction. Piano joins in the third “chorus” and trumpet comes in the fourth. Aslan lets listeners fully enjoy the idea of counterpoint that is in the title of Piazzolla’s composition, but less exploited in the original version.

At the end of Section B1, Aslan’s quintet blends together again in A minor chord. The next section is a repeat of Section C, but with more freedom in the piano part. After that, piano plays two “choruses” of an improvised solo in the jazz manner. Figure 8 reflects how the pianist creates a phrase with the upper structure (9th, 11th, 13th of the chord) of G dominant-seventh chord and the diminished scale, to create a phrase. Figure 9 shows the diagram of G dominant-seventh chord with the upper structure. Pitches of G-diminished scale are used on the fourth beat of the measure (see Figure 10). Therefore, Aslan’s version of “Counterpoint” uses jazz devices.

Figure 8. An extract from piano solo starting at 3:05 of “Counterpoint” by Aslan’s quintet

Figure 9. G dominant-seventh chord with the upper structure

Figure 10. A diminished scale started with G
Section B2 in Aslan’s version is similar to Section B1 of the original Piazzolla’s version. In the first part of the section, piano plays a contrapuntal line that did not exist in the original version. It sounds like a solo, in a manner closer to tango. As in the original version, Aslan’s quintet ends with a variation of Section C and a pedal on A minor chord. In Figure 11, the diagram compares the form of both versions.

![Figure 11. Diagram of “Counterpoint” sections in Piazzolla’s version and Aslan’s version](image)

To sum up, the version arranged by Pablo Aslan represents jazz tango, with a more complicated, elongated structure than the Piazzolla’s original tango. It adds improvisation in a jazz style. Compared to the jazz version of “Violentango,” Aslan’s arrangement of “Counterpoint” sounds more organic and natural. Even though it is not an original piece, this version is a successful interpretation.

Musical Analysis of Pablo Ziegler’s "Elegante Canyenguito"

The aim of this analysis is to explore an original jazz-tango piece "Elegante Canyenguito" composed by Pablo Ziegler. Ziegler is a pianist, composer, and producer, who joined Piazzolla’s latest quintet in the 1980s. "Elegante Canyenguito" is a part of the album *Jazz Tango* released in 2017 by Ziegler’s trio. There are three of Piazzolla’s compositions on the

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62 Pablo Ziegler, *Jazz Tango*, performed by Pablo Ziegler, Hector Del Curto, and Claudio Ragazzi, recorded live in 2015, Zoho Music, 2017, CD.
album, including “Michelangelo 70,” “Fuga y Misterio,” and “Libertango,” but the rest of the compositions are Ziegler’s original. *Jazz Tango* won the Grammy award for the Best Latin Jazz Album in 2018, and this was a huge success of jazz tango recognition as a style.

“Elegante Canyenguito” is a piece for piano and guitar, performed by Pablo Ziegler with Claudio Ragazzi. The length of the piece is almost six minutes, which is longer than most tango compositions, due to the solo sections. Table 5 contains the structure and the musical elements of the composition.

**Table 5. Musical content of “Elegante Canyenguito”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on recording</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00 – 0:25</td>
<td>Introduction: a lyrical piano solo starts in G major, then shifts to B-flat major. The melodic contour anticipates the theme in Section A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:25 – 0:57</td>
<td>Section A: the main theme starts in D major and then goes into G major, C major, and B-flat major. The texture is tango-like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:57 – 1:36</td>
<td>Section B: the contrasting theme starts in G minor, then it goes C minor, B-flat major, and comes back to G minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:36 – 2:24</td>
<td>Section A1: return of the main theme in B-flat major. Then the melody goes through D major, G major, C major, B-flat major, and finally, arrives to G minor for the next section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:24 – 3:37</td>
<td>Section B1: piano improvisation based on the harmonies from Section B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:37 – 4:19</td>
<td>Section B2: guitar improvisation based on the harmonies from Section B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:19 – 5:16</td>
<td>Section B3: piano and guitar trade “choruses.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:16 – 5:45</td>
<td>Section A2: the main theme in B-flat major, a quick modulation to G major, and the return to B-flat major.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The piece starts with a lyrical introduction by piano in G major. Then the composer shifts to B-flat major, and comes to D major. The melodic contour of the main theme appears in the introduction and then continues in Section A with the tango-like rhythm accompaniment and percussive sounds on guitar. Ziegler uses ii-V chord progressions to switch from D major to G major, C major, B-flat major, and to come to G minor in Section B. Figure 12 shows the scheme...
of harmonic progressions in Section A. As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, the usage of ii-V chords progressions is typical for jazz music.

![Figure 12. Harmonic diagram of Section A in "Elegante Canyenguito" by Pablo Ziegler](image)

The contrasting theme in Section B starts with G minor. Then, the composer uses ii-V chord progressions to modulate to C minor and then to B-flat major (Figure 13). The main theme returns in Section A1, where the composer again explores various keys, indicated in Table 5. There is a sense that guitar improvises some passages in this section, anticipating the next solo sections.

Solo sections start with the piano improvising over the chords from Section B. Then the guitar has a solo over the same harmonies. Finally, they are trading choruses in the next section. Overall, the improvisations still sound in the mood of tango, even though they utilize some jazz harmonies. After the solo sections, there is a return of the main theme from Section A. The form of the piece generally echoes jazz standards with A(A)BA form, improvisations over the harmonies from Section B, and the return of the material from Section A at the end. Figure 14 illustrates a simplified form structure of “Elegante Canyenguito”.

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63 However, this example does not indicate the full harmonic palette with jazz chord-extensions the composer uses.
Figure 14. Simplified form structure in "Elegante Canyenguito" by Pablo Ziegler

There is a great balance between jazz and tango in this piece. The interactions happen very naturally, which shows the pure virtuosity and experience of the musicians. More examples of Pablo Ziegler’s compositions and arrangements, which mix jazz and tango, are provided in the Appendix A.
CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS OF TANGO AT THE FINGERTIPS

It goes without saying that, at some point, music or any art have a life of its own. As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, Astor Piazzolla recorded a CD *Take me dancing!* and considered it a failure. But the music itself was not a failure. It was “rediscovered” after Piazzolla’s death by Pablo Aslan and his ensemble. Sometimes composers create music that might be too ahead of its time. The opposite also happens – there are composers who write music that might seem old-fashioned. Analysis of one’s own music helps to improve critical thinking and understanding of the value of music.

Since this chapter is devoted to my original composition, it is worth mentioning my personal background in music. My earliest composing and improvising experience happened at the age of five, when my father bought a tape recorder. He wanted me to play some piano pieces from a music book we had at home. At that time, I barely could read music charts, so I announced the title of a piece and just played something that reflected the title, straight from my head.

Later, in music school in solfege classes, I wrote compositions for lyrics that our teacher suggested. There, I learned how to notate music. For the celebration of New Year 2001, I presented to my mother the first piano suite, which she still keeps. At some point, I wanted to try jazz music because I sought for something more than classical music with simple I–IV–V chord progressions. My first attempt to explore jazz was not very inspired. In the music school, I played some ragtime and written solos for piano, but did not really learn anything about jazz. In fact, my first experience of improvisation over a blues form was so embarrassing, that for a long
time after it I never tried to improvise again. My parents were against my musical career, so I enrolled into radio engineering department and started studying towards a “normal” career.

Everything changed at the age of 19 when I enrolled in jazz courses. My piano teacher Platon Gazeleridi brought me back to improvisation and encouraged me to write my own music. I created a band with students, and we played my original jazz compositions at the local jazz club in Yekaterinburg, Russia. I did not study composition professionally before enrolling at Western Michigan University to pursue a master degree in music. Originally, I applied to jazz composition, but WMU did not have this particular direction. Nevertheless, I was admitted into the program and became a student of the two studios: jazz studies and composition. Being in-between these two disciplines affected me in many ways. In particular, it brought my attention to the music on the borders of styles. I started to question if my music belongs to jazz, at all.

After one of the composition studio concerts at WMU, a student shared some feedback regarding one of my pieces. She asked if “Forefeeling”, the piece I performed with a jazz combo (piano, double bass, drums), was a jazz piece. Without hesitation I replied “yes”, but the question was reasonable because there was a room for doubt. The piece did not contain typical jazz harmonies and ii – V harmonic progressions. It was not a swing piece. Still, there was improvisation, and we were the traditional jazz trio, but the question was reasonable. Now, looking back, I am thinking of it as a jazz-tango piece. The bass riff (Figure 15) represents tango-habanera rhythm that was discussed in Chapter 2.

![Bass riff](image)

**Figure 15. Bass riff in “Forefeeling” by Evgeniya Kozhevnikova**

The piece “Forefeeling” is in B-flat minor, with a section in B minor and C minor. The
general mood of the piece is very melancholic and tango-like. The melodic line has accents that create a polyrhythm 3 over 4 (Figure 16). Piazzolla used this rhythmic device (Figure 17) in many of his compositions, including “La Muerte del Angel” discussed in the article by Thomas Fontes Saboga Cardoso.64

![Figure 16. The polyrhythm 3 over 4 in “Forefeeling” by Evgeniya Kozhevnikova](image)

**Figure 16. The polyrhythm 3 over 4 in “Forefeeling” by Evgeniya Kozhevnikova**

![Figure 17. Rhythmic device used by Astor Piazzolla in various compositions](image)

**Figure 17. Rhythmic device used by Astor Piazzolla in various compositions**

If the composition “Forefeeling” was like a prelude to my working on the topic of jazz-tango interactions, then the jazz-tango suite *Tango at the Fingertips*65 is a result of exploring this topic. The instrumentation of *Tango at the Fingertips* is violin, alto saxophone, piano, bass, and drums. The suite consists of three parts: “Tango d’Adieu” (Farewell Tango), “Evergreen Tango”, and “Tango at the Fingertips”.

The first part of the suite was written in 2015 as a separate piece for a jazz trio (piano, double bass, drums. It was mostly influenced by my professor Platon Gazeleridi’s project that performed tango pieces in jazz interpretations with solo sections.66 There is much influence of Piazzolla’s music in “Tango d’Adieu”, as well.

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64 Fontes Saboga Cardoso, "L’incorporation d’elements du jazz dans le tango d’Astor Piazzolla,"125.
65 The full suite is available for listening here: https://tinyurl.com/yyzhfo8u.
Table 6 reflects the musical content of “Tango d’Adieu”. It starts with a riff in A minor (Figure 18), which comes back many times as a refrain in a rondo form, except the piece is not quite a rondo.

**Table 6. Musical content of “Tango d’Adieu”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4</td>
<td>Section A: introduction, riff in A minor starting with piano solo, then the bass plays a counterpoint line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 11</td>
<td>Section B: the main theme prolongs A minor, with a quick shift to E-flat major and back to A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 13</td>
<td>Section A1: a shorter version of A minor riff, with the same musical content as in the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – 16</td>
<td>Section B1: a shorter version of B section with the main theme mostly in A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – 20</td>
<td>Section A2: same material as in Section A, works as a transition to Section C in C minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 26</td>
<td>Section C: a contrasting episode with changes of time signature from 4/4 to 6/4 and back, harmonic shifts from C minor to D-flat major, and then back to A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 – 29</td>
<td>Section B2: a variation of Section B, similar to Section B1, A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 33</td>
<td>Section A3: same material as in the introduction in A minor, ends abruptly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 – 49</td>
<td>Section D: solo section in F-sharp minor, bossa nova style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 55</td>
<td>Section C1: same episode as Section C, in C minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 – 57</td>
<td>Section B3: a short version of B, ends in A minor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 18. Riff in A minor in “Tango d’Adieu”, piano part**

The main theme (Figure 19) is based on the rhythm that repeats every two measures for three times, with a variation during the third time, after which there are two measures with a different rhythmic pulse. The polyrhythmic idea appears here in a different way: even though all four measures in Figure 19 are in 6/4, the first three can be divided into 4/4 and 2/4 measures,
while the fourth measure can be divided into 3/4 and 3/4 measures. The accenting of the off-beats is typical for jazz music and Nuevo tango, rather than for traditional tango.

![Image of musical notation]

**Figure 18. The main theme of “Tango d’Adieu”, violin part**

The contrasting theme (Figure 20) starts with a sudden key change to C minor. Since “Tango d’Adieu” is not supposed to be a music for dancing, the time signature changes from 6/4 to 4/4. The polyrhythm 3 over 4, discussed in Example 13-14, is applied here as well (the last measure of Figure 20).

![Image of musical notation]

**Figure 19. The contrasting theme of “Tango d’Adieu”, violin part**

The improvised solo section starts with a key change to F-sharp minor and switching the texture to bossa nova style. Typically, jazz compositions have “theme and variations” form, meaning that the solo section exploits the harmonic material from the theme. In “Tango d’Adieu”, improvisation section is based on a completely different chord progression than the theme. That allows to have a break from the previous material and adds some freshness to the composition. Coming back to tango, the contrasting theme in C minor brings a listener back to the main theme in A minor.

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Overall, the form of the piece consists of written sections, then a section with improvised solos, and coming back to the written sections. Usually, solos in jazz standards are based on the same harmonies as in the sections of the theme. However, the solos in “Tango d’Adieu” are based on completely different harmonies. The idea here was to make a really new section, rather than repeat the harmonies from the previous sections. At the same time, the solo section uses the typical jazz improvisation approach, so overall it makes the piece a blend of jazz and tango.

The second part of my jazz-tango suite is called “Evergreen Tango”. In contrast to the first part, this piece is mostly in major keys, except the middle section in C minor. The musical content of the piece is indicated in Table 7.

*Table 6. Musical content of “Evergreen Tango”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>Introduction: a lyrical motif in G major, which is performed freely, with no rush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 13</td>
<td>Section A: the main theme in G major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – 21</td>
<td>Section A1: a repeat of the main theme with variations in melody and harmony, still in G major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 – 29</td>
<td>Section B: Contrasting episode starts with C minor, which restates as a ii to B-flat major, after several ii-V progressions there is a modulation to A major for the next section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 37</td>
<td>Section C: a short interlude in A major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 – 54</td>
<td>Section A1: solo section in G major, over the harmonies of Section A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 62</td>
<td>Section B1: a return of Section B in C minor, with a variation at the end, leading to A major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 – 68</td>
<td>Section A2: allusion on the main theme in A major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69 – 74</td>
<td>Section C1: a reminiscent of the interlude in Section C, stays in A major with the ending on D-major seventh chord.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The introduction starts in G major, leading to the main theme (Figure 21). The harmonies used in this part are mostly the chords with extensions (such as ninths and elevenths) due to jazz
influences. However, the melodic and rhythmic content came from tango.

The contrasting theme in Section B starts in C minor and then goes through different keys using II-V chords progressions. The section ends in A major, which is a key of the next interlude. The solo section goes over the harmonies from Section A, and the theme returns in the contrasting section in C minor. Similar to some jazz standards, the overall form of the piece is AB with improvisations following the harmonies from Section A and the return of the theme in Section B. The only exception is the appearance of a short interlude that works as a bridge to the solos, and then comes back at the very end as a coda.

The third part of the suite is “Tango at the Fingertips”, which gave the name to the whole suite. The composing process of this particular part started with the creation of Section B. Then, the search for an appropriate Section A lasted for a long time. The form of the current version of this piece is illustrated in Table 8.

Section A appears for the first time in the piano part playing solo as an introduction. The theme is in A minor with a short modulation to D minor and then back again to A minor. There is an interaction between the lines of the right and the left hand (Figure 22). The part of the left hand can be considered as a second voice, rather than an accompaniment. In m.6 of Figure 22, there is a changing of time signature to 3/4, and then comes back again to 4/4 in the next measure. The reason for making this choice is an intention to serve the melodic line, rather than a
will to specifically change the time signature (which seems to be a trend in contemporary classical music and jazz).

Table 7. Musical content of “Tango at the Fingertips”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Musical elements, tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 15</td>
<td>Section A: the main theme in A minor with a short shift to D minor, piano solo plays ad libitum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 29</td>
<td>Section B: the secondary theme (could be considered as a chorus or a continuation, but definitely not a contrast theme) in A minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 42</td>
<td>Section A1: violin plays the main theme in A minor, saxophone has a contrapuntal line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 – 64</td>
<td>Section B1: return of the B section in A minor with an extension at the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 73</td>
<td>Section C: a contrast lyrical theme in C major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 – 87</td>
<td>Section A2: improvisation over the harmonies of Section A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 – 100</td>
<td>Section A3: a return of Section A in C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 – 108</td>
<td>Section C1: a return of the contrast lyrical theme in C major.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21. The main theme of “Tango at the Fingertips”, piano part

Section B prolongs the same key, A minor. The secondary theme sounds like a continuation of the main theme, rather than as contrasting material. The melody is based on the syncopated rhythm (see Figure 23), which is typical for tango music. The sound of the accompaniment is more jazz-like due to the harmonies with extensions (ninthths). After the repeat
with variations of Sections A and B, the contrasting theme appears in Section C in the relative major key – C major. The solo section happens over the harmonies of Section A. The return of Section A after solos is in C minor, which is a parallel minor to C major (the relative key to the original home key). Finally, Section B and coda are in A minor.

![Figure 22. The main theme of “Tango at the Fingertips”, piano part](image)

The analysis of the interactions between jazz and tango helped me in many ways in writing my own jazz-tango suite. I had some great examples in front of me, which allowed me to find my unique blend of these two styles. In *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*, Ted Pease says that fusion of jazz and rock led to “an identity crisis in jazz.” In the same time, the fusion of with other styles gives jazz its essential freedom. It is a personal choice whether to consider jazz-tango a separate style or not, but it has become a part of jazz history.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As it is shown in this research paper, there is a great amount of interactions between jazz and tango. Both of these styles are complicated and were influenced by many other styles, so it was hard to define them in the first chapter of this research paper. The parallels and interactions between tango and jazz are not so obvious. In the early years of these styles there were more blends, while later they went separate roads. In the 1950s, with the passion and hard work of Astor Piazzolla, tango got some jazz flavor which was revolutionary for those years and for the traditional society of tangueros in Argentina. Piazzolla’s blend of tango with some classical and jazz elements was not accepted at the beginning. Decades passed before his music has finally become a synonym of tango. The next “generation” of people, who mixed tango and jazz, was made up of those who played with and were inspired by him. As it was described in the third chapter, the music of Piazzolla gave me a lot of inspiration in creating compositions, which is why I decided to dedicate this research paper to the blend of tango and jazz.

The method of analysis in this research is based on the classical form analysis and is mostly concentrated on the thematic material, rather than improvised material. Also it is based on the recordings, rather than on the scores since a lot of examples described in this paper are either unpublished or difficult to find. Some of the transcriptions are provided here, and it would be interesting to do the full transcriptions of the solo sections of Ziegler’s and Aslan’s compositions/arranging with the full analysis of them.

The compositions analyzed in this research paper are not the only examples of the interaction between tango and jazz. Many other interesting mixes of these two styles can be
found in Appendix A. There are some really unexpected examples, such as Duke Ellington playing tango, or a tango in the blues form.

Hopefully, this research can help to bring more scholarly attention to the music on the border of tango and jazz.
APPENDIX A

List of jazz-tango examples for further research


APPENDIX B

Lead sheets of *Tango at the Fingertips* by Evgeniya Kozhevnikova

**Tango d'Adieu**

Jane K (Evgeniya Kozhevnikova)
Lead Sheet

Evergreen Tango

Jane K (Evgeniya Kozhevnikova)

Tango \( \text{\textbar} \) = 130

D13  E7/G\(^b\)
Tango at the Fingertips - Leadsheet

Jane K (Evgeniya Kozhevnikova)

\[ z = 140 \]

\[ \text{A} \]

\[ \text{B} \] saxophone, piano, bass

\[ \text{Dm9} \quad \text{Bb} \quad \text{Am9/C} \quad \text{F\#9} \quad \text{Dm7} \]

\[ \text{Bb} \quad \text{E\#9} \quad \text{A7alt} \quad \text{Dm9} \quad \text{Bb} \]

\[ \text{Am9/C} \quad \text{F\#9} \quad \text{Bb7} \quad \text{Bb\#7} \quad \text{Violin} \]

\[ \text{A1} \]

\[ \text{Am9} \quad \text{Am9/C} \quad \text{B7\#9} \quad \text{E7\#9} \]


Audio and Video


