

## Lindy Hop and Argentine Tango<sup>1</sup>

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*Origins - Music - Rhythms - Technique - Innovations - Decline and Revival - Parallels - Conclusions*

### Introduction

In this essay we shall use the term "Swing" interchangeably with "Lindy Hop." When referring to the other swing dances that have originated from Lindy Hop, we shall fully qualify their name. Likewise, we shall also use the term "Tango" interchangeably with "Argentine Tango." We will not discuss the other kinds of tangos in this essay -- mainly, American Ballroom tango and International Ballroom tango (we may also cite Finnish tango). Because we are discussing Lindy Hop and Argentine Tango, that shall be our *lingo*.

### Origins

Lindy Hop originated in Harlem New York, in the Savoy Ballroom, in the years 1926-1927. It derives directly from the Charleston and fuses elements of Charleston, Jazz, Cakewalk and Blackbottom. Its basic is an 8-count movement called the Swingout, consisting of step, step, triple step, step, step, triple step. The man begins with his left foot, the woman with her right foot, and they both execute a slotted figure, exchanging places by count 4 and returning to their original positions by count 1. The connection between man and woman is man's left hand to woman's right hand.

The origins of the name of the dance are not clear. A popular explanation says the name was popularized by George Snowden, also known as "Shorty George" (the Jazz movement called Shorty George was named after him and was his signature move). When asked by a reporter what the name of this dance is, George Snowden wittingly replied "The Lindy Hop, we're flying just like Lindy did!" or "I'm doin' the Hop, the Lindy Hop!" -- because Charles Lindbergh had made his famous solo flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris (May 20-21, 1927), and the newspaper headlines read Lindy hops the Atlantic. But there is no evidence to support this.<sup>2</sup>



George Snowden

Lindy Hop is primarily a dance of African-Americans, as it incorporates rhythms and movements originating from that community. The Charleston (from Charleston, South Carolina) appears to have been danced by the Blacks living on an Island off the coast of Charleston, as early as 1903. The music associated with the Charleston is typically ragtime. The Charleston breakout, an 8-count figure without triple steps, is an intermediate step to the Swingout.<sup>3</sup>



Frankie Manning

Though many dancers contributed to the development of Lindy Hop, we can cite the two most influential: Frankie Manning and George Snowden.<sup>4</sup>

Argentine Tango originated in Buenos Aires in the 1890s. It derives directly from European ballroom dances. Before Tango, only the Waltz and the Polka were danced using a ballroom hold. The Tango "basic" is a simple promenade in a counter-clockwise direction, danced in a marching 2/4 rhythm (generally one step per two beats). Argentine Tango is also danced in a waltz rhythm (generally one step per measure) or in a fast *Milonga* rhythm (generally one step per beat). Tango is danced with a ballroom hold, partners facing each other, man's left hand holding the woman's right hand, with the man's right arm behind the woman's back and the woman's left arm resting on the man's right shoulder.

The origin of the name of the dance is most likely from the Spanish word "tango," which denoted a particular style of music related to Flamenco. Though Tango was undoubtedly performed by persons of African descent, there is no evidence to suggest that the dance originated from the African community. There is no African dance that uses the ballroom hold. The rhythms of the dance and its musical elements derive directly from European music. This will be discussed in detail below.

It is often stated that Tango music began in brothels, but there is no evidence for this. What is known is that brothels typically employed musicians to keep their customers entertained, and these musicians would play the prevailing type of music in their areas; this probably led to dancing among men, since the prostitutes were too busy dispensing their services to engage in dancing. A similar phenomenon occurred in New Orleans, where brothels also employed musicians. One of the fathers of Jazz, Ferdinand Joseph Morton ("Jelly Roll" Morton) was himself employed by a brothel (and was also a pimp at one time in Chicago).

It is most likely that Tango originated amongst the poor class, in the courtyards of apartment complexes, where residents would gather in the evenings and play music and sing. Evidence suggests that the dance can be traced back to 17<sup>th</sup> century England. An English country dance was imported into France (1700) and was called *Contredanse*; this same dance became known as the *Contradanza* in Spain (1750) and later *Danza* (1800). The Spaniards brought this dance to Cuba (1825) and it became known as *Danzahabanera* (Havana dance). In Argentina this dance became the *Habanera* (1850) and the *Habanera del Café* (1900), from which Tango seemed to have derived.<sup>5</sup>

## Music

The music of Lindy Hop is Jazz, and in particular the Big Band music of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Swing music was the popular music of its time, and in the golden age of swing (1925-1950) there were thousands of bands, big and small, that entertained the public. Bands varied in size from sextets to 18 pieces (typically 5 saxophones, 5 trombones, 5 trumpets, double bass, guitar and drums).

Well known bands included the Count Basie Orchestra (the best of them all, named after William Basie, its leader and pianist), the Duke Ellington Orchestra (named after famed composer Edward Kennedy Ellington), Chick Webb and his orchestra, Cab Calloway and his orchestra, Stan Kenton and his orchestra, Woody Herman and his



William "Count" Basie

orchestra, Benny Goodman and his orchestra, Glen Miller and his orchestra, and many others. Only the Count Basie Orchestra and the Woody Herman Orchestra have survived to this day.

Some bands were regional and confined themselves to small areas (they were known as "territory" bands). For example, the Benny Moten orchestra (whose signature song was "Moten Swing") was a territory band confined to Kansas City and the surrounding area (Count Basie began his career with this band). Other bands had a national presence.



Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1962

The music of Tango dance is its own genre and is called Tango music. It is performed by groups ranging in size from trios to big bands of 18 or more pieces. Famous Tango orchestras (*orquestas* in Spanish) included Francisco Canaro, Carlos Di Sarli, Juan D'Arienzo, Osvaldo Fresedo, Alberto Castillo, Rodolfo Biagi, Pedro Laurenz, Osvaldo Pugliese (widely regarded as the best), Anibal Troilo, Alfredo De Angelis and many others.<sup>6</sup>



Osvaldo Pugliese

Tango music was the popular music of its time. In the golden age of Tango (1920-1955) there were hundreds of Tango bands performing in Buenos Aires, the smaller ones had their own territories (neighborhoods) while larger ones had a national presence.

The first tango bands were trios, usually with a harp, flute and violin. The guitar replaced the harp in time and was itself replaced by the piano. Over time, the bandoneon,<sup>7</sup> which has become almost synonymous with tango, replaced the flute. Bandoneon, piano and violin became the basis of the *orquesta tipica* (typical orchestra) in tango. The larger tango bands added more violins and bandoneons, as well as cellos and double basses.



## Rhythms

The Charleston is a major and integral component of Lindy Hop. Its rhythm is:



Figure 1

It was written in 1923 by James P. Johnson in his song *Charleston*. The Charleston rhythm is essentially identical to the first half of the *Son Clave* rhythm:

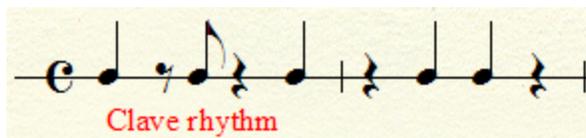


Figure 2

Johnson said he heard the rhythm from dock workers in South Carolina. It is unknown if the Charleston and *Clave* rhythms are related.

In its purest form, swing music places the accent heavily on beats 1, 3, 5, and 7.<sup>8</sup> The music is usually written in 2/2 or 4/4, and the 8-count basic takes two measures of music to complete. The rhythm is not linear. Beats 1, 3, 5 and 7 are approached with syncopation:



Figure 3

It is this fundamental rhythm that gives swing movement its characteristic look and feel. This rhythm is prevalent in Jazz music and is heard on the high-hat or other cymbal.<sup>9</sup> In beats 2 and 3 it is nearly identical to the *Habanera* rhythm:



Figure 4

Here's the rhythm of the footwork of the Swingout:

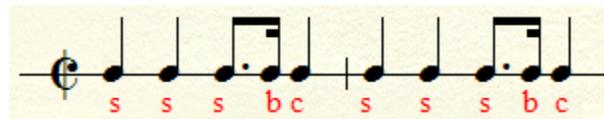


Figure 5

step step	1, 2
step ball change	3 & 4
step step	5, 6
step ball change	7 & 8

The weight changes are not even. The weight of the foot on counts 1, 3, 5 and 7 receives the greatest accent and time, so it appears that the dancers are "behind" (lagging) the music.

The form of a Swing song is usually AABA, where A and B are 8 measures in length, for a total of 32 measures. AABA (commonly known as four paragraphs) defines a section. A typical Swing song will have 3 to 5 sections.<sup>10</sup> A section may also be 44 measures in length, divided into 12, 12, 8, 12 (AABA).<sup>11</sup> The 44-measure section is an adaptation of the Blues form, which contains 12 measures per section. Swing music may also use the Blues form, 12 measures per section (AAAA...), though this is less common.<sup>12</sup>

The character of Swing music is highly improvisational. A typical song will introduce the main theme in the first section, followed by two to four sections of solos and rhythmic development in the accompaniment. In general Swing music tends to have more rhythmic than contrapuntal or harmonic development, though some of it can occasionally be quite complex contrapuntally. A fundamental aspect of Swing<sup>13</sup> performance is that the written notes are not played in "straight" time but in triplet time, as follows:

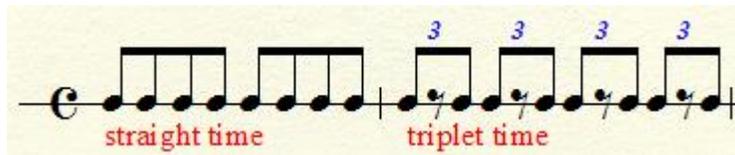


Figure 6

Modulation (change of key) in Swing music is rare to non-existent. Switching between major and minor modes in the tonic is sometimes done, though even this is rare. A change of mode is not considered a modulation because the tonal center is not changed (e.g., A minor and A major). An example of changing modes is W. C. Handy's *St. Louis Blues*.<sup>14</sup> This song also contains the *Habanera* rhythm.<sup>15</sup>

The most prevalent rhythm in Tango is the *Habanera* rhythm. This rhythm commonly appears unaltered in Tangos and Milongas. It is mostly used in the harmonic accompaniment, though melodies are also constructed upon it. In the following excerpt, the *Habanera* rhythm is played by the left hand on the piano



Figure 7: *A Su Majestad*, by J. & M. Canaro

Because the *Habanera* rhythm is in a duple meter (2/4), it does not readily adapt to the waltz, which is in a triple meter (3/4). I examined 139 tango waltzes and found only six instances where the *Habanera* rhythm was present in some form.<sup>16</sup>

The *Habanera* rhythm is varied in many ways:

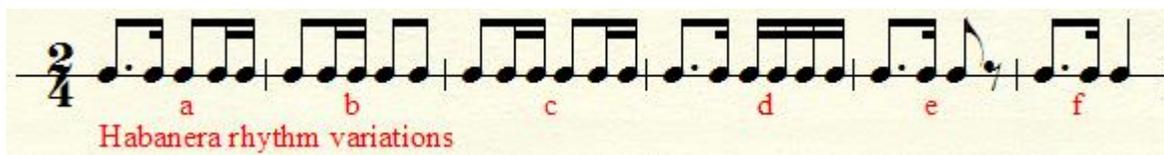


Figure 8

Variation b is common in Milongas.

Tangos and Milongas are written in 2/4, 4/8 and 4/4, waltzes in 3/4. In early tangos accents most commonly fall on the first and third beat of the measure (known as the *mercato* rhythm). In the later period a syncopation which becomes nearly idiomatic is employed, conventionally labeled 3-3-2:

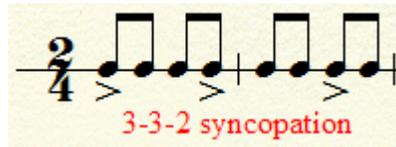


Figure 9

A very common syncopation which appears in melodies and rhythms is:

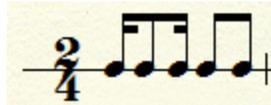


Figure 10

This can be seen in the second measure of the right hand in the piano part above. This same rhythm is the basis of the opening melody in the song *Derecho Viejo*<sup>17</sup>



Figure 11

The form of a Tango song is typically AABB or AABBC, where A, B and C are 8 measures in length. Thus a section in tango can be 32 or 48 measures in length. There are usually 2.5 to 4.5 sections. The .5 is found at the end of the song. For example, the song *Derecho Viejo* has the following arrangement:

Paragraph	AABB	AABB	AA
Length	8888	8888	88

The form is flexible and subject to a wide degree of variation. Here are some examples (T indicates a transitional phrase):

<i>Cachirulo</i> <sup>18</sup> (88 measures)	AABB	CDEF	BBC
	8888	8888	888
<i>Pavadita</i> <sup>19</sup> (88 measures)	AA	T	BB
	88	2	88
	2	88	2
	88	2	88
	2	88	2
	88	2	88
	2	88	2
	88	2	88
<i>Clavel Del Aire</i> <sup>20</sup> (81 measures)	ABA	T	CDC
	584	5	844
	584	5	844
	584	5	844
	5	844	5

Tango music is improvisational and highly contrapuntal, with weaving melodic lines. It features a rich texture with sophisticated harmony and orchestration. Development tends to be along harmonic and orchestration lines. The more sophisticated arrangements feature *rubato* -- acceleration and



Anibal Troilo

retardation of the tempo (Troilo was particularly good at this) -- with contrasting rhythmic and lyrical sections (Pugliese). Written Tango music is sometimes performed in triplet time, though this is not always done as in Swing.<sup>21</sup>

Modulation in Tango music is rare. The only modulation employed is between minor and relative major (and vice versa). Change of mode (minor/major) in tonic is, however, very common. Typically the B paragraph in the section (AABB) will change mode.

## Technique

Every partner dance has an immutable element that must be executed if the dance is to be successfully performed. Often this element is unrelated to the footwork or movement *per se*. Here are a couple of examples.

In East Coast swing the footwork is step step, triple step, triple step, in six counts. The step step, on counts 1 and 2, is called the rock-step and is left-right for the man and right-left for the woman. It is called the rock-step because both man and woman step back on the first step, changing weight but not their center, and step forward on the second step. This is followed by two triple steps. All East Coast swing movement/figures begin after the rock step. The rock-step is used to "spring" into figures, which occur on the two triple steps. The rock-step is the immutable element of East Coast swing. It uniquely defines the dance and if it is not executed, the dance ceases to be East Coast swing.

The footwork for West Coast swing is step step, triple step, triple step, in six counts. This is the same as East Coast swing, but these two dances look completely different. In West Coast swing the follower steps forward on the first two steps, triples forward until she is blocked by the leader (count 3) and pushed back (count 4) into a triple step (counts 5 and 6). This is the West Coast basic and is called the "sugar push." The vocabulary of West Coast swing depends on this element and is almost completely different from East Coast swing.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, it is possible to eliminate the triple step from both East and West Coast swing (replacing it with a single step) and still execute the dance. But if either the rock-step or the step-forward is eliminated, the dance is destroyed.

In Salsa, the immutable element is the Cuban motion of the hips. If the Cuban motion is not done, it is very difficult to execute the idiomatic Salsa vocabulary.

The fundamental, immutable element of Lindy Hop is momentum. In Lindy Hop, leading is the art of manipulating the follower's momentum. The fundamental momentum rule of Lindy Hop is: *momentum must always be honored* (conversely, *momentum must never be violated*). If a follower has momentum, she must maintain it. If a follower does not have momentum (is standing still), she must not create it (she must stay still). It is not possible to execute the idiomatic vocabulary of Lindy Hop if the momentum rule is broken.

Momentum has two independent components (vectors): horizontal and angular. Horizontal momentum is when the dancer is traveling across the floor or standing still. Angular momentum is turning and spinning. These do not interfere with each other. A follower can be traveling across the floor and turning simultaneously.

The momentum rule supersedes all other rules, including the footwork. If necessary the follower must sacrifice her footwork to avoid violating her momentum.

What is the immutable element of Tango? To answer this question we must first understand Tango movement. In Tango there are only four directions in which a follower can move: forward or back (radial) and left or right (lateral). Radial and lateral movements are always perpendicular to each other. The line of dance can be in any direction, but the next step must be in the lateral or radial direction. For example, assume the follower is facing south, standing on her right foot. The leader can send her north (left step back), south (left step forward), east (left step to the left) or west (he must pivot her so she is facing east, then send her back on her left). Now, if he wants to send her north-east, he must 1. pivot her 45 degrees clockwise then send her back on her left or 2. pivot her 45 degrees counter-clockwise then send her to her left, on her left.

To make all of this possible the follower must bring her feet together after every step and wait for the lead. This is called *collecting* in Tango. When a follower collects her feet she comes to a complete rest (this can be infinitesimally short). The collected position is the neutral position from which the follower can move radially or laterally. If the follower fails to collect, her feet will be protruding from her center and she will not be in position to take the next step.

Collecting is the fundamental, immutable element of Tango. To execute Tango dancing the follower (and leader) must collect, must come to a complete rest. It is the opposite of Lindy Hop, where to execute the dancing the momentum must not be violated (i.e., motion must be preserved).

## **Innovations**

Before Tango only the Waltz and Polka used the ballroom hold; all other dances were some form of line dancing, either in a single line (as in Assyrian or Greek dances) or in two lines facing each other, with the women in one line and the men in the other (such as American square and barn dancing or the *Chacarera* in Argentina).

In the Waltz and Polka the leader and follower faced each other and mirrored their footwork; when the man moved his left the woman moved her right, and vice versa. In other words, both always moved on the same side. This parallel system of motion severely limited the dancing; movement was restricted to lateral and radial motions and turns. The parallel system is one-dimensional because both partners must always move in the same direction; it has one degree of freedom.

Tango introduced the cross system of motion. In the cross system the leader and follower do not mirror each other, they move right to right and left to left. To enter the cross system the man simply takes two steps to the woman's one step (or pauses while the woman steps). The cross system adds a second degree of freedom to the movement because the man may move in the opposite (or different) direction from the woman. The partners can move independently of each other.

This simple innovation, this second degree of freedom, opens the dance tremendously and allows it to become highly improvisational, while still locked in the ballroom hold. The leader can freely switch between cross and parallel systems.

Lindy Hop made innovations in three areas. As in Tango, Lindy Hop uses both parallel and cross systems. The Swingout and other non-Charleston vocabulary are generally in the parallel system, while the Charleston and Jazz movements can be in both systems.

The second innovation of Lindy Hop was the abandonment of the ballroom hold altogether. The partners are only together at counts 4 and 5 of the Swingout and are free of each other at all other times, connected only by the hand, man's left to woman's right -- though there are a dozen or so other connection points.<sup>23</sup> Also, the partners can break the connection, dance freely and come together again.

The third innovation of Lindy Hop was air-steps (aerials). With air-steps the dance is no longer confined to the surface of the floor.

Lindy Hop has, therefore, four degrees of freedom in movement.

I am often asked by both Tango and Lindy Hop dancers which dance is more difficult. My answer is Lindy Hop because it has more degrees of freedom in its movement and this generally translates to higher difficulty.<sup>24</sup> This is a theoretical statement, not an aesthetic one (I leave that to the philosophers) nor a value judgment (I leave that to the theologians). In making this judgment I also take into account the diverse connection points and the tempos of Lindy Hop music. The tempos of Tango music are limited to a narrow range. The tempos of Lindy Hop range from slow (120 BPM) to insanely fast (320 BPM).<sup>25, 26, 27</sup>

## **Decline and Revival**

I originally titled this section *Death and Resurrection*, but decided that was not accurate, as these dances never died, never became extinct -- though they came very close it.

Lindy Hop began its decline almost immediately at the end of World War II. There are many factors to account for this, but the most potent was a change in the economics of entertainment, a change brought about by technological advances. Two advances stand out: the perfection of stereo recording and playing technology and the development of electronic sound amplification. With stereo recording it became possible to listen to high quality music outside of live performances. Consumers collected their favorite music on records and could listen to it at any time in the comfort of their homes. Fewer people sought live entertainment. With sound amplification it became possible to entertain a larger audience with fewer musicians. Sound amplification changed the economics of live music performance. Instead of hiring eighteen piece bands (the size being necessary for greater volume) venues could now hire four or five piece bands (drums, one or two electric guitars,<sup>28</sup> bass guitar and a vocalist) and use sound amplification to reach the audience. It was much cheaper to hire four or five musicians than eighteen.

The change in the composition of the band forced most Big Bands to disband. With the death of the Big Bands the music of Lindy Hop ceased to be the popular music and was replaced by Jump Blues, Rock and Roll and other genres. With the death of its popular music Lindy Hop declined and faded away. Frankie Manning, one of the fathers of the dance, ceased dancing and went to work for the United States Post Office in 1955.<sup>29</sup>

Lindy Hop lay dormant until 1982, when Al Minns, one of the original dancers of Lindy Hop, began to teach lessons. In 1986 Steven Mitchell and Erin Stevens from California, and Lennart Westerlund from Stockholm, independently contacted Frankie Manning and sought instruction from him in Lindy Hop. Thus the revival began. Today Lindy Hop is a worldwide phenomenon and is danced in almost all parts of the world.

The decline of Tango was largely caused by the military coup in 1955, which ousted the populist president Peron. The new regime was suspicious of all things that Peron supported, Tango being one of them, and strongly discouraged the singing and dancing of Tango. The military junta encouraged the introduction of Rock and Roll. Tango music was frowned upon, its musicians often arrested. Gatherings of three or more people were nearly prohibited. Tango went underground.

In 1983 the military junta fell, democracy returned to Argentina, and the Tango became fashionable. A renaissance began. Young Argentineans desired to learn the dance. Two of the earliest teachers were Miguel and Nelly, who trained many of the important professional Tango dancers. Thus the revival began. Today Tango is a worldwide phenomenon and is danced in almost all parts of the world.

## Parallels

	<b>Lindy Hop</b>	<b>Tango</b>
Earliest basis	1890s	1890s
First recognizable appearance	1926-7	1910-15
Music	Big Band, unique to the dance	Tango, unique to the dance
Orchestras	Typically 18 pieces	Typically 12-18 pieces
Rhythms	Charleston, <i>Habanera</i>	<i>Habanera</i>
Innovations	Cross system, free hold, air-steps	Cross system
Character	Technically demanding, highly improvisational, happy, energetic, extroverted	Technically demanding, highly improvisational, serene, intense, introverted
Golden age	1925-1950	1920-1955
Revival	1982	1983

## Conclusions

We have shown above the remarkable parallels between Lindy Hop and Argentine Tango, in their origins, development, zenith, nadir and rejuvenation. Now we shall examine the question of common genealogy.

In its form and structure Tango is a European dance. It was only the third dance to use the ballroom hold, after the Waltz (Vienna) and Polka (Prague). Its idiomatic vocabulary was new. The music of Tango is classical in lineage (indeed, it is amusing to listen to bits and pieces of classical music in Tango songs, such as the Overture from Carmen, the Overture from the Barber of Seville and the Second Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt).

Lindy Hop borrowed the notion of partner dancing from European dances, but that was the extent of its European influence. The form, structure and idiomatic vocabulary of Lindy Hop were revolutionary. Its music was new. Lindy Hop was a new product of the New World.

We have shown above that Lindy Hop and Argentine Tango both fundamentally use the *Habanera* rhythm. To answer the question of this relationship, we must address the question of the origin of the *Habanera* rhythm and how it came to be in the music of these dances.

The *Habanera* rhythm exists in many parts of the world. It is found in Assyrian,<sup>30</sup> Arabic,<sup>31</sup> Kurdish and African music, as well as in European Classical music. Bizet features the rhythm in his opera *Carmen*.<sup>32</sup> The rhythm is the central rhythmic motif of *En Saga*, the symphonic tone poem by the Finnish classical composer Jean Sibelius.<sup>33</sup>

The 2/4 meter is the most common meter and exists in almost all cultures. Given two beats it is a simple exercise in variation to arrive at the *Habanera* rhythm, with only a few permutations:

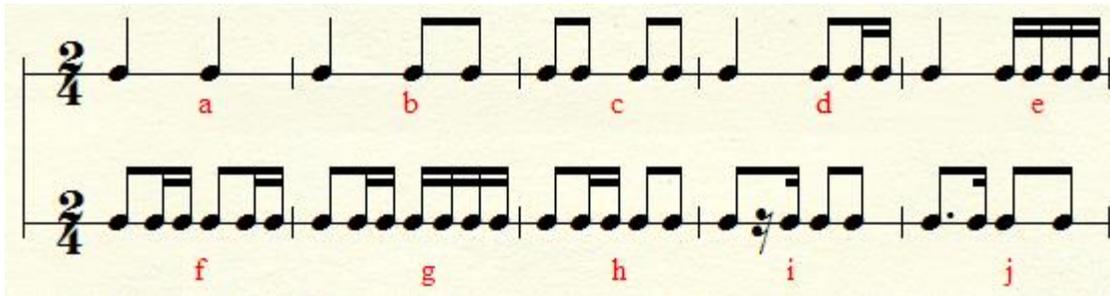


Figure 12

As can be seen above, it is quite easy to go from *a* to *j*.

Did Italians or Spaniards (the majority of immigrants to Argentina) know this rhythm before coming to Argentina? It is likely, though there is no evidence to substantiate this. Given that the rhythm exists in Arab music, and that Arabs ruled southern Spain for nearly 700 years, and that Arabs were also in Sicily, the answer is very likely yes. Did Africans bring this rhythm with them to Argentina? The answer is again most likely yes. There are, therefore, at least two lines of transmission.

How the rhythm came into American Jazz music is slightly better known. In Jazz music it is even sometimes given a name: "Spanish Tinge." This name was coined by Ferdinand Joseph Morton ("Jelly Roll" Morton), one of the fathers of Jazz. In an interview Morton says:

Then we had Spanish people there. I heard a lot of Spanish tunes. I tried to play them in correct tempo, but I personally didn't believe they were perfected in the tempos. Now take "La Paloma", which I transformed in New Orleans style. You leave the left hand just the same. The difference comes in the right hand -- in the syncopation, which gives it an entirely different color that really changes the color from red to blue.

Now in one of my earliest tunes, "New Orleans Blues,"<sup>34</sup> you can notice the Spanish tinge. In fact, if you can't manage to put tinges of Spanish in your tunes, you will never be able to get the right seasoning, I call it, for jazz.<sup>35</sup>

Morton's exposure to Spanish music would have been to music from Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Most commentators say that what Morton meant by "Spanish Tinge" was not rhythms from Spain, but Afro-Cuban rhythms. This is true, but this sidesteps the question. As we have discussed above, it is most likely the *Habanera* rhythm was known to Spaniards long before they colonized the Caribbean.<sup>36</sup>

Since the only thing in common between Lindy Hop and Tango is the *Habanera* rhythm, and this cannot be traced to a common point of origin, we may conclude that there is no genealogical relationship between Lindy Hop and Tango -- though they do have a striking parallel history. The relationship between the Charleston and *Clave* rhythms is suggestive but requires further research.

There is one quality that Lindy Hop and Tango share, and that is the exhilarating, liberating sense of freedom one experiences when dancing these dances. There are no artistic limits in these dances because each dance is the true expression of the man and woman dancing, and this can be and is different with each couple. It is a personal expression of hopes and aspirations, dreams and desires. It is a (non) reality, a place that is very difficult to arrive to and very difficult to leave from.

The future of both of these dances is very promising; they continue to attract new dancers, particularly the younger generation (this is especially true of Lindy Hop). Both dances continue to evolve in many directions, yet both stay faithful to their roots. A handful (literally) of dancers (myself included) are now experimenting with the fusion of Lindy Hop and Tango (*Swango* or *Lingo*), which is danced to Swing music and seamlessly incorporates movement from both dances.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Here are some of the headlines:

- *Lindy Hops For St. Louis*; Chicago Daily Tribune, June 17, 1927.



- *Lindy Makes Surprise Hop*; Chicago Daily Tribune, June 16, 1927.
- *Lone Flight Grips French Imagination; Lindbergh's Ocean Hop Appeals To Paris As Nothing Else Could Have Done*; The New York Times, May 21, 1927.

The earliest reference that I have found to "Lindy Hop" as the name of a dance is from The Independent, St. Petersburg, Florida, June 1, 1927. The article reads: *Obviously the first dance to be named for the Lindbergh flight was the "Lindy Hop." Another will be called the "non-stop" and a third the "French jump." Like all trick dances they will be done in a few theaters and dance halls where experts appear -- and that will be that.*

The image is a collage of three distinct items. On the left is a patent drawing of a sandal, labeled "SAND SANDAL" and "REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.". In the center is a newspaper clipping from "THE INDEPENDENT, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1927." containing a story about a woman's health and a dance named "Lindy Hop". On the right is a black and white portrait of a woman, identified as "MRS. FRANK DINDORE, BOX 238, LANCASTER, OHIO". Below the portrait is an advertisement for "Four Walls Can Make a House, but it takes a Woman to Make a Home" and "Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound".

Another reference from The Hartford Courant, June 14, 1927, reads: *Dancing Masters Here Introduce New 'Lindy Hop.'* The article states:

The premiere of the "Lindy Hop," a new dance created in honor of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, featured a special meeting of New England members of the Association of Dancing Masters of America Monday night at the Farmington Avenue studio of Walter U. Soby, secretary-treasurer of the New England section. The new dance was introduced by Marvin G. Ryder, Boston dancing master, and Soby termed it one of the probable dance hits of the summer.

"The Lindy Hop," described by Soby as a "slow walk, with a slight hop, quite taking and quite simple" will be officially introduced to the nation's dancing masters at the New York convention.

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**Dancing Masters Here Introduce New 'Lindy Hop'**  
*The Hartford Courant (1923-present); Jun 14, 1927;*  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers Hartford Courant (1764 - 1984)  
pg. 12

## **Dancing Masters Here Introduce New 'Lindy Hop'**

### **New England Terpsichorean Teachers Meet At Walter U. Soby's Studio**

The premiere of "The Lindy Hop," a new dance created in honor of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, featured a special meeting of New England members of the Association of Dancing Masters of America Monday night at the Farmington Avenue studio of Walter U. Soby, secretary-treasurer of the New England section. The new dance was introduced by Marvin G. Ryder, Boston dancing master, and Soby termed it one of the probable dance hits of the summer.

"The Lindy Hop," described by Soby as a "slow walk, with a slight hop, quite taking and quite simple" will be officially introduced to the nation's dancing masters at the New York convention.

Since "hop" also meant "dance" and was commonly used, it is reasonable to assume that "Lindbergh's hop" was used almost immediately after his flight to name many dances unrelated to Lindy Hop. The date of George Snowden's remark is uncertain, and ranges from September, 1927 to July 18, 1928. However, as the above references show, the name was in use as early as June 1, 1927. One can conclude that the George Snowden interview -- if it happened -- only popularized a name which had already been in use.

<sup>3</sup> The following video shows George Snowden and Pauline Morse executing the Charleston Breakout, from the film *After Seben* (1929): <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/AfterSeben.wmv>. The following video (from Chicago workshop, 2003) neatly shows the evolution of the Swingout, from 1920's Charleston to Charleston Breakout to the Lindy Hop Swingout. The dancers are Mattias Lundmark and Hanna Zetterman of the Harlem Hot Shots: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/MatthiasHanna.mpg>.

<sup>4</sup> Other dancers of significance were: Louise "Pal" Andrews, Tiny Bunch, Eunice Callen, Wilda Crawford, Mildred Cruse, Joe "Big Stupe" Daniels, Joyce "Little Stupe" Daniels, Eddie Davis, William Downes, Elnora Dyson, George Greenidge, Connie Hill, Leon James, Ann Johnson, Dorothy "Dot" Johnson, Frances "Mickey" Jones, Thomas

"Tops" Lee, Maggie McMillan, Lucille Middleton, Norma Miller, Al Minns, Mildred Pollard, Billy Ricker, Willa Mae Ricker, Stumpy, Naomi Waller, Ester Washington, Freida Washington, Jerome Williams, Russell Williams

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.allabouttango.com/history.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Here is a timeline of Tango orchestras:

1875	1900	1915	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
<b>TRADITIONAL TANGO ORCHESTRAS</b>												
Tango Dance Beginnings	Maglio/1904 V. Grecco Berto/1913 Union/1914	E. Arolas R. Firpo F. Lomuto F. Canaro	A. Aieta Orq. Victor Orq. Selecta B. Bachicha T. Genaro	A. D'Agostino J.D. Filiberto J. D'Arienzo E. Donato J. Pirincho F/ Canaro C. Ortiz E. Rodriguez A. Gambino		O. Pugliese F. Sassone Francini 1947 to 1978				C. Cedron El Arranque Beba Pugliese Solistas D'Arienzo Pa'que Bailen los muchachos Los Portenitos Cuarteto Centenario Tuba Tango Los guapos deel 900 Hugo Diaz Carlos Garcia Los Cosos del Lado		
TANGO DANCE GROWING PERIOD			TANGO DANCING CRAZE PERIOD				DANCING DECLINE		DANCING REVIVAL			
<p>After 1954 many orchestras became accompaniment for singers (Pontier /Soza; D'Arienzo/Echague/Laborde; D'Angelis/Dante, Martel; A. Piazzola's traditional period was 1946 to 1956)</p>												

<sup>7</sup> The *Bandoneon* is an Accordion type instrument. It is difficult to play because each key produces two notes, one when the instrument is contracted (squeezed) and a different one when it is expanded.



<sup>8</sup> The following song, *Flat Foot Floogie* by Slim Gaillard, demonstrates the heavy accent on 1, 3, 5, 7: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/FlatFootFloogie1.mp3>.

<sup>9</sup> Examples:

- *Let's Get Together*, Duke Ellington: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/LetsGetTogether.mp3>.
- *Flat Foot Floogie*, Benny Goodman: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/FlatFootFloogie2.mp3>.
- *Rooming House Boogie*, Cab Calloway: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/RoomingHouseBoogie.mp3>.
- *Tuxedo Junction*, Erskine Hawkins: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/TuxedoJunction.mp3>.

<sup>10</sup> *Take the A Train*, Duke Ellington (<http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/TakeTheATrain.mp3>): 4 measures introduction, two 32 measure sections, 4 measures transition, one 32 measure section, 16 measures closing.

<sup>11</sup> *I Diddle*, Dinah Washington (<http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/IDiddle.mp3>): 8 measures introduction, two 44 measure sections, 8 measures closing.

*Dipsy Doodle*, Larry Clinton (<http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/DipsyDoodle.mp3>): 12 measures introduction, one 44 measure section, 4 measures transition, one 44 measure section, 8 measures, 12 measures closing.

<sup>12</sup> *Sent For You Yesterday*, Count Basie (<http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/SentForYouYesterday.mp3>): 8 measures introduction, three 12 measure sections, 4 measures transition, two 12 measure sections, 4 measures transition, three 12 measure sections, 8 measures closing.

<sup>13</sup> Don Maichael Randel, Ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, (Cambridge: The Balknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 818, under the entry Swing.

<sup>14</sup> *St. Louis Blues*, Louis Armstrong: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/StLouisBlues.mp3>.

<sup>15</sup> Handy notes that "The one-step and other dances had been done to the tempo of Memphis Blues...When *St. Louis Blues* was written [1914] the tango was in vogue. I tricked the dancers by arranging a tango introduction, breaking abruptly into a low-down blues. My eyes swept the floor anxiously, then suddenly I saw lightning strike. The dancers seemed electrified. Something within them came suddenly to life. An instinct that wanted so much to live, to fling its arms to spread joy, took them by the heels." (Father of the Blues: An Autobiography. by W.C. Handy, edited by Arna Bontemps: foreword by Abbe Niles. Macmillan Company, New York; (1941) pages 99, 100).

<sup>16</sup> The website **Todo Tango** ([www.todotango.com/english/Home.aspx](http://www.todotango.com/english/Home.aspx)) contains 1258 scores of tango music. Of these, 139 are waltzes. I examined them all and found only six that had some form or fragment of the *Habanera* rhythm -- but even within these six songs the rhythm is sparsely used.

*Carmen* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=3222](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=3222)):

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Carmen'. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The melody in the treble staff is written in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The first half of the Habanera rhythm is clearly visible in both hands. The score includes lyrics in Spanish: 'la dulce can-ción que ex-pre-sa tu mi-ral ves-to da mi-lu-sión'. There are dynamic markings 'Meno' and 'p'.

The first half of the *Habanera* rhythm is shown above in the left and right hand parts.

*El aeroplano* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=1171](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=1171)):

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'El aeroplano'. It features a single melodic line in a treble clef. The melody is written in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat. The first half of the Habanera rhythm is shown in measures 2 and 3, where the note values are augmented (doubled).

In measures 2 and 3 above the first half of the rhythm appears augmented (note values doubled)

*Frivola* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=4488](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=4488)):

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Frivola'. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The tempo is marked 'Muy lento'. The first half of the Habanera rhythm is shown in the first two measures of the right hand part. The score includes a dynamic marking 'p'.

The first half of the *Habanera* rhythm is shown above in the first two measures in the right hand part.

*Nelly* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=1991](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=1991)):

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Nelly'. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The first half of the Habanera rhythm is shown in the second and third measures of the right hand part.

The first half of the *Habanera* rhythm is shown above in the second and third measures in the right hand part.

*Pañuelito federal* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=6596](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=6596)):

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Pañuelito federal'. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The tempo is marked 'Canto'. The first half of the Habanera rhythm is shown in measure 4, where the note values are augmented (doubled). The score includes a dynamic marking 'ral'.

In measure 4 above the first half of the rhythm appears augmented (note values doubled)

*Por no llorar* ([http://www.todotango.com/english/Las\\_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=5738](http://www.todotango.com/english/Las_obras/Partitura.aspx?id=5738)):



In measure 2 of the right hand part above the first half of the rhythm appears augmented (note values doubled).

<sup>17</sup> *Derecho Viejo*, Juan D'Arienzo y Su Orquesta Típica: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/DerechoViejo.mp3>.

<sup>18</sup> *Cachirulo*, Anibal Troilo y su Orquesta Típica: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/Cachirulo.m4a>.

<sup>19</sup> *Pavadita*, Alfredo De Angelis, Instrumental: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/Pavadita.mp3>.

<sup>20</sup> *Clavel Del Aire*, Carlos Di Sarli, El Señor Del Tango: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/ClavelDelAire.mp3>.

<sup>21</sup> I wish to thank Alex Krebs for pointing this out to me after reviewing this essay. Alex Krebs (<http://www.tangoberretin.com>) is an internationally renowned Tango teacher as well as a musician who plays the *Bandoneon* and leads a Tango orchestra. According to Alex:

I learned some interesting things transcribing "Llevatelo Todo" by Elvino Vardaro. If you just looked at the original sheet music many of the melodies would start on down beats and are written out as quarter notes and eighth notes, but what I learned was that many of the melodies are being played in triplet form, and many of the melodies start on the "and-of-4" instead of on 1 (the down beat).

And

Many *orquestas* use the triplet idea in the melody when it is being played lyrically. When the melody is played staccato it is never tripled.

<sup>22</sup> Both dances derive from Lindy Hop. East Coast Swing comes from Lindy Hop. It was developed by Arthur Murray so that he could teach some form of swing in a four week format. West Coast swing derives from Dean Collins Lindy Hop, which derives from Lindy Hop (the original dance, also known as Savoy Lindy Hop).

<sup>23</sup> Other connections are: both hands; man's right hand to woman's left; at the left or right or both shoulders (front or back); at the left or right waist (front or back); on the back of the woman, on the shoulder blades, with the man's left or right arm; a combination of some the above. In contrast, Tango has one connection.

<sup>24</sup> Another way of saying this is greater choreographic complexity. Lindy Hop has three distinct vocabularies: the Swingout and its related figures (the list is nearly endless here), the Charleston and its related figures (both 1920s style and Lindy Hop style -- again the list is nearly endless) and Jazz movements (there are nearly 30 figures here). Advanced Lindy Hop dancers will seamlessly flow between these vocabularies. Tango has two vocabularies: the Tango/Waltz and the Milonga -- though these overlap considerably. Advanced Tango dancers will seamlessly flow between these vocabularies.

<sup>25</sup> Tempo alone is not a gauge of difficulty; rather, it is what is executed at a particular tempo that is relevant (i.e., the choreographic complexity). The *Merengue* is a simple dance (styling aside) of alternating steps and it requires virtually no training to execute the dance at very high tempos. In Lindy Hop and Tango, what separates the master dancers from the lesser ones is not so much as what they do choreographically as the speed at which they do it. Note, it is just as difficult to dance at very slow tempos as very fast tempos. In general, slow tempos require greater control, less precision. Fast tempos require less control, greater precision.

<sup>26</sup> The following is from the film *Hellzapoppin'*, 1941; it is a Lindy Hop choreography by Frankie Manning as performed by Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. The tempo is 310 BPM: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/Hellzapoppin.avi>. The dancers are (in order of appearance) William Downes

(overalls) and Frances "Mickey" Jones (maid), Billy Ricker (chef's hat) and Norma Miller, Al Minns (white coat, black pants) and Willa Mae Ricker, Frankie Manning (overalls) and Ann Johnson (maid).

<sup>27</sup> In a prepublication review of this essay, Homer Ladas, one of the leading Nuevo Tango dancers in the United States, says the following:

Current social tango includes both off axis movements (*Colgadas* and *Volcadas*), changes of embrace, letting go, and lifts, which add more degrees of freedom and difficulty. In addition, the songs we dance to include music beyond the traditional orchestras, thus opening up the tempo variation possibilities from very slow to very fast. Even inside of the traditional realm of tango music many dancers play considerably with the tempo (from freezing to moving very slowly to trying to express the faster melodies). As a result, the control and conservation of this highly variable momentum is also very important in tango. It results in exchanges of energy through the embrace that can be very subtle or more dynamic. I would argue that both swing and tango are very difficult at the advanced level.

Though I agree with all the above, I do not think these fundamentally add a third degree of freedom to Tango movement. *Colgadas* are shared axis turns, which by definition are movements in one degree of freedom (because the partners are counter-balanced). *Volcadas* are off-axis weight changes (i.e., the follower changes steps while leaning on the leader) and again by definition this is movement in one degree of freedom. New music adds new possibilities for Tango dancing but never-the-less, the tempo ranges are still narrow. As for augmentation and diminution of dance movement tempo within a song (*rubato*), this does not add degrees of freedom to the dance. Lifts are the only movements that *may* add a third degree of freedom, depending on whether the lift is supported or unsupported by the leader, but these are rare in Tango, even among Nuevo Tango dancers.

<sup>28</sup> The electric guitar became the instrument of choice with the advent of sound amplification, heralding Jump Blues, Rock and Roll and most other subsequent genres of popular music, and it has yet to relinquish its position.

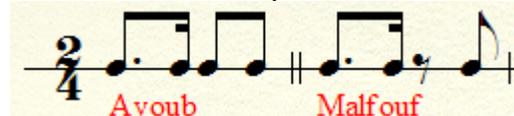
<sup>29</sup> Frankie Manning and Cynthia R. Millman, *Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), p. 216.

<sup>30</sup> In Assyrian music the *Habanera* rhythm is used in the *New Sheikhani* dance and in the *Belatee*. The word *Belatee* connotes the rhythm and the dance. In the *New Sheikhani* it is in 4/4 and repeated twice in the measure. In the *Belatee* it is written in 4/4 (the augmented equivalent of 2/4) and syncopated at the beginning.



Whereas the *Habanera* contains one syncopation, the *Belatee* contains two. The *Belatee* rhythm is identical to the most common Tango syncopation (see Figure 10). For more details on *New Sheikhani* and *Belatee* see *Thirty Assyrian Folkdances* (<http://www.boogiedrop.com/tafd.pdf>), by the author, pages 4, 11, 16. The following song, *Malikta Shameeram (Queen Semiramis)*, also by the author, is in *Belatee* rhythm: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/MaliktaShameeram.mp3>. The following song, *Habbaniya* by Evin Aghasi, is in the *New Sheikhani* rhythm: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/Habbaniya.mp3>.

<sup>31</sup> In Arabic it is called *Ayoub* and is identical to the *Habanera*; a second rhythm, called *Malfouf*, is slightly varied.



<sup>32</sup> *Carmen, Habanera*, George Bizet: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/CarmenHabanera.mp3>. The Cellos and Contra Basses open the aria with the *Habanera* rhythm:



<sup>33</sup> *En Saga*, Jean Sibelius: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/EnSaga.mp3>. The *Habanera* rhythm is written in 2/2 (the augmented equivalent of 2/4) and is introduced by the Violas:



<sup>34</sup> *New Orleans Blues*, Jelly Roll Morton: <http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/NewOrleansBlues.mp3>.

<sup>35</sup> The following is a recorded interview with Jelly Roll Morton, in which he discusses the "Spanish Tinge" -- from *Jelly Roll Morton, The Complete Library of Congress Recordings By Alan Lomax, 1938*:  
<http://www.boogiedrop.com/lingo/TheSpanishTinge.mp3>.

<sup>36</sup> Morton was a classically trained pianist and could read and write music (in New Orleans, a musician who could read and write music was called a "professor"). An examination of his music reveals the use of many classical elements and techniques (though they are not readily apparent to an untrained ear). As a classical pianist he almost certainly would have been exposed to classical music containing the *Habanera* rhythm, such as piano reductions of Bizet's *Carmen*. Also, as a classically trained musician, he would have possessed the tools to easily derive the rhythm. But his own statement suggests that he heard the rhythm from Latin musicians.