

**CONTEMPORARY TANGO AS RESISTANCE:
A CASE STUDY OF JULIÁN PERALTA**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the life of pianist Julián Peralta, a leading figure in the new tango movement, a cultural and social groundswell. It does so in the context of the movements of political resistance that formed in Buenos Aires after the 2001 Argentine economic crisis. Discussion considers the political and social dimensions of the new tango movement from the vantage point of Peralta's music, performance strategies, publications and community activism. While discussion considers the creative development of Peralta's musical trajectory, it also seeks to critically analyse pertinent political and social factors that would permit Julián Peralta's creative acts to be also characterised as modes of resistance in the context of his home city of Buenos Aires.

This study specifically focusses on Peralta's music and creative acts in the years following the 2001 crisis that resulted in the formation of *Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro* and subsequent performance and pedagogical projects. It is argued that *Fernández Fierro* employ tropes from Anglo-American and Argentine rock traditions to sonically and visually embody a discourse of resistance to state political apparatus, drawing upon twentieth century tango figures such as Osvaldo Pugliese. The argument is formed around the idea that the systematisation of tango music in the fields of production and education by Peralta can be understood as a conscious form of resistance to authoritarian expressions of power and control by the State. Further, it is argued that adoption of other local urban music forms from Buenos Aires into contemporary tango create internal strength in the genre, protecting it from dilution of tradition and style thereby resisting the outward neoliberal gaze. In the context of these creative acts, relevant writings on power by cultural theorists Foucault, Attali and Lefebvre are then applied to the discussion in order to contextualise Peralta's creative acts within a larger sphere of intellectual thought.

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Statement of Responsibility

I declare that this research project contains no material that has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at any university and to the best of my knowledge this research project contains no material that has previously been published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text of this research project.

Andrew James
6 June 2018

A Note on Translations

This study considers academic texts in Spanish and English, alongside the social, cultural and political narratives generated by independent organisations in Buenos Aires. Therefore, discussion of Peralta's work draws upon formal studies in books and journal articles, as well as interviews, press articles and social media discussions as source material. All English translations were made by myself, and on occasion in consultation with Spanish-speaking musicians and colleagues in Buenos Aires and Australia.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Julián Peralta is internationally recognised as one of the leading figures and most significant contributors to the development of contemporary tango music in Argentina in the twenty-first century. His *orquesta típica*¹ and sextet projects have allowed him to perform at the world's major music festivals and concert halls, and as a pedagogue he has taught throughout Argentina, Europe and the USA. Peralta's musical career to date has largely been shaped by two factors: the internationalisation of tango music over three decades and the political and cultural consequences of the 2001 Argentine economic crisis.

Peralta's early success and popularity as a pianist and composer made it possible for him, along with his peers in Buenos Aires, to lay the groundwork for the emergence of "new" tango music. They did this by adapting and creatively arranging older tango traditions into a new style for the purpose of addressing the lived reality and challenges imposed by the crisis and by increasingly authoritarian government policies.

This discussion considers the political and social dimensions of the new tango movement from the vantage point of Peralta's music, his entrepreneurial activities, performance strategies and modes of resistance. Building on this ethnographic data, this discussion seeks to address the following questions:

1. What broader conditions precipitated the emergence of the new tango music movement?
2. What are the mechanisms and modalities of the new tango movement that can be interpreted as creative expressions of political resistance?
3. What can a study of Peralta reveal about larger questions about, power and musical expression as protest and/or resistance?

Chapter 2 is a literature review that seeks to contextualise this discussion within the wider fields of scholarship on protest music and the historical and cultural development of tango music. This chapter also contains the methodology employed in this research. Chapter 3 is a

¹ *Orquesta típicas* were large ensembles, immensely popular in the mid-twentieth century in Buenos Aires, of ten to twelve members normally comprising four violins, four bandoneons, piano and bass. There were many variations, occasionally cello or vocalist, and a focus on section-based playing and group sound.

case study of Peralta that firstly examines the performative and stylistic components of *Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro*, conceived by Peralta in 1999. As the most influential and pioneering group of the new tango movement, *Fernández Fierro* utilised tropes from Anglo-American and Argentine rock as anti-establishment protest and appropriated the 1940s-1950s tango music of Osvaldo Pugliese as a form of resistance for the purpose of delivering tango music back to local communities as *música popular*² (popular music). Discussion focusses on Julián Peralta's acts of systematisation of the diffusion of tango music among current generations of musicians via self-managed collectives, pedagogy, performance and rehearsal spaces, and publishing in Buenos Aires³.

Discussion in Chapter 4 critically examines a series of responses to social and political challenges faced by Peralta, from the late 1990s to the present day, by drawing on late-twentieth theories of power by Foucault, Attali and Lefebvre. In doing so this chapter both analyses the forms of creative resistance adopted and also positions this case study within the wider intellectual discourse of power. Finally, the appendix provides a biographical overview of Peralta and his discography.

² In Latin America *música popular* describes specific forms of musical style and hierarchies of artistic value that are closely linked with patterns of social inclusion and exclusion (Capellano, 2004; Pujol, 2009). The adjective *popular* refers to notions of equality and relating to “the people” as a social category. Therefore, remaking tango as a form of *popular* refers to the music as both a musical style and a social movement. It contains both “aesthetic ideology and embodied social practice” (Luker, 2016, p. 66) .

³ Buenos Aires provides a unique and concentrated site for the study of urban music. A Latin American mega-city, tango music emerged in its cosmopolitan centre in the twentieth century amid historical engagement with Europe and the United States, and political instability throughout the mid-late twentieth century (Azzi & Collier, 2000).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Representations of power and resistance in popular music

Throughout the twentieth century music has been called upon by social movements as medium to affect social change. Consequently, social protest music has been widely studied by sociologists, historians and musicologists as a means of understanding social and political movements of resistance and revolution. Since the 1970s social protest music and its political ideology has been studied in the context of sociocultural theory (Denisoff & Peterson, 1972; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Feld, 1994). Theories from the same era by Foucault, Attali and Lefebvre address issues of power and its cultural expression (Attali, 1985; Foucault, 1978, 1980; Lefebvre, 1991). Further, they provide frameworks that can help reveal and explain the correspondences between power, social activism and musical expression in social protest music, and are useful for this discussion of contemporary tango music.

The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music, an anthology of essays from 29 contributors explores the history of the effect of social protest music during the twentieth century. It draws attention to the counterculture movement of the 1960s in North America and Europe and explores the origins of social protest music in North America in the early twentieth century. Freidman's collection, along with Peddie's *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest* (2017), form two key ethnomusicological studies on social protest music from the western hemisphere to accompany major works on social protest music in Latin America (Alvarez & Escobar, 2018; Escobar, 2018).

In the field of protest music study, the majority of studies focus on the lyrics of popular songs, particularly from the counterculture era (Cline, 2013; Jones, 2013; Oded, 2016), and non-American social movements influenced by the counterculture movement (Aderinto, 2013; Malisa & Malange, 2013; Santhiago, 2013). Martinelli's *Give Peace a Chant: Popular Music, Politics and Social Protest* (2005) argues social protest songs are a genre in their own right, providing a method to codify a broad spectrum of lyrical protest songs via taxonomy, revealing relationships between lyrical content, performance location, style and audience.

Resistance to power has been studied in popular music genres and movements following the counterculture era. Many studies of 1970s progressive rock examine compositional structure and performative acts in preference to lyrical content. Edward Macan argues progressive rock bands such as King Crimson, or Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead resist commercial music production cycles with unconventional forms, and long improvisations, thereby breaking conventional perceptions of time in music (2013). Other studies examine social activism by musicians in addition to their performance activities such as Frank Zappa's advocacy of libertarianism or John Lennon's experimental art (Weiner, 2011). British and American punk movements have been studied extensively from a social and political perspective (Cogan & Spheeris, 2008; O'hara & C'Hara, 1999; Phillipov, 2006), and are essentially regarded as forms oppositional protest, or as Jackson writes, "a sonic form of protest, a form or rupture from the music that has come before it" (Jackson, 2014, p. 161). Other literature examines localised forms of rock music opposing elements of the global capitalist system from a Marxist perspective, such as post-cold-war European rock bands (Robinson, 2013), or 1970s Argentine rock (Vila, 1989).

In studies of social protest music in popular music, dynamics of power and resistance are often characterised as revolutionary struggle - social movements acting to oppose state regimes or hegemonic power (Aderinto, 2013; Malisa & Malange, 2013). However, some scholars conceptualise resistance in a manner more nuanced than a binary opposition, revealing a complexity in response to power. Timothy Taylor in *Global Pop* (1997), argues that as hegemonic power changes over time, resistance will change form, becoming "perhaps even more myriad and diverse than hegemony" (p. 69). A reconfiguration of the dynamics of resistance post-Taylor allows a more subtle examination of social movements of resistance which contain urban music as a core component, such as contemporary tango (Peralta, 2014), other genres such as hip-hop (Murray & Neal, 2004), or even localised scenes, such as ska music in urban Lima (Vásquez, 2012). Tango music is seldom represented in general literature on social protest music, however the new tango movement after 2001 shares significant traits with movements of social protest music, particularly post-counterculture progressive rock, Argentine rock, and punk music movements (Juárez, 2014; Juárez & Virgili, 2005; Moseley, 2007; Polti, 2012).

New Social Movements (NSMs) emerged in Argentina and across Latin America in responses to the political, economic and social consequences of neoliberal restructuring (Alvarez & Escobar, 2018; Pardes, 2016, p. 5) and often through "desperate need" rather than

with cultural or political agendas (Luker, 2016, p. 69). Tango musicians in post-crisis Buenos Aires organise ensembles, performance and teaching enterprises based on collective organising based on NSM models. Contemporary *murga porteña* dance and percussion groups have been the subject of much academic scholarship as a form of NSM in recent years, with an agenda of political resistance and class equality (Canale, 2005, 2007; De la Garza Toledo & Cavalcanti, 2006; Martín, 1999; Pardes, 2016).

2.2. Tango music in the twentieth century

When embarking on research in tango music it quickly becomes apparent there is an extensive amount of informal literature, much of it from unreliable sources. The majority of literature written on tango in the twentieth century was written outside academia. Many autobiographies were written by musicians (Canaro, 1957; De Caro, 1964), and popular books chronicle the rise of tango from its dark popular working-class origins in the 1890s to the upper social classes in the 1920s-1950s as a form of orchestral music (Varela, 2016).

Academic books in English tend to focus on the transformation of tango into a symbol of national identity (Nielsen & Mariotto, 2005; Savigliano, 1995), written about successful musicians like Astor Piazzolla (Azzi & Collier, 2000), histories of successful orchestras in the “golden age”⁴ of tango (Link & Wendland, 2016), or the musical origins of tango in European, African and indigenous music (Collier, 1992). The remaining academic literature written in Spanish often forms part of larger studies of popular music from the Rio de la Plata region, with occasional exceptions of histories of the genre via anthology of interview and biography (Gasió, 2011; Herrera, 2013; Pujol, 2009). In *Músicas populares de Uruguay (Popular Music of Uruguay)* (Aharonián, 2007), Composer and musicologist, Coriún Aharonián acknowledges the problems faced by musicologists writing and research tango music and its history:

It is one of the first things you notice when you approach the topic ... often the musical aspect is rarely dealt with ... we face a surprising lack of rigor in the management of evidence. One example often comes up, Jorge Luis Borges, who is a very good writer but not necessarily a source of trustworthy data in the historical, sociocultural and specifically the musical fields. (Aharonián, 2007, p. 85)

⁴ The golden age of tango refers to the period 1940-1955 (Azzi & Collier, 2000).

In 1984 Aharonián reflected on the disappearance of tango music in the late twentieth century by asking, “Whatever happened to the tango, is it dead?”, highlighting the proliferation of oral culture and undocumented histories of tango as a significant issue for musicologists, leaving the genre “covered in mythology. Dark in general” (Aharonián, 2007, p. 85).

Aharonián argues tango has been historically stigmatised for its origin in brothels in the early twentieth century, and early recordings and published sheet music editions are assumed as reliable evidence of popular music culture in this period. Contemporary academics have also acknowledged similar issues of reliability facing musicologists. In 2012 Mercedes Liska wrote:

The universe of tango has historically been saturated with representations surrounding tradition, national identity and ‘legitimate’ culture. The act of musical creation has had to face crystallised discourses of an aesthetic dominant prototype and an evolutionary reading of musical development. (Liska & Venegas, 2012, p. 21)

One of the most influential publications on the global reach of tango is Marta Savigliano’s book *Tango, the Political Economy of Passion* (1995). Addressing both tango dance and music, Savigliano describes what became known in the 1990s as “Tango-for-export”, or the exoticisation and commodification of the genre. Savigliano characterises this phenomenon in Marxist terms, where a “trafficking in emotion and affect parallels the process in which countries of the capitalist world system extract material goods and labour in the third world or peripheral countries” (p. 4). Savigliano argues the exoticisation of tango in Europe throughout the twentieth century had a profound effect on the way tango musicians construct their identity in the genre’s place of origin (urban Buenos Aires). For Savigliano, “practices of auto-exoticism develop conflictively as a means of adjusting to and confronting neo-colonialism”, and “participants in local Argentine music and dance may need to resist intellectual colonialism and question their own auto-exoticism” (p. 5).

2.3. Tango music in the twenty-first century

Julián Peralta’s article *Tradición y ruptura en el tango de hoy (Tradition and Rupture in today’s tango)* (2014), describes the history of contemporary tango from Peralta’s own perspective and is the only exclusive source of information on Peralta. In *Tradición y ruptura*, Peralta describes the absence of tango music during 1990s neoliberal governments and his accidental discovery of 1940s tango music as a music student leading to the formation

of ensembles *Fernández Branca* and *Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro* his own generation of musician friends with whom he formed a tango orchestra. Peralta details the formation of a self-organised collective, “*La Máquina Tanguera*” (*The Tango Machine*), and its influence as a catalyst for a wave of new tango orchestras.

The new tango movement prompted a surge in academic writing in post-crisis Buenos Aires. The most comprehensive academic studies of tango in recent years have been by Mercedes María Liska, in her anthological series *Ventanas del Presente I & II* (*Windows to the Present I & II*) and her book *Sembrando al viento: el estilo de Osvaldo Pugliese y la construcción de subjetividad desde el interior del tango* (*Sowing the Wind: the Style of Osvaldo Pugliese and Construction of Subjectivity in Tango*) on the influence of Osvaldo Pugliese on twenty-first century tango (Liska, 2005a, 2016; Liska & Venegas, 2012). Many recent articles from Buenos Aires are published through independent cultural organisations such as *Centro Cultural Kirchner* (Kirchner Cultural Centre) rather than through American or European journals, reflecting local meaning in the genre. Liska explains:

The idea of *Ventanas* is to bring together different readings in a heterogeneous artistic field and movement. Different ways of thinking about the vitality of the here and now, ideas without distancing ... the desire is to underline and share this frame of culture ... the tango has become a fertile ground to think of these ideas and musical experiences. (Liska & Venegas, 2012, p. 12)

The most comprehensive history tango music in the twenty-first century are volumes 21 and 22 of Guillermo Gasio’s *La Historia del Tango* (2011). Gasio documentation is primarily through profiles of music ensembles such as *Fernández Fierro* and interviews with key musicians, particularly Julián Peralta and founding members of *Fernández Fierro*. Notable exceptions to this body of Argentine literature are publications in English by North American ethnomusicologist Morgan Luker (Luker, 2007, 2016).

Much contemporary tango music scholarship focusses on the musician’s role as part of a youth movement, embodying a discourse of political resistance and anti-establishment postures with origins in rock music (Gasió, 2011; Juárez & Virgili, 2005; Liska, 2005a; Luker, 2016; Polti, 2012). Guillermo Anad (2011) argues the “rockification of tango” and the “tanguification of rock” have been part of the lineage Buenos Aires popular music since late twentieth century, and contemporary groups such *Astillero* represent convergence of “decolonisation from neoliberalism” (p. 43) through a “sonic violence that is generated by

having marginality next to opulence” (p. 72). For the Anad this lineage includes Argentina’s most significant product of Tango-for-export, Astor Piazzolla.

A number of studies focus on sonic representations and aesthetic of sound of *Fernández Fierro* and their contemporaries: the magnitude and extremes of dynamic; textural range; amplification and production effects; ‘block’ sounds of harmonised rhythmic unison passages; and ensemble aesthetic in contrast to virtuoso solos (Juárez, 2014; Juárez & Virgili, 2005; Liska, 2004). Liska’s *Sembrando al viento* views Pugliese as a popular, almost mythological figure of resistance to ‘imperialism’ in the 1950s-70s from a perspective of late twentieth century cultural theory, where identification and appropriation of his musical style and socio-political activities act as inspiration and a link tradition (Gasio, 2011; Polti 2012; Peralta, 2014). Germán Marcos (2012) argues this return to *música popular* within t Osvaldo Pugliese’s provides the answer to cultural fragmentation caused by neoliberalism.

In the last decade several scholars have focussed on critical analysis of the urban cultural politics of tango, and state funded production of “Tango-for-export” in Buenos Aires (Cecconi, 2017; Luker, 2007, 2017). These studies highlight the lack of state support for Julián Peralta’s projects despite local success, and ideas of self-sufficiency and *autogestion* through organisation of collective and cooperative models to manage performing ensembles.

In recent years authors have reflected on diversification in the new tango movement, moving from an ideology of resistance to opening a wider field of cultural production in popular music. This change has been described as an “ecosystem of praxis” (Liska, 2016, p. 4) rather than a musical style, avoiding essentialist analyses and readings of tango history (Liska & Venegas, 2012, p. 75). Other scholars describe intertextuality, musical ‘porosity’ and a culture of shared identity through deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in the new tango movement (Adorni, 2012; Polti, 2012).

Julián Peralta’s current sextet *Astillero*, has not been the subject of recent scholarship, nor has *Escuela Goñi*, *Astillero*’s tango teaching school. A large amount of informal literature covers Peralta’s recent activities, particularly articles and interviews in Buenos Aires newspapers, cultural and political websites and interviews for web series and documentaries. Peralta gives frequent interviews with press and researchers on his creative work and social agenda and I interviewed him for this research in May 2018 (Peralta, 2018).

2. 4. Methodology

This research embraces theoretical perspectives from the social sciences and ethnomusicology. This research employs text based analysis of the works of Taylor (1997, 2007, 2016) and key twentieth century theoretical writers on power, resistance and/or music. Discussion is particularly informed by the essays *The history of sexuality* (1978) and *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings* (1980) by Michel Foucault, *Noise: The political economy of music* by Jacques Attali (1985) and Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991). Analysis of contemporary tango music, *murga* and *rock nacional* (Argentine rock) is taken from academic sources in Spanish and English. It should be noted that informal literature on the history and mythology of tango was avoided, as was a structural analysis of individual music works and study of the dance component of the genre.

This study also employs an ethnographic approach by way of the several interviews through email and personal conversation with musicians from Buenos Aires (Possetti, 2017; Bica, 2018; Peralta, 2018), drawing on writings on social movements and music from other genres (Neal, 2004; Vásquez, 2012; Wilkins, 2000), and examination of discussions from social media platforms.

Chapter 3

A case study of Julián Peralta

3.1. *Rock nacional* and expression of youth identity through tango music.

Julián Peralta did not grow up learning to play tango music. His generation reached adolescence in the 1980s and came of age in the 1990s. For them tango music was considered a museological relic of the past and a marketing tool to promote a booming tourist economy in line with a nationalist government agenda. Democracy arrived in 1983 and was marked by a resurgence in the popularity of regional folk music, western and local rock music. Peralta and his peers were immersed in 1970s rock bands such as Pink Floyd, Queen, Motorhead, the Ramones and local bands and musicians such as Charly García and the *Ratones Paranoicos* (Gasió, 2011, p. 3975). The immense popularity of British and American rock in Argentina in the 1970s gave birth to *rock nacional*, the local Spanish language form of the genre, which became the dominant form of popular music throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Vila, 1989). After the military coup of 1976 and during years of military dictatorship, *rock nacional* sustained popularity among the youth generation, who were a target of oppression and perceived threat to autocratic rule. During the period 1976-1983 over 30,000 people were “disappeared”, or arrested without cause (Vila, 1989, p. 15).

As popular music of the time *rock nacional* resonated strongly with Peralta’s generation, their political causes and expressions of identity. *Rock nacional* is a genre comprised of a blend of influences from North American popular genres, to western classical music, Brazilian music and Argentine folk music (Vila, 1989), however its defining characteristic is derived from the links it draws between ideology, youth identity and behaviour, with an emphasis on the importance of the music on ideological terms rather than style (Vila, 1989, p. 7). More so than in Anglo-American rock culture, the anti-establishment positioning displayed *rock nacional* bands came to be regarded as an indicator of artistic authenticity and popular respect. “The *rock nacional* movement not only dislocates itself from the establishment but also from itself in order to represent and to develop new and changing youth identities”, argues Vila (1989, p. 7). For many *rock nacional* musicians a flexible political ideology serves to support the needs of social movements:

For the possibility of transformation, for the social solidarity, for the will of change, it would be more in the left, but without dogma. At moments, it reaches anarchism and even the right, but always from the opposition. (Interview with Indio Solari, leader of *Patricio Rey y los Redonditos de Ricotta*, as quoted in Vila, 1989, p.12)

Rather paradoxically, this flexibility within the 1970s-1980s *rock nacional* scene had the effect of institutionalising the genre, rather than maintaining its stance as protest music. Vila argues that under the oppression and fear created by military dictatorships and political activism became a privilege of middle class youth:

For large sectors of the youth at the beginning of the 1970s, politics became a privileged form of social participation. The revolution seemed possible, and militancy was a worthwhile way of life for young people, one that deserved the renunciation of indifference, of consumerism, and of the superficiality that the establishment offered to the middle-class youth.

For these young people socialized in militancy, the proposals of *rock nacional* appeared very individualistic, without social content and with extremely diluted values. Their characterization of the rockers was disdainful. For them, the rockers were co-opted by the establishment. The militants' struggle against *rock nacional* coincide with the decline, at the international level, of the hippie culture, and its co-optation by a consumer society that began to sell its symbols. (Vila, 1989, p. 13)

Rock nacional was positioned as a marker of youth identity at the time the suppression of expression of youth identity was suppressed by the military regime. The overthrow of the military dictatorship and the arrival of democracy in 1983 catalysed the diversification of *rock nacional* into various sub-genres, encouraging a heterogeneity of voices attempting to fit with “necessities and experiences of the urban young people”:

Today rock is the official music of the system. We can only change the situation with a rocker life as an initial attitude and not a bourgeois model of aspiration. (Indio Solari, leader of *Patricio Rey y los Redonditos* as quoted in Vila, 1989, p.13)

For musicians of Julián Peralta’s generation, commercialisation and increasing international influences in local rock led to a loss of meaning in the conservative neoliberal era of the 1990s. “Rock did not represent us anymore” Peralta relates (Gasió, 2011, p. 3902), “You could see the Rolling Stones on Friday, or Madonna, and Prince on Saturday” (Peralta, 2016).

The 2001 crisis raised many existential questions among creative musicians within the wider field of cultural production. The loss of savings, houses and jobs created real and immediate dilemmas (Bica, 2018). As a consequence, the crisis had a “punctuating” effect on musicians in the new tango movement, “We thought the curtain was coming down on Argentina for good... after that, many people asked, ‘who am I?’” (Possetti, as quoted in Luker, 2016, p. 70). Castoriadis sums up the questions of collective identity that now confronted Peralta and musicians of his generation:

Every society up to now has attempted to give an answer to a few fundamental questions: Who are we as a collectivity? [sic] What are we for one another? Where and in what are we? What do we want; what do we desire; what are we lacking? Society must define its 'identity', its articulation, the world, its relations to the world and to the objects it contains, its needs and its desires. Without the 'answer' to these 'questions', without these 'definitions', there can be no human world, no society, no culture -- for everything would be an undifferentiated chaos. The role of imaginary significations is to provide an answer to these questions, an answer that, obviously, neither 'reality', nor 'rationality' can provide. (Castoriadis, 1997, p. 93)

The subsequent co-opting of *rock nacional* by neoliberal ideology, its tropes of alterity and sonic representation derived from American and British rock forced musicians of Peralta’s generation to confront these questions and lament the change that made increasingly distant from their time, place and aspirations.

In 1986 the opening of *Escuela música popular de Avellaneda* (Popular Music School of Avellaneda) was established in suburban Buenos Aires and became a meeting point for young musicians. It brought into focus generational issues of identity and style, both social and artistic for these musicians. Peralta describes his experience as music students in the 1990s: “we needed something that was a conscious revolutionary act, to establish a contesting force to neoliberalism” in an interview with Hernán Pérez at the University of Santa Fe (Peralta, 2016), “tango, folklore, murga, cumbia, not necessarily British rock ... we were 18, what could we do ...” (Peralta, 2016). However self-consciousness of their roles as actors within a political framework, Peralta’s choices equally reflect a youthful curiosity and enthusiasm:

In that era, the idea of studying popular music seriously was to study jazz, you couldn’t study any other popular genre... I had wanted to write music for big band.

One day I was looking through a revolving stand of cassettes at a record store. They had a special of 3 for \$10 (jokes, for what 10 pesos was worth in those times of inflation). I found only two jazz albums and then one compilation of tangos ... so I bought them. I sat down to listen to them at home and the first track was *Ojos Negros* by the Troilo⁵ orchestra ... Immediately the sound resonated with me. I was looking for something outside that I found so close, something homegrown. Something that seemed easy to accomplish. This was Tuesday, that Thursday I went to my jazz teacher. He asked, 'what did you do this week', I replied, 'well, I found a tango album. His response was, well why don't you go and study with Mederos⁶? I had no idea who he was. (Peralta, 2016)

Peralta had stumbled upon the 1940s golden age tango orchestras, leading to the formation in 1998 of the short-lived *Orquesta típica Fernández Branca* in 1999, and *Orquesta típica Fernández Fierro* in 1999 (Peralta, 2014). Their success defined what became known as a 'renovation' or re-emergence of tango music in the twenty-first century (Luker, 2007, 2016). *Fernández Fierro*'s reimagining of tango music was immensely popular with a generation of youth, and the orchestra established their own self-managed venue with custom lighting and sound, supported by like-minded groups, and enjoyed international success with 17 international tours at major music festivals (Fierro, 2018).

A temporal distance from the place of *Fernández Fierro*'s inception allows perspective for analysis of their role in addressing issues of youth identity and the effects of neoliberal governments in the years surrounding the financial crisis. Julián Peralta maintained autonomous agency in his decision to research, transcribe, arrange and perform tango music from the 1940s. Although his meeting with the music was one of chance, his actions to realise a new form of music of the past were conscious. He was fascinated by the richness, textural complexity, instrumental techniques and ensemble playing of these orchestras, as any erudite young musician would be, and practiced with a group friends, formed within the spirit of a New Social Movement:

Forty years have passed, and in those forty years we appeared, a generation for which tango has lost some of its bad connotations ... for use tango was nothing

⁵ Golden age orchestra leader and bandoneonist

⁶ Golden age bandoneonist still teaching today.

more than music ... it was just records ... we were able to say, “hey, there is some good music here”. (Julián Peralta, as quoted in Luker, 2016, p. 63)

Peralta’s personal, historical and artistic distance from tango allowed *Fernández Fierro* a means of reflecting their own notions of youth identity, while drawing upon older aesthetics and interpretative techniques that bore deep relevance to their contemporary experience. Viewing Peralta’s actions as a way of answering Castoriadis’ question of collective identity in society allows for examination of the “imaginary significations” (Castoriadis, 1997) *Fernández Fierro* draw upon in their decision to play orchestral tango music of the 1940s. As much as modernist rupture in the canon of the genre as it is reconfiguring of tango as *música popular*, their construction of generational meaning in music draws heavily upon stylistic techniques and arrangement styles of Osvaldo Pugliese. Regarded in Buenos Aires as a popular hero, the almost mythological ‘*San Pugliese*’ (‘Saint Pugliese’) conceived his music as *música popular* - for local people to dance in local venues - and Pugliese’s actions (himself a registered member of the communist party) were a vehicle of cultural resistance to ‘imperialism’ in the 1950s and perceived dilution of local content in a wave of global post-war commerce. For *Fernández Fierro*, Pugliese’s music was a pivotal site to reimagine tango as *música popular*. Musicians undertook a search for personal identity within the style of Pugliese and their differing subjective approaches stem from the fact that there are subjective representations of the past (Liska, 2005a, p. 71; 2005b). Mercedes Liska maintains that Pugliese’s music allowed *Fernández Fierro* to construct identity through his style and their subjective imagining of how his music sounded reflected their own contemporary experience. Liska argues connections to sonic representations of the Pugliese orchestra represent local place and time and a mode of resistance to a more globalised, superficial sound and Pugliese’s rich and forceful tango arrangements create a magnitude of sound that represents a multidimensional timeless language and gives musicians the “inescapable” role to generate the symbolic power of opera, linking to, and representing the crisis of 2001 (Liska, 2005a, p. 27).



Figure 1. Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro. Source: Google.

Fernández Fierro's most overt demonstrations of political resistance however are in the performative realm. The ensemble's appropriation of tropes from the rock music tradition sonically and visually embody a discourse of resistance to the system. Juárez and Virgili describe the group's move away from the traditional, refined, formally dressed, spotless images of 1940s tango orchestras with an attitude of irreverence and unconformity, combining ironic t-shirts, Rasta hair, piercings, glasses, systems of merchandising, lighting and smoke machines (Juárez & Virgili, 2005). *Fernández Fierro*'s rock production techniques, in performance and recording, distortion, amplification and filtering all underline a contemporary reconfiguration of tango (Juárez, 2014). The ensemble's "decidedly rock attitude" allows them to extend the magnitude of sound that characterised the tango orchestras of a past era, from "distortion at volume 10" to "clean and clear at volume 2" (Gasió, 2011, p. 3975). Yuri Venturin, the bass player in *Fernández Fierro*, relates his aesthetic of rock music to Camila Juárez:

I used to use a bass amplifier, now I use two, with two sounds combined and that gives a heavy attack to the notes, creating the function of the bass drum, and fat low tone at the same time – like the union of the bass and drums in rock. In the *orquesta típica* we do not have a drum kit and idea is that the double bass can provide it. (Juárez, 2014, p. 31)

Together, these actions had the effect of repositioning tango to give it an antiestablishment posture, aligning it with a youth generation. It came from a generation of young people who “perform tango that in turn listen to rock” (Liska, 2005b, p. 76), and emancipated the genre’s history of exoticisation by the west. Juárez writes, “tango is secure here because it didn’t consult Europe” (2014, p. 19). For Julián Peralta and his colleagues, the sound of tango returned to the place of its origin - it is “the sound of our neighbourhood, it is the sound of our city, it is how we sound, distinct from other neighbourhoods, not like [Astor] Piazzolla” (Peralta, 2016). Peralta, through *Fernández Fierro* consolidated the “cultural emptiness” of the Menem era in youth music and demonstrated how a musician’s subjective imagining of music in the past stems from “their context and reality, and that is the value of *música popular*”. (Peralta, 2014, 2016)

3.2. Towards systematisation

It is easy to read the anti-establishment positioning of *Fernández Fierro* as a form of resistance to neoliberal government policies after decades of military dictatorship. However a simple interpretation of these actions as the reaction of a displaced youth generation would cast *Fernández Fierro*’s ideology as short-lived revolution, a binary oppositional stance to the state, and render any long-term ideology powerless. Peralta explains his philosophy of revolution in an interview:

In 2002 to have an *orquesta típica* with its own tangos, or with new tangos (even though not all of them were new) and without wearing a black shirt, filling a theatre, it was a revolutionary deed! But what is revolutionary one day is not revolutionary the next day ... a moment has arrived when [having an *orquesta típica*] is no longer revolutionary. (Julián Peralta, as quoted in Luker, 2016, p. 70)

Creating a social group and movement was a critical step in being able to materialise ensembles and performances, “We developed the awareness that we could share knowledge, socialise, give information to colleagues and generate a network” (Julián Peralta, as quoted in Luker, 2016, p. 70). Playing music solo or in small groups was a selfish ideology, rejected in the context of post-crisis New Social Movements, “to think that salvation is individual is a mistake of the times, individual salvation doesn’t exist, it is not real, a triumph of nobody... it is an idea of capitalism, it’s a solo tango, locked” (Peralta, 2016). Luker argues in *The Tango*

Machine (2016) that musical culture and neoliberalism share a common trait of empowered political voice, a politics of inclusion and exclusion:

Its history is not of the haves and have-nots, but the story of the haves and have-mores, with the have-nots rendered silent and almost excluded from the sphere of official cultural politics. (Luker, 2016, p. 29)

However, it is critical to “understand the musical and other dynamics through those who are included and those who are excluded are located within neoliberalism”, rather than identifying and critiquing political ideologies (p. 29). As discussed previously, political protest has been described as a “privileged form of social participation”, a politics of individualism, not inclusive of the silent or marginalised (Vila, 1989, p. 13). Therefore, from this position we are able to view Julián Peralta’s work as a musician, pedagogue and entrepreneur as multiple acts of systematisation and diffusion of tango music enacting an ideology of accessibility and equity.

The *máquina tanguera* was formed by Peralta in response to the challenges of coordinating, formalising and organising large groups of musicians to rehearse, manage and perform with tango orchestras. The *máquina tanguera* was run from a principle of *autogestión* where members were expected to contribute by writing arrangements and contribute to the day to day management of the ensemble. Inspired by the collective management of the Pugliese orchestra in the 1960-1970s, and *máquina tanguera* management models created an exponential growth in the number of orchestras in the orbit of Julián Peralta (Peralta, 2014). “In four months we had eight orchestras”, Peralta relates in a webcast at the university of Santa Fe (Peralta, 2016). The *máquina tanguera*, based on a short manifesto adapted from Dogme95⁷, outlines principles for organising each ensemble:

1. Be formed with no less than nine musicians
2. Define themselves as an *orquesta típica*
3. Not name the ensemble after the title of a tango
4. Only play with acoustic piano
5. Only play their own arrangements or original compositions
6. Function as a cooperative
7. Pay a union fee

⁷ Danish hyper-realist film making movement, popular in Buenos Aires in the early 2000s (Dogme95, 2018).

8. Play in concerts organised by the *máquina tanguera*
(Peralta, 2014)

The *máquina tanguera* framework gave rise to a number of enterprises to support the surge of new tango orchestras. A teaching school to teach tango repertoire and techniques, *Escuela Goñi*⁸ was established in a disused furniture factory in the suburb of San Telmo. A weekly *milonga*⁹, *Milonga en Orsai* was started where ensembles could perform, and a self-managed performance venue, *Club Atletico Fernández Fierro* (Fernández Fierro Athletic Club¹⁰) established in an abandoned warehouse space in the suburb of Abasto, complete custom sound and lighting equipment for *Fernández Fierro* performances.

The lack of systematised popular music education while a student at *Escuela música popular de Avellaneda* prompted Peralta to publish teaching material to disseminate and share information on learning tango music and germinate a social movement of tango musicians. At the time Peralta and his colleagues faced almost a complete lack of state funding for rehearsal spaces, equipment, performance opportunities:

They never gave us a space, not even a light bulb, they never lent us a bass or tuned our pianos. So even with the high level of cultural production for tango in Buenos Aires, half of tango comes from a place where the state does not put in a single thing. (Julián Peralta, as interviewed in Luker, 2016, p. 92)

Peralta's book, *La Orquesta Típica. Mecánica y aplicación de los fundamentos técnicos del Tango* (*The Tango Orchestra: Fundamental Concepts and Techniques*) (Peralta, 2008) was published in response to an almost complete absence of instructional material for teaching tango music. An orchestration and arrangement method for *orquesta típica*, it contains over 400 musical examples from 1940s tango orchestras with half the volume dedicated to the practice of working as an arranger and composer. At the time of publication, Peralta offered scores of his original compositions as a free download on his personal website (Peralta, 2018). Peralta relates his experience as a music student:

There were no old teachers who could pass on information or had anything organised. Maybe a couple – many characters but not many who could pass on

⁸ In tribute to the pianist Orlando Goñi (1914-1945) and member of one of the golden age orchestras of Anibal Troilo (his hard-core bohemianism and death from alcohol poisoning at the age of 31).

⁹ Dance event.

¹⁰ A tongue-in-cheek name in tribute to suburban sports centres in Buenos Aires that host local social events outside sports rosters.

information. My classes with Anibal Arias¹¹, although he was a brilliant interpreter and improviser, were bad, I mean really terrible. (Peralta, 2016)

For Peralta, a social movement of musicians reflected the sound of the neighbourhood, the sound of the collective - in opposition to the historical image of the virtuoso soloist of 1980s Tango-for-export. The social collective eased the burden of production through shared workload, “We had 31 musicians on our recent album, *Soundtrack Buenos Aires* – everyone prepares in the kitchen¹² and we finished a record in four hours” (Peralta, 2016).

¹¹ Anibal Arias is regarded as one of the most important guitarists in the history of tango music (Azzi & Collier, 2000).

¹² Rehearsal.

3.3. *Pompeya*, from *Astillero*'s album *Quilombo*: contemporary tango music praxis as social activism.

In *Tradición y ruptura*, Peralta refers to debates of conservatism and the avant-garde in tango. He argues the philosophy of tango music is greater than surrounding tradition. Creative practice is connected to local place and time, drawing attention to local movements of practice over wider fields of cultural production:

There is a basic idea that disarms this diatribe, that tango is a philosophy, a way of understanding death ...much of the culture of the *Rio de La Plata* region surrounds discussion that everyday life is hard and often dangerous and gives (cultural) expression to the certainty that tomorrow we may not be here. (Peralta, 2014, p. 201)

As a reaction to a 'restlessness' he felt with the tango orchestra movement, Peralta conceived *Astillero* in 2005. This allowed him to explore the popular roots of tango music performing and composing entirely original compositions, as *música popular*, reflecting the "sound and experience of everyday life in Buenos Aires" (Luker, 2016, p. 75). Conscious use of stylistic features with popular and folkloric roots provide a reference point or template for examining contemporary social and political conditions. *Astillero* looks within its own neighbourhood for change, exaggerating techniques and developing extreme gestures from the historical tradition of tango rather than looking to the outside, for example using jazz harmonies or "falling into fusion" (Patricio Bonafligio¹³, as quoted in Luker 2016, p.75). Currently *Astillero* have released four recorded studio albums and undertaken many international tours (Peralta, 2018).

Viewing *Astillero*'s creative practice as a process of continual change allows for examination of the generative process of rupture and continuity in their recent work. This is evident through analysis of the three-minute track and video-clip of *Pompeya* (Pompeii), from their 2017 Album *Quilombo* (Astillero, 2017). *Pompeya* represents a move away from tango music for *Astillero*, an articulation of their established form of tango with *murga porteña*. *The practice of Murga porteña*¹⁴ an urban music and dance form with deep historical roots in the

¹³ Bandoneonist in *Astillero*.

¹⁴ *Murga porteña* is a regional form of *murga* from Buenos Aires, distinct from forms of *murga* in Argentina and Uruguay. The use of *porteño* as an adjective refers to the city of Buenos Aires.

Rio de la Plata region, involves large group public performances as a form of resistance to colonial powers in carnival marches and satirical dance routines¹⁵. Its contemporary descendent (Pardes, 2016) is embedded in underprivileged neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires, organised through horizontally managed cooperatives, and occupying public space with gatherings of high-volume percussion and synchronised athletic dancing. Mariana Pardes writes:

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, middle-class communities and elites in Buenos Aires viewed *murga* as an “unpolished” popular cultural practice of “bad taste.” *Murga* was stigmatized as an improvised spectacle that promoted profanity and represented an unrestricted and disconcerting space that contrasted with a sophisticated and “civilized” urban order. Military coups in 1955, 1966, and 1976 restricted public space available for irreverent *murga* performances during Carnival ... By the early 1980s, few organized *murga* troupes remained, and carnivalesque popular cultural practices were deemed relics of the past. (Pardes, 2016, p. 219)

In the opening shot of *Pompeya*, taken by an airborne drone, the viewer rises high above the city of Buenos Aires. The marginalised, informal settlement of *Villa Riachuelo* in the foreground, the developed inner-urban centre of Buenos Aires in the background. Cyclists commute toward the metropolitan centre on a bike path through abandoned industrial areas along the Matanza River waterfront. The camera cuts close to reveal the athletic performance of high kicks and low body spins of *murga* dancer Matias Boedo on the concreted waterfront between *Villa Riachuelo* and towering 1960s silos on the opposite shore. His partner, Aldana Mezzano, dances *murga* within centimetres of speeding metro buses on median strips in busy traffic. In darkness, Aldana dances on roundabouts in suburban traffic, a celebration of corporeal athleticism in the mundanity of the everyday. The narrative then moves the secondary theme, *Astillero* performing *Pompeya* in an empty theatre. Percussive violin and bandoneón evoke the *platicos* (cymbals) and *redoblante* (snare drum) of the *murga* rhythm section, while heavy bass and piano octaves summon bass drums of a *murga* percussion gathering. Scenes are cut in quick alternation, *Astillero*'s evocation of the *murga* links to the everyday experience of residents of the *Villa Miseria*¹⁶. The narrative is close and personal. Matias Boedo, Aldana Mezzano and 10-year-old Santino Vera, introduced with head and shoulders cropping, make direct eye contact with the camera. Their dancing continues as

¹⁵ For further elaboration on the historical and contemporary background of *murga* see Paredes (2016).

¹⁶ For a detailed background on *Villa Miseria* and informal settlements see Pastrana (1980).

Astillero's soundtrack reaches a final crescendo with incessant high violin eighth notes and low piano octaves. Suddenly and imperceptibly *Astillero* finish their concert to a full house and rapturous applause.



Figure 2. Still from Pompeya Source: YouTube



Figure 3. Pompeya shooting location. Source: Google



Figure 4. Map of Buenos Aires showing Villa Riachuelo. Source: Google.



Figure 5. Villa Riachuelo, Buenos Aires. Source: Google

Peralta reveals his interest in *murga* in a promotional interview with news website *tiempoar*:

The *murga* was always the object of a kind of disdain, it's a music that we all know but we often look sideways, it's still ignored by the popular music educational institutions. At some point we also let ourselves be carried away by some prejudices, but over time we understood its cultural weight and that added value that gives it its marginal origin (Feijoo, 2017).

Astillero's focus is an inward one and draws attention to local music, expanding on the representations of *murga* in the composition *Catinga* on their second album (Astillero, 2013) toward a whole album of *murga* in *Quilombo*. At the same time the narrative of *Pompeya* moves inwards, spatially, toward the suburban communities of the metropolis, and engages with the lives of community members in the *Villa Miseria*.

In *Pompeya*, dancing in public space allows dancers Boedo and Aldana an opportunity for unrestricted movement, a symbolic and practical act, creating space with corporeal expression. The act evokes hip-hop in the palimpsestic creation of meaning in unused urban space (Cooke et al., 2015; Wilkins, 2000). Appropriation and interaction in these spaces creates a sense of place, as Henri Lefebvre theorises in *The Production of Space* (1991). Dancer Matias Boedo illustrates the appropriation of public space for *murga* practice:

This is where the members of a commune meet again, where they return to be 'common among themselves', without distinction of race, creed or social condition. It is a space of creation and recreation, a space of unity between the family, the neighbourhood [sic] and the community. (Boedo, 2017)

Murga performers have "adopted and reinvented *murga* as a result of neoliberal transformations of public space and neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires and as a form of resistance to those changes", writes Mariana Pardes (2016, p. 226). Performing *murga* collectives use *murga* to occupy and reclaim spaces in Buenos Aires after gentrification, where accessible public spaces "ceased to be places of belonging and became sites of urban decay" (p. 226), and "streets, plazas, and sidewalks are no longer "sites of association" for face-to-face interaction among residents" (p. 214). In *Pompeya*, this personal understanding of the human condition becomes a central form of resistance, with framing of the actors:

We try to have a two-way interaction [with the public] through eye contact and by being conscious of their presence. What separates us is something imaginary and

something special happens between us and the public ... people are used to being on 'the other side' and it's difficult to overcome such habits (Pardes, 2016, p. 226).

Just as *rock nacional* did in the years surrounding the 2001 crisis, *murga* had local meaning and resonance for Julián Peralta. It was the soundscape of his childhood, moreso than tango. It had "a strong connection in every way, it was never embraced by the *petit bourgeoisie* ... Troilo¹⁷ never learned tango, it was the music around him ... the genre is clothing and one makes the music", he discusses with newspaper *Página12* (Valenzuela, 2017). Peralta relates research and adaption of *murga* in *Astillero*:

I think it's a really fantastic genre, with impressive potential and with a spirit that is sometimes overlooked as *murga* is seen to be a vehicle for resistance. That is why it is not given the attention it deserves as popular music (Valenzuela, 2017).

Astillero's statement with *Pompeya* detaches tango from style, simultaneously redefining the genre with the urban music of *murga*. This musical "porosity" is common practice in the current urban music scene of Buenos Aires where musicians freely draw upon musical resources on local music styles, tango, *murga*, *milonga* and other regional folk music (Liska, 2005b, 2016; Polti, 2012). *Pompeya*'s production is a contemporary statement on the city's urban music scene. After returning to take "charge of tango as our popular music, after many years of being considered a souvenir genre" (Capital, 2017), *Astillero*'s *Pompeya*, and its accompanying video narrative Julián Peralta demonstrates explicit intertextuality between traditions of the European concert hall and received colonialism in underprivileged suburbs of a Latin American Metropolis.

¹⁷ Anibal Troilo: Golden Age orchestra leader and bandoneonist.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Exploring three key contributions Julián Peralta has made to tango music within a 20-year period allows us to trace his development as a creative musician and examine how his creative practice negotiates with rupture and continuity within the tradition of tango music in urban Buenos Aires. It can be seen that forms of social activism have acted as drivers for his creative acts, and enacting change in local contexts enables Peralta to provide an agile response to the material and social issues facing his generation. Through carefully guiding his creative production into *música popular* rather than following an inherited art music tradition, Peralta is able to speak to local community, place, location and time. Recognising intertextuality in local music: *rock nacional*; Pugliese's tango, and *murga*, allows his creative practice to become a pivotal point, or nexus through which a historical and social reading of power relations can occur. The tropes of *rock nacional* provide a pathway for expressing collective identity in tango, and tango itself offers structure for creating collective identity through linking to communities in the 1940s. Systematisation of tango music education and enabling collective management structures creates conditions for social movements to flourish, and articulating tango with local urban music styles such as *murga* avoids stasis within genre.

Questions of identity and society situate a musician within a paradigm of power relations, inheriting historical superstructures of power and questioning whether their creative actions accept or subvert these structures. When a musician engages with local meaning in music their work manifests as a textual statement and interpretation of power relations within their neighbourhood and society. A statement in the present moment addresses what has come before and a desire for what will come in the future. Music engages with acceptance and subversion of power, shaping societies through restlessness, or “noise”, and “progressive rationalisation” of aesthetic. Jacques Attali explained these intersections in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*:

... a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. It is what links the power center to its subjects ... it is an attribute of power in all its forms. Therefore, any theory of power today must include a theory of the localisation of noise and its endowment with form. (Attali, 1985, p. 6)

Julián Peralta and his generation experienced the political, economic and social outcomes of neoliberal restructuring in their lives and careers, questioning the role that music played in linking their identity in society and their daily lives. Michel Foucault explains how power operates from multiple points, systematically reinforcing hegemonic power structures:

It must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; lastly the, as strategies which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (Foucault, 1978, p. 92)

Power relationships create a network or relationship, which rather than being imposed from top-down through processes of domination and subordination by state apparatus, are ubiquitous. They exist in everyday life, at neighbourhood and street level. “It seems to me that power is 'always already there', that one is never 'outside' it” (Foucault, 1980, p. 141):

I would suggest rather (i) that power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network; (ii) that relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality) for which they play at once a conditioning and a conditioned role; (iii) that these relations don't take the sole form of prohibition and punishment, but are of multiple forms; (iv) that their interconnections delineate general conditions of domination, and this domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form. (Foucault, 1980, p. 142)

Accordingly, resistance questions or rejects of power relations at any of its imposed points, contained in the context of experience. “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power”, explains Foucault (1978, p. 95), setting it apart from revolution:

This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points

of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (p. 96)

Foucault's conception of resistance is supple and enables us to view resistance outside the paradigm of traditional protest music. Resistances are complex, come in many forms, and are not always located as direct resistance to state power. A binary conception of power such as hegemony-opposition, or dominance-subordination hides actions which may not outwardly appear to be oppositional forms of protest. This includes people who are not always oppressed by power and includes people who may not participate in political protest but form a 'silent working majority', as discussed earlier in the politics of *rock nacional* and *murga*. A politics of inclusion and exclusion is extant in power and resistance discourse (Luker, 2016), and according to Taylor, actors in resistance may "not be totally caught up in resistance but leading their lives, only part of which may involve resistance", arguing that "resistance can work in ways other than direct confrontation" (1997).

This point of view allows a wide perspective from which to view Julián Peralta's actions, as multiple points of resistance changing over time, beginning in the revolutionary and anti-establishment positioning of *Fernández Fierro*. In revolutionary cause, aims may or may not be achieved, or the form of resistance may change naturally over time as the creative focus of a musician changes. Resistance, for Julián Peralta has become more nuanced over time, a compounding of activity through education, operating performance venues and publishing. His work demonstrates a complexity of resistance, ranging from reimagining European traditions of string orchestras and chamber music (Astillero, 2013), toward overt political statements in the press surrounding the ideology of resistance (Capital, 2017; Feijoo, 2017; Peralta, 2016). These mechanisms and modalities of creative practice reveal multiple expressions of political resistance, as proposed in the initial research questions of this thesis

A thread running through Peralta's work in two decades of practice is one of change in response to local conditions. This addresses a phenomenon which has plagued tango music since the late 1800s, that the genre is often co-opted by Europe or the United States as exotic form, morphing the genre and removing its local relevance. The consequent 'auto-

exoticisation' of Argentines, as discussed by Savigliano (1995) is addressed by Peralta with a system of inbuilt protection in his actions through continued redefinition and change in response to Tango-for-export and a 'political economy of emotion'. An unconscious phenomenon, affecting relationship with local music, argues Savigliano, auto-exoticisation is a particularly insidious symptom of global neoliberalism in tango, affecting commodification and ultimately stasis within the genre.

Peralta's conscious alignment with political ideology has returned to the explicit, if only verbally in response to the neoliberal measures and recent oppression of protest by the current 2018 Macri government (Capital, 2017; Feijoo, 2017; Peralta, 2016). Concurrently, Peralta sustains a creative independence as a performer and composer, through situating his work as local, original, and forming part of the canon of tango music. Peralta's work moved the genre of tango beyond style and its praxis is now a container for social cohesion and collective identity. His initial actions in positioning tango as a form of resistance were integral to arrival at this point. Julián Peralta's dedication to renovating tango music has given rise to a complex, contemporary form of resistance, a hybrid of both Latin American and western activism, one that responds to its local social, political and economic conditions, and contributes to the role of popular music as a form of social protest in a global context.

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Appendix

Julián Peralta: Biography and Discography

Julián Peralta was born in Quilmes, the province of Buenos Aires, in 1974 and grew up in the suburbs of Banfield, Lomas, San Telmo and Balvanera. His grandmother was a midwife and he was born at home. His father worked as an electrician and studied accounting. Peralta grew up in a nuclear family environment and from an early age was surrounded by British and North American rock music and regional Argentine folk music.

As an 18-year-old in the late 1990s Peralta attended the *Escuela Música Popular de Avellaneda* in the Buenos Aires province of Avellaneda where he studied with key twentieth century tango luminaries Orlando Trípodí, Anibal Arías and Rodolfo Mederos. A pianist, composer, pedagogue and entrepreneur, Julián Peralta has become an iconic figure of contemporary tango and a key figure among his generation of musicians, who are credited with the renovation and popularisation of tango music after the 2001 Argentine economic crisis. Peralta's generation pioneered the new *orquesta típica* (tango orchestra) movement in the late 1990s-2000s, forming *Orquesta Típica Fernández Branca* and *Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro* (*Fernández Branca* was a short-lived precursor to *Fernández Fierro*). *Fernández Fierro* have achieved considerable success within Argentina and internationally since their inception in 2001 despite Peralta leaving the group in 2005. At the time of writing *Fernández Fierro* have released seven studio albums, one live album, one DVD and have featured on two compilations of Latin American artists. They have toured internationally since 2003, playing at major music festivals and concert venues. *Fernández Fierro* are organised as collective, maintain the on-line radio station, *RadioCAFF*, record independently and manage their own music venue *Club Atlético Fernández Fierro*. The album *Mucha Mierda* (2006) was chosen by newspaper *La Nación* as one of the ten best albums released in that year and the composition *The Lights of the Stadium / Buenos Aires Zero Hour* as one of the hundred best songs of the year 2006 by the Argentine edition of Rolling Stone magazine. In the same year, *Mucha Mierda* was nominated in the Gardel Awards in the category of 'Best Orchestral Tango Album'. In 2009 they released *Putos*, their fourth studio album, chosen by the Argentine edition of Rolling Stone as one of the five best tango CDs that year. In 2005 Julián Peralta founded sextet *Astillero* ('shipyard') to explore the origins of urban music in Buenos Aires to explore *música popular* through original compositions. At the time

of writing *Astillero* have released four studio albums. In 2013 Julián Peralta formed his own *orquesta típica*, *Orquesta típica Julián Peralta*, releasing the album *Soundtrack Buenos Aires* in the same year. Peralta has also undertaken a collaborative project, *Astillero con cuerdas* (*Astillero* with Strings) involving sextet *Astillero* with a string orchestra.

Julián Peralta is a successful manager and entrepreneur and credited for starting independent and self-managed spaces for the development of the tango movement such with the collective management model *máquina tanguera*: the music venue *Club Athletic Fernández Fierro*; the weekly dance and music event, *Milonga en orsai* and the tango teaching school *Escuela Orlando Goñi*. An active pedagogue, he teaches tango techniques at the *Escuela de Música Popular de Avellaneda* and is professor of arranging, composition and conducting *Escuela Orlando Goñi*. He worked as a teacher at the *Academia Nacional del Tango* and was co-founder of the *Conservatorio de Estilos Argentino Galván* with Juan Trepiana. Today Peralta focusses his teaching activity at the *Escuela Orlando Goñi* and at the *Escuela de Música Popular de Avellaneda*.

In 2008 Peralta published a treatise on arranging and composing for the *orquesta típica* entitled *La Orquesta Típica. Mecánica y aplicación de los fundamentos técnicos del Tango* (*The Tango Orchestra: Fundamental Concepts and Techniques*) a method book with over four hundred musical examples from 1940s Golden Age tango orchestras and examples of his own compositions. The book has been translated and published in English, French, German and Italian.

A prolific composer, Peralta's work has allowed him to travel internationally to prominent concert halls including the Barbican Centre (London), Prague State Opera (Czech Republic) and the Viena Konzerthaus (Austria). In 2010 he performed his original score for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in a version produced by British actor Kenneth Branagh in London. Dedicated to the dissemination and sharing of information on tango music, he offers many of his original compositions available for free on his personal website.

As a conductor he has worked with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil de Medellín*, the String Orchestra of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, the Orchestra of the Conservatory of Toulouse and the Fidelius Orchestra of Switzerland among others. In 2013 he participated as a speaker of the *Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán* (Lauro Ayestarán National Center for Musical Documentation) in Montevideo for the Third International Colloquium *The Tango. Yesterday and Today*, and subsequently co-

authored a book. In 2014, Peralta participated as composer and conductor at the premiere edition of *Tango for Musicians* in Buenos Aires. He has given seminars in Toulouse, Amsterdam and Rotterdam and Rosario, Mendoza and Córdoba. In 2015 Peralta taught at an edition of *Tango for Musicians* in Portland, Oregon and Bloomington, Indiana. Today, Julián Peralta continues to work as leader of *Orquesta Típica Julián Peralta* and *Astillero*, while maintaining an active teaching and speaking schedule.

Sources: (Fierro, 2018; Gasió, 2011; Peralta, 2018)

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