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IRVINE

Analysis of the Crossover Between Ballroom and Ballet in Choreographic Works

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Chanel Kostich

Thesis Committee:  
Professor Alan Terricciano, Chair  
Associate Professor Tong Wang  
Assistant Professor Vitor Luiz

2020

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I would like to thank my thesis committee members Professor Tong Wang and Professor Vitor Luiz for your encouragement and guidance. To Professor Tong Wang: Thank you for the time you took to motivate me to use the knowledge I have in ballroom and ballet to create the unique crossover in my work and for helping perfect and correct my choreography. To Professor Vitor Luiz: Thank you for helping me find the Grupo Corpo company to analyze for my Thesis work. If it weren't for the direction and inspiration you gave me, my ideas for my Thesis would not have come together in a timely manner. You helped connect me with the company and therefore my choreographic ideas and research united as one. Thank you Professor Alan Terricciano, Tong Wang, and Vitor Luiz for your consistent help, guidance, and wisdom throughout my Graduate experience at UCI, helping me bring my choreographic and research ideas in the field of Ballroom and Ballet together.

Thank you to the dancers and interviewee from this research study. I admire you all for your hard work and triumph to bring the project together in this time of crisis that we are all experiencing with COVID-19. Without each of you, this project wouldn't be here today.

## **ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS**

Analysis between Ballroom and Ballet in *Vienna Waltzes*, *Lecuona*, and *Tango Pasión*

By

Chanel Kostich

Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2020

Professor Alan Terricciano, Chair

My research explores how Ballet and Ballroom influence each other choreographically through a close examination of several choreographic works from the companies New York City Ballet, Grupo Corpo, and Tango Pasión. I discuss the crossover in these works through movement analysis, narrative synopsis, and timeline analysis of the excerpts. My interview with Rodrigo Pederneiras, choreographer for the Brazilian Dance Company Grupo Corpo, provides an additional context as I compare his own claims about his creative process with my perceptions about his use of Ballroom dance in his Contemporary Ballet work.

This research explores the crossover between Ballet and Ballroom through the choreographic works *Lecuona*, *Tango Pasión*, and *Vienna Waltzes*. In collaboration with the dancers, I created a choreographic work inspired by this research to demonstrate the bidirectional influence that brings the two artforms together.

## INTRODUCTION

As a serious Ballet dancer turned Ballroom professional, I realized Ballet training helps enhance fundamental Ballroom technique (lines and footwork) while Ballroom training helps develop an expressive style and freedom of movement that is easily transferable to Ballet technique. For me, Ballet training is very rigorous and demanding of both the mind and the body—focusing on perfection of technique, body alignment, and expression. The crossover I made from Ballet to Ballroom bridged the gap from being a one-dimensional dancer to becoming a more well-rounded dancer.

When I first transitioned to learning Latin Ballroom dance, the footwork was easy for me to pick up while other aspects, such as staying grounded and not being so stiff in the upper body, took me more time to develop. Once I understood how to train my lower body to be grounded and my upper body to have more freedom and spinal rotation, something just clicked and I was able to use my Ballet technique to advance to the highest level (Gold Bar) of technique in *International Latin* dance in a short amount of time. If I were just a beginning dancer who was learning Ballroom dance for the first time, I would not have advanced as quickly. Because of my strong technical base in Ballet, I was able to use that skill set to surpass other dancers who have been training in Ballroom dance longer than I have.

Ballet and Ballroom have similar patterns in terms of structure and the development of technique that helps build up strong well-rounded dancers. Throughout

my career, I have observed that when Ballet and Ballroom choreographers collaborate, they affect each other through their work. It's not just one or the other, it's both styles of dance that influence each other. In order to demonstrate this bidirectional influence I have chosen to closely examine several works that overtly bring the two artforms together. My analysis will focus on the influences of Ballet and Ballroom in reference to the pieces from the Brazilian Contemporary Ballet company Grupo Corpo, the Argentine Tango company Tango Pasión, and New York City Ballet. It demonstrates the crossover in these works, showing the way Ballet and Ballroom unite and inspire each other to collaborate in unique, choreographic ways. My methodology includes movement analysis, narrative synopsis, and timeline analysis of the excerpts that include Argentine Tango, Ballet, Bolero, and Viennese Waltz elements intertwined into the same choreography.

As a dancer, choreographer, and educator, I hope that my research will provide insight and a broader understanding of how Ballet and Ballroom dance have influenced one another choreographically. Although the experiences I had as a competitive Ballet and Ballroom dancer have shaped and inspired this exploration, this research was intended to explore the ways that Ballet and Ballroom dance have influenced the development and choreography of the dance companies Grupo Corpo and Tango Pasión. In my choreographic work, I explored the crossover between Ballet and Latin Ballroom dance, creating material that embodies who I am as a choreographer and dancer. The chapters that follow serve to demonstrate how Ballet and Latin Ballroom dance have been brought together in choreographic ways as seen in the two works that I have studied using Balanchine's *Vienna Waltzes* as a benchmark for the two later works—*Lecuona* and the duet from *Tango Pasión*.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Dance Autobiography**

Dance is an escape from the real world. It is a way for me to influence others with my talent. I started pursuing ballet at the age of two. Performing brings me an abundance of joy, and I love being able to share this happiness with others. My parents would always tell me that I was twirling before I even learned to walk. When I was two years old, my mom put me in a "Mommy and Me" class, and that is where my love for dance began to bloom. Some people dance for recreational enjoyment, but I was always determined to make a professional career out of it. Dance is an uplifting art, and through it, I have been able to recognize the most important aspects and characteristics that truly define me as an artist and an individual.

When I was ten, I started to receive rigorous and intensive ballet instruction while training at Palos Verdes Ballet, one of the top tier ballet schools in Southern California. My parents became very invested in my dancing ever since. During the summers, I trained at the Joffrey Academy in New York, Kirov Academy in Washington D.C., Ballet West in Utah, and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. By the time I was seventeen years old, I had graduated high school a year early and attended the University of Utah ballet program on scholarship. After a year at the University of Utah, I decided that I wanted to explore other avenues in dance besides ballet, so I transferred to Brigham Young University and started Ballroom dancing. Throughout my training as a ballet dancer, I always felt that I had limitations in my flexibility, extensions, and fluidity of movement. Ballroom dance has

helped enhance my movement capacity and vocabulary, and I have gained and grown in this genre of dance. I believe that it is essential to be versatile as a dancer and Ballroom is the genre that gave me the room I needed to grow and develop my strengths, which is why I made the crossover from ballet to Ballroom dance.

During my first semester at BYU, I remember watching the Ballroom Touring Company's Latin and Standard Medley pieces that they performed on the concert stage before competing at the British Formation Championships in Blackpool, England. After watching this show, I remember saying to myself, "I want to be on this team competing at the British Formation Championships." Three years later, that dream became my reality, and I was so ecstatic to be put on the Latin Ballroom Formation team, which consisted of eight couples.

I had the opportunity to dance with the prestigious Ballroom Touring Company for three years. I traveled and performed around the world with the team to England, Scotland, Wales, Argentina, Chile, and the East Coast of the United States. During my first year on the Ballroom Touring Company, we competed in Blackpool, England, and won the Blackpool Ballroom Latin Formation Dance Championship title for the 28th consecutive year. In Argentina and Chile, we traveled and stayed with host families from the LDS church, performing at different venues, exploring various sites, and teaching master classes. My last tour with the Ballroom Dance Company was our East Coast tour; we performed all over the states including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Boston.

During my time with the Ballroom Touring company, my favorite tour was to Argentina and Chile. When we were in Argentina, I learned how valuable and important the

culture and influence of the Argentine tango is for the country. In Buenos Aires, we had the opportunity to see the Argentine Tango Company, Tango Porteno perform, which was incredible and inspiring to watch as a dancer. After the show, we were lucky to take an Argentine tango class from the director of the company and we also attended a Milonga Dance Social. It was a memorable experience to be embraced by such a welcoming culture, and surrounded by professional Argentine dancers whose passion for dance radiated from within.

With a strong Ballet foundation, I was able to transfer my Ballet technique to Ballroom dance easily, and I could tell that many of the dancers in the Tango Porteno dance company had strong Ballet training as well. Ballet technique and Argentine tango share vocabulary with steps such as relevé, sous-sous, plié, passe, and développé. Ballroom elements are also evident through the partnering aspect and connection between the man and woman in a close embrace. The technical range and awareness found in Ballet and Ballroom dance combine well with the emotional and expressive qualities of the Argentine tango. Both styles of dance are sophisticated, with full expressions of feeling and intuition.

Throughout my time in the Ballroom Dance Touring company, I competed in the International Latin, American Smooth, and Cabaret dance divisions. During my last year on the Ballroom Touring Company, I became the U.S. National Cabaret Dance Champion of 2018 and a U.S. National American Smooth finalist with my talented dance partner Landon Anderson. When I became the U.S. National Cabaret Dance Champion with my dance partner, that was one of the best moments and highlights of my career, and I will never forget the feeling and thrill from our performance and winning the National title.

Teaching has also been a valuable and enriching experience for me as I have seen myself grow as an educator and dancer. At BYU, I was lucky to be allowed to teach four undergraduate dance courses a semester—one beginning ballet class, an intermediate ballet class, and two Latin Ballroom dance classes. As an undergraduate student myself, teaching undergraduate dancers was a challenging experience because it took balance, attentiveness, and a change of mindset to distinguish between being a teacher and not a student. Through my teaching experience at BYU, I decided that I had a new love for teaching, and this helped me to prepare and make the decision to enter into an MFA Dance program. I was fortunate to be admitted into UCI's MFA dance program for Fall 2018.

These last two years spent at UCI have been an incredible experience as I have expanded my knowledge in the field of dance, exploring different teaching and choreographic techniques that have helped me as a future educator. I have also been able to creatively choose the path I want to follow with the influence of both Ballet and Ballroom dance in my life. At UCI, I have had the opportunity to teach Social dance, where I confronted the challenge of not only relying on my prior knowledge but also being open to new ideas from my fellow teaching assistants. Lastly, I choreographed on the Undergraduate dancers for the Graduate Showcase and for my Thesis. As an educator, dancer, and choreographer, I hope to inspire young dancers to reach for their fullest potential and prepare for all the possibilities that can come with a career in dance. In the next chapter that follows, I discuss the synopsis of the three works that I analyzed from Grupo Corpo, Tango Pasión, and New York City Ballet.

## Chapter 2

### Synopses of the Three Works

#### Synopsis of New York City Ballet's: *Vienna Waltzes*

With Balanchine's creativity and intellect, he was able to create a masterpiece, *Vienna Waltzes*, that showcased authentic Ballroom dancing on the Ballet stage. *Vienna Waltzes* was Balanchine's 160th work, and there were 74 dancers in the Ballet, waltzing across the stage in a set that resembled the forests and reflection of balls that took place in romantic Austria. According to Balanchine, ever since his early childhood, waltzing was his favorite way of moving. In an interview with Balanchine, he was asked about the idea behind *Vienna Waltzes*, and he said, "The idea? It doesn't come from anywhere—it is in me. You must remember, I was raised on the Waltz. As a student in St. Petersburg, I danced at the imperial court. You know, until a few years ago, I used to take a couple of pretty girls from the company and we would go to one of the East Side German dance halls, drink beer and Waltz all night." Balanchine grew up going to Ballrooms where people would dance socially, and he was inspired by what he knew to create a spectacular combination of Ballroom Waltz and Ballet for the stage.

Balanchine was direct about the technical style, wanting his dancers to glide across the floor, making sure the technique and form looked exquisite. He also had his dancer's practice the correct frame and handhold, so that the effect would be light and airy. In the piece, there are highlights of standardized Ballroom vocabulary, including: reverse turns, natural turns, open right turns, natural fleckerl's, and shadow position. The dancer's move

with gracious ease, and by utilizing their strong Ballet technique, they can mold to the Ballroom style quite effortlessly.

The New York City Ballet premiered *Vienna Waltzes* in 1977, and each Waltz suggested a different mood such as a formal dance, wood spirits, and a comic polka. Balanchine was particular about the style, wanting his dancers to practice the correct ballroom frame so that the effect would be light. The premiere of *Vienna Waltzes* was June 23, 1977, at the Lincoln Center in New York City. The rich scenery of *Vienna Waltzes* set the stage as it transitioned from moonlit Austrian forests to recreating the atmosphere of a mirrored ballroom with waltzing couples (Khadarina 1). The scene resembled the masked balls during Petersburg's Silver Age (Kendall 333). During this era, the Revolution was also beginning, and the ballroom had an element of danger and comedy known as "Commedia grotesqueries."<sup>1</sup> The music was composed by Johann Strauss II, Franz Lehár, and Richard Strauss, who all had close relations with Vienna, the music capital of Europe at that time. In the World Premiere of *Vienna Waltzes*, the original cast is split up into five parts of the ballet. The program excerpt is listed below:

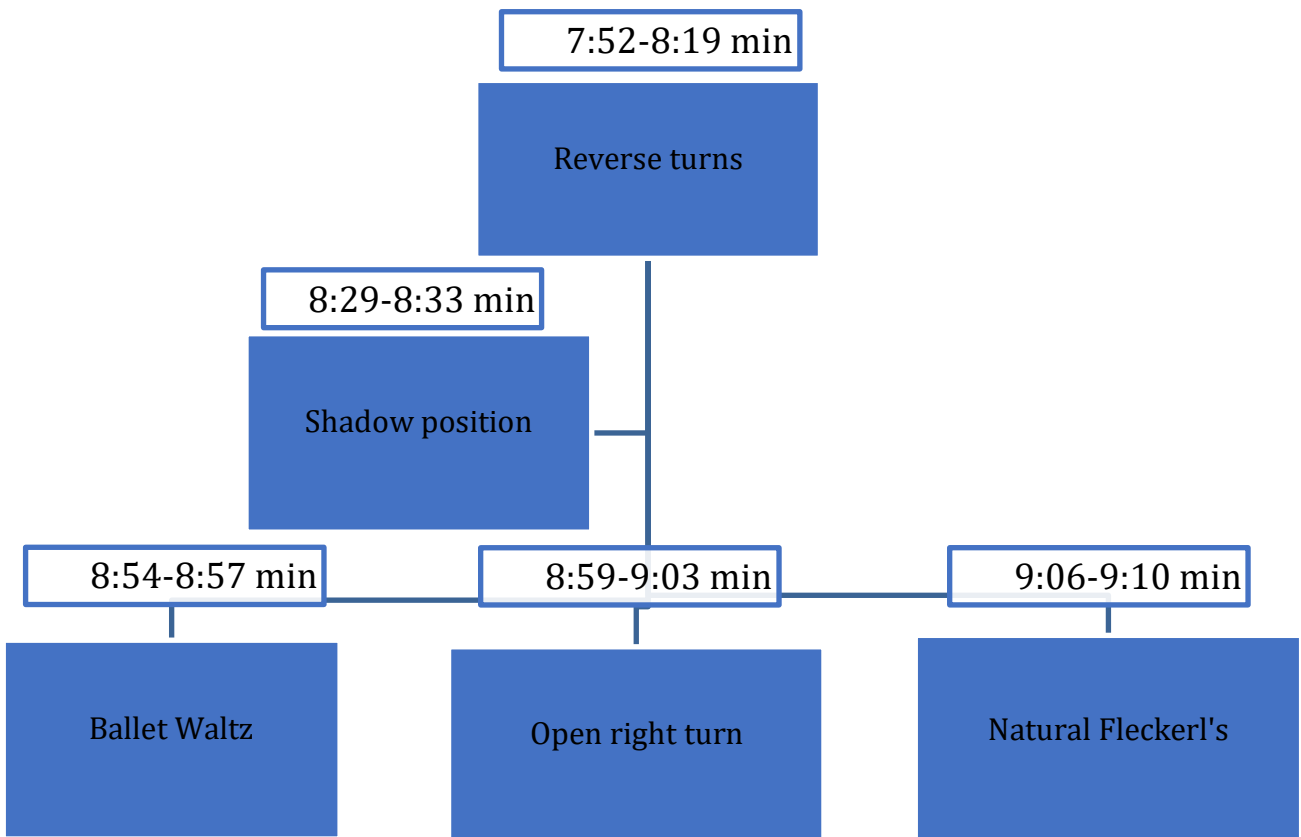
"G'SCHICTEN AUS DEM WIENERWALD," Karin von Aroldingen and Sean Lavery with ensemble; "FRUHLINGSSTIMMEN," Patricia MacBride and Helgi Tomasson with ensemble "EXPLOSIONS-POLKA," Sara Leland, Bart Cook with ensemble; "GOLD UND SILBER WALZER," Kay Mazzo, Peter Martins, with ensemble; "DER ROSENKAVALIER: ERSIE WALZER FOLGE," Suzanne Farrell, Jorge Donn with ensemble," (Kisselgoff 12). This ballet is a lavish representation of the traditional ballroom dance era. (quoted in the New York Times, "*Dance: Balanchine Adapts Waltz*," 1977)

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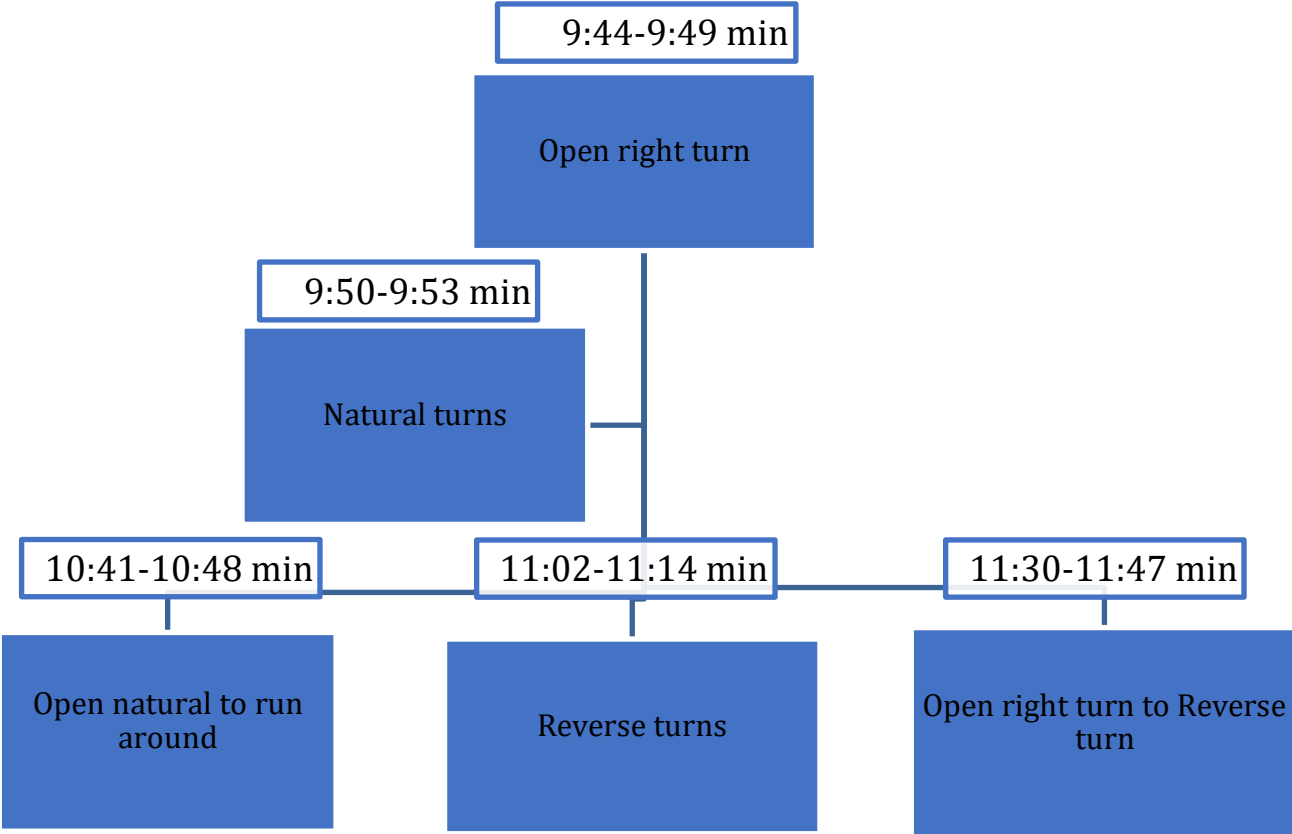
<sup>1</sup> See Kendall, for further description of the commedia dell'arte period, discussed in the novel *Balanchine and the Lost Muse*, (237).

## Timeline of *Vienna Waltzes*: 7:52-11:47 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7WC9W3Jhsc>



**Timeline of Vienna Waltzes Continued (2)**





## **Synopsis of Grupo Corpo: *Lecuona* “Grande Waltz”**

In 2003, Rodrigo Pederneiras choreographed a Ballet named *Lecuona*, which was inspired by both the music of composer Ernesto Lecuona and Ballroom dance. This 39-minute Ballet consists of 12 different Ballroom-inspired *Pas De Deux*'s, danced to Lecuona's most famous love songs, and a Grand Finale Waltz with music by the composer Siboney. *Lecuona* premiered in 2004 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Each *pas de deux* couple portrays a different story depending on the “fiery affairs, devouring lust, disastrous jealousy, broken hearts, brutal longing, contempt, rancor, and indifference in lyrics that border on the kitsch and dazzlingly beautiful melodies – these are the exuberantly romantic songs written by Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963)” (Grupo Corpo website).

According to Ravelli, the story behind creating *Lecuona* is as follows: “In the 1980s, João Carlos Galvão (Brazilian art critic and journalist) gave Rodrigo a tape of Ernesto Lecuona, the tape got ruined, and for many years he tried looking for the album but couldn't find it. Twenty years later, when Rodrigo was walking around San Francisco, in the United States, he decided to enter Amoeba Music, an independent store with thousands of new and used albums, at the end of the famous Haight Street” (Ravelli 1). Once he came across this album for a second time, Rodrigo became inspired to create an entire Ballet to Lecuona's most famous love songs and name the Ballet after him.

The choreography for each dance demands a high level of expertise in lifts, Ballroom dance characterization, and emotional expression. According to Rodrigo, “Perhaps it is the Ballet that people like most...There is that Cuban drama in the lyrics and that sometimes is over the top and is even funny. So, there is a funny side, a side that is very romantic, a very sensual one. It mixes a lot of things that I think made a good soup” (Ravelli

1). This sense of humor and parody appears in certain moments of the dances where the choreography makes fun of the story and Ballroom dance in itself. For example, in the finale of *Lecuona*, all twelve duets join together on stage, dancing a group Viennese Waltz. The group *pas de deux* represents a grand ball from a bygone era in which each couple dances around a reflection of mirrors in the form of a Viennese Waltz (Grupo Corpo website). The Finale becomes a parody of the original work, “Vienna Waltzes,” with over-the-top references of Viennese Waltz.

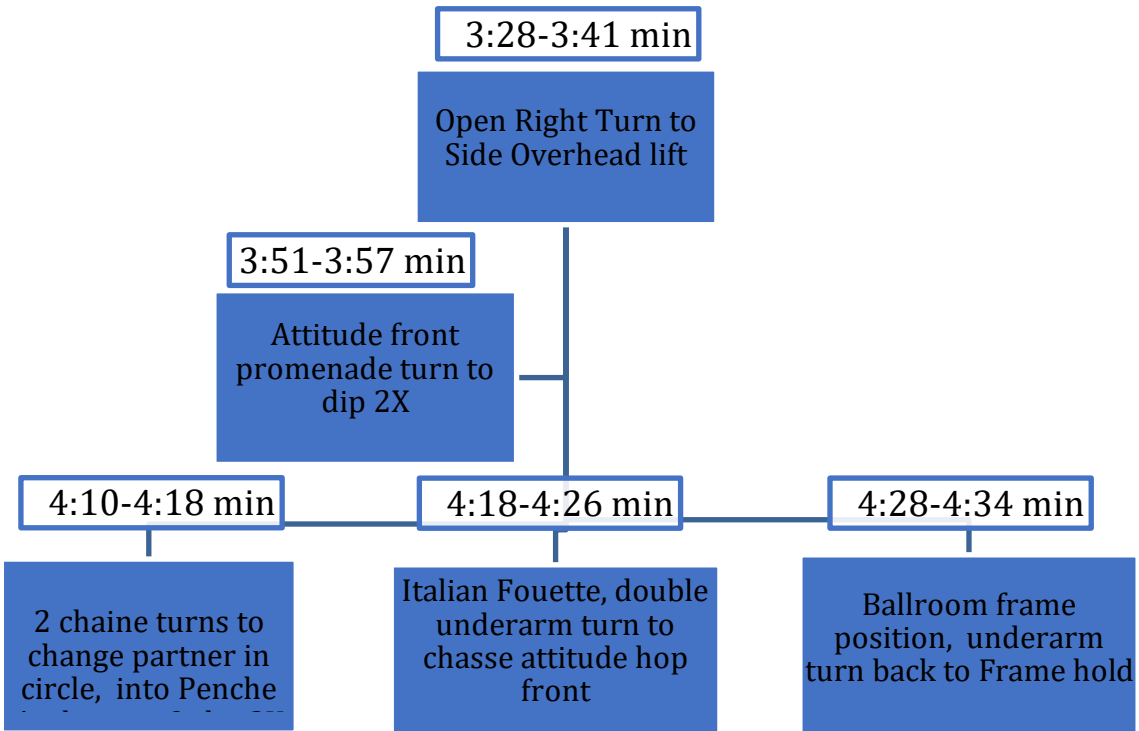
Appendix 1 contains a series of tables which articulate the vocabulary used in the finale in chronological order with additional notes in the second column. In terms of the set and concept of Viennese waltz, *Lecuona's* finale, “The Grande Waltz”, resembles Balanchine’s “Vienna Waltzes.” Dance Critic Rose Anne Thom, noted that “*Lecuona's* finale ended with the full cast and a reference, intended or not, to Balanchine’s “Vienna Waltzes” (Thom 1). In my opinion, “The Grande Waltz” reads more as a parody, with over-the-top references to Viennese Waltz, incorporating elements of humor and fluffy white costumes that resembled the ball gowns of the 19th century. The choreographer, Rodrigo Pederneiras incorporated Ballroom characteristics while putting a Ballet spin on it. In comparison to Balanchine, Pederneiras used his creativity to make a Ballet *pas de deux* look like a Ballroom dance by adding the embellishments of the traditional Viennese waltz with enhanced scenery and costumes. He truly made it his own by fusing the Ballroom and Ballet dance in an improvisational way to look like waltzing at a ball.

However, Pederneiras did incorporate some Ballroom technique elements as the dancer’s waltz on the stage, changing partners and formations in a Viennese waltz circle. The majority of the dancing in the piece is a Ballet *pas de deux* with Ballroom references

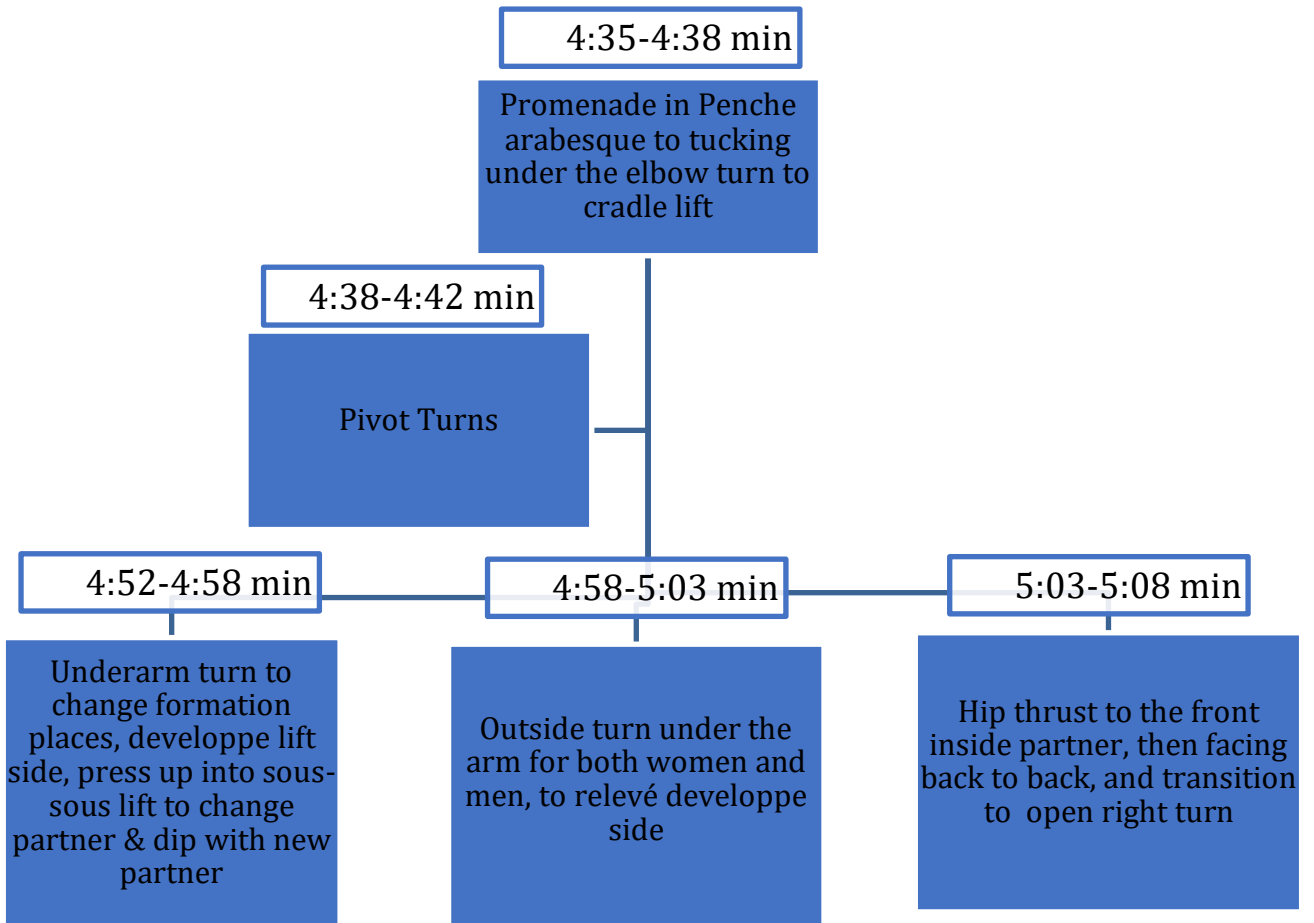
intertwined into the Ballet work. The Viennese waltz vocabulary in the piece includes natural turns, open right turns, underarm turns, outside turns, and pivot turns. Both Balanchine and Pedernieras use their creative imaginations to create magnificent pieces that resemble Ballroom dance with little to no Ballroom dance training.

**Timeline of *Lecuona* “Grande Waltz,”: 3:28-5:42 min**

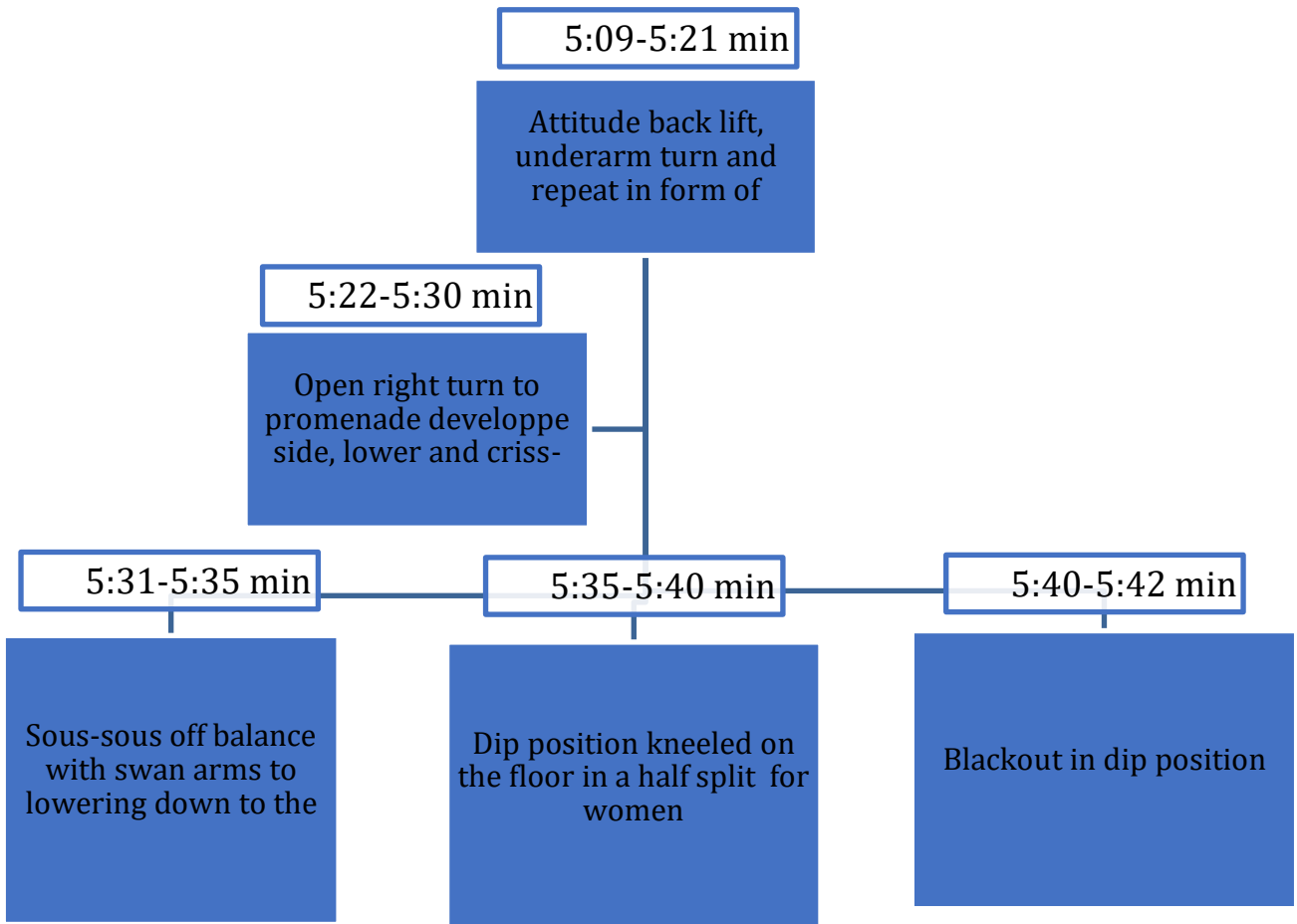
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd4dm4WdIjQ>



## Timeline of *Lecuona* “Grande Waltz” Continued (2)



### Timeline of *Lecuona* “Grande Waltz” Continued (3)



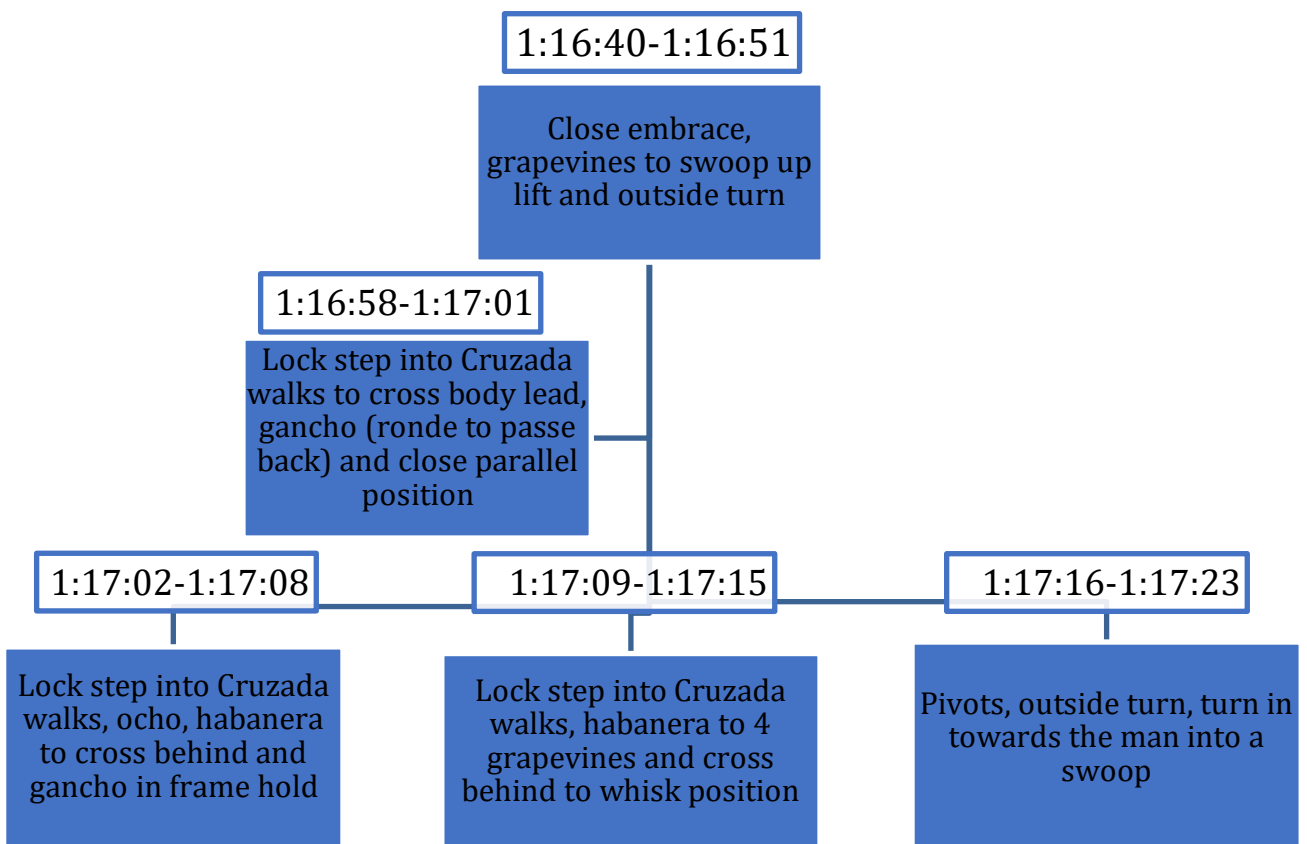
## **Synopsis of Tango Pasión, Argentine Tango Duet:**

The Argentine tango dance company, *Tango Pasión*, was developed in 1982 by Mel Howard and José Libertella. Mel Howard and José Libertella, the producers of the show, had an innovative idea to create a production that brought together the history of Argentine society and the tango love stories that accompanied it. Howard and Libertella spent months in Buenos Aires with choreographer Hector Zaraspe and painter Ricardo Carpani as they put together the idea for this show, and they came across fantastic dancers who could best put forth the spectacle of Argentine society and culture. The dancers' ended up joining forces with the producers, which formed the company and name *Tango Pasión*. *Tango Pasión* premiered at a small theatre in Miami, Florida, and then moved right on to Broadway, touring the world shortly after. The company has traveled and performed in various parts of the world, including "North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Turkey, Libya, Asia, and Australia, as well as being the first Broadway tango show to be presented in China" (Tango Pasión website).

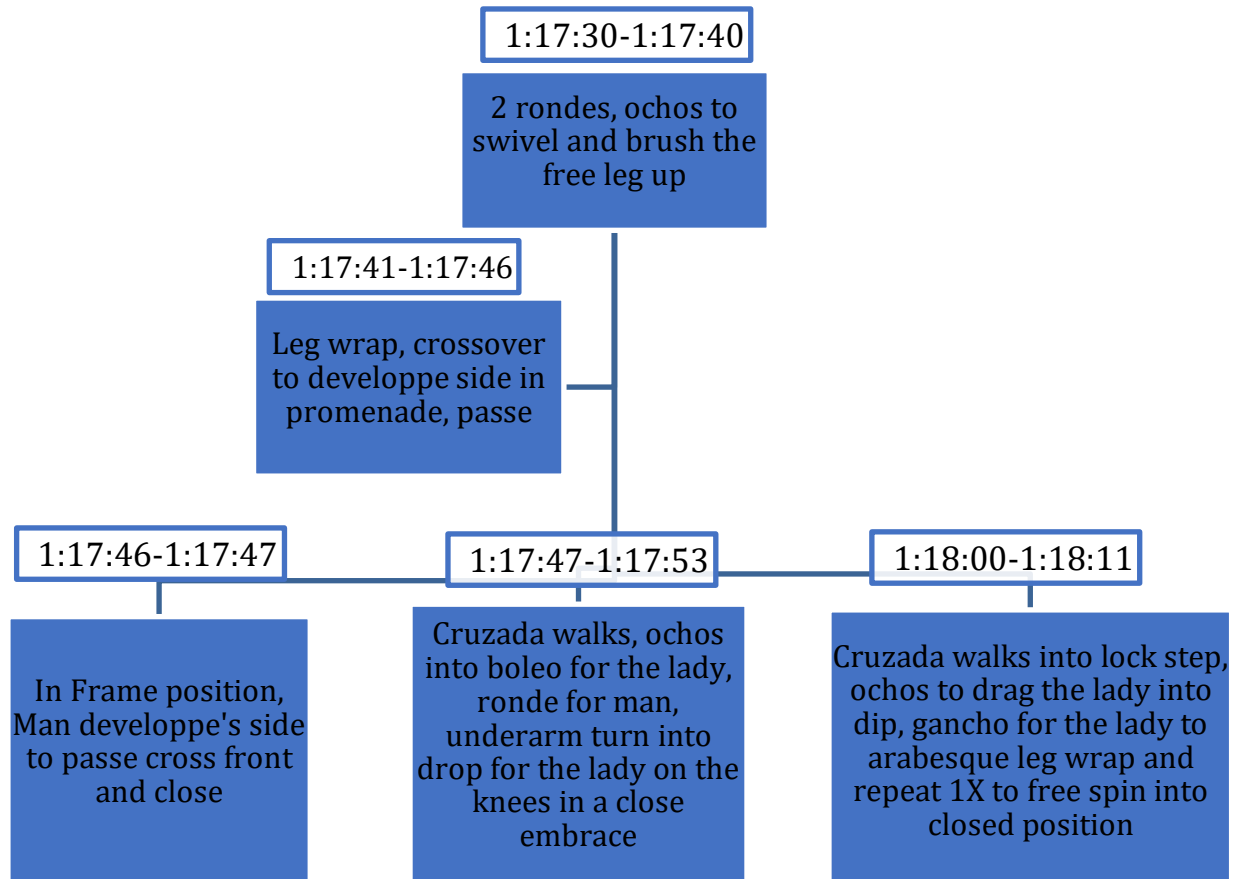
Graciela Garcia and Marcelo Barnadaz are the current Artistic directors of the company. The original cast members of the show include Alejandro Andrian and Paola Camacho, Daro Farias and Lida Mantovani, Leandro Gomez and Marcela Alejandra Vespasiano, Marcelo Bernardaz and Silvia Fuentes, and Mariano Pardo and Sabrina Amuchástegui (Tango Pasión website). The show, *Tango Pasión* is a one of a kind Broadway feature that combines strong elements of Argentine tango, Ballet, and theatrics to bring the love stories of Argentine society to life.

## Timeline of *Tango Pasión* duet: "1:16:40-1:18:49 min"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERQrGa75430>

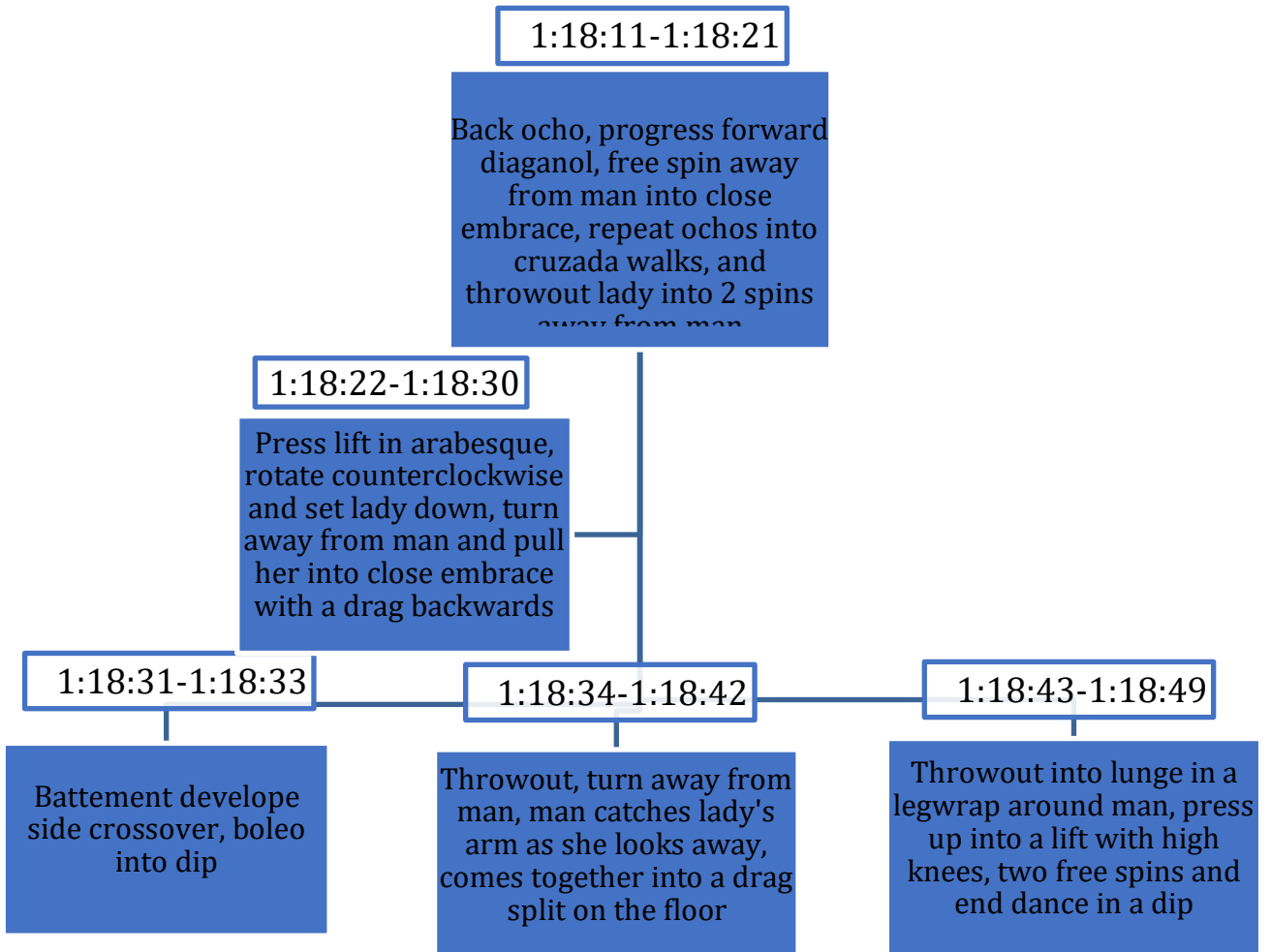


## Timeline of *Tango Pasión* duet Continued (2)





## Timeline of *Tango Pasión* duet Continued (3)



## Chapter 3

### CONTEXTUALIZING THE INTERVIEW WITH RODRIGO PEDERNEIRAS

Appendix 2 contains the full transcript of my interview with choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras. In my opinion, the interview I had with Rodrigo Pederneiras was an utter disappointment. When I was planning for the interview with Mr. Pederneiras, I had very specific questions to ask him based on where he learned Ballroom and how he was inspired to make his choreography intertwined with Ballroom and Ballet. When we were in the heat of the conversation, I felt that he was denying the obvious, saying that he had no Ballroom experience at all because it is very evident in his choreography that there are Ballroom excerpts of Tango, Bolero, and Viennese Waltz. For example, Mr. Pederneiras had said, “You know ballroom for example, I’ve never seen a live ballroom dance. Never, never. We see this kind of thing in pictures. But no, I’ve never studied ballroom. No, no, and the idea of *Lecuona* was not to create a Ballroom performance. Never, never. You told me you can see Tango steps sometimes, there are some Tango steps but in a Bolero. There is no Tango. It’s a mix. Yeah, yeah, the idea was to create...let me start from the beginning, I create *Lecuona* by chance.” I find this claim hard to support. The quote above contradicts itself whether it’s a Tango or Bolero. Furthermore, he contradicted himself when he admitted that there is Tango and Bolero in his choreography which means he had to have had some knowledge on what the dances are.

From an outside perspective, I think he was too proud of his creation to admit that he took steps and/or inspiration from Ballroom movement vocabulary. He wanted people

to know that what he created was his own, not taken from anyone else. However, it still baffles me that he said he had never seen a live Ballroom performance in his life, which makes no sense to me because he lived in Argentina for a year and Tango is the epicenter of Argentine social life. He also said that it was the music of *Lecuona* and the lyrics of “lost love” that inspired Mr. Pederneiras and that Ballroom was not what he intended to put in his piece whatsoever.

It was interesting to learn that he created *Lecuona* all by chance and if it wasn't for going to a record store and hearing the music, he never would have had the vision to create the work. His idea was to create twelve Pas de Deux's based on melodrama and love, and it was not intended to be a ballroom performance. Even though I was disappointed that he did not acknowledge his use of Ballroom steps and inspiration for the piece, I still gained knowledge and admiration for the Brazilian culture with the kind help of translator and UCI Ballet faculty member Vitor Luiz. Since my thesis is based on the relationship between Ballet and Ballroom, I really wanted to know his thoughts on the crossover and how they can influence each other through choreography, because that is what stood out to me about his piece *Lecuona*. I am thankful that I got to interview Mr. Pederneiras and respect his time and value to my thesis even if it still leaves questions unanswered. In the next chapter that follows, I discuss elements of the show and the collaborative creation process that allowed it to come together despite the limitations of COVID-19.

## CHAPTER 4

### HEAT OF THE NIGHT: A Choreographic Thesis Film

In this chapter, I discuss elements of my work that show the creative process that took place in choreographic rehearsals which were documented as part of my Thesis Film. Originally, I had planned to display my Thesis show at the Claire Trevor Theatre, but when COVID-19 happened, we were told that the requirements had changed and that the alternative assignment was to put together a video collaboration of our rehearsal footage. The creative components include the performance footage and lighting, collaborative design, copyright information, contents of the music, the rehearsal process, sections of the choreography, and a reflection of the whole creative process. My project includes a video compilation of Samba, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Hustle pieces that I put together in collaboration with the 12 dancers chosen for my thesis along with my solo dance partner. All of my pieces were inspired by Classic “Oldies” songs. Throughout the development of my thesis film, I wanted to come up with a title that would encompass my exploration of the relationship of Ballet and Ballroom that made up my choreography. Since my pieces are based on the International Latin dance form, I came up with the title *Heat of the Night*, which sums up the attributes of my thesis—the desire for passion, romance, fire, and thrill.

## **Performance Footage and Lighting:**

My thesis show was scheduled to be performed in the Dance Escape Graduate Show at the Claire Trevor Theatre in May 2020, but since the COVID-19 restrictions happened, I created an alternative video compilation of my rehearsal footage in its creative process. I was also working with the Lighting director Merle Dewitt to help me create the vision and lighting design for my pieces. I had envisioned my choreography to come alive through flashy lighting, projection, and set design to portray the *Heat of the Night*.

I was really excited to have Merle as my lighting designer because he had projection experience and for the introduction of my piece, I wanted a projection of the colorful city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to be the backdrop as the dancers would come on stage for the Samba. For my Rumba piece, I was planning to have an intimate scene of a moonlit night with fog as the dancers would appear on stage. My Cha-Cha piece would have a pool of light that would focus on my dance partner and I as we would perform our solo with Joao Martins and Jovia Armstrong playing their instruments on stage. For the last piece (Latin Hustle), I envisioned a pool of light on the dancers running down the aisles in John Travolta type costumes with flashing lights as they entered the stage. This was going to be a fun finale because the dancers would be interacting with the audience as they would boogie down the aisles and get the audience to groove with them. The video process taught me to be creative in using colorful transitions to exemplify the same feeling for the thesis I wanted to create for the stage.

## **The Rehearsal Process:**

Throughout the rehearsal process, my vision was to create choreography focused on the International Latin dance genre while also showcasing the dancer's strengths in Ballet, Modern, and Jazz. As I worked with the dancers in my rehearsals, I would come with set choreography to teach them, while also being open to ideas and suggestions that they had. We had a lot of fun in the rehearsal process and I learned a lot from teaching and choreographing. Appendix 3 provides a detailed account of the collaborative design, copyright information, and contents of the music for my thesis film project.

In my thesis, half of the dancers had ballroom experience from being in my New Slate piece while the other half was completely new to me, and I also asked a couple of actors from the acting program to be in my piece since I needed more men. This was a learning curve for me because I had to break down certain movements and train the dancers that were brand new to ballroom dancing. I was thankful for their cooperation and readiness to pick up the advanced material that I gave to them. The three group pieces I choreographed for the show included five men along with six women. Since I had more women than men in my thesis, I alternated them as partners and made sure that they were each in two of the three pieces that I choreographed. In the last week of our Winter quarter, we found out that we may not have a show because of the COVID-19 restrictions that were going to take place. This happened as I was finishing up my last bit of choreography and I was happy that I got it all filmed so that I could use it for my video project.

## **Sections of Choreography:**

### **Samba Duet Introduction: “Falar Do Tempo”**

Originally, I planned to set the scene for the show with a Samba duet that I choreographed for my dance partner (Marco Forte) and I with live music on stage played by Graduate Music students Joao Martins and Jovia Armstrong. The backdrop would represent the idea of a city-style atmosphere in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where dancers enter the stage dancing along to the music that is playing on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. The Samba duet incorporates the most International Latin style technique while the rest of the group pieces display the crossover between Ballet and Ballroom. Since I am opening up the film up with this piece, I wanted to demonstrate Samba in its purest form.

### **Section 1: Samba Piece, “Tico Tico”**

At first, I was inspired to create an opening Samba piece for my thesis concert because Samba is known as the “party dance” in Brazil, and I wanted to captivate the audience’s attention with something fun and exciting. As I was researching songs to use for the opening number, I came across the song “Tico Tico” from watching my favorite International Latin Dance Couple, Riccardo and Yulia perform. I was inspired by the music, their dancing, and the way they drew in the audience to interact with them. “Tico Tico” is a classic song, originally written by Zequinha de Abreu, and has been around for more than a century, being used in many movies and concerts. It’s also a very playful and fun song for the crowd to enjoy and dance along to in their seats. I wanted the opening of this section to

be enchanting and intimate as the group of five women lured the five men on the outskirts to make their entrance onto the floor.

Since I come from a formation dance background from my time on the BYU Ballroom Dance Formation team, I wanted to incorporate formation changes throughout the group piece to make it visually transcendent. As I instructed the dancers on formation changes, we worked together as a collaborative effort to form shapes and patterns such as diamonds, triangles, boxes, and lines. As a team, we worked through the kinks to make each formation change seamlessly go into a new pattern without ever looking like it.

## **Section 2: Rumba Piece, “Cómo”**

To a Cuban, Rumba is the dance of “love.” It is my favorite style of Latin dance because it embodies elegance, strength, and expressive movement qualities that incorporate Ballet and Ballroom technique. The standard approach to Rumba choreography is to create a dance that is full of emotion and fascination that keeps audience members on the edge of their seats as they do not know if the partners will end up together at the end of the dance. The story of the Rumba is the epitome of a romantic movie—where we want the characters to end up together, but it remains a mystery whether they will or not, which makes it all that more exciting to watch. For my Rumba choreography, I wanted to choose a song that expressed the qualities of passion and desire and tells this love story. I was inspired by the song “Como” after watching a video danced by Riccardo and Yulia, from whom I have drawn much of my thesis inspiration.

The movement quality and presentation that Riccardo and Yulia demonstrated in this video gave me the idea to create choreography that would show the dancer’s strengths



in Ballet by incorporating pas de deux work into the Rumba piece. By using the dancers' strengths in Ballet and embodying the elements of Rumba, this piece incorporated the technical qualities as well as expressive movement to tell the romantic story of the dance.

*Como* displays the most Ballet technique out of all the pieces I choreographed. The introduction starts with Jehbreal and Anna in a romantic pas de deux as they start together and then long for each other's "love" throughout the dance. The Ballet technique used in the dance include passés, développés, chaine turns, stag lifts, tendus, and plies. The Rumba technique used in the piece incorporates cucarachas, fan position, opening outs to the right and left, closed basic, opening basic, Alemana, spot turns, underarm turns, progressive walks forward, and the hockey stick position.

Throughout my training in the Rumba, I have learned to use my Ballet training to my advantage in specific steps such as Rumba walks. Rumba walks incorporate articulation of the spine and legs, as demonstrated as a tendu front with a transitional movement forward into a tendu back. That is the basic step for a Rumba walk forward and precisely why Ballet dancers have an advantage over Ballroom dancers because of their strong defined Ballet leg lines and turnout of the feet. Ballet training is specifically helpful for the Rumba because Ballet incorporates structure and movement of the feet and legs.

To set the stage, I imagined using a fog machine to fill the stage as the female dancers would appear out of the fog in long royal blue dresses that would represent their powerful, elegant stature. Since we were unable to showcase this on stage, I wanted to resemble the same feeling for the ambiance I was aiming for in my video project. I used transitional features on I-Movie to replicate that same feeling for the stage.

### **Section 3: Cha-Cha Solo Piece, “La Gorda Linda”**

For my Cha-Cha duet piece, I was inspired to choreograph a fun dance to the modern pop song “La Gorda Linda.” This dance would be put into the middle of the show, giving the dancers a break and a chance for the audience to see my dance partner and I take the stage one last time. The Cha-Cha is a vibrant, playful dance that would get the audience back up on their feet again after watching the sultry, romantic Rumba piece. In the Cha-Cha piece I choreographed, it incorporates balletic transitional movements such as chaine turns, passés, développés, and tendus. The Cha-Cha terminology in the piece includes lock steps, underarm turns, closed hip twist, alemana, fan position, and New Yorkers. The crossover of Ballet and Latin Ballroom style technique is shown demonstrates character and vibrancy throughout the piece.

### **Section 4: Latin Hustle Finale Piece, “Boogie Oogie Oogie”**

The Latin Hustle piece that I choreographed was inspired by the 70s, and I chose to use the classic disco song “Boogie Oogie Oogie” to be the finale piece. The Disco era was famous for the Hustle dance and the original name for it was “Latin Hustle” because it fused Salsa and Mambo motions of the hip with footwork that was based on Swing dance. The Latin Hustle was created by Puerto Rican teenagers in the early 70s. People also refer to this social dance as the “Modern Hustle” and the “New York Hustle.” Since the Hustle dance is based on the Latin style movement, I decided it would be a great way to end the show and would get the crowd grooving to the beat.

I imagined the male dancers to be grooving down the aisles in 70's era John Travolta type costumes with the women on stage in colorful fringe dresses. The stage would be filled with flashing lights and a disco ball as the dancers would enter the stage. This was going to be a grand finale with the crowd up on their feet grooving to the Disco beat.

I was also inspired by the Soul Train from the Disco era and wanted to incorporate that into my piece to get the audience up clapping on their feet. For this part in my routine, each dancer freestyled down the Soul Train to the Hustle rhythm, putting their flavor and creativity into it. Hustle movement incorporates roots from Swing, Samba, Cha-Cha, Mambo, Merengue, Fox Trot, Tango, Ballet, and Jazz. An interesting quality about the Hustle is that you start on "& 1" in the rhythm whereas in other Latin dances, you start on count "2." This can be tricky for some dancers to pick up but it just takes practice. For the introduction, I instructed each solo dancer to strike a pose on a certain count in the music where the spotlight would hit them and then fade into darkness. Then, they would all groove into formation and find their partner. The terminology in this routine includes the Hustle basic step, Spanish arms, the Vegas, diamonds, the magic, inside and underarm turns, cross-body lead, the side break, and diva walks. The transitional Ballet and Jazz movements include jazz walks, chaine turns, chasses, and tendus. It also incorporates Latin body action through the hips and torso in cross-body leads, diva walks and settling into the hip in the side break. These Latin, Ballroom, Jazz and Ballet qualities all make up the beautiful quality of Hustle dance movement.

## Reflection of Thesis Project

*Heat of the Night* captured my vision for creating a showcase of Latin style pieces that incorporated both Ballet and Ballroom dance elements. The choreography for the show embodies who I am as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer. Additionally, I wanted to showcase the dancer's strengths and skills in Ballet and Modern while also challenging them to embellish it with the Ballroom dance material given to them. I intertwined Ballet elements into the Ballroom dances that I choreographed, beyond what is normally done in Ballroom dance. I was impressed by their abilities to pick up the advanced sequences I taught, really putting their all into making the most out of our situation when COVID-19 happened. The choreographic process helped me realize how deeply I value a collaborative experience with the dancers. It helped me realize what worked for the piece and what didn't, as I examined the piece from their perspective as well.

Overall, the thesis video project brought my vision to life as it captured my rehearsal footage, creating a living representation of the qualitative research involved in this study. While not an exact representation of my written thesis, the film shared valuable aspects of the research that incorporated the use of Ballet and Ballroom dance technique in the pieces. Although we were unable to perform my thesis show on stage, the video project was a unique alternative that demonstrated the choreographic process and helped point out my strengths and weaknesses as an educator. I am thankful for this project because it has taught me to value technology and growth as a leader, helping me improve in my future choreographic ventures as a dance educator.

Throughout my research, I discovered that Ballet and Ballroom both influence and complement each other choreographically. I closely examined several choreographic works from Grupo Corpo, Tango Pasión, and New York City Ballet as well as my creative work. Furthermore, I discussed the crossover in these works through movement analysis, narrative synopsis, and timeline analysis of the excerpt pieces. Additionally, I interviewed Rodrigo Pederneiras, the prominent choreographer of the Brazilian Dance Company, Grupo Corpo. The information provides an additional context to Pederneiras's creative process along with my contextualization of the interview.

As a dance educator, I would like to offer Ballroom dance in more educational institutions because of the knowledge and value it has given me as a dancer, choreographer, and teacher. The transition I made from being a pre-professional Ballerina to a professional Ballroom Dancer is one that bridged the gap in helping me become a well-rounded, versatile dancer. Training the UCI Undergraduate Dance majors in Ballroom dance was an unforgettable experience, and I was proud to see the dancers excel in this genre of dance. Even when it was a challenge, I still encouraged the dancers to keep going, and it made me smile to see the joy and drive that the dancers had in learning this new style of dance. For this reason, I am happy that I brought Ballroom dance to UCI. As I put the rehearsal footage together, it was bittersweet to not see my creative work on the stage but at the same time, I am thankful to have this film prepared for future related job positions that do require a portfolio. I hope this research gives value to educators, students, and teachers that the bidirectional influence of both Ballet and Ballroom dance work together simultaneously in helping dancers reach their fullest potential.

## Appendix 1

### Movement Methodology

Appendix 1 provides the methodology used to analyze my performance of the American Smooth Tango in addition to the pieces from *Tango Pasión*, *Lecuona*, and *Vienna Waltzes*. The following is a series of tables which articulate the vocabulary in chronological order of the dance piece with the description in the second column. Column 1 are the dance terms and Column 2 are the description/definition of the dance terms. The definition of terms came from the ABT dictionary and Standardized Ballroom Syllabus for International Latin, Standard, and Smooth.

#### American Smooth Tango: Chanel Kostich and Landon Anderson

<https://youtu.be/rfkLR7PDbF8>

The American Smooth style allows dancers to be in open positions in addition to closed positions, allowing freedom of choreography.

<b>Ballet Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Penché	Upper body is bent forward over standing leg while working leg is up in arabesque
Passé	One leg passes the standing leg, sliding close to the knee
Ronde or Ron de Jambe	Transition step, circular movement of leg
Full port de bras	Staying connected to partner, full movement of head and body between the constant movements of the arm with port de bras and the thorough stretch from cambré
Grand Battement front	Transition step, kicking working leg up
Tour Jeté	Leaps from one foot, makes half turn in the air and lands on the other foot
Relevé Arabesque	Standing up on one leg with the other leg is raised directly behind in arabesque

<b>American Smooth Tango Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Gancho	Hook the leg in beginning of routine
Natural Promenade turn	Begin in promenade position, Right foot side, two steps forward and pivot
Closed promenade	Begin in Promenade Position, feet facing DC, body facing Centre,
Open promenade	Begin in Promenade Position, feet facing DC, body facing Centre
Fallaway reverse slip pivot	Begin in Closed Position, backing Diagonal Center, using rise and fall as you travel forward and lower through the knees
Reverse turn	Turning counter-clockwise
Double reverse spin	Rotates a full turn in one measure of music
Back corte	Flexed supporting leg with the working leg extended forward to a pointe
Outside swivel	Swiveling the foot, crossing it over the standing leg
Progressive link	Begin in closed position, step back with the Right Leg in CBMP and Left foot directly side
Contra Check	Right foot back with slightly flexed knees, staying connected to partner

## Argentine Tango: Tango Pasión (1:16:13-1:18:50)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERQrGa75430>

Love Story: Between man and woman, featuring love, passion, and obstacles

Argentine Tango Terms	Description/Definition
Cruzada walks	Crossing the feet into a sous-sous like position.
Cuatro	Lady flicks her lower leg up the outside of the opposite leg, and creates a numeral 4 in profile.
Gancho	The female dancer hooks her leg around and in contact with their partner's leg by flexing the knee and releasing.
Habanera	A side together side step action entered with a side chassé.
Pivots	Stepping in between the feet and rotating at the same time.
Ochos (Figure eights)	A crossing and pivoting figure from which the fan in American tango is derived. Executed as a walking step with flexed knees and feet together while pivoting, ochos may be danced either forward or backward.
Corrida	A milonga step in which the couple alternately step through between each other, the man with his right leg and the lady mirroring with her left
Pasada	Passing over. Occurs when the man has stopped the lady with foot contact and leads her to step forward over his extended foot.
Sous-sous position in air	Similar movement to "Lecuona," 1:17:26 min
Throwout	Similar movement to "Lecuona," 1:17:25 min



## Ballet in Tango Pasión (1:16:13-1:18:50)

<b>Ballet/Standard Tango Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Sous-sous	In the air w/legs crossed
Passe	In Promenade turns off-balance
Ballet arms	Stylized throughout the dance
Plié	Preparation for turns & transition steps
Développé	Side into dip
Arabesque	In transition steps throughout routine
Promenade in a la seconde	Partnering promenade turn, similar movement in "Lecuona," 1:17:43 min
Press lift	In Arabesque
Chaine turn & coupe turn	With Spanish arms, similar movement to "Lecuona," 1:16:31 min
Grande Battement	Grande Battement front
Whisk	Lowering the right foot behind the left in closed promenade position with standing leg slightly bent, working leg straight forward
Grapevines	Crossing the right foot back and forward with contra body action
Frame	Connection between man and woman in a closed position or close embrace
Pivots	Rotation in between partner's legs counter-clockwise

## **Bolero, Ballet and Argentine Tango: Grupo Corpo, “Te he visto pasar”**

“Te he visto pasar”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcoZvCx69Ck>

Love Story: Similar to *Tango Pasión*, featuring love, passion, trauma, and obstacles.

<b>Bolero, Ballet, and Argentine Tango Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Basic Cuban motion	Bolero movement, figure eight of the hips
Gancho	Reverse ganchos on the outside of leg instead of inside leg
Dip with leg up in Développé	Lunge in close embrace with développé
Traditional walking step	Walking pattern forward, similar to movement in the movie <i>Some Like It Hot</i> , “La Cumparsita” scene, 1:31 min
Promenade turn in Passé	Partnered movements to resemble ballroom action, off-balance to show contra body action
Improvisational walking patterns	Resemble Argentine tango and Bolero walking movements
Scissor step in lift, sous-sous like position	Similar movement to “Tango Passion” lift, 0:27 sec
Throwout	Turn out and look away, similar movement to “Tango Passion” in 1:27 min
Lunge in close embrace	Similar movement in “Tango Passion,” 2:12 min
Reverse a la seconde turn in promenade	Similar movement in “Tango Passion,” 2:30
Coupe turn	Beginning movement of the partners similar to “Tango Passion,” 0:07 min
Body-roll in lunge position	Full port de bras movement of the head with pelvis forward, connected to partner

## Viennese Waltz: Grupo Corpo, “Grande Waltz,” all 4 solo couples

Starting at 3:32 min: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd4dm4WdIjQ>

Reminiscent of Balanchine, Vienna Waltzes and Ballroom Viennese Waltz with mirror reflection of dancers as if they were at a Ball.

<b>Viennese Waltz Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Reverse turns in circle, counter-clockwise	Ballet waltz movement with lifts in a circle, resemblent of Viennese Waltz pattern
Chaine turns	Transition movement to change partners
Dip	Lunge with lady in close embrace
Pique Arabesque turn under the arm	Moving counter-clockwise in a circle with intricate lift variations that change
Développé side	Ballet movement intertwined with ballroom patterns
Underarm turn	Turning under the arm for both man and woman
Attitude lift	Attitude back lift as the dancers travel in the circle
A la seconde turn in promenade	Promenade turn in a la seconde, off-balance movement with contra body action
Throwout	Turning out away from the man
Lunge with lady in half split	Men and women end in close embrace, men are in a lunge and women are in a half split on the floor with Sylph arms, light and airy

## Viennese Waltz: *Vienna Waltzes*, Balanchine choreography

Starting at 7:51 min: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7WC9W3Jhsc>

Traditional Viennese Waltz with Ball Gowns in a Ballet choreographed by Balanchine.

<b>Viennese Waltz Terms</b>	<b>Description/Definition</b>
Reverse Turns	Traditional Viennese Waltz reverse turns counter-clockwise in a circle
Ballet runs	Men show off the lady as she runs to position for Viennese Waltz circle, runs around the man as well
Natural Fleckerl's	Viennese Waltz pattern crossing the feet and rotating in stationary position in circle
Throwout	Turning out away from the man
Frame	Traditional Ballroom frame in closed position
Natural Turns	Traveling Viennese cross step
Forward Change	Left foot back, closing feet together
Backward Half Natural Turn	Stepping forward into Box step
Forward Half Reverse Turn	Stepping backward into Box step
Reverse Turns	Traditional Viennese Waltz reverse turns counter-clockwise in a circle
Ballet runs	Men show off the lady as she runs to position for Viennese Waltz circle, runs around the man as well
Natural Fleckerl's	Viennese Waltz pattern crossing the feet and rotating in stationary position in circle
Throwout	Turning out away from the man
Frame	Traditional Ballroom frame in closed position
Natural Turns	Traveling Viennese cross step
Forward Change	Left foot back, closing feet together
Backward Half Natural Turn	Stepping forward into Box step

## Appendix 2

### Interview with Rodrigo Pederneiras

Translator: Vitor Luiz

**Chanel:** “Did you dance for a company in Buenos Aires?”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, I started dancing in 1971. I met Oscar Oriz at a Dance Festival in Orapentu near Belo Horizonte. He invited me to go to his company. I lived there for one year dancing for Oscar Oriz Dance Company in 1974. In 1975, I came back to Brazil and we found the *Grupo Corpo Dance Company*.”

**Vitor:** I have to say growing up, I know that for any art form but for dance in Brazil to be this successful this long, I have to vouch for you because it is not easy. We know how difficult it is”

**Rodrigo:** “Not only Brazil. Not only Brazil, yeah...I’ve been working with Jose Limon Dance Company, it is a company. But it’s not. It’s a name. They create productions and then stop for 4 or 5 years and then they use the name again to create. The name is there but they are not really a dance company. We are a dance company. People have everything every other worker has in Brazil.”

**Vitor:** “The benefits are all there just like any other job that is really rare. He is saying that all the benefits of a job of respect like even a government job would have medical benefits. It is a real company, an established company.”

**Chanel:** “So earlier we were discussing about when you were living in Argentina and when you were studying with Oscar Luiz, did you learn some Argentine tango and then study some elements to later put in your pieces?”

**Rodrigo:** “No nothing, nothing at all. No, no, nada, nada.”

**Vitor:** “Everybody thinks that. I see in another interview, someone asked you a similar question. I think what it means because you can see an element of ballroom because of the position.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yeah, Yeah. You know ballroom for example, I’ve never seen a live ballroom dance. Never, never. We see this kind of thing in pictures. But no, I’ve never studied ballroom. No, no, and the idea of *Lecuona* was not to create a Ballroom performance. Never, never. You told me you can see Tango steps sometimes, there are some tango steps but in a

Bolero. There is no tango. It's a mix. Yeah, yeah, the idea was to create...let me start from the beginning, I create *Lecuona* by chance. By chance, totally. I was in the states in San Francisco and I went too..."

**Chanel:** "On Haight Street?"

**Rodrigo:** "Yes, yes that's it. At Amoeba. Do you know Amoeba, the store?"

**Chanel:** "Yes, yes and you found the record of *Lecuona*, the music and it inspired you?"

**Rodrigo:** "Yes, I found the one CD, just one. And I thought...my god because I always loved *Lecuona*. *Lecuona* for me is I don't know...Cuban Gershwin. I don't know if you know *Lecuona*, the pieces for orchestra but also he was indicated for a time for Oscar Howard. He was serious...fantastic. No one knows *Lecuona* today because he was Cuban. If he were American, he would be known."

**Vitor:** "And can I say one thing, one thing I was talking to Chanel about the culture and how much we have mixed with African descent and how we, especially in the Northeast, the Forró, we also have in our own culture some sort of gatherings and dance. And so *Lecuona* speaks to me as well as a musician, because we see so many elements that kind of resemble us in a way. So that's my personal question."

**Rodrigo:** "That's true. But only a Brazilian person can see this kind of thing."

**Vitor:** "Yes."

**Rodrigo:** "Because there are some things that look like ballroom."

**Chanel:** "Yes, I have a question but I feel like I kind of need to demonstrate this in a way but I notice moments in your piece of hip motion and the hold and so that is my question...like if you didn't study the ballroom dance, how did you...because your a master of putting these fusion and melting pot of different influences, how did you incorporate that without studying ballroom dancing at all? Like was it from traditional cultural dances that you just were brought up with and seen that you naturally put into *Lecuona*."

**Rodrigo:** "Mmm yeah, I think that there is a Brazilian way to move. We have a very sensual way to move."

**Chanel:** "Right."

**Rodrigo:** "We really have this and the Cuban people have this kind of...yes."

**Chanel:** "The Cuban motion."

**Rodrigo:** “We call it malemolência.”

**Chanel:** “Malemolência Okay.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes. When I found the music from Lecuona, I already knew some of the songs, you know. But when I heard the complete CD, I said I want to do this. I will do this. And it was ready, absolutely ready. One thing I did was change I think two songs, you know. All what I did is on the CD, exactly the CD. And for me what is fantastic is because it’s not really very Brazilian, it’s very very Latin but in the Spanish language, not Argentina and Caribbean countries, they are very very dramatic.”

**Chanel:** “Yes and the songs are very dramatic and passionate.”

**Rodrigo:** “All the lyrics are like that. They pour out the mentality. It’s very dramatic, the lost love, the love that was never reached. Always revenge, vengeance and when I heard this, I wanted to use it and that’s Latin. The idea was to create Pas de deux’s, 12 Pas de deux’s.”

**Chanel:** “Yes, plus the Grande Waltz.”

**Rodrigo:** “And a big, great end.”

**Vitor:** “May I interpret for a second, I think the name is like a melodramatic.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, very very melodramatic (laughing).”

**Chanel:** “Yes, also what I found interesting is...”

**Rodrigo:** “It was really really I don’t know by chance because also since 1992, all of our pieces, we have the music commissioned. We invite, and I said no, now I need to do this. I need to talk to my artistic director who is my brother and we are sometimes like this. He said at the beginning, no no no. And I needed time to convince him to create this piece.”

**Chanel:** “And now *Lecuona* is... I was reading, is one of the most recognizable pieces. Is that true?”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, yes it is true.”

**Chanel:** “Then, you made a great decision. Also, I studied a lot of International Latin Dance, Latin style. So I saw what you were saying about Bolero in your piece, I studied Rumba. And when you were talking about passion and revenge, that is what Rumba is

about. And yeah so I don't know if you were using the Cuban influence, but would you say you used some Cuban influences in here as well."

**Rodrigo:** "Not intentionally but yes, yes because all of the lyrics came from Cuba and all the songs came from Cuba and I really loved the songs. Reading some questions you sent me, you asked me about my influences. I also let myself be influenced by the music. If the music had lyrics, also by the lyrics. I never get a txt for example, "I don't want to do this." I don't like to be, how do I say this..."

**Vitor:** "He doesn't just use narrative."

**Rodrigo:** "And I used the lyrics and the music as..or some idea other people sometimes the composers who invite, they bring us new ideas, things like that. I always say that I prefer being influenced than trying to influence someone."

**Chanel:** "Being influenced, I like that."

**Rodrigo:** "I don't know if I answered your question."

**Vitor and Chanel:** "Yes, I understood. Thank you."

**Chanel:** "First of all, I'm so impressed with the way all of your pieces. You are such a master with fusing all these different styles so it is so inspiring for me as a dancer to see how you incorporate this so seamlessly because even though these dancer's don't necessarily know any ballroom like you're saying like yourself. I can see it because I've studied both, I can see both elements and it was just so exquisitely done that let's say a person who also doesn't know ballroom but sees it, says oh, he is using some ballroom. So, that's just what really stood out to me."

**Rodrigo:** "Yeah."

**Chanel:** "And the lifts were impeccable as well. Like the transitions of the lifts."

**Vitor:** "One thing, before I interrupt, because I know what she is saying. She is a great ballet dancer, when you see her in ballroom, "Like, oh wow, I was very impressed" because we are in the school, and she is one of my favorite dancer's, don't tell the other one's please (laughing) because I'm really not allowed to say that. But I really enjoyed...and she is a choreographer as well and she uses both elements as well so I know why she is finding you. It is so inspiring for her and I see why this link, this connection was made so quickly and that is why I think she is trying to maybe get from you how did you become...and I know how being Brazilian, you can understand that... growing up as we did with a bunch of influences being tossed at us from everywhere, it's hard to kind of make...so maybe what she wants to say: "How do you do your partnering? How are your lifts? How does the dance include this but also ballet pas de deux? How did you get there? Tell me your secret."



**Chanel:** “Yes, thank you Vitor. That’s it”

**Rodrigo:** “Well one of the things that I love better or more is to create a Pas de deux. It’s for me the best. And the idea is trying to create a...I don’t know if you know other Pas de deux’s that I did, I created from other pieces but I try always to keep them together all the time you know. Keep them together. Not one goes there, and another goes there and they do this, no. What I try to do all the time, the lifts, I try to get out of the traditional way to catch, to hold. And uh I think that’s it. I don’t know what I say, but I love creating. Really love, yeah. And people say many, many times I’ve heard about it, that you’re very good at creating but for me it’s maybe the easier way to talk about things, about people, relationships. I was married three times.”

**Chanel:** “So was my dad (laughing).”

**Vitor:** “Listen, I was married to a Cuban so I know what melodrama is okay. I feel what your going to say about that because they are very much so with the Novelas but when it comes to the Argentines and Cubans, they are more like very (gesturing warm and romantic) and so I think that translates...and you got this right away, just so right and that’s why it speaks to people as well, and I really admire you. One of my favorite things as a dancer too...sorry I’m interrupting you...I also danced Pas de deux’s. It was always my top part right. And I do know that your style is so unique but because you are a creator, you are creating something that is supposed to be and you are a non-orthodox system. But now I understand why, like keep them connected, that’s it you said it, that’s why.”

**Rodrigo:** “There is one thing, there own thing I think always when I’m creating a new piece. When things start to be too easy, I stop you know. There’s something wrong here, no. So, and restart, restart. Throw away the garbage and not be easily satisfied.”

**Vitor:** “Perfect, your English is better than mine.”

**Rodrigo:** “Better than Chanel Portuguese (laughing).”

**Chanel:** “Yes I need to learn, I need to learn Portuguese so I can come to Brazil (laughing). But, yes going along with this connection with pas de deux because growing up as a ballet dancer, I noticed that we do have this separation between the man and the woman with these pas de deux’s but then when I learned ballroom, it took me awhile to understand the connection between the man and the woman specifically in the hold and and for me like, let’s say I’m learning rumba, we have a specific hold between the core and our arm connection to create this elasticity within the dance and coming together and coming away and it’s this like what you’re talking about, this melodramatic with the passion and “I don’t want you but I do but I don’t want you anymore but I do love you” like coming away and coming back and then through my self development as a latin dancer as well, I was able to use that as a crossover. I don’t know Vitor if you remember my Cabaret with the lifts but

learning the ballroom dance is what helped me to understand these connections with lifts and to stay connected with the partner and it's difficult, it is a difficult approach and when I saw this in your piece, I said "Wow, like this really is sticking out to me because I experienced this myself," and it took me time so with your dancers' in your company, do you help them practice these connections with pas de deux's like through your training and technique or on a regular basis or how do they develop that?"

**Rodrigo:** "During the rehearsals, only during the rehearsals, yeah, during the creation of the piece. Many people ask us what kind of technique you work with your dancers' to create this. No, no, they have classical ballet every week, one hour and a half, classical ballet. Then, all of what we do for the pieces, we do it during the creation of the piece. During the process, during the process. They never studied another kind of technique, only ballet, classical technique."

**Chanel:** "And how about contemporary?"

**Rodrigo:** "How about? Not even, no no, no but to come to the company, they need to pass first ballet technique and then doing part of our repertoire, and then we can see how each one feels doing the kind of work we do, you know. And it's fantastic because we have people that work with us not more as dancer but my assistant is with us for 28 years, the wardrobe for 31 years, we have dancers for 15 years, 16 years, 12 years, 10 years, when people come, they don't go, they try to find some place for them in the company and so it's very important for me and I think for them also that I know them, I know them very well and they know me very well. So it's a two way road."

**Chanel:** "Yes, so when you're looking for a dancer let's say to audition for a company, do you look for their strong classical ballet training or do you look for their versatility and how you think they can mold into you company."

**Rodrigo:** "Both, first strong technique ballet and then we select you, you, you, sometimes we can see 12, Oh I don't know the less, doesn't matter, we select people for the classical technique, then sometimes 5, sometimes 10 people, we bring them to Belo Horizonte to stay here with us during 3 days just learning our part of repertoire and then we choose the person we want."

**Vitor:** "Ok, can I just say one little thing, my last person that I used to work with was Julia Amazia, is she still there? She was in the Municipal Theater with me."

**Rodrigo:** "Yeah, Julia is now in Rio."

**Vitor:** "Ah, she's back."

**Rodrigo:** "Yeah, she got married 3 years ago."

**Vitor:** “But I remember she was in your piece when she came back.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, yes.”

**Vitor:** “She had the accent when she came back.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, she was in *Lecuona*.”

**Vitor:** “*Lecuona*, yeah. So then I remember I just made this point because when she grew up she was a great classical dancer, like she knew everything but I knew she was amazing, a much better fit for you in terms of what she could do because she was not comparable to let’s say in Brazil..Cecilia Cash (great ballet dancer from Brazil), and because our dance world, we do not have enough space to pay attention, but in Grupo Corpo, it’s another world because you’re creating on them. Because you’re giving that opportunity, their personality speaks.”

**Rodrigo:** “And that’s very important, yeah, to have the personality.”

**Vitor:** “And because you’re looking for someone that has classical training, but can also be diverse enough to make the company and interact with the company in a way that they can all be in a good group. That’s one of the recipes of success and it’s been used in places like San Francisco Ballet that they are just the same and the reason I kind of decided to go to San Francisco is because I knew that I wanted something that had that. And they have classical ballet in the morning, then the choreographer comes, and he just does the piece for the person and then he leaves. And you like the connection of having someone there. Anyways I just wanted to make that parallel into what you’re saying about classical and how important it is to have this base because as we know, because we all have the same thing, the same base, we can do anything after that, and that’s not something you can do if you were just contemporary, just ballroom, you cannot do.”

**Chanel:** “I know, it’s much harder because of the strong foundation it does make you more moldable to learn contemporary, to learn ballroom, to learn folk.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes.”

**Chanel:** “Because I saw that especially in my college that I went to, Brigham Young University, like I was surprised at how quickly I could adapt to Ballroom whereas a person who didn’t know any Ballet or ballroom and then they tried to do ballroom dance, it’s much harder but having this base and having this knowledge and the technique because it’s very strict and we’re brought up to learn it very properly, it helps so much to learn a different style and be adaptable.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, yes, it’s true. I think for us, for other people, no. Mostly Europe, no, but for us, it’s totally necessary to us. It’s the first point ya know and then the personality. We also

have people that come, that have very good technique, and when it goes to our repertoire, the guy, he doesn't know where north, south, east or west, no. Completely lost, no. And it happens also, the personality, also for me, it's very important, the musicality, to know how to hear the music, how to feel the music. Many, many, many other things."

**Vitor:** "I'm laughing because I know exactly what you're talking about. Some like who can do 10 pirouettes but then..."

**Rodrigo:** "Yes, that's why."

**Chanel:** "Yes, like a robot."

**Vitor:** "Like something doesn't click."

**Chanel:** "Yeah, that is true because some people do have a harder time if they are very stiff or like it's harder to adapt. And so it works differently for different people."

**Rodrigo:** "Uh-huh."

**Chanel:** "Question, so when you talked about personality, do you get inspired by your dancers to create on a specific dancer themselves, do you get inspired by the way they move, the way they feel, their musicality."

**Rodrigo:** "Yes, how I said I know very well each one of the dancers no, and they know me. And it's easier to work like that when you know what each person can do, where, can do better, but also is important not stopping this because you create a limitation for the dancer, no. Sometimes I try to do the opposite. This one, this girl for example, has good lines and she is tall. And so let's do something very, very fast. Let's try. No, don't stay in a very easy position, easy situation."

**Vitor:** "Not something comfortable."

**Rodrigo:** "Yes, not comfortable all the time. It's very important also to create this kind of opposition. I don't know. But still trying to answer your question, many times I do things for dancers and after a while he or she comes to me, "why don't we try like this, for example." And 90%, they create a better situation than the one I propose to them, you know. To know people here is very important, very, very important, for me. I never, never work and I don't like to work with improvisation. No, no. I think, for me. Many people work like that, no. I create all the steps, all the dynamics, but many, many dancers in many, many occasions said "why don't we change this or why don't we go this way not that way." And it's very important, very important, but we need to start in one direction very, very clear and then we can do many others but we need one direction in the beginning."

**Vitor:** “Can I just say you said it perfectly. I just want to understand like so maybe for Chanel, it will be more clear. I think when he says he’s not the choreographer, ok let’s incorporate and then people start doing their thing, no he’s doing his work but he’s open to suggestions of “oh, how about we do this way instead of this way,” and he’s accepting and listening to the feedback of others within the process but in the direction, his direction and is accepting of other’s opinions and that’s actually a very democratic system to me but it doesn’t have to be open for all because I do feel that sometimes dancers feel that sometimes there is an intellectual appropriation when you say, “oh but his piece he did was like oh I choreographed everything but now he takes the credit, how come?” And you can see because there is a consistency of your style, of your opinions that you can see of course, that’s Rodrigo. So anyways I just wanted to say that, that’s all.”

**Chanel:** “No, no that’s great. And that makes sense because sometimes you see things differently than someone else and then they try it but maybe it doesn’t feel as natural for them so then if they find something that works and show it to you, and then you can kind of collaborate that in a way together and make it even better.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yup. Yeah, yeah that’s it (laughing). You send me many, many questions, I don’t know what...”

**Vitor:** “I know this is the American way, they’re very prepared and their questions are all written down.”

**Rodrigo:** “I love it. It’s good.”

**Chanel:** “But I kind of changed my questions as I went so...(laughing).”

**Vitor:** “So I’m just going to say I am really happy that you took this time. I mean of course Chanel, if you have any other questions or anything else you wanted to say, like “Can I audition for you?” or something like that.”

**Chanel:** “I mean I would love too.”

**Vitor:** “Because I think and maybe I would also like to say “Can I audition for you?” But I am still dancing although I’m teaching, but that is something I would love to do in my career and by the way since we have an opening, and thank you Chanel and I thank you Rodrigo for opening at this moment, I always wanted to meet you personally and I feel that I do want to one day if you want me to speak about other things in the future, projects that we can do together.”

**Rodrigo:** “Thank you very much.”

**Vitor:** “Of course, I am planning to work around some things but also here we do have a great school and Grupo Corpo has a school too?”

**Rodrigo:** “Yes, yes.”

**Vitor:** “And so we can manage to maybe as a start, there are projects that we do like East meets West for example, that use our school. People from Asia and I think we have to say, “Hey me too, South America, why not,” you know or bring something. And I just joined last year but I do have a lot coming forward and I would appreciate it if you open that moment for me to just to talk and see if we can do some collaboration in the future. Anyways but I thank you for your time. Thank you, Chanel and if you have any questions or anything else to say, you’re open to it but I just want to say I really thank you both in this.”

**Chanel:** “Also going along with Vitor said I know Cathy mentioned in her email when she was connecting us that maybe Grupo Corpo could come perform at UC Irvine. We have a beautiful Barclay theater so if you guys collaborate, that would be beautiful, that would be something very beautiful for the dancers also to learn.”

**Rodrigo:** “Yeah.”

**Vitor:** “And that does require flights and visas so it becomes a big but it’s possible. When there is a will, there is a way, that’s what I think. And it’s possible. That’s actually...if I wasn’t leaning towards this professional job of teaching, I would definitely want to be the link between our cultures and in music, and make that bridge because there is some cultural gap when it comes to organization and you know that really well because you have traveled all over the world and you know work and how Brazil works differently. So sometimes it’s difficult to counterbalance but you know I do have good hopes for the future but in the meantime, I just think for Chanel, I know that this interview means a lot and because her thesis is coming up soon, and I came from the suggestion to being like a translator and then one of the Chair’s of the committee, she stepped down so I could take the spot because she said “Well you have so much and I feel bad,” and so in this process I am also growing with you and Chanel and learning from dancer to professor, there is also a lot of “wait, why, what,” I thank you.

**Rodrigo:** “(laughing) Thank you and Chanel if you need me also for something more, just call me okay, you have this number.”

**Chanel:** “(laughing) Okay.”

**Rodrigo:** “Maybe I can, but I can hear at the moment and if you both have Cathy contact, our manager from the states, Cathay is very, very close people. Okay.”

**Vitor:** “Perfect.”

**Chanel:** “Okay great. So I’ll keep in touch with you as well.”

**Rodrigo:** Thank you.

**Vitor:** “I’m going to do something that the staff has been doing because it’s so rude to say bye on zoom, we kind of never know what to do, okay I’m going to hang up now. So I’m going to say 3, 2, 1 and then Chanel is going to hang up and just give you a little bye, bye and then we can all be happy and just you know go.”

**Chanel:** “(laughing) Okay and how do you say bye in Portuguese?”

**Vitor and Rodrigo:** “Ciao.”

**Chanel:** “Okay, ciao.”

**Rodrigo:** Like one day I arrive ciao, we say ciao when we go.”

**Vitor:** “Yes, exactly, so let’s say ciao together in 3, 2, 1. Thank you.”

**Rodrigo:** “It’s okay for you Chanel?”

**Chanel:** “Yes I learned so much from you. Thank you. I really appreciate your time and effort in being here.”

**Rodrigo:** “And again if you need something more, I’m here, okay.”

**Chanel:** “Okay thank you. Thank you Rodrigo. Okay ciao.

**Vitor and Rodrigo:** “Ciao, bye.”

## Appendix 3

### **Collaborative Design:**

**Performers:** There will be 14 dancers (Felix, Jehbreal, Evan, Ro, Jack, Nancy, Wren, Anna, Natalia, Piper, and Emily) in the show including my dance partner and I. The musicians (Jovia Armstrong and Joao Martins) will also have a role, playing on stage in the beginning of the show.

**Costume Designer:** The costume designer of the Dance Escape show is Cassie DeFile. I purchased costumes for the women in my Samba and Rumba pieces. I will use my own Samba and Rumba costume for myself that I have purchased in the past. I will only need Cassie's expertise to help make the Men's costumes for the Samba and Rumba pieces as well as the Hustle costumes for both the women and men in my show.

**Composers:** The composers include Joao Martins and Jovia Armstrong for my Introduction and Samba solo piece. They will be playing improvisational Samba music for both my beginning pieces. Additionally, the Samba group piece composer is Isabelle Boulay, the Rumba group piece composer is Tito Rodriguez, the Cha-Cha solo piece composer is Arthur Hanlon and the Hustle group piece composer is A Taste of Honey.

**Sound Designers:** The Sound Designers of the Dance Escape show are Ezra Anisman and Evelyn McCollum.



**Lighting Designer:** My Lighting Designer is Merle Dewitt; he will be lighting and using projection elements to create the overall mood and setting for each of my five pieces in the show.

## **Copyright Information:**

### **Samba**

**Song:** Tico Tico

**Musical Score Rights Holder:** Isabelle Boulay

**Sound Recording Rights Holder:** Lionel Management

### **Rumba**

**Song:** Cómo

**Musical Score Rights Holder:** Tito Rodríguez

**Sound Recording Rights Holder:** RCA Records

### **Cha Cha**

**Song:** La Gorda Linda

**Musical Score Rights Holder:** Arthur Hanlon

**Sound Recording Rights Holder:** Universal Music Group

## **Hustle**

**Song:** Boogie Oogie Oogie

**Musical Score Rights Holder:** A Taste of Honey

**Sound Recording Rights Holder:** Capitol Records

### **Contents of the Music:**

**Samba:** 2/4 Meter between 48 and 52 measures per minute (96.0 and 104.0 beats per minute). The Samba began in Brazil in the early 1940s and is a Latin style dance. I will be using two live musicians on stage for my intro piece and Samba solo to create the sound for the Samba movement. The instruments that the live musicians will use are the Cajon (wooden box) and the Pandeiro (tambourine). The instruments that are usually used to create Samba music consist of Tambourines, Snare drums (Caixa), Agogo bells, surdos, Ganzás / Chocalho (shakers), Cuíca, Timbal, Pandeiro, and the Repinique which whistles at the beginning to give the samba a beat.

**Rumba:** 4/4 Meter between 26 and 36 measures per minute (104.0 and 144.0 beats per minute). The rumba began in Cuba during the early 1930s and is a Latin style dance. The instruments that are usually used in Rumba music are the claves, and the conga drums: quinto (lead drum, highest-pitched), tres dos (middle-pitched), and tumba or salidor (lowest-pitched).

**Cha Cha:** 4/4 Meter between 30 and 31 measures per minute (120.0 and 124.0 beats per minute). The Cha Cha began in Cuba during the early 1950s and is a Latin style dance. The instruments that are usually used in the Cha Cha are the Cowbell, Cascara (side of the Timbale), Clave, Conga, and Guiro.

**Hustle:** 4/4 Meter between 28 and 30 measures per minute (112.0 and 120.0 beats per minute). The Hustle started during the 1970s of the Disco era and was influenced by the Puerto Rican community in the Bronx of New York. The Hustle has evolved and formed different names such as the Spanish Hustle, Latin Hustle, Disco Hustle and the Hustle. It is a form of Social Dance and Competitive Dance. Orchestral instruments in hustle music include the harp, violin, viola, cello, trumpet, saxophone, trombone, clarinet, flugelhorn, French horn, tuba, English horn, oboe, flute, and piccolo. The horns in disco music provide accents to songs.

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