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# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON POINTS AND CONTRASTS





## **5. Mendizábal's *El entrerriano***





## 5.1 *El entrerriano* – Comparative analysis of the arrangements by Pugliese, Salgán and Piazzolla

Music by Rosendo Mendizábal.

Arrangements by Horacio Salgán, Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla.

In this chapter, I study three arrangements of Rosendo Mendizábal's *El entrerriano* by Salgán, Pugliese and Piazzolla. Through a comparative analysis of their main features, many traits of the composers' styles are highlighted and further exemplified. Two aspects can be observed:

- a) The relationship of each arrangement with the original tango. This allows for a better understanding of how its main features were re-created, how its materials were organized, how accompanimental models were defined and how orchestration, texture and formal parameters were established.
- b) The relationship of the arrangements with each other, outstanding common traits, differences and peculiarities.

In order to illustrate some stylistic features, I will make use of a scheme introduced by Julián Peralta in his book "La orquesta típica"<sup>299</sup> in its improved version edited by bandoneonist Francesco Bruno<sup>300</sup>.

*El entrerriano*, composed by Rosendo Mendizábal in 1897, is the oldest known piece remaining in today's tango repertoire, and is organized in a three-part structure. Apart from its historical relevance, it has been recorded by many tango orchestras and therefore allows for a comparative analysis. From the diagrams presented in Bruno's thesis I have taken the ones based on the arrangements of Pugliese and Salgán's orchestras. The last diagram, illustrating the arrangement by Piazzolla for his "Octeto Buenos Aires", has been added by me. Unfortunately, Beytelmann did not record this piece, so it is not possible to form a complete overview of the approach to this work by the four musicians studied in this research.

*El entrerriano* has a traditional structure, which makes any modification in the arrangements easy to identify. For each version a diagram is constructed that shows:

- the general structure of the arrangement (sections, phrases, semi-phrases, motives, bars)
- the instrumentation (tutti, soli, solo, instruments or instrumental sections involved)
- the texture (melody with accompaniment, homophony, polyphony)
- the kind of accompaniment (marcados, countermelodies, background figures)
- the kind of language used in each thematic fragment (rhythmical/melodic, staccato/legato)
- the connections between phrases and sections (connecting passages, sudden changes)
- the different tempos

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<sup>299</sup> Julián Peralta: *La orquesta típica: mecánica y aplicación de los fundamentos técnicos del tango*; Buenos Aires: author, 2008.

<sup>300</sup> As presented in his Master thesis "How can Tango styles be compared?", Codarts, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2011. I am grateful to the author for sending me this useful material and for helping me with the software used to generate the diagrams.

The information is displayed on a timeline marked with bar numbers. This kind of visualization provides an overview of the many features of each arrangement upon first glance. It cannot contain all of the information present in the recording or in a score, but it is used here as a tool for the comparison of certain primary aspects of the musical organization.

Figure 1 is an explanatory legend of the information shown in the diagrams:

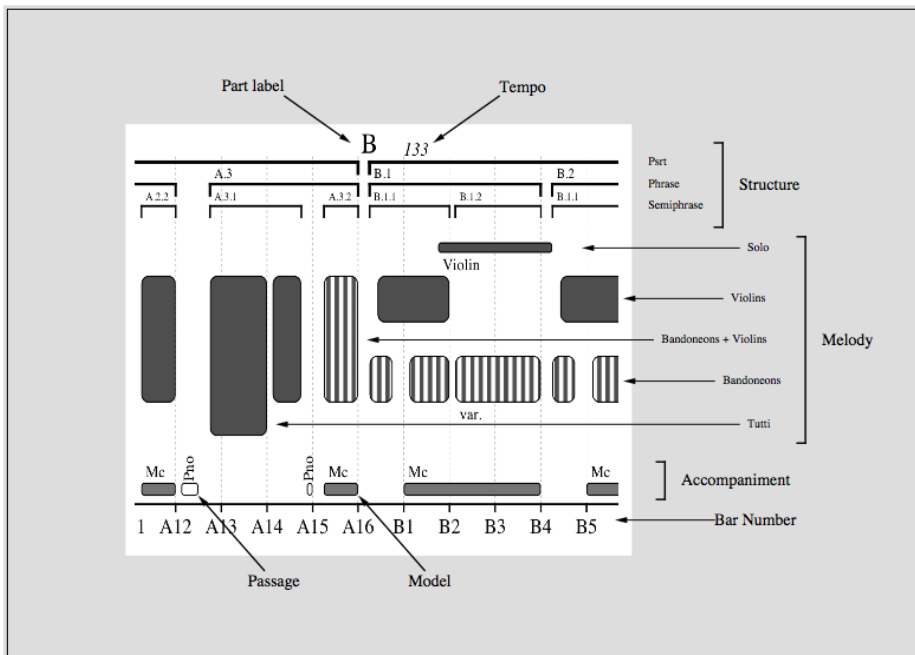




Figure 1: Bruno's explanatory legend for the diagrams<sup>301</sup>

Just above the bar number line at the bottom of the diagram, accompanimental features are shown. Two types of figures are used:

 **Passage:** this is a short passage with no melodic function, mainly used as a fill or for connecting consecutive phrases. Above the rectangle signaling each passage the instrument or section involved is shown.

 **Model:** this is a recognizable tango accompaniment pattern, with specific kinds of marcato shown above (e.g. Mc). There is generally no explicit indication of the instruments used because they are mostly played by the piano and double bass (the standard rhythmical base).

<sup>301</sup> I would refer to the main textural layer as 'theme' rather than 'melody'.

These are the types of marcato included in the diagrams (Fig. 2):








| Label | description   |
|-------|---|
| Mc.   | <i>Marcado</i> .    Accents on all 4 beats. It comes in many different flavours, depending on the relative strength of the accents on the different beats. |
| Dos   |    Accents on 1s and 3rd beat only, normally with nothing in between.  |
| Uno   | Only the first beat is marked.   |
| 332   |    The 8 eighth beats are divided in 3+3+2, this rhythm is common in tango and derives from the milonga campera  |
| Ped.  | Pedal, a long sustained note, can be used as a suspension effect.   |
| Sc.   | <i>Sincopa</i> ,    typical pattern with many variants   |
| Yumba | Variant of the marcado, typical of Pugliese. The 2nd and 4th beats are played percussively, usually using a cluster of the lowest notes of the piano.   |
| Perc. | Percussion effects  |



Figure 2: Bruno's legend on the accompanimental models shown in the diagrams

The thematic structure is shown in the middle area of the diagram. Two types of indication are used to show the kind of language in each thematic fragment:

 Rhythmic: when the thematic material is played in a rhythmic, heavily articulated way.

 Melodic: when a line is played legato, in a non-rhythmic and less articulated way.

Due to the many interpretative nuances when a distinction is made between rhythmic and melodic sections, this classification should only be considered as an approximate indication.

The height of the rectangles ( and ) showing the thematic material indicates the instrumental section involved. As shown in Fig. 1, five kinds of orchestration are distinguished: solo (a label specifies the solo instrument), violins, bandoneons, violins + bandoneons, and tutti.

In the soli and tutti sections, instruments generally play in parallel motion; unison segments are explicitly labeled. Other labels in the diagrams indicate the following (Fig. 3):

| label               | description  |
|---------------------|--|
| Pno                 | piano  |
| Bnd                 | bandoneon  |
| Bnd m.i.            | <i>mano izquierda</i> , left hand of the bandoneon                   |
| VI.                 | violin   |
| P/B                 | piano and bass together  |
| var.                | <i>variacion</i> , fast variation on the melody played in 16th notes |
| Pj.                 | <i>Pasaje</i> , passage  |
| contram. ,<br>c.mel | <i>contramelodia</i> , countermelody                                 |
| gliss., pizz.       | <i>glissando</i> , <i>pizzicato</i>                                  |

Figure 3: Bruno's legend of other labels shown in the diagrams

Below is the original, published solo piano score of *El entrerriano* (Fig. 4). It includes indications of the formal features displayed in the three following diagrams, which are based on the arrangements by Salgán (Fig. 5), Pugliese (Fig. 6) and Piazzolla (Fig. 7). I highly recommend listening to the recordings (included in the CD accompanying this dissertation) while reading through the diagrams. As can be seen from these analyses and the great differences between the three versions, there is still a vast unexplored territory in the study of tango arrangements.

# El entrerriano

Tango

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is the right hand, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It contains measures 1-4, with first and second endings labeled A.1/A.1.1 and A.2/A.2.1. The second staff is the left hand, containing measures 1-4, with first and second endings labeled A.2/A.2.1 and A.3/A.3.1. The third staff is the right hand, containing measures 5-8, with first and second endings labeled B.1/B.1.1 and B.2/B.2.1. The fourth staff is the left hand, containing measures 5-8, with first and second endings labeled B.1/B.1.1 and B.2/B.2.1. The fifth staff is the right hand, containing measures 9-12, with first and second endings labeled B.1/B.1.1 and B.2/B.2.1. The system concludes with a first ending labeled B.1/B.1.1 and a second ending labeled B.2/B.2.1.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is the right hand, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It contains measures 13-16, with first and second endings labeled A.1/A.1.1 and A.2/A.2.1. The second staff is the left hand, containing measures 13-16, with first and second endings labeled A.2/A.2.1 and A.3/A.3.1. The third staff is the right hand, containing measures 17-20, with first and second endings labeled C.1/C.1.1 and C.2/C.2.1. The fourth staff is the left hand, containing measures 17-20, with first and second endings labeled C.1/C.1.1 and C.2/C.2.1. The fifth staff is the right hand, containing measures 21-24, with first and second endings labeled C.1/C.1.1 and C.2/C.2.1. The system concludes with a first ending labeled C.1/C.1.1 and a second ending labeled C.2/C.2.1, followed by a *D.C.* (Da Capo) instruction.

Figure 4: original, published solo piano score of *El entrerriano* by Rosendo Mendizábal



# El Entrerriano, Orq. Osvaldo Pugliese (1969)

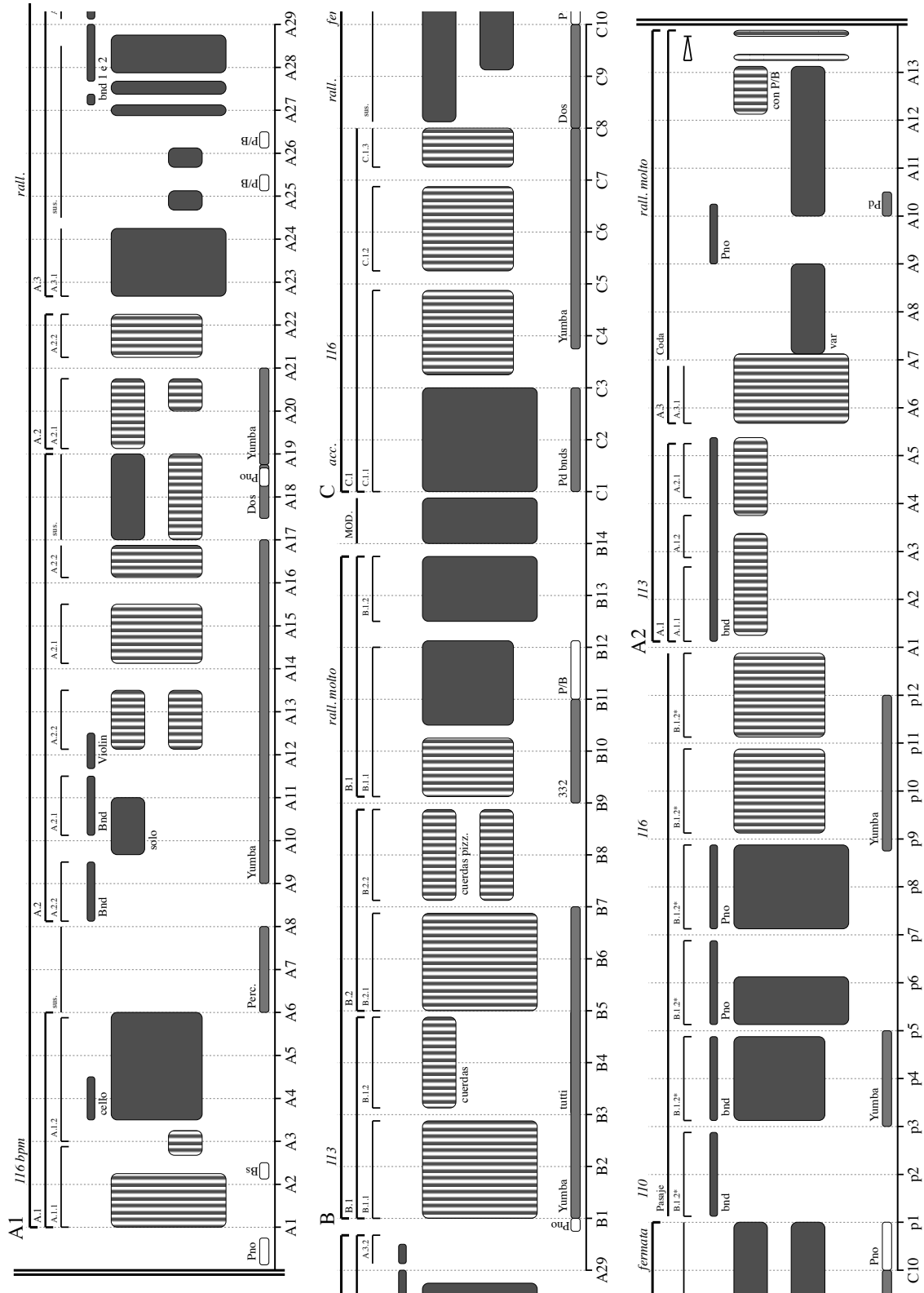


Figure 6: arrangement by Pugliese



# El Entrerriano, Octeto Buenos Aires- A. Piazzolla (1957)

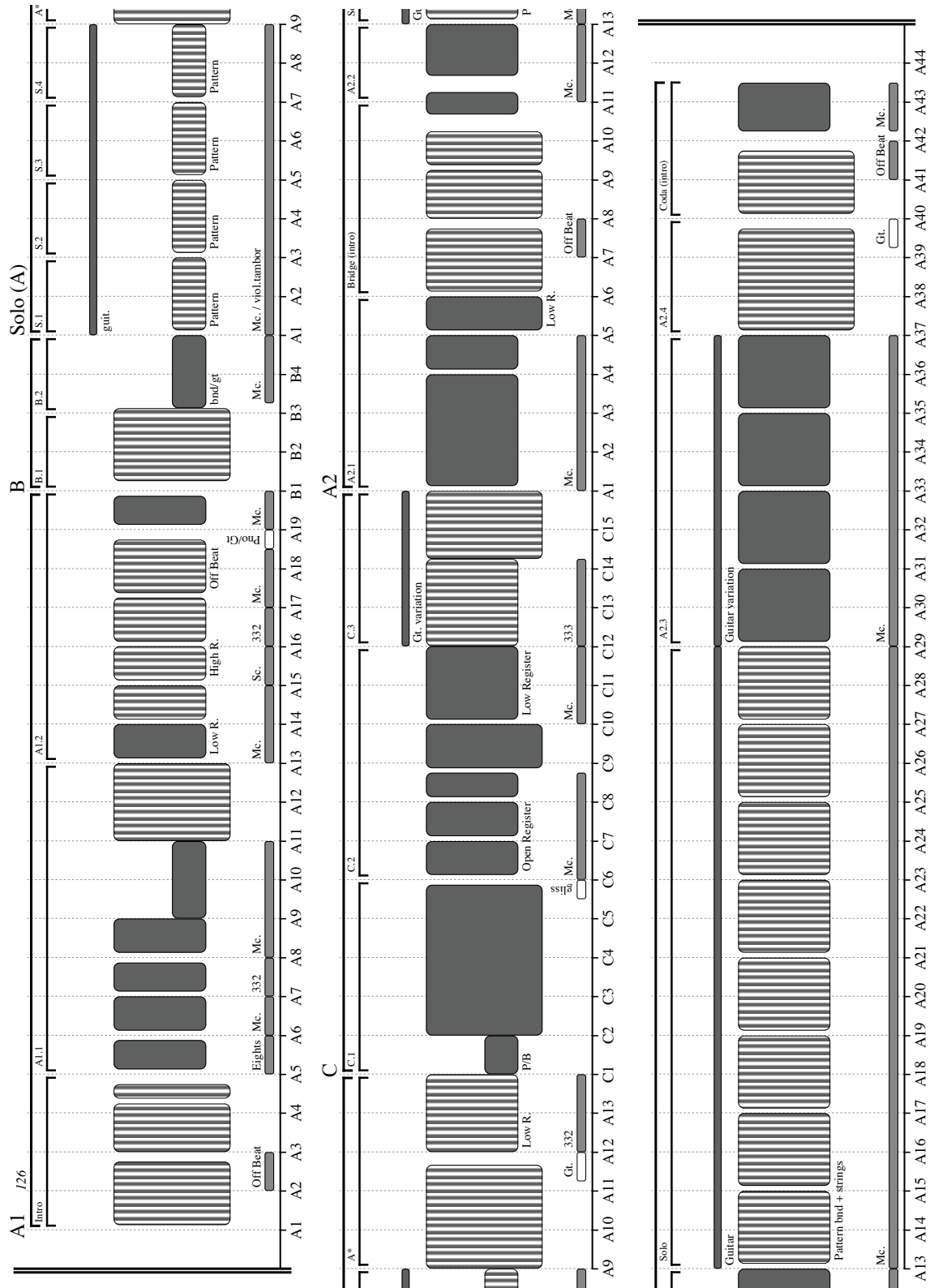


Figure 7: arrangement by Piazzolla

Below are observations on the diagrams in the above, which clearly indicate the main stylistic traits of the musicians being researched.

### Regarding formal structure

The formal structure of the original piece is **A-B-A-C-A**, with each section consisting of the typical two eight-bar phrases. In traditional versions this structure is maintained, as is the case in performances by the orchestras of D'Arienzo, De Angelis, Basso, Troilo and Francini-Pontier. The formal organization in the versions studied here demonstrates the less conventional approaches of their creators and the contrasts they have imported. Pugliese and Salgán omit the middle section **A** to create diversity, while Piazzolla maintains the original structure but heavily alters its symmetry.

Below are three tables summarizing the formal structure of the three versions studied here. The rows in the tables indicate:

- a) arranger
- b) large formal segmentation (**A-B-C**)
- c) number of bars in each large section
- d) division into phrases of the bars within the sections

| Salgán    |          |          |             |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>A1</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>A2</b>   |
| 16        | 24       | 8        | 39          |
| 8+8       | 8+8+8    | 8        | 4+8+8+8+8+3 |

Figure 8: formal scheme of Salgán's arrangement

| Pugliese  |          |          |              |           |
|-----------|----------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>A1</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>(p=B)</b> | <b>A2</b> |
| 29        | 14       | 10       | 12           | 13        |
| 7+11+4+7  | 8+6      | 7+3      | (4+4+4)      | 6+7       |

Figure 9: formal scheme of Pugliese's arrangement

| Piazzolla |          |            |          |           |
|-----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>A1</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>(A)</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>A2</b> |
| 19        | 4        | 13         | 15       | 44        |
| 4+8+7     | 4        | 8+5        | 5+6+4    | 12+16+8+8 |

Figure 10: formal scheme of Piazzolla's arrangement

Salgán's version presents the formal structure in regular eight-bar phrases with occasional extensions. To extend sections, he adds eight-bar phrases to the usual two

per section. In his version of *El entrerriano*, he compensates for a longer section **B** by removing an eight-bar phrase from section **C**, therefore achieving an average of two phrases per section in the first three sections. The final formal section **A2** is significantly extended through the addition of two extra eight-bar phrases, plus a short segment at the beginning (to connect to the piano solo) and at the end (to conclude the piece).

Pugliese's version is arranged in asymmetrical segments and contains larger alterations compared to the original formal structure. Additional bars are consistently used to emphasize segmentation and to keep the pacing unpredictable. In contrast to Salgán's version, Pugliese's greatly extends section **A1** and shortens the others, while the regular eight-bar-phrase organization is abandoned. He also inserts a passage (marked 'p') between sections **C** and **A2** based on theme **B** that then continues in **A2** as an accompanying base. His technique of superimposing thematic materials from different sections is therefore emphasized: section **A2** is accompanied by a variation of theme **B**. In addition, the theme from section **B** is maintained from one section to the next, interweaving the phrases, as we have seen previously in the analysis of Pugliese's *La mariposa*.

Piazzolla's version also contains great asymmetries and contrasts compared to the original formal structure. As in Salgán's, the last section (**A2**) is heavily altered and extended, while section **B** is here reduced to only four bars. In addition, Piazzolla is the only one to begin a new section without a connecting or preparatory passage, as he does between **A1** and **B**, which are separated by a rest. This is unusual in the genre and demonstrates a stylistic feature already seen in other pieces by him, such as *Retrato de Alfredo Gobbi*. Although Piazzolla maintains the original formal structure (he does include the middle section **A**), he heavily varies it with a free electric guitar solo that never states the **A** theme in full. The segmentation produced by the use of the electric guitar concertante is completely unusual in tango, as are the length and melodic features of its improvised solo. However, in contrast to the usual way in which he structures sections and phrases, he remains here connected to traditional tango through his frequent use of segmentation based on instrumentation, accompanying *marcatos* and the alternation between melodic/legato and rhythmical/articulated segments.

### **Regarding accompanimental structures**

Salgán's version uses frequent syncopation, one of the main traits of his style. When a *marcato* in 4 is performed there is oftentimes a preceding *arrastre* that destabilizes the *S/W* structure of the 4/4 meter (the accent now falls on beat 4 instead of beat 1). Other ways in which he counteracts the steady beat are the fast tempo of the piece and the *pizzicato* line in the double bass. In addition, he frequently alternates between different *marcatos*, as in section **B**, in which the accompanying base changes almost every bar. The only moment where the *marcato* stays stable, with no *arrastre*, is in section **A2**. This steady accompaniment contrasts with the ever-changing one in previous phrases and supports the long, phrased piano solo. Also typical of Salgán is the change of *marcato* to demarcate or connect phrases and to emphasize segmentation.

Pugliese's version – as could be assumed – is based on an accompaniment in *yumba*, his musical signature. He uses a 3-3-2 passage and interruptions in the *marcato* in order to destabilize the steady beat, emphasize segmentation and create contrast and diversity. The tempo is slower than in Salgán's version, which is necessary for his heavy, thick musical language. Another distinctive device that can be observed in this arrangement is his use of extreme changes in tempo through *rallentando* and *accelerando* passages for the whole orchestra. Many of these rubatos are applied to the extensions added to the original formal structure, creating asymmetries and emphasizing discontinuity.

Piazzolla's version presents a wide array of *marcato* patterns, which change on a much more frequent basis than in most of his compositions. His typical 3-3-2 rhythm alternates with segments of *marcato* in 2, in 4 and in syncopation, which destabilize the meter. The accompaniment based on thematic two-bar ostinatos (heard during the guitar solos) is also a main trait of Piazzolla's music. In the third phrase of section C, a salient feature already seen in *Tres minutos con la realidad* can be observed: the passage that counteracts the steady beat with a 3-3-3 rhythmical structure. The longest segment with a steady *marcato* (section A2) contrasts with the ever-changing ones in previous phrases and supports the long, improvised guitar solo (as in Salgán's version).

### **Regarding orchestration**

In order to remain concise in this chapter, many important issues regarding register and voicing will not be discussed in the general descriptions below. Those aspects have already been thoroughly studied in the previous chapters of this dissertation.

In most of Salgán's arrangement, the bandoneons and violins play the theme in unison over a rhythmical base, thus maintaining the typical melody and accompaniment texture of tango music. However, the frequent changes in rhythm, instrumentation and register give the piece a complex and varied musical surface. In section B there occurs a kind of dialogue in which the piano concertante plays solo passages against the rest of the orchestra, as does the guitar some bars later. This use of the guitar is unusual in *orquestas típicas*, while the concertante treatment of the piano, as manifest in its final extensive solo, is a main trait of his style. Lastly, in this arrangement there again occurs an increase in instrumental density by accumulation: after the long piano solo the violins enter, and finally, for the last phrase, the bandoneons join as well.

Pugliese's orchestration is organized in a varied and ever-changing way. Different instrumental sections alternate continuously, which generates a more discontinuous language than that of the other versions analysed here. Solo, soli and tutti fragments are organized in a wide variety of combinations that seem to take the conflicting nature of tango music to an extreme. A remarkable feature is the effect obtained by the frequent movement between different instrumental sections (A1: 8-13 bandoneon and violin solo; A1: 25-26 bandoneons and piano/bass; A1: 27-28 tutti and bandoneon solo and A2: 7-13 bandoneons and piano). A similar effect is obtained in segment p: 9-12 where the theme, presented in a *yumba* rhythm, is orchestrated: the rhythmical base performs on beats 1 and 3 while the rest of the orchestra states the theme on beats 2 and 4.

Piazzolla's version is more continuous and his orchestration is mainly organized into unison blocks, whose contrasts are articulated through changes in register (indicated in the diagram, Fig. 7). A main feature of this arrangement is that apart from a short segment of soloistic bandoneon, the electric guitar functions as the concertante instrument. This constitutes a triple anomaly in the tango world. First, the timbre of the instrument was not a part of the tango language before Piazzolla. Second, the total duration of the solos played by the guitar in this arrangement is atypical, as it covers almost half of the piece. Finally, the solos are not written but improvised, and the rhythmical and melodic treatment of the thematic materials in these improvisations is more linked to jazz than to tango.

### **Regarding melodic features**

As regards interpretation and variation techniques applied to the themes, the three musicians remain faithful to their styles. The main traits studied in previous chapters feature prominently in these arrangements.

In Salgán's version, most variations involve altering the rhythmical structure of the themes. He uses syncopated, varying rhythms in the melodic lines, helping to create his light, articulated language. In addition, some fragments are varied with the usual *variación* tango technique. Lastly, a main trait of his compositional language is affirmed: in section **A2**, a newly crafted melody is introduced. This melody is based on materials from section **A1** but differs substantially from it, and is perceived as completely new material. Moreover, it is stated in a legato, lyrical and phrased piano solo that has little relation to the articulated, rhythmical character of section **A1**.

In Pugliese's version, the original themes are generally maintained, being varied mainly through contrasts in instrumentation and rubatos for the full orchestra. In contrast with Salgán's and Piazzolla's treatment of the thematic materials, Pugliese reduces the rhythmical density by keeping only the main features of the theme and stating them in a variety of ways: a sort of synthesis of both the themes' profiles and their general structures. Lastly, the rhythmical organization of the melodic lines create a sense of discontinuity that gives his music a strong, rhythmical drive.

In Piazzolla's version, which also has a faster tempo, we immediately perceive the composer's aim to impress. Themes are varied in a virtuosic way and, as in Salgán's version, some fragments are re-created with the usual *variación* technique. Contrary to Pugliese, he emphasizes rhythmical structures by increasing the rhythmical density and adding frequent ornamentation and sixteenth-note passages that give the piece a continuous sense of nervousness. Structural notes are interspersed with turns, diatonic and chromatic passages, acciaccaturas and repeated notes that fill in longer notes.