

Homer & Cristina's Tango DJ Workshop

Special Perth Tango Club focus on:

“How to attract and retain your
experienced dancers!”

v11_2010

- **ToTANGO DJ FORUM - Alex Krebs photo: Alex at the Oregon Coast**

- **Alex, from Portland, Oregon,**
- **explains the DJ's task in mytho poetic form:**
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- **In the beginning there was only darkness and chaos.**
- **DJ's played one full CD after another -**
- **Recklessly, relentlessly...**
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- **On the first day God created "El Compas."**
- **El Compas reigned the earth and heavens,**
- **With DeCaro, Canaro, D'Arienzo, and Donato at his**
- **side,**
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- **...Drawing in dancers from far and wide and asking**
- **them,**
- **Begging them to follow the Way.**
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- **On the second day God created The Flow.**
- **The Flow soothed the beast-like savageness of El**
- **Compas, with Beron, Demare, Campos, and Los Angeles, Together with El Compas the**
- **heavens and earth were shared.**
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- **On the third day God created El Duende. El Duende put the fire in the eyes of the musicians**
- **and dancers, and together with Pugliese and Piazzolla at his side, this divine union struck**
- **passion into the hearts of all beings which crossed their path.**
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- **On the fourth day God created Tandas. Tandas created an order in the heavens and on earth**
- **By which El Compas, The Flow, and El Duende could share in their ruling of the universe.**
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- **On the fifth day God made, in his image, the DJ by which his knowledge could be spread**
- **through the milongas.**
-

- **But one angel was exiled from the heavens and now roams the milongas, offering**
- **the forbidden fruit, which by with a single bite returns the order that God created**
- **Back into the depths of a fiery, arhythmic, chaotic hell in which dancers must suffer under**
- **the hand of a tempted DJ. Beware, for the forces of good and evil are among us.**
- **On every floor, in every part of the world the fallen angel lurks and tempts, but it is up to**
- **each one of us mortals to take The Path, That God has generously offered us.**



DJ Workshop Overview

Presentation: 30 minutes

- Transparency
- Consistency
- The Art and Skill of DJ'ing
- DJ Evaluation Techniques

Discussion:

- Question & Answer Period (30 minutes)
- 2 Focus Groups (30 minutes each)

Summary & Concluding Remarks

Tango DJ Transparency (1/3): Define Theme

- A “**Standard**” event will have mostly consistent music selections, tanda structure (with or without cortinas), flow, & dj style.
- An “**Experimental**” event will have loose or no structure wrt music, tandas (i.e. random sizes & on/off use of cortinas), flow, & dj style.
- Other examples are “**Mostly Standard**”, “**Half Experimental**”, etc.
- **Note that most experienced social dancers prefer a “Standard” event but sometimes getting “Experimental” can be fun.** The key is proper promotion of your event theme and music mix (see next slide).
- **Two Quick DJ Stories...**(from experimental to mostly standard)
 - Homer’s **First DJ Gig** at The Shoebox Tango Club (1999)
 - The **Year of Enlightenment** & The Alex Krebs All-Nighter CD’s (2001)

Tango DJ Transparency (2/2): Define Music Mix

- **Traditional** (1920's thru 1940's with few exceptions, i.e. late Di Sarli)
- **Alternative** examples include:
 - Tangos just beyond traditional years 1950's – 80's
(**late D'Arienzo, late Pugliese, Miguel Villaboas**)
 - Tangos from less popular or lesser know traditional groups
(**Orchestra Brunswick, Ciriaco Ortiz Trio**)
 - **Rodriguez Fox-Trot-Tangos** (make a fun alt-milonga set)
 - **Hugo Diaz**
 - **Astor Piazzolla** (from any decade) and anything in this style
 - Contemporary Tango Orchestras that play in a Golden Age style
(**Sexteto Milonguero, Los Tuba Tangos, Sexteto Mayor, Color Tango**)
 - Tango Fusion Groups (**Gotan Project, Bajofondo, Otros Aires**)
 - Other World Music (**Goran Bregovic, Leonard Cohen, Lhasa, Kevin Johansen, Tom Waits,**)
- **Define your music ratio** and make it public (i.e. 70/30 traditional/alternative).
 - If in addition your theme is experimental (in-part or in-full) let folks know ahead of time (i.e. 70/30 mix in a mostly standard format with a twist of experimental flow)

The **CELLspace alt Milonga** story in brief (2003)

- **July 9th, 2003** – First DJ'ed Event (Homer)
 - 5 song experimental tandas in consistent flow (repeated for entire night)
 - Traditional tango
 - Contemporary tango
 - Tango Fusion
 - World Music
 - Something really out there (movie theme, Classical, punk rock, etc)
 - Big party, folks enjoyed it, but realized a change was necessary since the energy was too crazy and many folks just hanging out.
- **July 16th, 2003** – Second DJ'ed Event (Homer)
 - Consistent tandas
 - 1/3 traditional, 1/3 contemporary, 1/3 Tango Fusion + World Music
- **2009 to Present** – Latest Iteration:
 - dj coordinator, 15 dj's, surveys, self-evaluations, pier review, dj breakfasts
 - **50/50 mix** (1 traditional tanda, 1 alternative tanda) in mostly TTVTTM flow pattern but sometimes divert to TTVTM or TVTM as needed to keep energy up and trad/alt things glued together.

Consistent Tanda Construction

- **Most Common Tanda Lengths:**
 - Traditional **Tangos** (4 songs)
 - 3 songs only for beginners, short nights, and very special cases
 - 5 or 6 songs only in extremely well crafted “Super Tanda” cases
 - Traditional **Vals** or **Milonga** set (3 songs, 4 in rare cases)
 - **Late Pugliese & Other Contemporary Tango** Orchestras (3 songs)
 - **Alternative** Sets (2 to 4 songs but average set length is 3 songs)
 - As a **GENERAL RULE** try to keep tandas between 8 and 15 minutes long **with 10 to 12 minutes being the Preferred Universal Average** for all traditional and many alternative tango sets.

Consistent Cortina Usage

- **Cortina function**
(clear floor, palette cleanser, talk time, rest time)
- **Cortina Lengths** average 25s to 45s but can be longer (2 min)
- Some alt songs have **built in cortinas**
(Celos by Gotan Project, Siempre Me Quedara by Bebe)
- Some communities (Berlin, Nijmegen), DJs (UK's Michael Lavocah), or events (practicas) **Don't Use** (or prefer not to use) **Cortinas**
- **Currently**, I like to use cortinas even in group practica or solo/partner practice situation (but may keep it short, 15s to 30s). Sometimes I experiment with built in cortina usage, especially with an alternative event.
- As a **GENERAL RULE** most experienced dancers still **rely on** and **prefer** to have **cortinas** in-between sets (even if songs have a built in cortina).

Consistent Tanda Flow

- Tanda Definitions: T=Tango, V=Vals, M=Milonga, A=Alternative
- Most Common Flows
 - **TTVTTM** (most **universally accepted flow** pattern for 4+ hours)
 - **TVTM** (mainly for **short (<2 hrs) events, practicas**, etc)
 - **TTVTM** or **TVTTM** (keeps energy for med. length events, ~3hrs)
 - If dj'ing **alternative**, **substitute** one traditional set with one alternative set **but keep the flow (i.e. TTVTAM)**!
- For 3hr or longer events
 - Recommend to start with TTVTTM and deviate only if needed, cutting out one T set to improve energy and flow.
 - Some DJ's prefer not to play T or V sets 30 minutes to 45 minutes prior to the end of the night (depending on how late the event goes, especially for all-nighters).

Categorical DJ “Song-Type” Definitions:

- **Power Songs - Best of the Best** (See following slide for examples)
- **A List - Most commonly played and universally accepted good songs.**
- Traditionally these are songs from the "Big 8" orchestras: Osvaldo Pugliese, Carlos Di Sarli, Francisco Canaro, Angel Vargas/Angel D'Agostino, Ricardo Tanturi, Miguel Caló, Juan D'Arienzo, and Anibal Troilo, but also include Rodolfo Biagi, Edgardo Donato, Francisco Lomuto, Lucio Demare, Pedro Launenz, OTV, Adolfo Carabelli, Ricardo Malerba, Miguel Calo, Enrique Rodriguez, etc. (See following slide for examples)
- **B List**
 - Less commonly played but have plenty of dance merit
 - (i.e. “Agua Serena - 29” & “No Es Pa’ Tanto - 32” by Edgardo Donato)
 - Sometimes B-List songs become A-List songs over time...
- **C List** – These are your “**Jinx**” songs. In general **Do Not Play!!!**
 - includes poorly recorded traditional songs, many symphonic post-Golden Age tangos, usually where singer is the “Star”, alternative music that is too fast, too slow, or too dynamically crazy, Ballroom tango, etc.

Example A-List & Power (P) Songs

Juan D'arienzo

Nada Mas (P, Echague)
La Bruja (P, Echague)
Lagrimas y Sonrisas (P, vals instr)
No Mientas (Echague)
La Payanca (instr)
El Flete (instr)
Milonga Viega Milonga (milonga instr)
Olvidame (Echague)
Ansiedad (Echague)

Edgardo Donato

La Medolia Del Corazon (P, Gavio)
Sinsobar (Morales & Lagos)
Ella Es Asi (P, milonga, Lagos)
El Acomodo (instr)
Sinfonia De Arrabal (Morales, Gavio)

Carlos Di Sarli

Nido Gaucho (P, Podesta)
Indio Manso (P, instr)
No Esta (P, Podesta)
Corazon (P, Rufino)
A La Gran Muneca (P, instr)
Nada (P, Podesta)
Junto a tu Corazon (P, Podesta)
La Capilla Blanca (P, Podesta)
En un Beso...La Vida (P, Rufino)

Miguel Calo

Bajo Un Cielo De Estrellas
(P, vals, Podesta)
Que te Importa Que te Lore (P, Beron)

Francisco Canaro

Milonga Sentimental (Fama&Ramos)
El Adios (Maida)
Poema (P, Maida)
Corazon de Oro (P, vals instr)
Cuartito Azul (Amor)
La Melodia de Nuestro Adios (instr)
Copa de Ajenjo (Amor)
Charlemos (Fama)
Desde el Alma (P, vals, instr & Omar)

Enrique Rodriguez con Moreno

No se porque razon (P)
Tengo Mil Novias (vals)
Llarar Por Una Mujer (P)

More Traditional Orchestra and some Alternative Group Examples:

Additional Traditional Orchestras with many A-List songs:

Anibal Troilo

Lucio Demare

Ricardo Tanturi

Francisco Lomuto

Ochestra Tipica Victor

Adolfo Carabelli

Rodolfo Biagi

Osvaldo Pugliese

Osvaldo Fresedo

Pedro Laurenz

Ricardo Malerba

Angel D'Agostino

Some Examples of Alternative Groups with A-List songs:

Gotan Project

Bajofondo

Otros Aires

Goran Bregovic

Astor Piazzolla

Tom Waits

Lhasa

Kevin Johansen

Jason Mraz

Yann Tiersen

Also see Sharna Fabiano's Neo Tango list ([link to online site in end notes](#))

The Art and Skill of DJ'ing 1/5

Detailed Tanda Construction: Advice

- **Use mostly (50% or more) A-list songs**
 - **Never Start** your Tanda **with a B-List** song
 - 3rd song position in 4 song set can be B-list (good location)
 - 2nd or 3rd song position in 3 song set is a good location for B-list
- Include a **Power Song** at least every 3rd tanda, but recommend at least **every other tanda**
 - Start or Finish with Power Song
 - Usually use 1 Power Song per set but some Power Sets can have 2 or more Power Songs, especially near event climax.
- I like to space shorter songs in-between longer songs.
- I like to start my tandas with a long song, if possible, since it gives folks time to enter dance floor and enjoy song before it ends.
- Note that “sometimes” playing a song at the right time in the right song order changes it’s rating from C List to B List or better...

The Art and Skill of DJ'ing 2/5

Detailed Tanda Construction: Advice Continued

- Try to **keep lyrical sets with the same singer**, especially when you have many choices (i.e. don't mix Rufino with Podesta in Di Sarli sets).
- It's ok to **space lyrical songs** with **instrumental** songs sometimes!
 - 3rd song position in 4 song set can be a good location for this!
 - Also this technique blends different singers together if necessary
- **Be Careful** not to mix traditional orchestra decades **unless** “sound” and recording quality is similar.
- **Most experienced dancers like lyrical, but still rhythmic, sets**
 - Pepper mix with instrumental sets in-between 2 or 3 lyrical ones
 - Don't play too many instrumental sets (Traditional or Alternative)
- Try to understand a few of the lyrics or get a few translations
 - Some songs are difficult to play once you know their meaning
 - i.e. “El Panuelito” (Love Obsessed Man w/ Handkerchief Fetish)

The Art and Skill of DJ'ing 3/5

Detailed Tanda Construction: Perth Examples

Carlos Di Sarli w/ Rufino (tango)

1. Tristeza Marina - 3:08
2. En un Beso...La Vida - 2:26
3. La Pasao Paso - 2:25
4. Corazon (P) - 2:47

Rodolfo Biagi (mixed tango)

1. Racing Club (P, Instr.) – 3:09
2. Son Cosas del Bandoneon (Falgas) – 2:44
3. El Recodo (almost P, Instr.) – 2:25
4. Todo Te Nombra (Ortiz) – 3:32

Francisco Canaro (mixed vals)

1. Corazon De Oro (P, Instr.) – 3:20
2. El La Noche Azul (Amor) – 2:25
3. Tormenta En El Alma (lesser known but beautiful B side, duet with Fama-Mores) – 2:37

Alternative (Tango Rhythmic/almost Milonga mixed set)

1. Tango in Harlem (Touch & Go) – 3:26 Popular A-List Power Song
2. Narigon (Melingo) – 3:08 Popular A-List Old School Alternative*
3. Lemon Tree (Fool's Garden) – 3:11 Popular B-List song (A-List in some communities)

*Note: “**Old School Alternative**” refers to the original 80's and 90's alternative songs that have now become alternative dj “standards”.

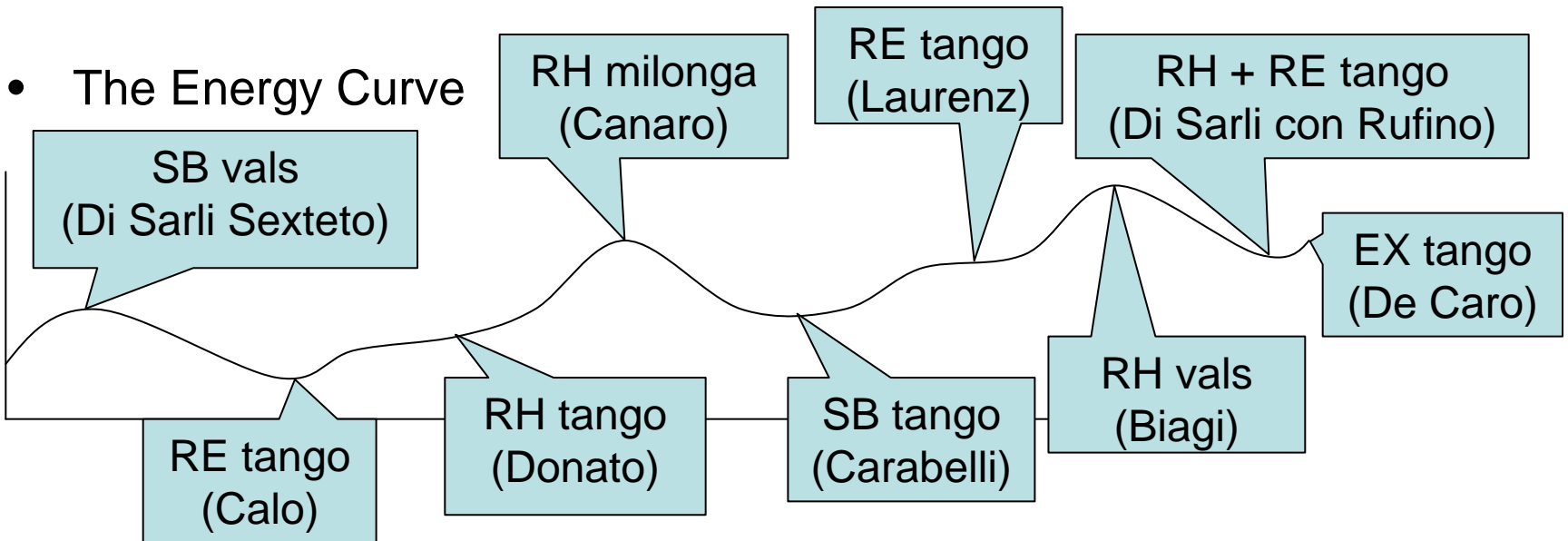
There is also the concept of “**New School Traditional**” which refers to a dj style based on playing newly remastered traditional material (songs with better sound quality, including former B-List songs) and also some alternative (usually Old School Alternative stuff).

The Art and Skill of DJ'ing 4/5

The Shorey Myer's Approach:

- 4 Textural Categories of Tango Groups (mostly traditional)
 - SB = Street Band (most sextetos & some orchestras before 1940)
 - RH = Rhythmic (Donato, Canaro, D'Arienzo, Rodriguez, Biagi)
 - RE = Refined (Laurenz, Calo, Demare, Di Sarli con Podesta)
 - EX = Experimental (De Caro, Pugliese, late D'Arienzo)

- The Energy Curve



The Art and Skill of DJ'ing 5/5

Notes from Dan Boccia's DJ Handout (see end notes for online link)...

For **growing communities**:

The DJ is responsible for educating the community about what good dance music is, **by playing ONLY good dance music**. The DJ may have to find **creative ways to keep the energy flowing** in young communities...but **don't push it**. When it's time to go home, go home. Trying to bring them back onto the floor may burn them out. After some time, they will gain interest & confidence and become "hardier" tangueros and will stay longer and dance with more energy. Be sensitive, not maniacal. **Play familiar music** – most newer dancers enjoy hearing familiar music. This is part of the "educational process". Play music to **keep the majority of the people happy** – you cannot satisfy everyone, and should NOT play music just to suit a minority of the community, in general.

For **established communities & festivals**

Play for the dancers, not to show off your collection. **Play a matrix of familiar music**, and look for the opportunity to toss in some spice from time to time, but don't call too much attention to the "specials". Sometimes they're not necessary, especially in the first couple dances of a major festival – this is a good time to play familiar music so people from different places can connect in unfamiliar places within a matrix of familiar, comfortable music.

Identify the dancers who are either the **most experienced**, have the most influence, etc. and make an effort to **keep them dancing**, in the hope that this will influence the others to keep dancing too. **Caution** is advised here – while identifying the major players, **keep your eye on the overall crowd** as a whole – this is merely something to be considered and balanced....

Vary the music through the event to gradually **build up to a climax**, and if there is time (usually takes 4+ hours), a second climax is possible. The variables are **speed of the song**, **emotional content**, **recording quality**, and **rhythmic complexity**. There are other variables, but these are the big ones.

Special notes on **sound equipment** and **volumes**:

Use the **highest quality sound equipment** possible, and the **fewest components** possible. All that is needed is a source (CDs or computer), perhaps a mixer, an amplifier (unless the speakers are all powered), and speakers. An equalizer is very handy in the hands of an experienced technician; otherwise it often does more harm than good. Get the horns (tweeters) of the **speakers at least 9' above the floor level**, and higher IS better. This keeps the sonically tiring high notes out of the dancers' ears. As for volume, the goal is to set the sound system up to be able to **play the lowest volume possible while still filling the room with full sound**, allowing room to **raise the volume**, perhaps **as the climax builds**. **Continual loud music causes sonic fatigue**.

DJ Evaluation Techniques:

(3 CELLspace Examples)

- At the door **Paper Evaluation** surveys for exiting dancers...sorry no copies here, but keep it short, simple, and anonymous (similar to pier review below). Leave room for open comments at bottom.
- **DJ Pier Review** via online email questionnaire to club/local dj's
 - Hello, Could you please give me a few minutes of your time and give me your feedback on the music last week (ex DJ's: Ben & Homer)?
 - 1. How did you like the music overall? (1-5 where 5 is best)**
 - 2. How much did you dance while you were at CELL? 20%? 50%? 80%?**
 - 3. How did you like the traditional selections? (1-5)**
 - 4. How did you like the alternative selections? (1-5)**
 - 5. If you did not go, why not?**

Any other comments? Did you like the flow / energy? What could be improved?
If you would like to leave your feedback anonymously, then please submit it at:
<http://freetango.org/cell-feedback.php>
Thanks! Ben Cellspace DJ Coordinator
PS: if you no longer want me to email you about this, just respond with 'remove' or something. I hate SPAM as much as the next tanguero! But I ask so that we can improve the overall experience at Cell.
- CELLspace **DJ Self-Reflection** (automatic email from DJ Coordinator Ben Thoma to dj following each event):
 - Could you give me feedback on how you thought your music went last Wednesday?**
 - What were your goals while DJ'ing? How did you go about achieving them?**
 - How did you assess how people liked the DJ'ing? Are you satisfied on how they liked it?**
 - What do you think you could do to improve your DJ'ing for next time?**
 - Did you feel that you could communicate with your partner well (assumes CELLspace tandem dj'ing structure, sometimes folks solo as well)?**

General Question & Answer Period

Q & A Guidelines:

30 minutes **max**

Please **keep** your questions **focused**

Raise Hand and try **not to interrupt** speaker

Let's **not get too caught up** in any one subject

Let other folks ask questions if you've asked a few

Positive and **Constructive** Questions but be **Honest**

Focus Group 1

Assignment: Your group is to develop a dj playlist for the first hour of a standard 3 hour event

- Form a focus group of 3 to 6 people.
- Group Names:
- Each group will be randomly given an assigned theme from one of the following:
 - traditional, mostly traditional, 50/50 mix, mostly experimental
- Your group will put together a **6 tanda playlist** for your theme
- Use worksheet provided on next page...
- Define your dance audience before you start
- Determine a tanda and flow structure
- At a minimum list orchestra names
- At a maximum list individual song titles with singer
- Pick a representative to report to entire group: _____

Focus Group 1 Worksheet

Group Representative: _____ Assigned Theme: _____

Tanda 1 Type:

Tanda 2 Type:

Tanda 3 Type:

Tanda 4 Type:

Tanda 5 Type:

Tanda 6 Type:

Focus Group 2:

“How to attract and retain your experienced dancers!”

See next Slide for Homer & Cristina’s ideas...

- Form another focus group of 3 to 6 people.
- Group Names:
- Take 15 minutes to come up with your own ideas.
- We’ll finish with each group reviewing plan in front of others so pick a delegate to represent you: _____
- Your Group Ideas Here:

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Homer & Cristina's Ideas for Perth Tango Club:

- Establish non-committee PTC DJ Coordinator
- Publish Monthly online DJ Event Plan for Transparency
 - Have a variety of theme nights (traditional, alternative, mixed, experimental, etc) and define mix ratio if necessary (i.e. 50/50 mix)
- Have dancer surveys, dj pier-reviews, & self-evaluations
- Host “DJ breakfasts” or other social/educational meetings
- Encourage new dj development through mentorship program
- Compensate club DJ's and hire guest DJ talent (local and beyond)
 - Pay DJ's well; They are your future and can make or break your club!
 - Decide on flat rate for club and local guest dj's (maybe \$20 to \$30/hr?)
 - Pay top dollar for well known, established, visiting guest dj's (~\$50/hr).

Online DJ Resources & Reference Material 1/2

1. Old but still good CELLspace alt Milonga (note current mix is 50/50): http://www.organictangosf.info/dj_SF.htm

2. Michael Tennent's great collection of dj resource links:
<http://www.tangozone.net/musicdjresources.htm>

3. Dan Boccia's must have traditional DJ orchestra hand out:
<http://web.acsalaska.net/~redfox/web/Orchestra%20Handout2.pdf>

4. Sharna Fabiano's Neo Tango List:
<http://www.neotango.com/neotangos.html>

5. UK DJ Michael Lavocah's tango music shop and guide:
<http://www.milonga.co.uk/tango/advice.shtml#byartist>

Online DJ Resources & Reference Material 2/2

6. Stephen Brown's DJ Resource Page:

http://www.tejastango.com/milongas_djsrole.html

Including his annotated list of tanda suggestions:

<http://www.tejastango.com/tandas.html>

7. Another Great DJ Resource Page:

<http://www.tangodj.org/>

8. Tango DJ Discussion Forum:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TangoDJ/>

9. Todotango.com with historical data, lyrics, discographies, etc:

<http://www.todotango.com/english/Home.aspx>

10. Zival's Online Music Store (traditional and alt music for sale):

<http://www.tangostore.com/home.php?lang=e>

On Lyrics and Tango DJ'ing 1/4

from the Tango DJ Yahoo Group

- [Re: Lyrics vs. Melody](#)
- **Posted by: "Ilene Marder" imhmedia@yahoo.com [imhmedia](#)**
- **Mon Nov 1, 2010 1:35 pm (PDT)**
-

I think about this ALOT. I read as many lyric translations as I can, and am always working on my very poor castellano, but there's no way I can say I understand even a fraction of the poetry of tango. So for me, bottom line is... you have to go with the feeling of the song, as Dan suggests. I put tandas together by how they work together musically, not poetically. I sometimes think I might DJ totally differently if I did understand what they are really saying, and might do more "theme" tandas, especially to suit the time of night, etc. But I agree the people we generally play for in USA, do not listen for words. (I try not to play really maudlin tangos, such as Margarita Gauthier, which was pointed out to me as way too tragic by a porteno in NY, and altho I dearly love Manana Ire Temprano, I am now avoiding it somewhat after Silvia Ceriani told me the guy was about to kill himself.)

I have DJed full milongas in BsAs several times (Monday Canning, Porteno y Bailerin)... and always breath a sigh of relief when I am asked back to DJ, and the "front-table" milongueros gave me the thumbs up (altho one told me never to play anyone but Fiorentino with Troilo, after I had played a very danceable Troilo/Ruiz set...). So I think going for musicality/danceability is the number one factor in DJing and composing tandas. If you can compose tandas via lyrics as well as musciality, more power to you.

I am sure there will be many native speaking tangueros who will find this conclusion unacceptable. ...
I.

On Lyrics and Tango DJ'ing 2/4

from the Tango DJ Yahoo Group

– Dan Boccia wrote:

>

>

> I try, but given that I only understand a small portion of the lyrics
> of tangos I play, I'm forced to go by how the song feels. BUT, I will
> say that for the tangos I do understand, it matters (to me) when I
> play them. Most of my audience hasn't got a clue about the lyrics,
> and I'd submit that most who do understand them don't really care too
> much. But there have been times when I'd play a song and a
> latin-speaker would come up to me and explain why I shouldn't play the
> song at that moment.

>

> Bottom line is that I'm driven to understand more of the lyrics, but I
> haven't truly found that it makes much difference unless I'm DJing for
> a crowd of Spanish-speakers, then it's much trickier.

>

> I'd say you did the right thing, but if you know most of the crowd
> won't care, give yourself a bit more of a break.

>

> For this reason I've had nightmares about being asked to DJ in BsAs....

>

> Dan

On Lyrics and Tango DJ'ing 3/4

from the Tango DJ Yahoo Group

-

- >
- >
- >
- > *From:* TangoDJ@yahoogroups.com [mailto:TangoDJ@yahoogroups.com] *On
- > Behalf Of *ramiro garcia
- > *Sent:* Sunday, October 31, 2010 9:26 AM
- > *To:* TangoDJ@yahoogroups.com
- > *Subject:* [TangoDJ] Lyrics vs. Melody
- >
- >
- >
- >
- >
- >
- > A couple of days ago, I was trying to put together an "up" Biagi
- > tanda, I thought the mood needed lifting, and I also wanted Biagi's
- > clear rhythms.
- >
- > I found myself torn between the melody and the lyrics. I'd find songs
- > that had a perky melody, but heartbreaking lyrics. In the the end, I
- > found a tanda's worth of songs with positive lyrics and up melodies,
- > after 'trying' and discarding quite a few others.
- >
- > Does anyone here ever make the lyrics of the songs a factor in DJing?
- >
- > If you know that few, if any people at a particular dance are really
- > paying attention to them, much less understanding the lyrics, is it
- > over-punctiliousness to worry about it?
- >
- > Thanks for your input.
- >
- > ramiro
- >
- >

On Lyrics and Tango DJ'ing 4/4

from the Tango DJ Yahoo Group

- 2b.

- [Lyrics vs. Melody](#)

- **Posted by:** "Brian And Luz" tangotiburones@gmail.com [tangotiburones](#)

- **Mon Nov 1, 2010 2:10 pm (PDT)**
-

In our community we have tons of dual language english/spanish speakers and they will, and have, commented on tango lyrics. Normally it is the ladies who vocalize issues with a tango's dark lyrics. My GF loved the milonga, "La Puñalada" until I told her the title.

- 2c.

- [Re: Lyrics vs. Melody](#)

- **Posted by:** "mail@theresa-tango.de" mail@theresa-tango.de [theresafaus](#)

- **Mon Nov 1, 2010 5:10 pm (PDT)**
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Many tangos have lyrics that are sad or dramatic or cruel, and many of them sound quite cheerful instead of dramatic (at least some versions). For example, "La gayola", "La última copa" (Rodríguez, Canaro).

In my experience, Argentinians don't care much about the lyrics. There are argentinean DJs, here (in Europe) and there, who play "Un crimen" or "A la luz del candil" (describing brutal murder) or "Tormenta" (serious religious stuff), and nobody seems to care. I used to avoid dramatic lyrics when Spanish-speakers were present, but now I think I was worrying more than them.

Sometimes I construct thematic tandas and announce them to the crowd. My experience is that people are interested in learning about the lyrics and listen more when a thematic tanda is announced. For tomorrow ("all souls'day", "día de los muertos") I have prepared three tandas on the topic "death": murder, suicide and mourning.

Theresa (Munich)