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## 1.5 *A los artistas plásticos*

Music and arrangement by Osvaldo Pugliese, 1964.<sup>136</sup>

Recorded on LP “El gran Osvaldo Pugliese” in 1965, for the record company Philips.

Duration: 3’17”

*A los artistas plásticos* is another clear example of Pugliese’s innovating trend in which the melodic-rhythmical structures are not shaped into clear themes as in traditional tango (previously indicated in the analysis of *Negracha*). These structures, generated from a few materials and well-defined interval classes, are used in each section in different ways: expanded, compressed, as solos, as accompaniment, successively, and even simultaneously (superimposed). Also, the sections are interwoven and passages from one to the other are not always evident. Of the ever-present structural materials, specific ones are highlighted in each section and different functions are attributed to them. The phrases are irregular in length (unlike the eight-bar phrase characteristic of the genre) and upon them the process of fragmentation typical of Pugliese’s orchestra is established. As he did with *Negracha*, Pugliese composed a tango based on a non-tango idea: in this case, the creation of two one-bar motives. The same holds true of his widely popular *La yumba*. In this respect, Oscar Del Priore claims:

It is only a brief theme. This theme develops, is enriched by countermelodies and harmonies, but does not change: the basis is always that repeated theme, as if it were reflected in a thousand mirrors mounted in different places.<sup>137</sup>

The analysis of *A los artistas plásticos* is based on the 1965 recording and its transcription from the archives of the Tango Department of codarts University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Below, the table of formal sections with their quantity of bars (Fig. 1).

Section	A				B				A'		coda
Sub-s.	a1	a2	a3	a4	b1	b2	b3	b4	a'1	a'2	-
Bar #'s	1-6	7-12	13-19	20-28	29-36	37-44	45-50	51-57	58-67	68-79	80-87
Qty.	6	6	7	9	8	8	6	7	4+6	3+2+7	8

Figure 1: table of formal structure of *A los artistas plásticos*

Section A (from bar 1 with upbeat to bar 28), [00:00-01:01]

**a1** (from bar 1 with upbeat to bar 6), [00:00-00:15]: the phrase starts with a leap of the interval class 5, which characterizes the piece: an ascending perfect fourth in the strings and a descending perfect fifth in the double bass<sup>138</sup>. Either directly or by

<sup>136</sup> This date is supposed since there is no information available on the precise year of creation. Its rights were only registered in 1974, ten years after the 1965 recording.

<sup>137</sup> Del Priore, Oscar: *Osvaldo Pugliese. Una vida en el tango*; Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada S.A., 2007, p. 72.

<sup>138</sup> The staff of the double bass is not shown in Fig. 2.

means of stepwise motion, this interval class generates all the motives of the first formal section. From the first measure the constituent materials are clearly presented (Fig. 2). The first violin line concludes with a minor sixth (bars 4-5), foreshadowing the interval class 4 characteristic of section **B**.

6 = 6th. interval  
4 = 4th. interval

Violin I+IV  
Violin II  
Violin III  
Viola  
Cello  
Bandoneón 1&4

BANDONEÓN SOLO

Figure 2: beginning of the piece, bars 1-4 [00:00-00:12],  
with indication of the intervals used

**a2** (from bar 7 to bar 12), [00:16-00:28]: two structural blocks are superimposed (Fig. 3). The first is made up of a homorhythmical, unison ostinato, here played by the viola, the piano left hand and the double bass. The second is a syncopated, homorhythmical, parallel-voiced ostinato based on the interval of a descending perfect fourth played by the rest of the instruments (F-C, with a B-natural as an incomplete neighbor<sup>139</sup>). By removing the note F from bar 8 the interval-span thus becomes a diminished fourth. There is also an emphasis on the minor third Eb-C, which – like previously in the first violin – anticipates the main interval of section **B**.

<sup>139</sup> Sometimes called “escape tone” or “échappée”.

4 = 4th. interval; 3 = rd. interval

The image shows a musical score for a section of a piece, specifically bars 7-12. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves. At the top left, there is a note: "4 = 4th. interval; 3 = rd. interval". The staves are labeled as follows: Vln. I-IV, Vln. II, Vln. III, Vla., Cello, Band. 1&4, Band. 2, Band. 3, Piano, and D.B. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D minor) and a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *f*, *sp*, *mf*, and *fff*. There are markings for "PIZZ" (pizzicato) and "4" (quadruple) above the strings. A "3" (triple) is also marked above the strings in the first measure. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns and superimposed motives across the different instruments.

Figure 3: superimposed motives in **a2**, bars 7-12 [00:16-00:28], with indication of intervals

**a3** (from bar 13 to bar 19), [00:29-00:44]: this phrase starts with a transposed version of the motive of a descending minor third (G - E) with accompaniment of *milonga campera*<sup>140</sup>. From bar 14, it recalls the full descending perfect fourth (bandoneons, right hand), which is then transposed. In bars 16-18, the same structural materials are organized differently: strings and the rhythmical base play long notes while the bandoneons, after inverting the perfect fourth motive (bar 16), compress it to a descending minor third (Eb-C, again superimposing the thematic material of section **B**).

**a4** (from bar 20 to bar 28), [00:44-01:01]: the first bandoneon connects **a3** and **a4** (Fig. 4). This phrase resumes the descending eighth notes of bar 8 and the syncopated, homorhythmical, parallel-voiced ostinato now varied in pitch and in a lower register. In bar 25 all the strings and the right hand of the bandoneons resume the motive of **a1**, which could be perceived as an introduction of section **B**.

<sup>140</sup> See Glossary.

3 = 3rd. interval; 4 = 4th. interval

Violin 1 & 4  
Violin 2  
Violin 3  
Viola  
Cello  
Band 1 & 4  
Band 2  
Band 3  
Piano  
Double Bass

Figure 4: end of **a3**, beginning of **a4**, bars 16-23 [00:33-00:52],  
with indication of motives and intervals

**Section B** (from bar 29 with levare to bar 57), [01:01-02:06]

Section **B** contrasts with **A** in several ways: it has a cantabile character, it is made up mostly of regular eight-bar phrases, and it presents the only theme of the piece, based on an ascending and descending minor third derived from the initial motive (C-Eb). The beginning of this theme (Fig. 5) is clearly analogous to the motive superimposed by bandoneons in bars 17-19 (Fig. 4). Moreover, at the end of **b1** (bars 29-36) the phrase resumes the perfect fourth of section **A**, again superimposing materials of both sections.

$\underline{3}$  = 3rd. interval

Figure 5: end of **A**, beginning of **B**, bars 27-33 [00:58-01:14],  
with indication of intervals

**b2** (from bar 37 to bar 44) is a transposed, extended version of the beginning of **b1**, played by the piano. It is a suspense-inducing variation and links to the following phrase, **b3** (bars 45-50), in which the theme is clearly articulated: a rhythmical base is performed in *yumba* and strings play sustained chords, while the first bandoneon restates the compressed theme of **b1**<sup>141</sup> (a characteristic trait of Pugliese's orchestra). In **b4** (bars 51-57), strings and bandoneons play a variation of the theme, expanding the register and leading to the following section, **A'**.

Section **A'** (from bar 58 with pickup till bar 79), [02:06-02:56]

In this section, the motive of the introduction (interval class 5) reappears and materials presented in the two previous sections (**A** and **B**) are further developed. In bar 62 bandoneons restate the motive of **a1** at pitch while strings perform a cantabile countermelody for the first time, recalling section **B** with both its character and its focus on thirds. From bar 68 (Fig. 6) there is a superimposition of three motives used in the previous sections, as well as the addition of percussive effects in the first violin (*chicharra*) and in the third bandoneon (box slaps).

<sup>141</sup> The last four bars of the original theme are reduced to two, resulting in a six-bar phrase instead of an eight-bar phrase.

Figure 6: superimposition of three motives in bars 68-73 [02:30-02:43]

**Coda** (from bar 80 to bar 87), [02:56-03:17]

It restates fragments of the structural materials of the piece over the rhythmical base in *yumba*. Strings play a countermelody ending in long notes to accompany the last occurrence of the motive over the interval-span of a perfect fourth in its two superimposed versions: ascending (like in **a1**) and descending (like in **a2**). In the final three bars, the first exposition of the motive from bars 2-4 is recalled and the piece concludes with the typical open ending, “in the Pugliese manner”.