




LOVE TO LOVE YOU, LOMUTO

An Introduction to Orquesta Francisco Lomuto

By Michelle McRuiz

Lomuto: what's to love?

- Friendly
- Fun, whimsical
- Easy to dance to (rhythmic)
- Good energy (a DJ's friend) 
- Some surprisingly elegant and dramatic recordings

Lomuto: what's to love?



A brief history

- November 24, 1893 –
December 23, 1950 (57 years)
- His mother taught him piano;
father and siblings also were
musicians.
- In 1915, at 22, he formed his
first tango orchestra.
- Apprenticed with friend Francisco Canaro.



A brief history

- Did Lomuto compose his first tango song, “El 606,” in 1906 at the age of 13?
- El 606 = compound 606 /arsphenamine/salvarsan
- Used to treat syphilis
- But ...



A brief history

- Like other tango orchestras of the 1920s (Canaro, Firpo), Lomuto also had a jazz band: the Lomuto Jazz Band. Discography:
<http://www.redhotjazz.com/lomuto.html>
- His most popular and best tracks were recorded throughout the 1930s: the guardia nueva (new guard) era and the beginning of the golden age.

Overview of tango music eras*

Guardia vieja I: ~1895-1910

- African/European blend of music
- Trios: flute, clarinet, guitar/violin; bandoneón arrived later
- beginning of recorded music
- tango goes to Europe

*Source: tangology101.com, Clint Rauscher

Overview of tango music eras

Guardia vieja II: ~1910-1925

- middle & upper classes embrace tango
- orquesta típica (sextet: 2 bandos, 2 violins, bass, piano)
- “La cumparsita” written/recorded
- Carlos Gardel

Overview of tango music eras

Guardia nueva: ~1925-1935

- classically trained musicians joining/forming orchestras
- music slowed down, structure changed to “the four”:
 - four equal quarter notes w/2 down beats (1 & 3) and 2 up beats (2 & 4) – A B A B
- more of a listening than a dancing audience
- tango in film

Overview of tango music eras

Golden age: ~1935-1955






- D'Arienzo, El Rey de Compás!
- BA celebrates 400th birthday w/obelisk, opening of Avenida Nuevo de Julio
- the rise of the tango singer
- the zenith of tango music in the mid- to late 1940s
- milongas all over BA

What makes Lomuto Lomuto?

- heavy walking beat
- “honky” sound (Dr. Seuss)
- clarinet and saxophone
- unique ending to tangos:
 - ~~chan-CHAN!~~ CHAN-chan!
 - “diminished seventh cadence”
 - vals:
 - milonga:
- drums and cymbals



Variations on a theme

- hard rhythmic: Callecita de mi novia, Mano a mano, A la gran muñeca 
- more lyrical, romantic: Nostalgias, Sueño de poeta, San Telmo, Dímelo al oído 
- dramatic: Riendo, Solamente ella, El barco Maria, Lo han visto con otra 
- zippy: Zorro gris, Golgota, Monte criollo, La gayola, Copa de ajenjo, many valeses 
- amped-up: all of the milongas 

Lomuto lovelies: classic tunes

- Callecita de mi novia (t) – 1938 w/Jorge Omar
- Nostalgias (t) – 1936, w/Omar
- Guitarra romana (t) – 1939, instrumental
- San Telmo (t) – 1932 w/Charlo
- Aquí me pongo a cantar (m) – 1945 w/Alberto Rivera
- No hay tierra como la mía (m) – 1939 w/Fernando Díaz
- Isabelita (v) – 1940 w/Díaz
- Noche de ronda (v) – 1937, instrumental
- Cuando estaba enamorado (v) – 1940 w/Díaz
- Lirio blanco (v) – 1934 w/Díaz



So, how do YOU Lomuto?

Resources for Lomuto music

- *Tango Stories, Musical Secrets* by Michael Lavocah
(in the TCA library)
- <https://tango.info/eng/FrancLomuto>
- <http://www.todotango.com/english/artists/biography/101/Francisco-Lomuto/>
- TangoTunes
- iTunes
- Amazon

Questions?

