

PIAZZOLLA AND BEYOND: THE ARGENTINE TANGO TRADITION AND  
PERFORMANCE APPLICATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY FLUTE REPERTOIRE

by

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(Under the Direction of Angela Jones-Reus)

ABSTRACT

The twentieth century was an exciting time in tango history. Compositions for flute by Astor Piazzolla contributed to tango's rise in popularity among classical flutists and musicians. Although flutists today are fortunate to play pieces for flute by Piazzolla himself, there are a handful of contemporary composers who have followed in his footsteps and have contributed significantly to the tango flute repertoire. This project is devoted to bringing attention to and discussing the flute's role in the history of tango, highlighting not only Piazzolla's works for flute, but also pieces by José Serebrier, Christopher Caliendo, and Valerie Coleman who infuse the Argentine tango tradition into their contemporary compositions for flute. Additionally, this document will provide practical performance applications, a suggested repertoire list of tango-inspired works for flute, and will be accompanied by a slideshow presentation at the author's lecture recital.

INDEX WORDS: Astor Piazzolla, Christopher Caliendo, Valerie Coleman, José Serebrier

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B.M., Ithaca College, 2015

M.M., The University of Wyoming, 2018

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2025

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my flute professor Angela Jones-Reus for her continual support and expertise throughout the course of this project and the duration of my time at The University of Georgia. I would also like to thank and acknowledge Dr. Reid Messich and Dr. Jean Kidula for contributing their time and insight to this project. I would also like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the members of the UGA Flute Studio. Finally, I would like to thank my husband Connor Austell for his unending love and encouragement through the entirety of this project and degree.

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## INTRODUCTION

Argentina is the birthplace of tango. While the word is often associated with a sensuous national dance style, *tango* is a complete art form in and of itself combining music, dance, and poetry. Tango has evolved considerably since its conception, as depicted in Astor Piazzolla's flute masterpiece *Histoire du Tango*. Thanks in part to Piazzolla's tango-infused compositions, the Argentine musical phenomenon has spread far and wide among audiences across the world. Piazzolla's compositions for flute opened the door for the flute as a voice of the tango, influencing classical composers to integrate the popular style into their works. Flutists are fortunate to have access to several tango-inspired pieces—of course by Piazzolla, but also contemporaries such as José Serebrier, Christopher Caliendo, and Valerie Coleman, each of whom has published a significant output of repertoire for flute and incorporated tango into their contemporary compositions.

The goal of this paper is to provide a basic guide for flutists interested in the art of playing tango music, with an emphasis on contemporary works for flute. As most flute players are familiar with Piazzolla's *6 Tango-Études* and *Histoire du Tango*, this guide will feature lesser-known tango composers and their contributions to the modern flute repertoire. The introduction will include a brief history of tango, Piazzolla's influence, and the flute's role in that history, as I believe that it will inform performers with the historical groundwork necessary for performance. Because the language of tango is rarely notated on the score and is often a style foreign to classically trained musicians, this presentation will lend practical suggestions for

performance, a glossary of tango terminology, and a suggested repertoire list of several compositions and arrangements that are readily available for flutists to study and incorporate into their concert programs. This guide is meant to be an introductory resource aimed at broadening flutists' knowledge of tango history, performance applications, and repertoire beyond Piazzolla. It will encompass examples from a variety of pieces and composers that are accessible to the average flutist. Since the scope of this project is performance-based, there will not be detailed formal or theoretical analyses of the music. By understanding the Argentine tango tradition, performers can expand their musical vocabulary, develop their improvisatory skills, and understand the flute's unique role in the history of tango.

## THE ORIGINS OF TANGO

To fully understand tango music, it is first necessary to understand Argentina's rich cultural history. The groundwork for tango can be traced as far back as the sixteenth-century colonial era and encompasses European, African, and gaucho cultures. The development of the tango included a multitude of cultural influences that fused together over time, leading to the creation of the artistic medium we recognize today.

The story of tango begins with the influx of people who immigrated to the new world, especially the great migration of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The city we know today as Buenos Aires was situated in an underappreciated corner of the Spanish empire before its new world discovery in 1536, and remained distant and sparsely populated for the next three hundred years. Beginning in the later half of the eighteenth-century, the vast territory of grassland known as the *Pampas* would soon be recognized for its agricultural potential, and by the 1870s, its industrial and economic potential. Before the nineteenth century, most of the music in Argentina consisted of *payadores* (gaucho folk singers) accompanied by guitar. Before the nineteenth-century, Argentina's new immigration policy attracted European immigrants and welcomed them through the country's newly constructed port in the city of Buenos Aires. With its population rapidly growing and the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Buenos Aires quickly became a melting pot of diverse cultural and musical traditions.

Outside musical traditions began appearing in Argentina around 1816, such as the waltz, polka, mazurka, and by the middle of the century, the *habañera*. This popular Spanish-Cuban

dance was one of the primary influences on the emergence of tango and originated in early–nineteenth century Havana, Cuba, when Spanish colonists imparted their musical and dance traditions onto the people, who were mostly enslaved people of West African descent. The habañera was a fusion of two styles, the first of which evolved from the Spanish *contradanza* (adopted from the eighteenth–century French *contredanse*), and secondly, by the dance rhythms of Cuba’s enslaved African population. Habañera’s popularity became prevalent in both Argentina and Europe, where it traveled across the Atlantic to Spain (inspired *tango andaluz*) and eventually piqued the interest of classical composers such as Georges Bizet, best known for his opera *Carmen* (1875).

The word *tango* is suspected to be African or Portuguese in origin and it is widely believed to that it was first brought to Argentina as a result of the slave trade. Eventually, the word *tango* took on the meaning of a place where enslaved or free Africans congregated to dance. It was the association with African influences that the tango arrived in Spain, after traveling from the new world back to Europe.

The habañera, already a mix of traditions, fused with two other genres: the *candombe* rhythms of enslaved Angolans and Congolese and the *milonga*. Candombe dance rhythms originated in Africa and were brought to the new world by the enslaved African population. The genre is still popular today in certain parts of South America and is characterized by *cortes* (pauses) and *quebradas* (improvised movements). Milonga originated as a fast, rhythmic, rural song–form in the Pampas, which was occupied by indigenous people and gauchos. Dance steps were added in the late nineteenth–century, which were heavily shaped by the habañera and the Polish mazurka. Furthermore, Italian immigrants made up 49 percent of the region’s population and their sacred music, the *tarantella*, and their sense of nostalgia towards their homeland also

contributed to the development of the tango. This fusion between the habañera, the milonga, and the various musical influences brought by immigrants eventually morphed into what we know as the tango.

The habañera began to fall out of fashion in late–nineteenth century Buenos Aires, due to the rapid arrival of immigrants along with their musical customs. Because of this intercultural phenomenon, the conditions were just right for the tango to emerge and blossom. Immigrants who left the familiarity of their homelands were forced to adjust to city life, and did so by congregating in *bordellos* for amusement and musical entertainment. People imitated the sounds of whatever music they heard, thus paving the way for the beginnings of tango music as an independent genre. It was through these continuous interchanges between Europe and the Americas that the tango was able to flourish.

Tango originated as a vigorous, sensual dance and the original tango ensemble was a small trio called an *orquesta típica*. The original *orquesta típica* was comprised instruments such as the violin, flute, clarinet, guitar, and bandoneón. These instruments were easily transported to and from the *bordellos*, as musicians often had more than one gig per night, or even at times had to flee if a fight broke out. One instrument in particular, the *bandoneón*, was crucial in the development of tango, as its characteristic textures and timbre contributed to the unique tango sound. An accordion–like instrument invented in the Black Forest of Germany in the 1830s, its original purpose was to replace the harmonium and intended for sacred music. When it was imported to Argentina the bandoneón quickly lost its sacred connotations, as it was increasingly played in the brothels. The unique sound of tango could not have been possible without the distinct, melancholic timbre of the bandoneón.

Comparable to the rise of jazz in North America, tango arose as a result of syncretism between musical cultures from different continents and traditions, and was not always socially accepted due to prevalent racism and the “indecent” bordellos where this music and dancing was taking place. Eventually tango became accepted among the populace as a symbol of Argentine identity and culture, making it one of Argentina’s most distinctive art forms.

## ASTOR PIAZZOLLA: A GLIMPSE OF HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCE

The individual responsible for the revitalization of the tango was performer, composer, and bandleader Astor Piazzolla. His life and influence deserve special recognition, as they are crucial to the flute's rise in popularity as an instrument of tango. Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla was born on March 11, 1921 to Italian immigrants in the modest fishing village of Mar del Plata, Argentina; located approximately 250 miles south of Buenos Aires in the Argentine Pampas. Young Piazzolla was about four years old when his parents decided to immigrate to the United States, where they lived in New York City's Lower Manhattan. The only child of Vincente and Asunta, Astor grew up in a melting pot of a neighborhood among the traditions and musical influences of different nationalities. Most notably it was during his childhood that Piazzolla was introduced to the bandoneon after his father, a decent guitarist and accordion player himself, gifted him one at age eight. This moment was the start of what would become a long and illustrious musical career for Piazzolla.

Throughout the 1930s, Piazzolla's family moved back and forth between Argentina and New York, hoping to find success and financial stability during the Great Depression. In his early years, Piazzolla did not show much interest in tango, but was inspired by the sounds of New York, which included jazz in Harlem and classical music heard from his next door neighbor, who turned out to be Bela Wilda, a student of Rachmaninoff and later Piazzolla's "first great mentor." Piazzolla was completely enamored by Bela's playing, particularly the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Later, Piazzolla recalled "I fell in love with Bach, I went crazy." Bela taught Piazzolla to read music and arranged classical pieces for him to play on the bandoneón.

This new world of classical music captivated Piazzolla and along with jazz, became a lifelong musical influence for his compositions.

During his childhood, Piazzolla started performing transcriptions of classical works on the bandoneón around New York and to his surprise, at a concert to commemorate the new Rockefeller Center in 1933, Piazzolla was given a drawing of himself at the performance. Later, he discovered that it was the famous Mexican painter, Diego Rivera. From 1933 to 1935, Piazzolla found himself in the company of Argentina's beloved tango superstar and movie actor, Carlos Gardel. Gardel began to take a liking to young Piazzolla, finding him useful as an English translator while doing business and shopping around the big city. In 1935, Piazzolla was even given a humble role as a newspaper boy in one of Gardel's New York movies. That same year, Gardel was scheduled to go on a tour of the Caribbean and wanted Piazzolla to join him as an assistant, but his father firmly rejected this offer, as Piazzolla was only fourteen at the time. Coincidentally, it was a good thing Piazzolla did not accompany Gardel, because it was that fatal flight that went up in flames in Medellín, Colombia on June 24, 1935, which put an end to the tango legend and everyone on board.

The 1930s kicked off tango's golden age as well as Piazzolla's eventual interest in tango music, specifically the more innovative, non-traditionalist style of *tango nuevo*. The population of Buenos Aires was around 2.5 million by the late 1930s and at the time was the largest city South of the equator. With its popularity growing, the tango scene in Buenos Aires seemed like the place to be as a young musician and bandoneonist. As Piazzolla attempted to pursue opportunities with several orquesta típicas in Mar del Plata, it became clear that Piazzolla would get the experience and employment he needed in the big city. In July of 1939 (a cold winter day

in the southern hemisphere), eighteen year old Piazzolla packed his belongings and moved to Buenos Aires, the motherland of tango.

By the early 1950's, Piazzolla became more focused on classical composition. In 1953, his piece for orchestra *Buenos Aires*, won first prize in a competition that included a year-long scholarship sponsored by the French government. Leaving their two young children with the grandparents, Piazzolla and his wife Dedé took the opportunity to live in Paris, where Piazzolla began his studies with the world renowned pedagogue, Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger also mentored composers such as Aaron Copland, Jean Francaix, and was close friends with Igor Stravinsky. Boulanger thought that Piazzolla's classical pieces were well-composed, but lacked a sense of feeling. Boulanger asked Piazzolla to perform one of his tangos for her and when she gave him the infamous feedback: "*This is Piazzolla! Don't ever leave it!*", it was clear that Piazzolla's strength lay in tango music, the bandoneón, and being an artistic leader. He later recalled this moment with Boulanger as an "epiphany" of sorts and credits her for guiding him towards his own musical path. After this encounter, Piazzolla received contracts from French record labels to compose and record tangos and he resolved to never work within the limitations of the traditional *orquesta típica* again.

The rest of Piazzolla's career was defined by his experimentation in *tango nuevo*, much to the disappointment of tango traditionalists. His modernizations to the tango genre included complex rhythms, contemporary harmonies, and elements of counterpoint. By the 1970s and 80s, his new style of tango began to gain more appreciation among the general public in Argentina (his music had already become a sensation in other parts of the world, such as the United States and Europe). It was during this later period of Piazzolla's career that he wrote his acclaimed and influential compositions for flute.

## THE FLUTE AND TANGO

The flute enjoyed immense popularity in tango ensembles roughly between 1905–1920, as its tone was ideal for playing the melodic line. In 1911, tango made its debut in Paris where tango clubs began to appear across the city. With its somewhat lewd beginnings in the slums of Buenos Aires, the Parisian middle and upper classes welcomed the tango, associating as “exotic art music” rather than music played in the bordellos. As tango attained more and more adoration, larger and louder orchestras became necessary in the tango clubs. The flute was simply unable to project at the volume necessary in those environments, eventually leading to the bandoneón assuming the melodic role. Although the flute was commonplace among the original *orquesta típicas*, it was left behind once the tango entered its Golden Age (approximately 1930–1950).

The flute was not added back to tango until much later in the twentieth century. The person responsible for the flute’s revival in tango is none other than Piazzolla. The flute’s first appearance in Piazzolla’s music was first and only opera *Maria de Buenos Aires*, which premiered May 8, 1968 at the Sala Planeta in Buenos Aires. Later on and towards the end of his life, Piazzolla composed two works for flute: *Histoire du Tango* scored for flute and guitar (published in 1986) and *Tango Etudes for Solo Flute*, a set of six unaccompanied etudes (published in 1987). In a 2010 interview, Marcelo Costas shines light on possible reasons why Piazzolla chose to compose these pieces for flute. Supposedly Piazzolla chose the flute to promote his music due to its worldwide prevalence and popularity, and wished to carry his

legacy of tango to other instruments.. Both of his flute compositions remain popular tango standards among professional musicians and amateurs alike in the western flute oeuvre.

## BEYOND PIAZZOLLA: CONTEMPORARY TANGO WORKS FOR FLUTE

Today the influence of tango in modern flute repertoire stretches beyond the works of just Astor Piazzolla. His *Six Tango-Études* and *Histoire du Tango* for flute and guitar are now standard in the western flute canon and opened the door to the world of tango for flutists and composers around the world. This document will highlight three contemporary composers who have followed in Piazzolla's footsteps by incorporating the spirit of tango into their works for flute. José Serebrier, Christopher Caliendo, and Valerie Coleman have each made significant contributions to the flute's repertoire, and have cleverly woven the influence of tango into their flute pieces in their own unique style of composition. Additionally, a list of their tango works for flute, along with several other modern composers, can be found in the appendix of this document.

José Serebrier was born December 3, 1938 in Montevideo, Uruguay. A Grammy award winning conductor and composer, Serebrier is one of the world's most widely recorded maestros. José's musical career began at an early age where he immersed himself in the violin, conducting, and composition. Around age eighteen, he received a fellowship to study in the United States at the Curtis Institute of Music under the tutelage of Bohuslav Martinu, Vittorio Giannini, and with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood.

In addition to being celebrated as a world-renowned artist, Serebrier has made astounding contributions to the modern flute repertoire. His “Flute Concerto with Tango” is virtuosic and modern (almost reminiscent of Jacques Ibert’s flute concerto) and evokes the nostalgic aura of the tango. Additionally his orchestral works, such as *Tango in Blue*, and *Almost a Tango*, have been transcribed for flute and piano, further expanding the flute tango repertoire. Similar to Piazzolla, Serebrier has successfully blended the tango with twentieth century compositional techniques, with Serebrier’s compositions mostly falling within the limitations of classical instrumentations. Nonetheless, elements of tango can be heard throughout Serebrier’s works.

American guitarist, composer, conductor, and publisher, Christopher Caliendo was born in 1959 in Queens, NY, where he grew up in an Italian-American household. Having had a successful career as a multifaceted composer in Los Angeles, Caliendo is noted for his unique compositional style representative of genres such as classical, jazz, folk, tango, and many more. Additionally, Caliendo is well known in the flute world for his many solo and chamber compositions for flute. Caliendo launched Caliendo Music Publishing in 1995 in part to fill a gap in the flute publishing world by selling his original tango music and arrangements for flute and guitar. Among the many compositions Caliendo wrote for flute, several are heavily influenced by tango. The *Tango Concerto No.1* for Flute and Orchestra contains rhythmic elements of the habañera, virtuosic Piazzolla-esque articulations, and feelings of passion and nostalgia, providing the performer with ample opportunity to vary tone colors and dynamic changes. *Acariciame* for solo flute is virtuosic in nature, mimics the sound of the guitar, and presents a “Prelude and Tango” formal structure. There are over eighty arrangements of Caliendo’s tango flute works

written for flutes and various instrumental ensembles, making his music flexible for a variety of instrumentations.

Trailblazing flutist and composer, Valerie Coleman, has risen to fame in today's classical music scene. Born September 3, 1970 in Louisville Kentucky, Ms. Coleman founded the woodwind quintet the Imani Winds and is highly regarded in the world of chamber music. Ms. Coleman has written numerous compositions for flute which are quickly becoming standard in the repertoire and increasingly featured on competition lists and college auditions. Among Coleman's many colorful compositions for flute, several evoke the landscape and music of South America, including the Argentine tango.

*Danza de la Mariposa* ("Dance of the Butterfly") for solo flute (2008) was inspired by the abundance of butterfly species located on the continent of South America. Rich, expressive, and colorful melodies composed of syncopated and compound rhythms depict the diverse array of butterflies "dancing" together, intertwining their paths. Just like the weaving butterflies, the fast and slow sections of the piece alternate, with the faster section developing into somewhat of an Argentine tango, and concluding with the original mood of the "Yaravi" melody. Additionally, Coleman's works *Requiem Milonga* for flute and piano and *Rojo Tango* for two flutes both embody elements of tango.

## PERFORMANCE APPLICATIONS

Much of what began as playing by ear, performing tango music is often an intuitive act that requires knowledge of how to interpret the score. It is up to the performer to be aware of these nuances and add his or her own artistic touches to bring the music to life. The following chapter will expand on different elements of music that will help flutists understand the tango style and general performance applications. With knowledge of traditional tango performance practices, these concepts can be applied from Piazzolla's flute works to modern tango–influenced compositions for flute.

### Rhythm

Recalling tango's origins as dance music, rhythm is arguably one of the most important aspects of performing this genre. Tango compositions often contain specific rhythmic phrasing patterns, frequently notated across bar lines. Piazzolla's syncopated rhythmic pattern 3-3-2, is a common pattern found across tango flute repertoire. Valerie Coleman's *Danza de la Mariposa* for solo flute demonstrates rhythmic elements of the Argentine tango with syncopated rhythms, alternating between triple and duple divisions of the beat, as seen in measures 15–26. By understanding these dance rhythms, players can achieve a better sense of the tango “groove,” which translates into a more captivating performance.

15 Presto (♩ = 144)

mf

19

24

p

Figure 1: Coleman, *Danza de la Mariposa* for solo flute, mm 15-28

#### Practice Tips:

- Figure out the rhythmic pattern(s) present in the music.
- Notate divisions of rhythmic patterns on your music by drawing triangles for groups of 3 and slashes for groups of two (shown above in figure 1).
- Practice emphasized notes only to feel the rhythmic pattern. This could be the first note of every group, or only accented notes.

#### Phrasing

Between all the scales, arpeggios, and embellishments present in tango music, there is often an underlying core melody. It can be difficult to distinguish, especially at a fast tempo or with a heavily ornamented piece. Finding this basic melody will inform players of the harmonic motion, which reveals to players where to add tension or relax the phrase. Awareness of the core melody will also be helpful if the performer plans on adding ornamentation on repeated melodic material. Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4* is a great example of how a tango piece can be seen down to its most basic melody (melodic notes circled in blue):

Figure 2: Piazzolla, *Tango-Etudes pour solo flûte, No. 4, mm 1-18*

Breath marks placed in unconventional places have the tendency to puzzle classical players, especially flutists and other woodwind players, since these breath marks are located in places where it is often not necessary to breathe. There are techniques, such as cropped note values, that *tangueros* employ intuitively that are not written in the score. Piazzolla's *Tango-Études* have hints at shortened note durations by notating breath marks between notes intended to be shorter than written. These passages are meant to be played slightly shorter than notated and with a slight decay. This allows for space between the notes to be heard and acknowledged. Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4* demonstrates this subtle effect in measures 17–20 and again in the recapitulation in measures 46–49 (shown in Figure 3).



Figure 3: Piazzolla, *Tango-Etudes pour solo flûte*, No. 4, mm 43-50.

*Practice Tips:*

- Eliminate ornamental gestures such as grace notes or chromatic sixteenth note figures to find core melodic material.
- If applicable, practice only the bass notes, only the first note of each group, etc. Often there is a hidden melody or harmonic movement!
- Practice core melody by itself to understand melodic and harmonic contour, then play again as written.

### Articulation

Articulation not only serves as an indication of when to separate certain notes and rhythms, but it is a means of musical expression. Articulation is as crucial to music as it is to speech, and in addition to adding animation and execution to musical passages, a more articulated approach can also produce a clearer texture in an ensemble setting. Additionally, repeated notes are abundant in tango music and have forward momentum which require the performer to adjust air and articulation accordingly. In short, the final choice of articulation depends on the particular mood of the work, the intervallic distance between notes and their grouping, individual taste of the performer, as well as the acoustical qualities of the performing venue. Christopher Caliendo's *Acariciame* for solo flute demonstrates the use of detailed articulations such as accents, marcatos, legatos, and staccatos (Figure 4). This specificity gives the musical line a “speaking quality” when executed properly.

Figure 4: *Caliendo, Acariciame* for solo flute, mm 9-21.

#### Practice Tips:

- Note where accents, articulations, and slurs are placed. Are they directly on the beat, or the off-beat?
- Pay attention to detail. Record yourself to see if your accents sound different than your marcato, for example.

### Tempi

Although tango music is generally characterized by a steady rhythmic pulse, it is equally defined by its rhythmic elasticity. Filled with cadence points and slight moments of *rallentando*, tango music presents the opportunity for performers to be free with the tempo in the appropriate places. For example, many of *Caliendo's* works for flute begin with a prelude followed by an *Allegro* movement, where the performer is expected to be rhythmically flexible much like a vocal recitative (the prelude is an instrumental musical genre known for its improvisatory nature). The opening of *Caliendo's La Primavera* exhibits variations of tempo, such as *accelerandos*, *arrastres* (dragging), and *cortes* (pauses). Additionally, Figure 6 indicates a “*poco a poco crescendo e accelerando*” in the arrangement of *Serebrier's Tango in Blue*. All aspects of tango music, such as cadences or melodic material, can imply the use of these tempo changes.

**Christopher Caliendo**

*Andante* *Meno mosso* *rit.* *molto rit.*

*f* *mf* *sfzp* *mf* *mp*

4 *Tempo primo* *accelerando* *cresc.* *mf* *mp*

*mp* *Allegro* *nostalgic & dream-like*

8 *mp*

Figure 5: Caliendo, *Acariciame* for solo flute, mm 9-21.

37 *Subito meno mosso* *poco a poco cresc. e accel. to Tempo I*

*più p passionato, sensual*

42 *(cresc. e accel.)*

47 *(cresc. e accel.)* *Poco più lento e lontano, dolente* *a tempo*

*p dolce* *gliss.* *p molto* *ff*

Figure 6: Serebrier, *Tango in Blue* for flute and piano, mm 37-50.

### Practice Tips:

- Performers should look for clues in the score such as the time signatures, tempo, and mood markings to determine the tempo of a tango.
- Approach the melodic line as if you were a singer. Where does the line go? If not already notated by the composer, where in the line do you think there is opportunity to stretch, drag, or pause?

### Other Enhancements: Tone color, Dynamics, and Vibrato

Although tango music is generally very rhythmic, there are still ways for flutists to achieve a more improvisatory effect by varying tone colors, vibrato, and dynamics. There is no consensus on what defines an ideal flute tone, but flutists can agree that tone color, dynamics, and vibrato can dramatically change the mood of a line or piece. Tango music is often associated with words and even when there aren't words, the music has a singing quality to it. Character changes, often changing every couple of measures, are very common in tango music. Keeping this in mind, flutists should choose a vibrato style to match the mood or dynamic level of a piece. In contemporary repertoire the flute oftentimes imitates other instruments, as demonstrated in Christopher Caliendo's *Acariciame*, where it imitates the guitar in the opening of the piece, as seen in measure 2 of Figure 7:

**Solo Flute**

## Acariciame

(dearest one) Christopher Caliendo

*Quasi rubato* ♩ = 66

Flute

2 *Tempo primo*

*f* *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

Figure 7: Caliendo, *Acariciame* for solo flute, mm 1–2.

Utilizing a variety of tone colors is essential to the style and sentiment of tango music. Flutists should choose tone colors according to dynamic level and mood markings, adjusting the speed of air and aperture to achieve said tone colors. Phrasing is often varied in the tango style and therefore dynamic contrast is as essential as tone color in that regard. Much like repeats in Baroque music, repeated melodic material presents the opportunity for a different dynamic than

before. If not already notated by the composer, performers can find the melodic contour of the piece and plan dynamics accordingly.

*Practice Tips:*

- Use a wide range of vibrato (from narrow to wide) to emphasize certain notes and arrivals.
- Which places in the music are better suited for gradual, terraced, or subito dynamic changes? Emphasizing these changes will add interest and color to the listener!

### Ornamentation

Encompassing an enormous variety of embellishments, ornamentation is an essential component to performing tango music. Knowing how to ornament in the appropriate places can provide performers a way to showcase their individual style and add interest for the audience. Similar to Baroque music, players usually embellish on the repeats and repeated material so as to not over-ornament to the point that the melody gets lost. Figure 8 shows the beginning of Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4*, which contains embellishments that are already written by the composer. These gestures are representative of the ornamental possibilities within the genre of tango.

Additional considerations include the tempo of the piece, the speed of the ornamental gesture, and the types of ornaments. Some examples of tango ornaments include: glissandos, mordents, neighbor tones, and pitch bends. Additionally, flutists may choose to incorporate flute extended techniques such as flute percussion, singing and playing, and or flutter tonguing, all which could be rendered in tango performances. It is often advantageous to ornament more in slower pieces and less in faster tempi. Faster pieces are better suited for simple ornaments like quick trills or grace notes, or ornaments that don't involve many notes (flutter tongue, pitch bend, sing and play, etc.).

Lento-Meditativo  
(Tempo ad lib.)

*p* *mf* *f* *pp* *p* *poco più mosso*

Figure 8: Piazzolla, *Tango-Etudes pour solo flûte*, No. 4, mm 1-23.

#### Practice Tips:

- Perform ornaments based on mood and tempo (for example: Allegro movement = faster trills and glissandos, Lento movement = slower or gradual trills and slower glissandos).
- Ornament on repeated melodic material, special cadence points, and parts of the music you want to emphasize. Avoid performing the same embellishments each time.

## CONCLUSION

The twentieth century marked a vibrant period in tango history, with Astor Piazzolla's compositions playing a key role in popularizing tango among classical flutists and musicians. While Piazzolla's works remain a cornerstone of the tango flute repertoire, contemporary composers such as José Serebrier, Christopher Caliendo, and Valerie Coleman have significantly expanded and enriched the tango flute genre with their contemporary compositions, continuing the flute's legacy within tango music. The flute's significant role in the evolution of tango informs flutists with historical background, cultural awareness, and practical performance applications for classical players. By embracing the unique language and stylistic elements of tango, flutists can enhance their interpretative skills, broaden their musical vocabulary, and connect with the vibrant traditions of this distinctive genre.

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## GLOSSARY

*arrastre*—to drag

*bandoneón*—An accordion-like instrument invented in the Black Forest of Germany in the 1830s, its original purpose was to replace the harmonium and intended for sacred music.

*bordello*— a brothel

*candombe*—style of music and dance that originated in Africa and brought to the new world by enslaved Africans. Still popular in certain parts of South America, especially Uruguay. Characterized by *cortes* (pauses) and *quebradas* (improvised movements).

*gaucho*—A nomadic cowboy of the mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century who wandered the South American plains (the pampas). Noted for their strength and agility, the gauchos lived outside the bounds of the law and are now celebrated folk heroes of Argentine culture and literature.

*habañera*—nineteenth century dance originating in modern day Havana, Cuba characterized by a slow 2/2 meter.

*milonga*—musical genre that originated in Rio de la Plata that was the precursor to the tango. Similar to the habañera but faster and with less pauses.

*orquesta típica*— tango ensemble consisting of strings, bandoneóns, and rhythm section (piano and string bass).

*payadores*—gaucho folk singers.

*porteño*—(feminine: *porteña*) name that refers to a resident of the port city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*pampas*—region in South America that extends across east Argentina, stretching as far as Uruguay and parts of Brazil. The pampas is a vast, low lying plain of fertile grasslands.

*Rio de la Plata*—name of the large estuary formed by the Uruguay and Paraná rivers. Both the cities of Buenos Aires, Argentina and Montevideo, Uruguay are situated on the Rio de la Plata, forming the border between the two countries.

*tango andaluz*—Mid-nineteenth century Spanish (specifically, Andalusian) variation of the

*habañera* better known as a popular song form rather than a dance.

*tanguero*—(feminine: *tanguera*) a person who is deeply passionate about tango music or history.

*tango nuevo*—genre of tango that incorporates new elements into traditional tango music.

## SUGGESTED TANGO REPERTOIRE LIST &amp; ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLUTE

## ALBÉNIZ, ISAAC

Tango	Flute and Piano
Prelude and Tango	Flute and Piano
Tango from España	Flute and Piano
(All arr. Bill Holcombe & Bill Holcombe, Jr.)	

## AGUIRRE, PABLO

Pasión ensordecadora	Flute and Piano
Sonata argentina “Pasión, esperanza, y gloria”	Flute and Piano
Sonata Tanguera No. 1 Buenos Aires en llamas	Flute and Piano
Sonata Tanguera No. 2 Buenos Aires renacer	Flute and Piano
Sonata Tanguera No. 4 Buenos Aires solitaria	Solo flute
Suite Tanguera	Solo flute
Trío	Solo flute
Tríptico argentino	Flute and piano

## BORNE, FRANÇOIS

Fantasie brillante sur “Carmen”	Flute and piano
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## CALIENDO, CHRISTOPHER

Acariciame	Solo flute Flute and guitar
Ardiente	Flute and guitar 2 flutes
Despiadado	Flute and guitar 2 flutes Flute, guitar, and cello Flute choir Wind quintet
El Conquistador	Flute and Piano Flute and guitar 2 flutes 2 flutes and guitar
Gli Amanti Segreti	Solo flute

	Flute and guitar 2 flutes and guitar
La Esgrimadora	Flute and guitar Flute choir Wind quintet
La Memoria	Flute and Guitar
La Milonga	Solo Flute Flute and Guitar Flute and Piano 2 flutes 2 flutes and guitar 2 flutes and piano Flute, clarinet, and cello Flute, guitar, and cello Flute, piano, and cello Flute, clarinet, guitar, and cello Flute, violin, viola, and cello 4 flutes Wind quintet Flute Choir
Las Fuentes del Romance	Flute and guitar
La Primavera	Solo flute Flute and Guitar Flute and Piano 2 flutes and guitar 2 flutes and piano Flute, guitar, and cello Flute, piano, and cello Flute choir Flute choir and 3 guitars Wind quintet
Siempre Domingo	Flute and guitar 2 flutes 2 flutes and guitar Flute, guitar, and cello 4 flutes Wind quintet
Tango Concerto No. 1	Flute and String Orchestra

I. Tango Andaluz	Solo flute Flute and piano Flute and guitar Flute, cello, and piano
II. Por Siempre Para Siempre	Flute and guitar Flute and piano Flute and bass flute 2 flutes 2 flutes and guitar Flute, alto saxophone, and piano
III. Torbellino	Flute and guitar Flute and piano Flute, guitar, and cello Flute, piano, and cello
Tango de los flamencos	Flute and guitar Flute, guitar, and cello
Tango Tarantella	Flute and guitar
Tristeza	Flute and guitar Flute and piano Flute and harp 2 flutes Flute, guitar, and cello Flute, piano, and cello Flute, viola, and harp
Ven a mis Brazos	Flute and guitar Flute and piano 2 flutes 2 flutes and guitar Flute, guitar, and cello 4 flutes Flute choir Wind quintet
COLEMAN, VALERIE	
Danza de la Mariposa	Solo flute
Roja Tango	2 flutes
Requiem Milonga	Flute and piano
COLL, XAVIER	
Tango y Chacarera	Flute and guitar

COREA, CHICK Spain	Flute and alto saxophone
DORFF, DANIEL It Takes Four to Tango	4 flutes
GINASTERA, ALBERTO Duo op. 13 Impressions of Puna	Flute and oboe Flute, 2 violins, viola, and cello
GADE, JACOB THUNE HANSEN Tango Fantasia Tango Jalousie (arr. Bjarne Kristensen) Tango Jalousie (arr. Stig Jørgensen)	Flute and piano Flute and guitar Wind quintet
HOFMEYR, HENDRIK It Takes Two...two tangos	Flute, cello, and piano
HORSLEY, GRANT Jacaranda- Tango Duet El Choclo-another duet Tango for flute choir	Flute and piano
KAHKONEN, GAY Tangoed Up	Solo flute
KALKE, ERNST-THILO Tango, Mambo, et cetera Tango, Mambo, et cetera	4 flutes Wind quintet
KUTNOWSKI, M. 12 Etudes in the key of Tango	Solo flute
MEWS, DOUGLAS Tango Fantastique	Solo Flute
NØRGÅRD, PER Esparanza, "Tango del paguro" (arr. Niels Rosing-Schow)	Flute, bass clarinet, bassoon, trumpet in C, harp, bandoneon (or accordion) violin, viola, cello
PIAZZOLLA, ASTOR Tango Etudes Histoire du Tango for flute and guitar Le Grand Tango	Solo flute Flute and guitar Flute and guitar Flute, viola, and guitar

SEREBRIER, JOSÉ

At dusk, in shadows

Tango in Blue

Flute Concerto with Tango

Wind quintet

Solo flute

Flute and piano

Flute and orchestra

Flute and piano

VOLGAR

Bird Tango

3 piccolos and piano

COLLECTIONS

A Little Tango in Her Blood Music from Argentina

(arr. and edited by Alison Young)

Flute and piano

Argentinian Tango and Folk Tunes for Flute

(41 Traditional Pieces by Ros Stephen)

Collection contains pieces for

solo flute, 2 flutes, and mp3

Accompaniment has option to play

Along with guitar or bandoneón

## LECTURE RECITAL SCRIPT

Link to recital recording: <https://youtu.be/IRZp6Ruvyqg>

Friday, March 21, 2025

Edge Recital Hall

Hugh Hodgson School of Music

**PLAY TANGO ETUDE #3****SLIDE 1**

**WELCOME:** Thank you all for coming tonight. The piece you just heard was Astor Piazzolla's Tango Etude No. 3. The twentieth century was an exciting time in tango history. Piazzolla's flute compositions played a role in tango's rise in popularity among classical flutists and musicians. Although we are fortunate to play pieces for flute by Piazzolla himself, there are a handful of contemporary composers who have followed in his footsteps, contributing significantly to the tango flute repertoire. This project is devoted to discussing the flute's role in the history of tango and highlighting modern composers who infuse the Argentine tango tradition into their compositions for flute. Additionally, my final document provides practical performance applications and a suggested repertoire list of tango-inspired works for flute (which can be found in your handout). I am excited to share this program with you all, so without further ado, let us begin.

**SLIDE 2**

**INTRODUCTION:** Argentina is the birthplace of tango. While it is often associated with a sensuous national dance style, *tango* is actually a complete art form in and of itself combining music, dance, and poetry. Tango has evolved considerably since its conception, and thanks in part to Piazzolla's compositions, the Argentine musical phenomenon has spread far and wide among audiences across the world.

As most flute players are familiar with Piazzolla's *6 Tango-Études* and *Histoire du Tango*, this presentation will feature lesser-known tango composers and their contributions to the modern flute repertoire. Because the language of tango is rarely notated on the score and is often a style foreign to classically trained musicians, this presentation will lend practical suggestions for performance, and a suggested repertoire list of several compositions and arrangements that are readily available for flutists like you to study and incorporate into your concert programs.

**SLIDE 3**

**THE ORIGINS OF TANGO:** To fully understand tango music, it's first necessary to understand Argentina's rich cultural history. The groundwork for tango can be traced all the way back to the 16th century and encompasses European, African, and gaucho cultures. Over time, the fusion of multiple cultural influences led to the creation of the artistic medium we recognize today.

The story of tango begins with the influx of people who immigrated to the new world. The city we know today as Buenos Aires was an underappreciated corner of the Spanish empire before its new world discovery in 1536. It remained distant and sparsely populated for the next three hundred years. Beginning in the late 18th century, this vast territory (situated on a large stretch of grassland known as the *Pampas*) would soon be recognized for its agricultural, industrial, and economic potential. Around this time, Argentina's new immigration policy attracted European immigrants and welcomed them through the country's newly constructed port in the city of Buenos Aires. With its population rapidly growing and the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Buenos Aires quickly became a melting pot of diverse cultural and musical traditions.

Before the 19 century, most of the music in Argentina consisted of gaucho folk singers accompanied by guitar. Around 1816, European traditions began appearing in Argentina, such as the waltz, polka, mazurka, and by the middle of the century, the *habañera*. This popular Spanish–Cuban dance was one of the primary influences on the emergence of tango and originated in early 19th century Havana, Cuba, when Spanish colonists imparted their musical and dance traditions onto the people, who were mostly enslaved people of West African descent. The *habañera* was a fusion of two styles, the first of which evolved from the Spanish *contradanza*, and secondly, by the dance rhythms of Cuba's enslaved African population. *Habañera's* popularity became widespread in both Argentina and Europe, where it traveled across the Atlantic to Spain and eventually piqued the interest of classical composers such as Georges Bizet, best known for his opera *Carmen* (1875).

The word *tango* is suspected to be African or Portuguese in origin and was first brought to Argentina as a result of the slave trade. Eventually, the word *tango* took on the meaning of a place where enslaved or free Africans congregated to dance. It was the association with African influences that the tango arrived in Spain, after traveling from the new world back to Europe.

The *habañera*, already a mix of traditions, fused with two other genres: *candombe* rhythms and the *milonga*. *Candombe* dance rhythms originated in Africa and were brought to the new world by the enslaved Angolan and Congolese population. The genre is still popular today in certain parts of South America and is characterized by *cortes* (or pauses) and *quebradas* (or improvised movements). *Milonga* originated as a fast, rhythmic, rural song–form in the Pampas, which was occupied by indigenous people and gauchos (which is a South American nomadic cowboy). Dance steps were added in the late 19th century, which were heavily shaped by the *habañera* and the Polish mazurka. Furthermore, Italian immigrants made up 49 percent of the region's population and their music contributed to the development of the tango. This fusion between the *habañera*, the

milonga, and the various musical influences brought by immigrants eventually morphed into what we know as the tango.

The habañera began to fall out of fashion in the late-19th century, making the conditions just right for the tango to emerge. Immigrants who left the familiarity of their homelands for the port city of Buenos Aires were forced to adjust to city life, and did so by congregating in *bordellos* (or brothels) for amusement and musical entertainment. People imitated the sounds of whatever music they heard, thus paving the way for the beginnings of tango music as an independent genre. It was through these continuous interchanges between Europe and the Americas that the tango was able to emerge.

The original tango ensemble was a small trio called an *orquesta típica* which was composed of instruments such as the violin, flute, clarinet, guitar, and bandoneón. These instruments were easily transported to and from the bordellos, as musicians often had more than one gig per night, or even at times had to flee if a fight broke out. One instrument in particular, the *bandoneón*, was crucial in the development of tango, as its characteristic textures and timbre contributed to the unique tango sound. The bandoneon is an accordion-like instrument invented in the Black Forest of Germany in the 1830s and was intended for sacred music. When it was imported to Argentina, the bandoneón quickly lost its sacred connotations, as it was increasingly played in the bordellos.

Comparable to the rise of jazz in North America, tango arose as a result of syncretism between musical cultures from different continents and traditions, and was not always socially accepted due to prevalent racism and the “indecent” brothels where this music and dancing was taking place. Eventually tango became accepted among the populace as a symbol of Argentine identity and culture, making it one of Argentina’s most distinctive art forms.

#### **SLIDE 4**

**ASTOR PIAZZOLLA: A GLIMPSE OF HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCE:** The individual responsible for the revitalization of the tango was performer, composer, and bandleader Astor Piazzolla. He was born on March 11, 1921 to Italian immigrants in the village of Mar del Plata, Argentina. Piazzolla was four years old when his parents decided to immigrate to the US, where they lived in New York City. He grew up in a melting pot of a neighborhood among varied musical and cultural influences. Most notably, it was during his childhood that Piazzolla was introduced to the bandoneon after his father gifted him one at age eight. This moment was the start of what would become a long and illustrious musical career for Piazzolla.

Throughout the 1930s, Piazzolla’s family moved back and forth between Argentina and New York, hoping to find success and financial stability during the Great Depression. In his early years, Piazzolla didn’t show much interest in tango, but was inspired by the sounds of New York, which included jazz in Harlem and classical music heard from his next door neighbor, who turned out to be a student of Rachmaninoff. Piazzolla was completely enamoured by the neighbor’s playing, particularly the music of Bach. Later, Piazzolla recalled “I fell in love with Bach, I went crazy.” This new world of

classical music captivated Piazzolla and along with jazz, became a lifelong musical influence for his compositions.

The 1930s kicked off tango's golden age as well as Piazzolla's eventual interest in tango music. The population of Buenos Aires grew to 2.5 million and at the time was the largest city South of the equator. Upon his return to Argentina, Piazzolla attempted to pursue opportunities with several *orquesta típicas* in Mar del Plata, but it became clear that Piazzolla would get the experience and employment he needed in the big city.

By the early 1950's, Piazzolla became more focused on classical composition. In 1953, he won first prize in a competition that included a year-long scholarship sponsored by the French government, so Piazzolla and his wife Dedé took the opportunity to live in Paris, where Piazzolla began his studies with the world renowned pedagogue, Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger thought that Piazzolla's classical pieces were well-composed, but lacked a sense of feeling. Boulanger asked Piazzolla to perform one of his tangos for her and when she gave him the infamous feedback: "*This is Piazzolla! Don't ever leave it!*", it was clear that Piazzolla's strength lay in tango music, the bandoneón, and being an artistic leader.

The rest of Piazzolla's career was defined by his experimentation in *tango nuevo*, much to the disappointment of tango traditionalists. His modernizations to the tango genre included complex rhythms, contemporary harmonies, and elements of counterpoint. By the 1970s and 80s, his new style of tango began to gain more appreciation among the general public in Argentina. His music had already become a sensation in other parts of the world, such as the US and Europe. It was during this later period of Piazzolla's career that he wrote his acclaimed and influential compositions for flute.

## SLIDE 5

**THE FLUTE AND TANGO:** Although the flute was commonplace among the original *orquesta típicas*, it was left behind once the tango entered its Golden Age (approximately 1930–1950). The flute enjoyed immense popularity in tango ensembles roughly between 1905–1920, and its tone was ideal for playing the melodic line. In 1911, tango made its debut in Paris where tango clubs began to appear across the city. With its somewhat lewd beginnings in the slums of Buenos Aires, the Parisian middle and upper classes welcomed the tango, associating it more as “exotic art music” rather than “bordello music.” As tango attained more and more adoration, larger and louder orchestras became necessary in the tango clubs. The flute was simply unable to project at the volume necessary in those environments, eventually leading to the bandoneón assuming the melodic role and leaving the flute behind.

The flute was not added back to tango until much later in the twentieth century. Towards the end of his life, Piazzolla composed two works for flute: *Histoire du Tango* scored for flute and guitar and *Tango Etudes for Solo Flute*. A 2010 interview shines light on possible reasons why Piazzolla chose to compose these pieces for flute specifically. Supposedly Piazzolla chose the flute to promote his music due to its worldwide prevalence and popularity, and wished to carry his legacy of tango to other instruments.

Both of his flute compositions remain popular tango standards among professional musicians and amateurs alike in the western flute canon.

### **SLIDE 6**

#### **BEYOND PIAZZOLLA: CONTEMPORARY TANGO WORKS FOR FLUTE:**

José Serebrier, Christopher Caliendo, and Valerie Coleman have each made significant contributions to the flute's repertoire, and have cleverly woven the influence of tango into their flute pieces in their own unique style of composition.

José Serebrier was born December 3, 1938 in Montevideo, Uruguay. A Grammy award winning conductor and composer, Serebrier is one of the world's most widely recorded maestros. In addition to being a world-renowned artist, Serebrier has made astounding contributions to the modern flute repertoire. His "Flute Concerto with Tango" is virtuosic and modern and evokes the nostalgic aura of the tango. Additionally, his orchestral works, such as *Tango in Blue*, and *Almost a Tango*, have been transcribed for flute and piano, further expanding the flute tango repertoire. Similar to Piazzolla, Serebrier has successfully blended the tango with twentieth century compositional techniques, with Serebrier's compositions mostly falling within the limitations of classical instrumentations. Nonetheless, elements of tango can be heard throughout Serebrier's works.

American guitarist, composer, conductor, and publisher, Christopher Caliendo was born in 1959 in Queens, NY. Caliendo is noted for his unique compositional style representative of genres such as classical, jazz, folk, tango, and many more. Caliendo is well known in the flute world for his many solo and chamber compositions and launched Caliendo Music Publishing in 1995 in part to fill a gap in the flute publishing world by selling his original tango music and arrangements for flute and guitar. Several of his works are heavily influenced by tango, containing rhythmic elements of the habañera, virtuosic Piazzolla-esque articulations, and feelings of passion and nostalgia. There are over eighty arrangements of Caliendo's tango flute works written for flutes and various instrumental ensembles, making his music flexible for a variety of instrumentations.

Trailblazing flutist and composer, Valerie Coleman, has risen to fame in today's classical music scene. Born September 3, 1970 in Louisville Kentucky, Ms. Coleman founded the woodwind quintet the *Imani Winds* and is highly regarded in the world of chamber music. Ms. Coleman has written numerous compositions for flute which are quickly becoming standard in the repertoire and increasingly featured on competition lists and college auditions. Among Coleman's many colorful compositions for flute, several evoke the landscape and music of South America, including the Argentine tango.

### **SLIDE 7**

**PERFORMANCE APPLICATIONS:** Much of what began as playing by ear, performing tango music is often an intuitive act that requires knowledge of how to interpret the score. It is up to the performer to be aware of these nuances and add his or

her own artistic touches to bring the music to life. The following portion of this presentation will expand on different elements of music that will help flutists understand the tango style and general performance practices. With knowledge of traditional tango performance practices, these concepts can be applied from Piazzolla's flute works to modern tango-influenced compositions for flute.

The first element we're going to explore is **Rhythm**. Recalling tango's origins as dance music, rhythm is arguably one of the most important aspects of performing the tango style. Tango compositions often contain specific rhythmic phrasing patterns, frequently notated across bar lines. Piazzolla's syncopated rhythmic pattern 3-3-2, is a common pattern found across tango flute repertoire. Valerie Coleman's *Danza de la Mariposa* for solo flute demonstrates rhythmic elements of the Argentine tango with syncopated rhythms, alternating between triple and duple divisions of the beat, as seen in measures 15–26.

### SHOW EXCERPT

By understanding these dance rhythms, players can achieve a better sense of the tango “groove,” which translates into a more captivating performance. Some helpful practice tips include:

- Figure out the rhythmic pattern or patterns present in the music.
- Notate divisions of patterns by drawing triangles for groups of 3 and slashes for groups of two.
- Practice accented notes to feel the rhythmic pattern. This could be the first note of every group, or simply all the accented notes.

### SLIDE 8

The next topic is **Phrasing**. Between all the scales, arpeggios, and leaps, there is often an underlying core melody. It can be difficult to distinguish, especially at a fast tempo or with a heavily ornamented piece. Finding this basic melody will inform players of the harmonic motion, which reveals to players where to add tension or relax the phrase. Awareness of the core melody will also be helpful if the performer plans on adding embellishment on repeated melodic material. Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4* is a great example of how a tango piece can be seen down to its most basic melody, as shown by the notes circled in blue.

### PLAY mm 1-11 EXCERPT (OUTLINE NOTES ONLY, THEN AS WRITTEN)

Also, breath marks placed in unconventional places have the tendency to puzzle classical players, especially flutists and other woodwind players, since these breath marks are located in places where it is often not necessary to breathe. Piazzolla's *Tango-Etudes* have hints at shortened note durations by notating breath marks between notes intended to be shorter than written. These passages are meant to be played slightly shorter than notated and with a decay. This is to allow for space between the notes to be heard and acknowledged. Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4* demonstrates this subtle effect in measures 17–20 and again in the recapitulation in measures 46–49.

### PLAY EXCERPT (last 5 measures)

Practice tips:

- Eliminate ornamental gestures such as grace notes or chromatic sixteenth note figures to find core melodic material.
- Practice core melody by itself to understand melodic and harmonic contour, then play again as written.

## SLIDE 9

**Articulation:** Possibly just as essential as rhythm, articulation not only serves as an indication of when to separate certain notes and rhythms, but it is a means of musical expression in and of itself. Articulation is as crucial to music as it is to speech, and in addition to adding animation and execution to musical passages, a more articulated approach can also produce a clearer texture in an ensemble setting. Additionally, repeated notes are abundant in tango music and have forward momentum which require the performer to adjust air and articulation accordingly. Christopher Caliendo's *Acariciame* for solo flute demonstrates the use of detailed articulations such as accents, marcatos, legatos, and staccatos. This specificity gives the musical line a "speaking quality" when executed properly, an example of which can be seen in this example.

### POINT TO ARTICULATION ON SLIDESHOW

*Practice Tips:*

- Notice where accents, articulations, and slurs are placed. Are they directly on the beat, or the off-beat?
- Pay attention to detail. Record yourself to see if your accents sound different than your marcatos, for example.

## SLIDE 10

**Tempi:** Although tango music is generally characterized by a steady rhythmic pulse, it is equally defined by its rhythmic elasticity. Filled with cadence points and slight moments of *rallentando*, tango music presents the opportunity for performers to be free with the tempo in the appropriate places. For example, many of Caliendo's works for flute begin with a prelude followed by an *Allegro* movement, where the performer is expected to be rhythmically flexible much like a vocal recitative. The opening of Caliendo's *La Primavera* exhibits variations of tempo, such as *accelerandos*, *arrastres* (dragging), and *cortes* (pauses). Additionally, the example shown indicates a "poco a poco crescendo e *accelerando*" in the arrangement of Serebrier's *Tango in Blue*. All aspects of tango music, such as cadences or melodic material, can imply the use of these tempo changes. Practice tips include:

- Performers should look for clues in the score such as the time signatures, tempo, and mood markings to determine the tempo of a tango.
- Approach the melodic line as if you were a singer. Where in the line do you think there is opportunity to stretch, drag, or pause?

**SLIDE 11**

**Other Enhancements: Tone color, Dynamics, and Vibrato:** Although tango music is generally very rhythmic, there are still ways for flutists to achieve a more improvisatory effect by varying tone colors, vibrato, and dynamics. Tango music is often associated with words and even when there aren't words, the music has a singing quality. Character changes, often changing every couple of measures, are very common in tango music. Keeping this in mind, flutists should choose a vibrato style to match the mood or dynamic level of a piece. In contemporary repertoire the flute oftentimes imitates other instruments, as demonstrated in Christopher Caliendo's *Acariciame*, where it imitates the guitar in the opening of the piece, as seen in the example on the screen.

Utilizing a variety of tone colors is essential to the style and sentiment of tango music. Flutists should choose tone colors according to dynamic level and mood markings, adjusting the speed of air and aperture to achieve said tone colors. Phrasing is often varied in the tango style and therefore dynamic contrast is as essential as tone color in that regard. Much like repeats in Baroque music, repeated melodic material presents the opportunity for a different dynamic than before. If not already notated by the composer, performers can find the melodic contour of the piece and plan dynamics accordingly.

*Practice Tips:*

- Use a wide range of vibrato (from narrow to wide) to emphasize certain notes and arrivals.
- Which places in the music are better suited for gradual, terraced, or subito dynamic changes? Emphasizing these changes will add interest and color to the listener!

**SLIDE 12**

**Ornamentation:** Ornamentation is an essential component to performing tango music. Knowing how to ornament in the appropriate places can provide performers a way to showcase their individual style and add interest for the audience. Similar to Baroque music, players usually embellish on the repeats and repeated material so as to not over-ornament to the point that the melody gets lost. The beginning of Piazzolla's *Tango Etude No. 4*, which contains embellishments that are already written by the composer. These gestures are representative of the ornamental possibilities within the genre of tango.

Additional considerations include the tempo of the piece, the speed of the ornamental gesture, and the types of ornaments. Some examples of tango ornaments include: glissandos, mordents, neighbor tones, pitch bends, flutter tongue, and sing and play, all which could be rendered in tango performances. It is often advantageous to ornament more in slower pieces and less in faster tempi. Faster pieces are better suited for simple ornaments like quick trills or grace notes, or ornaments that don't involve many notes (flutter tongue, pitch bend, sing and play, etc.).

**Conclusion:** The twentieth century marked a vibrant period in tango history, with Piazzolla's compositions playing a key role in popularizing tango among classical flutists and musicians. While Piazzolla's works remain a cornerstone of the tango flute repertoire, contemporary composers have continued to expand and enrich the genre. The flute's significant role in the evolution of tango informs flutists with historical background, cultural awareness, and practical performance applications for classical players. By embracing the unique language and stylistic elements of tango, flutists can enhance their interpretative skills, broaden their musical vocabulary, and connect with the vibrant traditions of this distinctive genre.

### **SLIDE 13**

### **Bibliography**

### **Thank you slide**

### **PLAYING PORTION OF RECITAL**

**CLOSING REMARKS:** I want to thank all of you for coming out this afternoon. It is an honor to have to share this music and research with you all. I feel lucky to have these wonderful pieces in our flute repertoire and I hope you look into including them into your future performances. Thank you.