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Creating and re-creating tangos : artistic processes and innovations in music by Pugliese, Salgán, Piazzolla and Beytelmann

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4.3 *Encuentro*

Music and arrangement by Gustavo Beytelmann.

Recorded by the Mosalini-Agri Quintet for the record company Label Bleu, Paris, France, 1996. Juan José Mosalini, bandoneon; Antonio Agri, violin; Osvaldo Caló, piano; Leonardo Sánchez, guitar and Roberto Tormo, double bass. Score published in 1999 by Tonos Musikverlags GmbH, Darmstadt. Ed. No. 22004, ISMN: M-2015-5074-9.

Duration: 9'38''

Encuentro is a 'laboratory' piece, in which Beytelmann explored new techniques for the tango tradition that he would later apply to other works, such as *Otras voces*. Among *Encuentro*'s many innovative features, the most outstanding is that formal segmentation is not necessarily based on thematic but rather on textural contrasts. This enables techniques such as a 'textural recapitulation', where the theme is not restated explicitly.

Its formal structure is mainly articulated by three solos for the string instruments: the first, by the double bass, closes the first section of the piece (bars 48-71); the second, by the violin, opens the second section (bars 72-102), and the last, by the guitar, is a clear-cut cadenza that leads to the end of the piece. The originality of this form does not lie in the timbral and textural contrasts implied by the typical alternation between solo playing and group instrumentation in tango music, but rather in the formal and structural roles these solos play. According to Beytelmann, this decision was also influenced by the quality of the interpreters of the piece: "Considering that [violinist] Antonio Agri was playing, not writing a solo for him was out of the question." The guitar solo was created especially for Leonardo Sánchez, a superb guitar player who later recorded the piece. Thus, both the contribution by the musicians of the Mosalini/Agri quintet and Beytelmann's experience as a performer are of fundamental importance in *Encuentro*. As seen in the chapter focused on Piazzolla, this new method of writing that conceives of the ensemble as soloists – in which composers create the piece based on the strengths of the musicians that will play it – is characteristic of smaller ensembles (unlike *orquestas típicas*) and of the development of instrumental tango.

Another major idea of this piece was to create a melodic line²⁸¹ from which the materials of the whole piece derive. This theme, 14 bars long, introduces another characteristic feature of Beytelmann's music: the frequent use of asymmetrical phrases longer than the usual eight-bar length. In addition, the tonal rhythm is accelerated (the piece features six different tonalities and eight modulations) and modulations are usually to foreign tonalities.

Although these characteristics are innovative aspects in relation to the traditional model, the overall perception of the piece remains close to the language of tango.

²⁸¹ In this analysis, we will refer to it as the "theme" although it does not correspond to the formal characteristics of a theme as specified in the Glossary.

Formal structure and descriptive analysis

Figure 1 shows the formal scheme of the piece and the main characteristics of each section.

Section	A				
Sub-section	a1	a2	a3	a4	Bridge
Bar #'s	1-14	15-31	32-47	48-61	62-71
Qty. bars	14	12+4	11+5	11+3	10
Texture	polyphony			mel. w/acc-polyphony	polyphony-homophony
Tonality	Am	Gm	Fm	Am	
Main	theme: bnd. counter:guit	theme: vln. counter:bnd/guit	3 text.layers	Solo D.B.	-

Section	B		A'			C
Sub-section	b1	b2	a'1	a'2	a'3	-
Bar #'s	72-84	85-96	97-108	109-118	119-132	(132-136)
Qty. bars	13	12	4+4+4	10	14	no div.
Texture	mel. w/acc				mel. /acc-polyphony	mel. w/acc
Tonality	Bb m	Em	Dm		Am	(Am)
Main	Violin solo		'Arolas'	theme downbeat	var. on theme	guitar cadence

Section	A''						coda
Sub-sec.	a''1	a''2	a''3	a''4	a''5	a''6	-
Bar #'s	137-149	150-163	164-173	174-182	183-194	195-201	202-207
Qty. bars	13	14	9	9	12	7	5
Texture	polyphony						homoph.
Tonality	Am			Gm			
Main	milonga rhythm	instr. blocks	3/4-6/8	5/4-4/4 (4/4)	5/4 (6/8-9/8-12/8)	instr. blocks	homo-rhy. tutti

Figure 1: formal scheme of *Encuentro*

Section A (from bar 1 to bar 72), [00:00-02:39]

The opening melodic line – whose rhythms and intervals are manipulated in a variety of ways throughout the piece – presents the primary materials of the piece. The line's melodic profile and its first presentation by the bandoneon give it a strong tango-like connotation. From the very beginning, *Encuentro* establishes an intimate relationship

with the genre, although the development of the piece is only slightly traditional in essence. Figure 2 shows the bandoneon line in the beginning of the piece, with indication of its main features described below.

Figure 2 consists of two parts. Part (a) shows the first two bars of the Bandoneón line. The first bar contains a turn (blue rectangle) and an ascending motion (green oval). The second bar contains a minor sixth interval (green oval). Red circles indicate chord tones. The Guitarra part is shown below. Part (b) shows the complete bandoneon theme from bars 1 to 14. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108. The dynamic is marked as *mf*. The theme ends with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*f*) ending.

Figure 2: a) bandoneon line in bars 1-2 with indication of chord tones (red circles), turn (blue rectangle); ascending motion, minor sixth and minor second plus initial eighth-rest (green ovals); and b) complete bandoneon theme (bars 1-14) [00:00-00:29]

In the first bar, the melodic line presents a heavily ornamented tonic triad of A-minor and, in the second, a similar treatment of the dominant chord. The ornamentation consists of turns, upper and lower neighbors, passing tones and grace notes (Fig. 2-a). The opening segment of the melody outlines a minor sixth²⁸² from A to F, which is then gradually compressed each time the melody changes direction. A set of decreasing intervals is thus established, departing from a perfect fifth (plus a half-tone of the neighbors completing a minor sixth, G#-E and A-F, which will be repeatedly used in the rest of the piece) to later compress the interval-span to a minor second (B-

²⁸² If we consider the initial A as structural note (without the turn) and the accented F as arrival tone (bar 1), we obtain the interval of minor sixth (indicated in Fig. 2 with a green oval).

C, final green oval in Fig. 2-a). The theme – based on chord tones with grace notes – is closely linked to the tango tradition and, in fact, there exist numerous pieces with comparable features. Among them are two composed by Horacio Salgán (whom Beytelmann mentioned as a major influence) that have similar beginnings: *A fuego lento* and *Don Agustín Bardi*, the latter analyzed in chapter 2. *Don Agustín Bardi* (Fig. 3) also begins with a turn (on D, $\hat{5}$ of its tonality G-minor) and continues with intervals similar to the ones in *Encuentro*. The crucial difference lies in the continuation of both lines: in the case of Salgán, a typical tango-theme is developed based on the repetition of a motive in the first two bars; in Beytelmann's case, the line is developed freely through a progressive variation that never literally recalls materials. When comparing Figs. 2 and 3, the radical difference between traditional structures based on motives and Beytelmann's innovative way of organizing materials and phrases becomes clear.



Figure 3: piano beginning of *Don Agustín Bardi*, by Horacio Salgán, with indication of chordal tones (red circles), turn (blue rectangle), initial rest (green ovals) and motives (horizontal black bars)

In the first phrase of *Encuentro* (**a1**), the bandoneon presents the main line while the guitar accompanies in free counterpoint. As the remaining instruments are gradually introduced, there occurs an increase in instrumental density by accumulation, a device oftentimes used by Beytelmann. During the first phrase (**a1**) by the bandoneon and the guitar, the violin enters at bar 12 (three bars before **a2**, in which it restates the main theme), and finally the piano and the double bass enter together at bar 23, again in anticipation of the next phrase, **a3**. In this way, sub-sections are interwoven and demarcated by the instrumentation. Another unique feature of the melodic line is that it begins with an eighth-rest and ends by modulating a descending major second each time. This sequence of modulations helps to further demarcate the sub-sections: **a1** in

A-minor, **a2** in G-minor, and **a3** in F-minor. Thus, the initial ascending scale of the theme (A, B, C, D, E) is compensated for by the descending scale formed by the different tonalities used (A, G, F).

In sub-section **a2** the violin restates the theme of **a1** (Fig. 4).

Figure 4: beginning of **a2**, bars 15-16 [00:29-00:33],
with the same indications as in previous figures

Following **a2**, five additional bars (27-31) are used to present the first homorhythmical passage of the piece: a set of dotted quarter-notes at a distance of a perfect fifth (interval class 5), foreshadowing the textural change from polyphony (section **A**) to melody and accompaniment (section **B**). The following sub-section **a3** is also part of this process of textural change and deviates from the previous ones: the melodic lines are here organized into three distinct textural layers with an accompanying marcato in 4. The reutilization of materials from the original theme in **a3** can be observed in Fig. 5 (same indications as in previous figures).

Figure 5: beginning of **a3**, bars 32-33 [01:05-01:10],
with indication of the above-mentioned features (T.L. stands for ‘textural layer’)

In bar 47, the last of **a3**, a tutti performed in unison clearly marks the end of this segment and anticipates the texture of the following sub-section.

a4 (the last phrase of section **A**) presents the double bass solo, also based on materials of the initial theme **a1**. The rest of the instruments perform a homorhythmical accompaniment, thus realizing the last step towards the melody and accompaniment of section **B** that was hinted at in previous segments. The accompanimental chords are used as a percussive element, further emphasizing the textural change from polyphony to melody and accompaniment. As seen in Fig. 6, the scale of the initial theme is re-created. The line still starts with an eighth-rest followed by an A, but then inverts its direction (now descending), adds chromaticism and expands to now outline a minor seventh (A-B). It also outlines a minor sixth between the accented tutti chord over the bass note G and the final note B, recalling the minor sixth of the original theme.

Figure 6: beginning of **a4**, bars 48-51 [01:38-01:47],
with indication of the above-mentioned features

The double bass solo continues – though in a discontinuous manner – until the end of **a4**, which includes 10 transitional bars (62-71) leading to section **B**. In this transition there is an increase in instrumental density by accumulation similar to that of the beginning of the piece. Towards the end of the passage, an arpeggiated guitar line (that will reappear later in the piece) leads to the violin solo.

Section **B** (from bar 72 to bar 96), [02:39-04:17]

This section is distinguished by the arrival of the second extensive solo for a string instrument. Now the violin plays a solo with a lyricism coming from both classical and tango traditions, while affirming the typical contrast between sections. The violin's melodic line is even longer than the melody that opened the piece; it begins in the lower register and develops while gradually moving higher in register until section **A'**. Figure 7 compares the beginning of this solo as notated (in the upper staff) and the

transcription of Agri's version as performed (in the lower staff). This is a clear example of tango phrasing, even though the score indicates 'a tempo'. The melodic line is again based on the intervals of the initial theme.



Figure 7: beginning of section **B**, a) violin solo bars 72-76 in the original score; and
b) transcription according to Agri's performance [02:38-03:02]

In this section there is again an increase in instrumental density by gradual accumulation. It begins with the violin alone; followed by the bandoneon joining as accompanist, and lastly, the guitar and the double bass join simultaneously. Beytelmann reserves the piano for the typical tango upbeat figure (four chromatically ascending sixteenth-notes in the low register) in the last bar of section **B**, which leads to the following section (**A'**).

Section **A'** (from bar 97 to bar 132), [04:17-05:32]

The first phrase in this section (**a'1**) consists of a varied restatement of the head-motive of the initial melodic line in three successive, brief solos (4 bars long each). This is supported by a stable accompanimental marcato that is typically tango-like, "in the Arolas style"²⁸³, and with the traditional harmonic progression I-II-V-I in D-minor, the subdominant of the initial tonality A-minor. The first of these three solos is for violin and acts like an extension of the previous phrase, interweaving both sections. Figure 8 shows the first two bars of section **A'**, with an indication of the intervals derived from the original theme.

²⁸³ See Glossary.

Figure 8: beginning of section A', bars 97-98 [04:18-04:22]

In the second brief solo (bars 101-104), the piano performs a passage in sixteenth-notes also derived from the theme, while the violin continues with a short phrase, again interweaving both segments. In the final solo (bars 105-108), the bandoneon plays the original melodic line more clearly. Contrary to the beginning of the piece, in **a'2** (bars 109-118, Fig. 9) the beginning of the theme is emphasized through both a downbeat entrance and a passage in unison for the violin, bandoneon, guitar and piano right hand, with an accompaniment in 4 by the double bass and the left hand of the piano.

Figure 9: beginning of **a'2** of section A', bars 109-110 [04:42-04:47], with indication of above-mentioned features.

This section gives the impression of a recapitulation through the return of the following elements:

- The homorhythmical tendencies of **a4**
- The dotted quarter-notes passage from bar 27, now in bar 115
- The interval class 5 from bars 27-31, now in **a'3** (bars 119-132, Fig. 10).

All throughout **a'3** (Fig. 10) the head-motive of the theme is used in a varied form and repeated every two bars over a marcato in 4. In turn, the density of the orchestration is expanded and then contracted first through instrumental accumulation and then through a gradual dispersal.

Figure 10: beginning of **a'3** of section **A'**, bars 119-120 [05:03-05:08], with indication of above-mentioned features

The end of this sub-section is demarcated with a two-bar sustained chord (bars 131-132). Thick chords in the low register hinder the precise perception of pitches, and due to their rhythmical and harmonic structure, they function as a suspense-inducing moment that introduces the guitar cadenza, the third and final extensive solo by a string instrument.

Section C (from bar 132 to bar 136), [05:32-06:55]

The guitar cadenza begins with arpeggios of a descending perfect fourth similar to the ones used prior to the violin solo that introduced section **B**. It is based on the materials of the initial melodic line and, as noted earlier, produces one of the main divisions of the piece. In addition, it is perceived as a large extension of the first bar of the initial theme, when the bandoneon enters in bar 137 with the second bar of that theme. This bar (Fig. 11) plays two key roles: it is a bridge to the recapitulation of the theme as well as an unmistakable quote of the beginning of the piece.

Section A'' (from bar 137 to bar 201), [05:32-09:14]

This section is clearly recapitulative: the second bar of the initial theme (bar 137) is presented with no variations, at the same pitch and by the same instrument (bandoneon) as in bar 2. The guitar and the double bass accompany with a *milonga campera* rhythm.

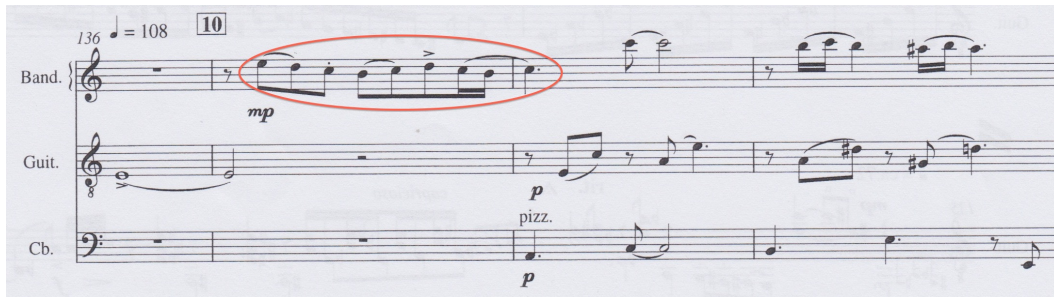


Figure 11: beginning of section A'', bars 136-139 [06:52-07:02]

However, after bar 137 there are only tiny excerpts and variations of the original melody and harmony; the theme is not restated. The main aspects of section A that return in section A'' are the contrapuntal polyphonic texture and the gradual instrumental accumulation. From this moment on, the section becomes tense and non-directional as the structural materials of section A are reused freely in briefer, asymmetrical segments that do not constitute clear themes, and lead to the end of the piece (Fig. 12). From bar 164, for the first time Beytelmann introduces mixed meter, increasing the tension further. He uses the equivalent meters 3/4-6/8 already seen in Piazzolla's chapter, together with others such as 5/4, 9/8 and 12/8.

The seven bars preceding the coda reinforce the polyphonic tissue by the superimposition of two clearly differentiated textural layers: violin, bandoneon and guitar on the one hand, and piano and double bass on the other.



Figure 12: counterpointal texture of section A'', bars 144-146 [07:09-07:16]

Coda (from bar 202 to bar 207), [09:14-09:38]

In the coda, the characteristic intervals of the theme are reused. The coda contrasts with previous sections because it is stated in a homorhythmical full tutti reached by instrumental accumulation (Fig. 13). To end the piece, a thematic line is performed in tutti, featuring a rhythm that is also derived from the initial theme.

202

VI. *ff* *p < f* *fff*

Band. *ff* *p < f* *fff*

Guit. *ff* *p < f* *fff*

Pn. *ff* *p < f* *fff*

Cb. *ff* *p < f* *fff*

Am B^bm Dm E^bm Bm Gm Em B^bm B^b A E^bma⁹ E^bma⁹

Figure 13: **Coda**, bars 202-207 [09:13-09:38]

