

# **Dancing with the Hands: Four-Hands Piano Music from South America**

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## Musical nationalism in South America

- Began in several countries in the 1900s
- Composers drew inspiration from the rich musical heritage from the region

## Sources of popular and folk music in South America:

- Indigenous music: instruments, modes, rhythms
- African music: drumming, rhythm, call and response, syncopation, polyrhythms, layers, dance, religion
- European folk music: Spain and Portugal. Salon music, dances

## Some rhythmic features you'll hear:

- Sesquialtera: juxtaposition or superposition of 6/8 and 3/4 (regrouping of 8<sup>th</sup> notes)
- Polyrhythms in layers
- Syncopated rhythms
- Ostinato rhythms
- Groupings, such as 3+3+2

## **Program**

### **Third movement from Romance del Plata (1987).** Carlos Guastavino (Argentina. 1912-2000)


- Romantic nationalist
- Late work for 4 hands. "Plata" refers to the Rio de la Plata river and region
- Third movement loosely based on the Chamamé dance, from northeast Argentina
- Sesquialtera rhythms: Superposition of 6/8 and 3/4

### **Libertango (1974)** by Astor Piazzolla (Argentina. 1921-1992)

- Tango musician and classically trained composer (Ginastera and Nadia Boulanger)
- Developed Nuevo Tango (new tango) since 1960s.
  - Extended harmonies
  - Dissonances
  - Elements of jazz
  - Counterpoint and passacaglia technique
- Libertango = libertad (freedom) + tango
- One of his fastest tangos. No lyrical section
- This version is an adaptation of Pablo Ziegler's arrangement for two pianos

### **Enciso (porro – 2008)** by Bernardo Cardona (Colombia. Born 1965)

- Enciso is neighborhood in Medellin where cumbias and porros are heard
- A "porro" is a dance and music closely related to the cumbia
- The cumbia is one of the most popular "tropical" urban genres in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico, etc. Cumbia tejana
- African and indigenous origin. African slave drumming and (originally) indigenous wind instruments

- Many syncopations. Moderato, with a typical bass rhythm: 

### **Brasiliana No. 4** (1968) by Osvaldo Lacerda (Brazil. 1927-2011)

- Dobrado
  - Brazilian march, in 2/4 or 4/4 time signature
  - Slight influence of Spanish music ("dobrado" comes from the Spanish "paso doble" or "double step")
- Embolada
  - Vocal genre, typical of northeast Brazil
  - It appears alone or within dances, usually, *côco*
  - Declamatory, speech-like melody, in fast tempo
- Seresta
  - In general, a serenade
  - Song of sentimental or passionate lyrics, directed to the singer's beloved
  - Its style is very close to the slow waltz and the "modinha," another Brazilian slow love song
- Candomblé
  - Afro-Brazilian religion. In it, each divine entity is invoked by its own songs.
  - It includes characteristic rhythms, mostly in 6/8, and polyrhythmic layers

### **Tango** (1993) by Ronaldo Miranda (Brazil. Born 1948)

- Miranda's re-interpretation of the tango dance
- Fast composition that does not quite follow the style of the original genre
- Bartokian harshness, contrasting with the *molto cantabile* in the middle section, reminiscent of Piazzolla

### **How to obtain this music:**

Guastavino, Carlos. *Romance del Plata* (1987). *Sonatina for 4 hands*. Ricordi Americana/Melos, Buenos Aires. Available through ElkinMusic.com

Piazzolla, Astor. *Libertango*. (1974). Two-piano version arranged by Pablo Ziegler printed by Carl Fischer Publishing.

Cardona, Bernardo. *Enciso* (2008). Self-published (also available for two pianos). Contact the composer [bernardocardonamarin@gmail.com](mailto:bernardocardonamarin@gmail.com).

Lacerda, Osvaldo. *Brasiliana No. 4* (1968). Irmaos Vitale. Out of print. Available only through interlibrary loan.

Miranda, Ronaldo. *Tango* (1993). Self-published. Contact the composer. <http://www.ronaldomiranda.com/>