

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PERFORMANCE AND MUSIC CREATION

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#### Introduction: concepts and contexts

##### 1. "Musical Work": execution, interpretation, performance

The discussion about what "music interpretation" and "musical performance" actually are has been active for many years. During the period of 1995/97 I had the opportunity to research and write about "music interpretation"<sup>1</sup>, with the aid of empirical research conducted in a professional music school. Reviewing this and other texts made me reconsider what these concepts mean.

Hermann Danuser<sup>2</sup> explains, with subtle irony, the historical evolution, the methodological perspectives and the main differences and particularities between "execution", "interpretation" and "performance". The term "execution" is, in my view, symbolic in this process, although somehow pushed away from criticism and theoretical speech. Perhaps because "execution" is also understood as the concretization – the final performance – of a capital punishment: the death penalty. And it is a sad idea when we speak of the "execution" of a great masterpiece, or when "execution" is linked to the performance of a virtuosic, devilish, "musical work". But death is always, symbolically, present in interpretation/performance, because:

1. the concretion of a "musical work", when it becomes performed music, with sounds in time, corresponds to the death of the composer as a creative figure; the performer becomes, as mediator or as creator, the (phenomenological) player of the listener's apprehension;

2. death is symbolically a possible outcome of a more or less virtuosic performance, when the performer fails a difficult passage, or just fails to gain the public's acceptance; when the performance doesn't match the listener's expectations. Much like in other ritualistic events, such as offering rites in ancient South America and Rome, or in the circus, in a bullfight, or in car racing; death is always a possibility around each corner<sup>3</sup>.

Central to the understanding of these concepts has been the concept of "musical work", the possible object of interpretation and performance. What is interesting about this matter, as Nicholas Cook (2002) explains, are the contrasting views, such as:

1. the views of Molino/Nattiez<sup>4</sup> and of Ingarden<sup>5</sup>, a linguistic perspective reserving a crucial, pivot function for what is called the "neutral level" of the "musical work", and its possible supports/sediments (the score, a recording, written intentions, etc.);

2. Lydia Goehr's argument<sup>6</sup> that the concept of "musical work" is a constructed one, coming from the nineteenth century;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Francisco Monteiro, *Interpretação e Educação Musical* (Porto: Fermata, 1997), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hermann Danuser, "Execution—Interpretation—Performance: The History of a Terminological Conflict", in *Experimental Affinities in Music*, Paulo Assis (Ed.), p. 177-196. Orpheus Institute Series (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Francisco Monteiro, "Virtuosity, Some (Quasi Phenomenological) Thoughts", p. 315-320, in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Performance Science 2007*, Aaron Williamon and Daniela Coimbra (ed.), (Utrecht: Association Européenne des Conservatoire, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), 2007).

<sup>4</sup> See Jean Jacques Nattiez, *Musicologie Générale et Sémiologie*, Collection Musique /Passé/Présent (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1987), 38, and Jean Jacques Nattiez, *Le Combat de Chronos et d'Orphée: Essais*, Collection Musique/Passé/Présent (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1993), 81.

<sup>5</sup> See Roman Ingarden, *Qu'est-ce qu'une œuvre musicale?* (Paris: C. Bourgois, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, Rev. ed (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 108.

3. the ethnomusicological perspective where the "musical work" concept doesn't have any autonomous character but must be understood in the context of a particular event, in a specific (individual or collective) listening, in a social context.

Sincerely I find the idea of "musical work", as thoroughly explained by Roman Ingarden, of utmost utility; if, of course, it somehow has a "neutral level" distinctly supported and clearly explained by a score, in a composer's intentions list, or at least, as in theatre, in a series of thorough blocking instructions (I prefer the Latinism *didascaliae*, used in French, Portuguese and Spanish), or that the "neutral level" can be fixed in a recording (as in electronic music). "Musical work" is a very convenient concept if we have specific musical works with precise boundaries in mind: a symphony, a song from the Renaissance or later, a piano piece. "The Piece" ("*Das Stück*") seems to be the necessary related word, an illusive materialization of the more unsubstantial "musical work".

But when the music has no fixed boundaries, as in improvisation, in aleatoric works, or when the instructions of the composer are somehow limited or errant, as in Stockhausen's "*Aus den Sieben Tagen*", the idea of a thing, "The Piece", "*Das Stück*", or of a "virtual thing" (the "musical work") although possible, creates more problems than fruitful outcomes. These kinds of musical works do not have clear-cut boundaries, no distinguishable features, and no measured time-span. It can be something and also something else, completely different. In these cases, "performance" seems to be the important concept: the "musical work" includes so many performative choices that ultimately it is only its performance.

I wonder about Cage's extreme example, 4'33". It is, perhaps, the most extreme "musical work", as it has clear-cut boundaries and the composer's intentions are well explained; and the outcome is never very different. On the contrary, Cage's piano concerto (1957/58) is a strange "musical work": although there are many instructions, the results are unpredictable, the time of performance unclear, the results always very different.

Another interesting concept is that of the "musical work" applied to unwritten, orally transmitted traditional music; when we listen to Portuguese traditional song recordings, the "neutral level" of the "musical work" is nothing more than its performance<sup>7</sup>, intimately dependent on the performer, on his circumstances and the circumstances of performance, even on the circumstances of the listeners, overshadowing any original "musical work".

In summary:

1. there is a concept ("execution") that does not hold much interest, as it creates more illusions than answers;
2. another concept ("performance") that, on the contrary, always appears much more effective in any music process; although perhaps not so much in electronic music processes;
3. a kind of "genre" concept ("musical work") interesting for some kind of music but remaining only theoretical for other genres;
4. an operator concept, "musical interpretation", linked specially with "musical work".

## 2. Music Analysis, Creation and Research

Music analysis is one of the multiple ways of understanding music: its focus has been, traditionally, the "neutral level" of the "musical work", with more recent inputs from contextual and cultural perspectives. It is, nowadays, music research, as it is no longer viewed as an uncritical use of a group of methodologies (as in simple harmonic or macro-structural analysis). Music analysis, for its continuous critical and dialectical understanding of the object (the "neutral level"), of the subject (the analyst's own interests and circumstances), or its critical understanding of the contexts and of the methodologies, it becomes research, music research, as understood by musicologists and music theorists. It becomes music research using methodologies and resources from literature studies, cultural studies, history, psychology and sociology, combined with music-based methodologies<sup>8</sup>.

But some music has no reliable score, no composer, no clear-cut "neutral level"; as seen above, even the concept of "musical work" becomes foggy in many examples of music. Music analysis resists, then focusing on its performance, trying to see differences and similarities, understanding expressiveness, creating a hermeneutic approach to what is heard, to what is performed. This is the case of analysis of improvisation, of traditional (unwritten) music and of pop and rock music. Music analysis also becomes, in these cases, performance analysis, performance research. Or better still, research of a creative process arriving to us through its performance (or recordings of the performance). The processes of composition and interpretation become indistinct, composition is then inseparable from performance.

Another concept emerges: "music creation". The importance of "music creation" becomes clear in considering the interpreters/performers as creative individuals, autonomous in their creativity: the focus

<sup>7</sup> Eventually the memory of a performance and its context.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 64, and Kofi Agawu, 'Analyzing Music under the New Musicological Regime', *The Journal of Musicology* 15, no. 3 (1997): 297-307.

becomes the creative process instead of any mediation process or the end result alone. I would say that in “music creation”, understanding how to interpret, how to perform, a given “musical work” is not so important as:

1. how to make music (to be creative with sounds) with (or despite) a given “musical work”; or
2. how to be creative making music; with or without any given instructions.

Perhaps the concept of “music creation” is not so important when it concerns Western European art music, mostly written using a more or less precise score: the previous concepts of “music interpretation”, of “musical work” are adequate for a linear, traditional, analysis and research. But, if we apply these principles to the interpretation processes of medieval and renaissance music, of baroque and classical improvisation, or in other genres of music apart from the Western European art music tradition, “music creation” becomes much more convenient<sup>9</sup>.

Comentado [Alexandre1]: From the tradition of Western European art music?

### Researching music creation: a project

Researching “music creation” already has a history, using methodologies concerned with research and musical practice, (practice-based, practice-led research), monitoring the creative process and comparing it with other data, such as music analysis, interviews, etc. It can be conducted by a non-intervent researcher, whereby the researcher is limited to the observation of the process and to data collecting. But an intervent researcher, a musician taking part in the creative process, has a different insight and can collect much more personal and decisive information about what happens during a particular creative process.

In October/November 2016 I had the opportunity to play with a tango group I didn’t know: the usual pianist had other commitments and could not commit to a series of concerts and a tour; as I already had four years of experience with Argentine tango (as a performer and arranger) and as I used to play with the bandoneonist who had recently played with this group, I was invited to be the replacement. This experience has proved to be interesting, in relation to two different musical practices. This project encompassed different dimensions.

1. The practice of European art music, specifically chamber music, with concerns about the musical work, the score and its interpretation, as a pianist in duos and trios dedicated to the music of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and as a pianist in different contemporary music groups;
  2. The specific practice of tango music in concerts, shows and *milongas* (dance parties),
    - 2.1 as the pianist in an Argentine tango group for 4 years, playing different arrangements, transforming and adapting them in the group, playing the melody and chords (*a la parrilla*) or the piano part, arranging some pieces for the group, and playing occasionally with musicians who dedicate themselves exclusively to this genre;
    - 2.2 the project of replacing the pianist in a tango group, specifically monitored and critiqued for research purposes.

### Styles, contexts and performance

#### 1. European Art Music–Chamber Music

The practice of chamber music in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was very common both at a professional and at an amateur level. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, different itinerant professional groups began to appear, along with a local practice of professional musicians grouped *ad hoc*, and an amateur practice at home (*Hausmusik*)<sup>10</sup>. The repertoire varied between classical and romantic composers, as well as local composers and salon music pieces (or light music, entertainment music, *Unterhaltungs Musik*)<sup>11</sup>.

Some characteristics are important: 1. the existence of a score and parts with clear instructions for all musicians, with little place for variances in rhythm, melody and harmony, giving a very clear idea of what the musical work is, as defined above; 2. a broad communion of a common frame of (musical, cultural and

<sup>9</sup> And, in my view, applying these principles to any kind of music, even 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century concert music, is also very interesting.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Tilmouth, ‘Chamber Music’, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London; New York: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> Among these salon pieces it is interesting to consider the Brazilian and Portuguese *Modinhas* as an example of a less notated, sometimes more performance based, genre.

social) references<sup>12</sup>, allowing for a similar and quick understanding of the score and of that specific musical work. There was certainly the possibility of multiple expressive variants in the performance, but these were always discreet, never questioning the expectations of the audience or of colleagues regarding the recognition of that particular "musical work".

The results, as expected, may be more or less correct, expressive, and communicative, according to a norm and/or a school of virtuosity, approaching, to some extent, the Kantian sublime, always ensuring that the "musical work" announced and/or expected will be played, heard and recognized: nothing like John Cage's Piano Concerto, or a jazz performance. The idea of "musical work" (and of its interpretation) as well as the existence of a community with a common frame of references, seems to be key in this type music. The creative process is, therefore, limited by a large group of restrictions encompassed in the "musical work's" fidelity/interpretation.

The performance of European classical chamber music may require more or less rehearsals: in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries it was common for an *ad hoc* group of musicians perform at a certain moment in a certain place, giving chamber music concerts with very few rehearsals. However even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some groups (trios, quartets) became fixed and became notorious through their tours around Europe, with great public appreciation.

## 2. The Tango: origins and practices

Tango music, born between Uruguay and Argentina in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, appeared as a device for dancing in bars and brothels; or, according to Carlos Vega<sup>13</sup>, as a characteristic way of dancing to the different rhythms and songs of that time; a choreography with "*cortes y quebradas*" (cuts and breaks). The music recognized as tango, which originated in the miscegenation of different influences (*candombe*, *habanera*, *milonga*, bolero, tango of Andalusia, foxtrot, waltz, etc.)<sup>14</sup> suffered a very troubled evolution during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: emigrating from the brothels ("*casas de chinas*", "*casas de cuarteleros*") of *Rio de la Plata* to the French Parisian halls around 1910, then returning to Argentina, becoming a middle and upper class dance of Buenos Aires salons and a popular dance in Argentina and Uruguay<sup>15</sup>. The more modern and jazzy Piazzolla, following other bandoneonists and orchestras of tango in the fifties, transformed the tango into concert music.

In about a century the texts of the songs changed (usual practice at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was to convert socially or sexually daring songs into socially accepted songs), the movements changed (eventually becoming slower in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is more marked from the 1940s onward)<sup>16</sup>, the rhythms were enlarged (by adding different ways of varying the harmony), the instruments changed (abandoning the *organitos* – simple mechanical instruments – and the flute and introducing the bandoneon and the piano), the social contexts changed, the ways of dancing were mixed and changed, practices of social dance and exhibition dance (*tango de escenario*) were created, different dance styles were added, some tangos became concert pieces. Tango has also become a global dance, composed, played and danced not only in Argentina or by Argentinians but also in many European countries, possibly with some different characteristics.

The performative practices of Argentine tango music are, in general, somewhat different from those of chamber music, and closer to urban music (such as the Portuguese *fado* and jazz).

1. Although there are completely notated arrangements, as with the music of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the degree of variance in reading the parts is generally very large: phrases, rhythms, accentuations, dynamics, figurations of harmonies and bass, all these elements are largely improvised or arranged according to norms accepted by musicians but not always notated;

2. The arrangements are very imaginative, looking for an identity of the orchestra and/or the arranger, according to their social and musical pragmatics, far beyond any originality of the "musical work" which

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J S Atherton, 'Doceo; Frames of ReferenceFrames of Reference, Frames of Reference', accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.doceo.co.uk/tools/frame.htm>, and Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Northeastern University Press ed (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Carlos Vega, 'Carlos Vega, La Formación Coreográfica Del Tango Argentino', *Facultad de Artes y Ciencias Musicales - UCA Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina*, 10 July 2017, <http://www.uca.edu.ar/index.php/site/index/es/uca/facultad-de-artes-y-ciencias-musicales/instituto-carlos-vega/publicaciones/textos-on-line/carlos-vega-la-formacion-coreografica-del-tango-argentino/>.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Adriana Melgarejo, 'Nuevos Cultores Del Tango', 10 July 2017, <http://www.henciclopeda.org.uy/autores/Adriana%20Santos%20Melgarejo/Nuevos%20cultores.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Coriún Aharonián and Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán, eds., *El Tango Ayer y Hoy*, 1a edición (Montevideo: CDM, Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán, MEC Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2014), 32.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. María Mercedes Liska, 'El Arte de Adecentar Los Sonidos: Huellas de Las Operaciones de Normalización Del Tango Argentino, 1900-1920', *Latin American Music Review* 35, no. 1 (June 2014): 25–49, doi:10.7560/LAMR35102.

is at the base (usually a song); this implies, not uncommonly, that the original pieces are hardly recognizable, being predominantly the versions by the arranger/orchestra X or Y; there is also the current practice of making specific arrangements for each orchestra, valuing their idiosyncrasies (instruments, characteristics of the musicians, tastes, etc.);

3. There is a continuous tradition of playing without a score, by ear, or “*a la parrilla*” (with melody and chords), usually in an amateur and occasional contexts, with the common practice of different musicians and the ability to improvise counterpoints, rhythmic and harmonic figurations being important.

The results, as expected, are of a characteristically expressive song, more or less adapted to a choreographic function, depending on the context in which it is presented (concert, show or *milonga*). The arrangements are made according to different norms/styles of historical tango orchestras, looking for the empathy of the audience and/or fulfilling the function of encouraging and supporting the audience in their dancing practice. The “musical work” may eventually be recognized, but it is much more important that the audience recognizes the rhythms, the styles and practices with which they are familiar. The fans will be able to recognize the piece, to murmur the words of the song, to perceive the “cuts and breaks” of a certain version, but this is not essential. The very idea of “musical work” does not seem to be of any great importance, and the style and socio-cultural practices are much more significant, within a framework of common references: musical, linguistic, choreographic, and social.

The Argentinian tango, in these peculiarities 1. of constant adaptation to the changing social functions, 2. to be able to respond to these changes, 3. by the dubious and elusive way in which it takes shape, 4. even in the confusion it provides between the name of a choreography, the name of an instrument (the Afro-American drum *tangó*), a way of playing music, and a musical genre, is the characteristic example of the concept of *Mesomúsica* as described by Carlos Vega. In Mesomusic, the music of all of us, the fundamental feature is its social and performative function, and not any intrinsic aesthetic value of the works.

“Mesomusic acquires its full significance in this special sense, because, relegating to the background its artistic aspect, we can consider it chiefly as a functional entity in harmony with the need for recreation, diversion, general sociability, meeting of the sexes, etc.; and with the business enterprises involved in its consumption and the groups that absorb its production.”<sup>17</sup>

### Music Performance, music creation: comparing practices

After understanding the contexts and the practices of tango and of European chamber music, and bearing in mind the recent performance research concerning a substitution in a tango group and the extended practice of tango and European concert music, it is important to see how and to what extent music creation can be understood, and to critique some of the problems that emerged.

#### 1. The relation with the professional expectations and contexts

“The richness and specificity of performance goals, and the degree to which they are truly shared across ensemble members, vary as a function of the musical context. Members of a symphony orchestra, for example, do not necessarily know the intricacies of each part in the ensemble texture; rather, the conductor functions as repository of the global performance goal.”<sup>18</sup>

The practice of performance can be quite different when it is in a merely professional context, even a commercial one, or when there is an intrinsic, self-motivated will to be creative with that music. In the first case, the musicians, like workers in a production line, are asked to play what is written in the parts without alterations, without surprises, contributing in the presupposed way to the total performance of the group<sup>19</sup>.

When there is an extra self-motivation, an intrinsic purpose to be creative, when the whole process is more self-motivated, the tendency of the musicians is to be more participative, to have more possibility of making mistakes, perhaps to have less (external) control, or to have more (internal) control over specific musical items (parts, sections, notes, musical features of any kind) which normally are just played

<sup>17</sup> Carlos Vega, ‘Mesomusic: An Essay on the Music of the Masses’, trans. Gilbert Chase and John Chappell, Scanned in from *Ethnomusicology*, 10/1: 1-17 (January 1966), 23 August 2017, <http://tagg.org/others/VegaMesa.htm#Conclusions>.

<sup>18</sup> Peter E. Keller, Giacomo Novembre, and J. Loehr, ‘Musical Ensemble Performance: Representing Self, Other, and Joint Action Outcomes’, in *Shared Representations: Sensorimotor Foundations of Social Life*, ed. Emily Cross and Sukhvinder S. Obhi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Eventually one of the musicians is required to be freer, to show his virtuosity, even to improvise, with the others maintaining the support. Such is the case of *concertante* music (baroque and classic concertos).

(uncontrolled, automatically), and to care for increased individual responsibility. In both European art music and in tango this intrinsic self-motivation and will of the musicians can increase participation, with somewhat distinctive results: in tango it is surely freer with regard to the "musical work", in European classical music there is much less freedom, but much more control over very discreet, normally overlooked, items.

Clearly the musicians in the tango group in which I made a substitution were focussed on a much safer performance, without surprises, as: 1. very few rehearsals were possible; 2. some of the repertoire was new to all; 3. only 3 of the 6 musicians were actually group members, 4. there were many communication problems as only two of the group's musicians spoke (very poor) English; 5. the project was an attempt to respond affirmatively to a *tourné* invitation, although some of the pivot musicians were not available (specially the piano and the double bass players). In these performances, I sometimes intentionally played with more participation, showing some self-motivation and body involvement. This very emphatic way of playing (not necessarily freer) was musically responded to by the bandoneonist and the singer (both Argentinian) and was clearly unapproved, with faces of astonishment, by the 2 historical members of the group<sup>20</sup>.

In the tango group where I usually play, many times there is that specific self-motivation to exceed oneself and to be more creative and, when possible, freer in the performance. My experience in European art music gives the same results; sometimes, the reasons for that enlarged self-motivation and total (mind, body, emotion) involvement are unknown: a somehow special context, a musical trigger from another musician or from myself, an exceptional collaborative involvement of part (or all) of the musicians, etc. The sensation of "music creation" is much more intense when self-motivation is triggering the performance; the "flow" sensation is also manifest<sup>21</sup>. The musical results are, perhaps, better, but this is nothing more than generous wishful thinking from a creative person.

But this intense creativity is restricted to some other performance contexts. In a *milonga*, when the audience dances, maintaining a fixed tempo is normal, to accentuate the *cortes y quebradas*, to follow the dance-floor so that people can dance more easily<sup>22</sup>. A different situation occurs in a tango concert: the degree of freedom can be much higher; the possibility of improvisation and alteration is increased. "Music creation" is also a matter of the performance circumstances and context, of direct social constraints, and the obligation to follow those constraints.

## 2. The relation with the "musical work"

The practices of tango and European art music differ in a fundamental way, concerning the relation to the "musical work".

In tango, it is expected that the group creates a specific sound or re-creates a sound somehow imitating traditional historic orchestras. And this means adapting, changing, reorganising, inserting new elements, re-creating the "musical work". That was the case of both tango groups with whom I played, using arrangements by Argentinian musicians. - some of them changed during the rehearsals - or using new arrangements specifically for that particular group. It implies a very loose relationship with what is understood by "musical work": although an important, perhaps recognizable, base, the specific "musical work" can be subject to extensive transformations by the preferences of the orchestras and the adaptations to the contexts.

In my own tango group, the arrangements are usually changed in the rehearsals, responding to the intentions of the group; some other arrangements are made within the group (by me as the pianist and the bandoneonist) or written by me<sup>23</sup>. In the tango group in which I briefly replaced the pianist, many of the arrangements were made by a group member, imitating traditional Argentinian orchestras or completely changing the familiar versions<sup>24</sup>.

In the two tango groups with whom I played there was also the practice of performing music using no arrangements (*a la parrilla*): a paper with the melody and chords or a piano score that everyone should use, according to performance models defined in the rehearsals and/or practice in tango manuals. This performance *a la parrilla*, although much less safe, promises more freedom for the musicians, always attentive to one-another's performance, responding immediately to their colleagues' musical proposals.

<sup>20</sup> A proposal to insert a *tacet* bar in the middle of one piece, making an emphatic (and common) *corte*, gave place to some discussion and, finally, was not approved by the director of the group, unwilling to change what was expected in such a short time.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery And* (Place of publication not identified: HarperCollins e-Books, 2014), <http://rbdigital.oneclickdigital.com>.

<sup>22</sup> In European concert music, something similar happens when a new soloist, a singer, for instance, appears to sing a work already known by the group: the tendency is to stay more in tempo and play attentive to the soloist's interpretation, helping the newcomer and accommodating everyone in the piece.

<sup>23</sup> For some pieces, there are different versions (arrangements) made within the group.

<sup>24</sup> Some of these arrangements were notoriously problematic, with completely changed harmonies.

Even if the performance is not so very free, the necessary attentiveness and immediate response to each other's contributions creates a very loose and participative ambiance. And to play tango with instrumental parts but also having the experience of playing *a la parrilla* implies a much freer attitude to adapting the parts to the stylistic manners and to the group's sound, and to improvise changes (melodies, rhythms, figurations, stylistic manners) responding to the moment and to the context: even with an arrangement and parts, freedom can be a very strong possibility.

All this freedom is very different from what happens in Classical European art music, with clear-cut "musical works". In Baroque and Renaissance music, the capacity to freely perform melodic figurations, to improvise ornaments, *basso continuo* and *cadenzas*, the capacity to re-create the given "musical work" using the score and known (or new) historical practices, is very common. But after the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, the score became more and more complete, systematic, allowing for less freedom<sup>25</sup>: the melodic instruments do not usually improvise a melody according to the harmony and given melodic cues, the harmonic and bass instruments do not change the rhythm of the chords or even the chords themselves, no-one introduces a silent bar, or creates an introductory section or an interlude, or transforms a section giving colour, rhythm and dramatic motivation; all this is normal and welcome in tango music, but clearly the composer's task in European art music from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward.

The idea of "music creativity" clearly has different perspectives and different degrees: it can be linked to the freedom of performance (as in tango music, or in baroque music) or in a much more discreet way, according to the primacy of fidelity to the "musical work".

### Conclusions

This text reflects on a specific research project and a critique of the musical practice in tango and European art music: a comparative analysis of the practice of a typical example of Mesomusic, weighted with the so-called classical European music, classical because it was composed peculiarly after the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In the taxonomy of Lopes-Cano<sup>26</sup>, it involves research of the creative process, somehow focusing on the process and not on the end results. In the view of artistic research methodologies involving both practice and research, it is *Practice-led Research*<sup>27</sup>, trying to raise questions about the process of music creation, about the performers constraints motivated by the production and the performance contexts, about the musicians' adjustment to each-other, understanding the role of the "musical work" in different genres, and answering these questions focusing on a monitored and reflective creative practice: music performance in different genres and in different contexts. And it is, in musical terms, a further understanding of the analysis of "music creation", a further understanding of "musical performance" analysis, not as an analysis of a product but of a process, taking into consideration different contexts and different materials for performance: the "musical work", the norms and traditions, the practices, the history, and their significance in different creative contexts.

Clearly there are different manners of creativity, various in terms of freedom, in responses to contexts and to the needs of production. And, as stated above, different degrees of creativity, from a mere performance of the written parts to a full involvement in creating new, exciting music with older materials. Future challenges for continuing this research of the creative process are: how to be more creative in European music written after the 18<sup>th</sup> century? What is a discreet (creative) interpretation and how does it differ from a less creative (even non-creative) interpretation? What about improvised music? What about the perspective of a composer and/or an arranger? What can creativity in music be?

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<sup>25</sup> With the exception of works specifically composed for improvisation, or specific practices of improvisation.

<sup>26</sup> Rubén López-Cano and Úrsula San Cristóbal Opazo, *Investigación Artística En Música: Problemas, Métodos, Experiencias y Modelos* (ESMUC, n.d.).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, eds., *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts, Research Methods for the Arts and Humanities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 19.

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