

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE STYLE, ANALYSIS, AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF *LAS CUATRO
ESTACIONES PORTEÑAS* BY ASTOR PIAZZOLLA, ARRANGED BY LEONID
DESYATNIKOV

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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Abstract

This research study mainly focuses on Leonid Desyatnikov's version of *Four Seasons* for solo violin and string orchestra, an arrangement of Astor Piazzolla's renowned tango-style chamber music. Desyatnikov's music retains the classical music structure while incorporating tango elements inspired by Piazzolla, and this piece enriches the repertoire of modern violin music and makes an outstanding contribution to the development of violin music. This document includes an analysis of the work's musical structures, stylistic elements, and different classical and modern violin techniques. Besides, it combines a comparative evaluation of performances by five renowned violinists to offer musical ideas and practical guidance for interpreting and mastering this significant violin piece.

Chapter 1: Introduction

When discussing the music written for the four seasons, the first piece that comes to mind is the set of four violin concertos entitled *The Four Seasons* by the Baroque-era composer Antonio Vivaldi, a must-play piece for every violin player. Argentine tango master Astor Piazzolla created four tango chamber music pieces and put them together as a suite whose title referred to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Later, Ukrainian composer Leonid Desyatnikov arranged the four chamber music suites into four solo violin and string orchestra suites.

The chamber music suite *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, also called *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, is a collection of four single-movement pieces composed by the Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla between 1965 and 1970. Compared to classical chamber music, these four pieces were originally written for a non-conventional ensemble of instruments, including one violin (or viola), one piano, one electric guitar, one double bass, and one bandoneón, which the composer himself performed. Although Piazzolla composed these four works separately, he and his quintet often performed them together. This set of four pieces has become a beloved and timeless classic work owing to its combination of classical and Latin American music styles. Numerous classical musicians have arranged and performed this work for years since its composition.

Unlike Vivaldi's original structure of three movements per season, Piazzolla and Desyatnikov's arrangements condense each season into a single movement. However, Desyatnikov's solo violin version retains the essential Baroque characteristic of each season while incorporating the tango music elements introduced by Piazzolla. It explores traditional violin techniques and expands them with modern approaches inspired by tango music, creating a dynamic fusion of classical violin music and contemporary tango music. Leonid Desyatnikov truly elevated

this piece to international fame. This document will discuss how Leonid Desyatnikov's arrangement transformed it into an iconic work.

Purpose of study

Desyatnikov's arrangement of *Estaciones Porteñas* has become a staple in the violin repertoire, with many distinguished violinists performing it. This study intends to give violinists a deeper understanding of this violin solo work and how Desyatnikov's arrangement relates to the original chamber suites. Although performers can interpret the music freely as they prefer, an understanding of the original composition and an in-depth analysis of the development and changes of the melody line will give performers more choices in articulation and timbre while enhancing the sensitivity of their music performances. This study will be a reference for musicians seeking to study or perform either version of this piece.

Need for the study

Piazzolla's tango music has gained widespread popularity over many years, with plenty of classical musicians taking an interest in performing it. However, it may be difficult for many violinists to access the original composition, which can hinder their understanding of the composer's intent and limit their interpretive choices. Through this research, it is hoped that violinists will gain a more comprehensive understanding of Piazzolla's tango music and how to perform Desyatnikov's arrangement effectively.

Organization of the document

The entire study will be divided into five chapters. After the introductory Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the composers' lives and their respective compositions, explicitly focusing on Piazzolla's new tango style and Desyatnikov's writing style as a player and arranger.

In Chapter 3, the score will be analyzed in detail, including a comparison of tempos, rhythms, harmonic progressions, melodic contours, orchestrations, and counterpoints. The purpose of this analysis is to find the similarities and compare differences between the two versions and understand how Desyatnikov's arrangement reflects Piazzolla's original composition.

Chapter 4 will observe and study the performance practices of well-known violinists in Desyatnikov's version. By analyzing their recordings, the study will explore how these musicians interpret the music and whether they follow the written score strictly or incorporate their own improvisations. As Piazzolla said in his telephone interview with WPFW-FM Radio in Washington, DC, on April 23, 1989, he would encourage musicians to improvise the music to make it sound new and exciting.¹ This study will provide valuable insights into violinists' performances and how they interpret Piazzolla's tango music as both players and second-time creators. A conclusion will round out the document in Chapter 5, followed by the bibliography.

¹ "Interview with Astor Piazzolla (April 1989)," Youtube, accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUh4dNuK56o>.

Literature Review

Various research materials have been written about Astor Piazzolla and Leonid Desyatnikov. Biographical books provide general information about composers' lives and musical works, whereas research papers or dissertations concentrate on specific aspects of their music. Journal articles, reviews, and program notes can offer different insights into how audiences and critics perceived the composers throughout time.

Maria Azzi and Simon Collier published the book *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* in 2000. This book is a biography resource of the renowned composer Astor Piazzolla, including his life, studies, and musical career. The book follows in a chronological order, with the first section introducing the composer's background and discussing his parents and their lives and struggles. The second part involves the people and musicians associated with Piazzolla and their influences on him, and the final section explores his middle and later periods of career and worldwide performance tours. Overall, this book generally provides a general description of the composer's life, offering readers an understanding of Piazzolla; however, it lacks a detailed analysis of his musical works. As Gabriela Mauriño writes in her review of this book, *Le Grand Tango: the Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla by Maria Susana Azzi and Simon Collier*, published by *Music & Letters* in 2002, Azzi and Collier's emphasis on secondary aspects of the composer does not help readers fully understand the composer's unique characteristics and his identity as a musician. However, the book is an excellent resource for those who have just started to learn about the composer's life journey.²

² Gabriela Mauriño, "Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla by Maria Susana Azzi and Simon Collier," *Music & Letters* 83, no. 1 (2002), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3525967>.

In her dissertation, *Violin Periphery: Nuevo Tango in Astor Piazzolla's Tango-Études and Minimalism in Philip Glass' Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Jenny Vaughn conducted detailed research on the *Nuevo Tango* style in Piazzolla's études and how this new tango style influenced the development of his music. However, she does not explore how this style was applied to the composer's other violin works.

The New York Philharmonic performed Piazzolla's *Estaciones Porteñas* in a concert on June 27, 2016. The concert program note briefly introduces Piazzolla's new composition style and the general information about the entire suite. The note also discusses the possible orders from various publishers, arrangers, and performers who have made different choices compared to the composer's original set. Additionally, it provides a deep insight into the creative process and the evolution of the composition.³

Piazzolla's 1989 telephone interview with WPFW-FM is valuable for exploring his creative process and motivations for innovating and modernizing traditional tango music. In the audio clip, Piazzolla discusses his dissatisfaction with traditional tango music, which he deems "non-music with a little bit brain music."⁴ Moreover, he explains how younger generations seek more excitement and change in music and how that encourages him to innovate a new style of tango that would entertain both his younger listeners and himself. This new tango style is evident in his music, *Estaciones Porteñas*.

In the article, *The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov*, musicologist Olga Manulkina briefly introduces Desyatnikov's life and educational background.

³ "Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas (the Four Seasons of Buenos Aires), for Violin and String Orchestra ", New York Philharmonic, June, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160627061615/https://nyphil.org/~media/pdfs/program-notes/1516/Piazzolla-arr-Desyatnikov-Four-Seasons-of-Buenos-Aires.pdf> (Live Concert Program Note).

⁴ "Interview with Astor Piazzolla (April 1989)."

She also discusses Desyatnikov's music-writing style, pointing out that his compositional style was influenced by different periods of music, from Baroque music to Contemporary jazz music. Manulkina writes that Desyatnikov drew upon Russian cultural influences in his works, in particular. Even though Desyatnikov thought he would be a "Russian European" composer rather than a "nationalist composer,"⁵ he still drew massive inspiration from Russian musical idioms, poems, traditional stories, and composers such as Stravinsky.

In WayAnne Watson's 2015 dissertation, *Musical Borrowing in Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: Piazzolla, Desyatnikov, Vivaldi*, Watson analyzes the musical elements that Desyatnikov borrows or quotes from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. According to Watson, the method Desyatnikov uses in his arrangement can be characterized as the modern concept of "mash-up"⁶, which means two or more music clips are overlayed or mashed together as a new work in the pop music genre. In the paper, Watson briefly analyzes the materials that were either maintained or transformed by the other two composers. However, the dissertation does not explore more of the composers' intentions or musical interpretations, nor does it discuss musicians' actual performances.

Besides the extensive existing research on Piazzolla's and Desyatnikov's scores, it is necessary to understand that the performance of a composition can greatly influence its overall interpretation and reception. Considering this, it would be necessary to have further research on the actual performances of Piazzolla's and Desyatnikov's compositions to better understand how the related materials connect and interact in practice. By studying performance recordings of

⁵ Olga Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," *Tempo*, no. 220 (2002): 20-23, Cambridge University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/946581>.

⁶ WayAnne Watson, "Musical Borrowing in Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: Piazzolla, Desyatnikov, Vivaldi" (Honor Thesis, Andrews University, 2015), 6, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/honors/121>.

various recognized musicians, including Piazzolla himself on his original quintet version, comparative analysis on different interpretations and performance styles can help musicians learn and develop their own performances.

Chapter 2: Piazzolla and Desyatnikov's Lives and Music

Piazzolla's Life and Music

Astor Piazzolla is an Argentine composer and musician who is famous for innovating the new tango music, *Nuevo Tango* (New Tango). Because of this unique music style, a fusion of European classical music and South American folk-dance music, he gained world-renowned fame and the nickname "El Maestro" (The Maestro) among his fans.⁷

Piazzolla was born in 1921 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, shortly after his parents immigrated from Italy. When he was four years old, the whole family moved to New York City and settled in an Italian community called Little Italy. During that period, Piazzolla got inspiration from his father, who liked to listen to classical music records after returning home from work. He was exposed to various classical music styles in his early childhood.⁸ At the age of eight, Piazzolla received a gift from his father, his first instrument, bandoneón—a type of accordion typical in tango and other Argentinian music—and started to learn it. Later, this instrument became the most important instrument in Piazzolla's performance career and one of the most distinguished instruments in his music composition.⁹

Piazzolla returned to Argentina at seventeen. He quickly got involved in the local music field by playing the bandoneón and performing with various ensembles. During this period, Piazzolla started his unique musical style by combining the European classical repertoire he had grown up with and the traditional Latin American styles he encountered in Argentina. This fusion of classical and Latin styles resulted in what has become known as *Nuevo Tango*, and Piazzolla's

⁷ Natalio Gorin, *Astor Piazzolla: A Memoir*, trans. Fernando Gonzalez (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2001), 22.

⁸ Maria Azzi and Simon Collier, *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3-9.

⁹ Gorin, *Astor Piazzolla: A Memoir*, 141.

work is celebrated worldwide and continuously inspires modern tango musicians. His compositional style not only revolutionizes the sound of tango music by including the fugue, elements of jazz, like extreme chromaticism and dissonance, and expanded instrumentation¹⁰ but also solidifies it as an art form that is still appreciated and performed individually today.

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires is one of the pieces Piazzolla composed in *Nuevo Tango* style. This work is inspired by Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi's best-known set of concertos, *Four Seasons*, and it combines the classical music themes found in the concertos with the tango style.

Other of Piazzolla's well-known pieces include *Le Grand Tango*, initially written for cello and piano duet and commissioned by Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. In his masterpiece, Piazzolla combines tango characters with classical techniques, and this music has become a standard contemporary piece in the cello repertoire. *La Historia del Tango*, a suite of four pieces, describes the story of the development of tango music. *Libertango* is one of Piazzolla's most famous works due to its lively and rhythmic musical style. Furthermore, *Adiós Nonino* is written in memory of Piazzolla's father, and *Michaelangelo '70* also reveals Piazzolla's compositional style of combining classical music with jazz and tango music.¹¹

In addition, Piazzolla also made contributions to the world of opera, literature, and film music, including Fernando E. Solanas's film scores *Tangos: the Exile of Gardel* (1985) and *Sur* (1987).¹²

¹⁰ "Piazzolla, Astor," Grove Music Online, 2001, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.45192>.

¹¹ Gorin, *Astor Piazzolla: A Memoir*, 251.

¹² Eisen, "Piazzolla, Astor."

Besides composing, Piazzolla was a well-skilled bandoneón player. In 1955, he founded his first ensemble, the Buenos Aires Octet, comprising two bandoneón, two violins, one viola, one cello, one bass, and one piano, and this ensemble started to make recordings of his new tango music.¹³ Later, in the 1970s, Piazzolla formed more experimental groups. In 1978, the Second Quintet became his most famous ensemble. It gained him great success in virtuosic performances and recordings.¹⁴ It established an exciting and intimate atmosphere, while the musicians often interacted and improvised together during their performances. As a result, the music created a unique, energetic, melancholic sound,¹⁵ and often evoked nostalgia for the old days of tango dancing.¹⁶

Nuevo Tango

Tango is a dance type that has complicated origins and branches. Current research shows that it was influenced by dances of the Spanish gypsy milonga, the Afro-Argentine candombe, the Spanish contradanza, and the Cuban habanera dances.¹⁷

The traditional Argentine tango was originally a form of social dancing, which is usually considered the "Dance of Love." It is a series of short dances, consisting of the Start through to the Natural-Resolution, often played by bandoneon, piano, violin, bass, and sometimes the guitar.¹⁸ The sonority of the bandoneón expresses the lament and emotional cries that characterize the tango music. This music can be traced back to 1885-1895 in the Rio de la Plata region, along a river

¹³ Azzi and Collier, *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla*, 57.

¹⁴ Ibid., 287.

¹⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹⁶ Kathy Davis, *Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World* (New York: New Yprk University Press, 2015), 160.

¹⁷ Thomas L. Nelson, *Tango and Related Dances* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009), 6.5.

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.6.

forming part of the border between Argentina and Uruguay. In the beginning, tango music was primarily used for accompanying the dancers and was played in a 2/4 time signature, which later changed to 4/8 in the 1920s.¹⁹ The traditional tango music form consists of three parts: sections A, section B, and a Trio in relative or parallel keys. Developing in the 1940s-50s, it slightly added the binary or da capo ternary form.²⁰

However, *Nuevo Tango*, which Piazzolla created, is primarily used as concert instrumental music in a new art form. After studying with the educator and pianist Nadia Boulanger in France, Piazzolla was encouraged to find his compositional style and started working on the *Nuevo Tango* in 1954. While Piazzolla followed the traditional tango phrases and structures in his earlier work, he also used multiple techniques, like two-bar extensions after the traditional four- or eight-bar phrasing, irregular meter changes at the end of a section, or added introductions or cadenzas in a section. The following study will discuss the *Nuevo Tango* rhythmic patterns Piazzolla uses in his tango music writing.

A typical rhythmic pattern [3-3-2] is prominent in Piazzolla's music, and sometimes it is emphasized by the accents (indicated by “>” on the top of the note in the sheet music) on the first 8th note in each group. Throughout the rest of the document, the number in the rhythmic pattern refers to groups of 8th-note beats, which usually form the rhythm into triplet sequences in his work. Thus, for example, the number sequence [3-3-2] indicates a grouping of three 8th-note + three 8th-note + two 8th-note (eight 8th-note in total) (for detailed illustrations, see Example 1, p 24). This is different from the rhythm pattern, the quarter-note as the fundamental pulse underlying the rhythm, in the framework with a 4/4-time signature.

¹⁹ Ibid., 6.5-6.6.

²⁰ Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music, Currents in Latin American and Iberian Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 35.

Moreover, Piazzolla expands and transforms this pattern to more varieties, such as the [3-2-3] pattern, a group of three 8th notes + two 8th notes + three 8th notes (eight 8th notes in total) or duplicated rhythm pattern [3-3-3-3-2-2] (sixteen 8th-note in total), either in two measures with simple 4/4 meter or a combination of 3/8 and 2/4 meters.²¹ In addition, Piazzolla often uses "continuous variations on repeated progressions and bass lines,"²² which is typically found in jazz music, to create larger contrasting sections. He also changes traditional themes and adds extended harmonies, syncopations, and improvisations to transform the music into a new style of tango.²³ *Nuevo Tango* is typically performed by small chamber ensembles, from quintets and sextets to octets consisting of instruments like violin or viola, bandoneon, double bass, guitar, and piano.

Bandoneón

The bandoneón originated in the 1830s from the chemnitzer concertina, a diatonic instrument created by Carl Friedrich Uhlig in Chemnitz, Germany.²⁴ In the year 1850, the German musician Heinrich Band improved the buttons on the original chemnitzer concertina and named the new instrument Bandoneón, after himself, and he was the first to sell this instrument.²⁵ The modern version of the bandoneón is a square-shaped, smaller accordion, with 33 buttons on the left and 38 buttons on the right, and each button produces two different notes based on the direction of pulling outwards or pushing inwards of the sound box. It is hard to play fast-tempo music on

²¹ Alejandro Marcelo Drago, "Instrumental Tango Idioms in the Symphonic Works and Orchestral Arrangements of Astor Piazzolla. Performance and Notational Problems: A Conductor's Perspective" (Dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 2008), 82-87.

²² Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music, Currents in Latin American and Iberian Music*, 240.

²³ "Interview with Astor Piazzolla (April 1989)."

²⁴ *Music around the World: A Global Encyclopedia [3 Volumes]: A Global Encyclopedia*, ed. Andrew R. Martin and Matthew Mihalka (United States: ABC-CLIO, 2020), 58.

²⁵ *The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music* second ed., ed. Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 395.

the bandoneón because it takes time to pull out or push in the entire sound box completely, but the bandoneón lends itself to dark, emotional lower melodies, as well as establishing additional rhythmic effects when playing the harmonic bass line as the accompaniment.

Soon after Heinrich Band's development of the new instrument, the Bandoneón spread to Latin America in the mid-nineteenth century, especially in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. As early as the 1850s, German sailors and merchants brought the bandoneon to northeastern Argentina and southern Brazil through the art form of dance, including polka and mazurka. There, the bandoneón became integrated into playing for the Argentine folk dance, such as *chamamé*, by joining with violin, guitar, and other instruments. With the large influx of European immigrants into Buenos Aires, which is the biggest port city in South America, the bandoneón quickly became the dominant instrument of early tango in Argentina.²⁶

In Piazzolla's quintet version of *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, each instrument plays a significant role in the ensemble. Undoubtedly, the bandoneon is the most distinctive instrument in this mix, given its signature sound that characterizes tango music.

Besides bandoneón, the violin part stands out because of its unique technique of glissando, which adds a sliding and expressive quality to the music. Different from piano or other instruments, the glissando of the string instruments is a technique that uses rapidly shifting finger positions and allows the player to move smoothly and continuously between different notes. Interrupting the glissando with pizzicato, which involves plucking the strings instead of using a bow, could produce a percussive sound effect rather than just a melodic one. With these effects, it quickly reveals the rhythm and style of the tango dance steps.

²⁶ *Music around the World: A Global Encyclopedia [3 Volumes]: A Global Encyclopedia*, 58.

The double bass also plays an essential role in the quintet, with many pizzicatos and a sound reminiscent of a percussion instrument. With the violin pizzicato, these two instruments create an attractive rhythm that drives the music forward. In addition to these three instruments, the quintet version of the tango also includes a guitar and a piano. The guitar adds texture to the music, while the piano usually accompanies the other instruments.

Piazzolla wrote all parts for every instrument for the performance without indicating the use of improvisation. However, after performing the same repertoire over time, the same musical material became monotonous for the composer. Then, he encouraged musicians to improvise with their own interpretation over the written-out notes during the performance.²⁷ The following study is to examine Piazzolla's chamber version.

Piazzolla's *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*

Piazzolla composed the four pieces of *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* individually. Initially, he wrote music for a play by his friend Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz, *Melenita de oro*, after his quintet concert tour in New York in 1965. And one of the movements stood alone and became a famous piece, *Verano Porteño*. *Porteño* refers to Buenos Aires in Argentina, so this work is about Buenos Aires' Summer. It was premiered by Piazzolla's quintet for the play production, one day after it was composed in August 1965. After four years, Piazzolla wrote *Invierno Porteño* (Winter), and a year later, he finished two more pieces, *Primavera Porteña* (Spring) and *Otoño Porteño* (Autumn) in 1970. He formed these four pieces in the composing order of Summer-Winter-Spring-Autumn into a whole set, which was *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*. On May 19, 1970, Piazzolla

²⁷ "Interview with Astor Piazzolla (April 1989)."

and his quintet premiered the entire suite at a full-packed concert at the Teatro Regina in Buenos Aires, and the live performance was recorded and released on LP shortly after. Piazzolla and his quintet played in a different order of Winter-Summer-Autumn-Spring in this concert, but it was not set permanently. Music publishers choose their order for various arrangements, and musicians may vary the order to perform according to their preference.²⁸ The following research on Piazzolla's suite is based on the sequence of the composer's compositions.

In Piazzolla's first work, *Verano Porteño* (Summer), the bandoneón establishes the primary rhythmic motif [1-3-4] accompanied by the violin and guitar in a percussive style. After an extended introduction to the main rhythmic pattern, the bandoneón shifts the rhythmic pattern to syncopated variations, while the violin occasionally plays in unison or alternates with the bandoneón. Before the middle section, the violin performs a brief virtuosic cadenza. In the slow middle section, the bandoneón and violin interact in a duet on different melodic materials, while the other instruments provide a soft accompaniment underneath them. After the duet, a brief, intense closing passage leads into a second slow section. Here, the violin plays as a solo instrument and shows off the advanced techniques and beautiful melodies supported by other string instruments. After the violin's solo cadenza, the bandoneón returns and plays the leading role with its syncopated rhythm. Finally, all instruments join back and build to the climactic conclusion of this movement.

Four years after the first composition, Piazzolla composed his second work, *Invierno Porteño* (Winter), and it starts with the bandoneón and piano duet on a rhythmic pattern [4- 4]. After a brief introduction, the bandoneón introduces the primary theme with a rhythmic pattern [1-

²⁸ "Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas (the Four Seasons of Buenos Aires), for Violin and String Orchestra ", Program Note, p28-29. <https://nyphil.org/~media/pdfs/program-notes/1516/Piazzolla-arr-Desyatnikov-Four-Seasons-of-Buenos-Aires.pdf>.

3-1-3], followed by a piano solo cadenza. Then, the violin enters with a melancholy melody accompanied by rhythmic piano chords. The piano later reprises the primary theme with a percussive bandoneón accompaniment. The viola presents the primary theme in the slow section, while the electric guitar gives an arpeggiated support. The viola continues to perform the theme variation, with bandoneón joining the accompaniment. Together, the bandoneón and the viola restate the theme with piano percussive support. Sooner, the bandoneón transits into an intense syncopated rhythm before turning to another slow variation with the viola. Later, the duet quotes the famous chord progression of the ground bass (characterized by the repetition of a descending fourth in the bassline) of Johann Pachelbel's *Canon in D major*, and the two instruments alternately play with accompaniment by the guitar and bass. Finally, the movement concludes with all instruments playing unison on the *Canon* chord progression, gradually slowing down and ending softly and calmly.

In the opening of *Primavera Porteña* (Spring), the bandoneón states the *Nuevo Tango* theme with the rhythmic pattern [3-3-2], accompanied by the violin's *chicharra* bow technique, which adds a percussive effect. Then, the electric guitar represents the primary theme, with the two other instruments accompanying. The violin takes the lead as the main theme returns for the third time. After these three presentations, the bandoneón takes control, either with a piano duet or violin duet, maintaining the theme until the end. This progression perfectly shows the tango fugue structure that Piazzolla used in his signature composition. Similar to Desyatnikov's arrangement, the violin also shows off various bow techniques, including *Bartók pizzicato*, *chicharron*, and *chromatic glissando*, to create striking percussive rhythmic effects.

The last movement is *Otoño Porteño*, and it begins with all instruments playing together, providing an eight-measure introduction. Following this introduction, the bandoneón presents the

main theme with the rhythmic pattern [1-3-3-1], while other accompaniments contrast with a pattern of [1-3-1-3]. The piano emphasizes the *Nuevo Tango* pattern [3-3-2], which transit into a slow, expressive section. Here, the bandoneón performs a cadenza, supported by arpeggios from the guitar and bass. During the cadenza, the piano returns with an ostinato figure, along with the guitar and bass to provide strong support. Afterward, the bandoneón restates the primary theme with a dynamic percussive sound effect. Then, the violin enters and performs a cadenza based on the same material as Bandoneón's, highlighting a lyrical, vocal-like melody. After the cadenza, the violin plays a sustained note with the guitar, which maintains a driving percussive rhythm. This movement builds as all instruments come together in a syncopated rhythm before the bandoneón delivers the final statement. In the closing section, the entire ensemble employs a variety of techniques to create a percussive sound effect, concluding with a final motif restatement.

After attending an earlier concert by *Quinteto Nuevo Tango* at New York's Philharmonic Hall on May 26, 1965, Robert Shelton provided a perceptive review of Piazzolla's quintet performance in *The New York Times*. He mentioned that "sometimes the quintet sounded like a 1920s ballroom dance band, then like Chico Hamilton/ Fred Katz modern jazz combo, and at other times, it resembled a classical quintet shifting from chamber music to bossa nova." Five years after Piazzolla's death, *The New York Times* published an appraisal by critic Jon Pareles on January 16, 1997:

Piazzolla was Argentina's equivalent of Gershwin or Ellington. His compositions brought the tango to the concert stage, using its sultry melodies and seductive pulse as a foundation for fantasias and fugues, enriched with twentieth-century dissonances. In many of Piazzolla's works, a restless, jagged first theme gives way to a longing second one; the music begins forceful and commanding, then unfolds to reveal its tender heart.²⁹

²⁹ David Vickers, *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (Hyperion, 2022). https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W16617_120405.

Desyatnikov's Life and Music

Leonid Desyatnikov is a Ukrainian composer, born on February 16, 1955, in Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine. He received his musical education in Russia at the Leningrad Conservatory, which changed its name to the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in 1991. There, he studied composition under the guidance of Boris Arapov³⁰, a figure who greatly influenced Desyatnikov's music approach. During his earlier years as a composer in the mid-1970s, Desyatnikov started writing vocal music in different genres. His works from this period include *Poor Lisa* for chamber opera, *Children's Album* for Children's Music Theatre, *Dichterliebe und Leben*, a song cycle for tenor and piano, and several choral compositions.

As his career progressed, Desyatnikov started writing instrumental music at the request of his musician friends. During this period, he composed *Variations on the Obtaining of a Dwelling* for cello and piano and *Du côté de chez Swan* for two pianos.³¹ These pieces showed his composition talents in creating melodies or connections between instruments and marked his growing interest in chamber music.

Desyatnikov also became known for his ability to arrange works for solo instruments. In the late 1990s, he arranged Piazzolla's suite *Estaciones Porteñas* (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) on the commission of Gidon Kremer, a world-famous violinist of Latvian origin.³² Desyatnikov's arrangement transformed the original music, which was written for a quintet, into a version for solo violin and string orchestra for Kremer and his ensemble Kremerata Baltica.

³⁰ *Music and Change in the Eastern Baltics before and after 1989*, ed. Rūta Stanevičiūtė and Janicka-Słysz Małgorzata (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022), 311.

³¹ Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," 20.

³² Franco Sciannameo, *Experiencing the Violin Concerto: A Listener's Companion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 169.

In Piazzolla's original version, the melody lines are primarily carried by bandoneón, along with other instruments occasionally doubling the theme melodies or providing rhythmic and harmonic support. Desyatnikov's arrangement changed the performance form by featuring the solo violin as the dominant instrument, along with the string orchestra playing as a supportive accompaniment. Through this arrangement, Desyatnikov retains the essence of Piazzolla's excellent tango-inspired melodies and enriches them with the violin's expressive sound. Additionally, his arrangement incorporates several quotations from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, which is clever and playful, emphasizing the similarities and differences between the two composers' styles. This juxtaposition maintains the sultry harmonies and nostalgic sentimentality of Piazzolla's music and keeps Vivaldi's baroque tradition, creating a fascinating blend of classical and contemporary styles.³³

Desyatnikov's contributions extend beyond instrumental music and arrangements. He also composed several operas, such as *Rosenthal's Children*, which explored the lives of the Jewish community in twentieth-century Russia. In addition, he also expanded his composition genre into other fields. He worked closely with different kinds of artists, like choreographers, filmmakers, and visual artists, showing his versatility and ability to dedicate his music to various arts.

Beginning in 1990, Desyatnikov expanded his repertoire to film music and soon became one of the most significant film composers in Russia. His works for cinema include *Sunset* (1990), *Lost in Siberia* (1990), and *Evenings Near Moscow* (1994). However, the score for *Moscow* (2000) brought him international recognition in the film music world at the Grand Prix of the IV International Cinema Music Festival in Bonn.³⁴

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Manulkina, "The Rite of Beauty: An Introduction to the Music of Leonid Desyatnikov," 20.

Desyatnikov's music is widely regarded for its beauty and emotional depth. While his earlier works may sound deceptively simple, later, he was inspired by various musical genres. He improved his composition by combining Russian folk songs, 19th-century musical motifs, and contemporary compositional techniques. For instance, in his work *Sketches to Sunset*, Desyatnikov cleverly combines popular Russian tunes with classical structures. His compositions for solo instruments, including violin and cello, further present his composition techniques and deep musical expression abilities. The composer himself describes his music as "an emancipation of consonance, transformation of banality and 'minimalism' with a human face." He also defines his favorite genre as "a tragically naughty bagatelle."³⁵

Desyatnikov's arrangement of Piazzolla's *Estaciones Porteñas* reveals a deep perception into his creative process. The following study explores how Leonid Desyatnikov arranged this chamber music into a four-movement suite for solo violin and string orchestra. In his arrangement, each movement begins with a brief introduction that consists of either harmonic motifs or tango rhythmic themes, providing a thematic foundation to tie the four movements together. Desyatnikov also varies the same tempo and harmonic motifs with variations throughout the entire piece and incorporates references to previous movements to create musical cohesion. In addition, he develops the expressive character of each season with advanced violin techniques, such as double stops, harmonics, *col legno*, *glissando*, etc. These techniques allow him to bring out the distinct emotional qualities of each season and enrich the violin's expressive tone color.

³⁵ "Leonid Desyatnikov Biography," accessed 9/10, 2024, <https://www.last.fm/music/Leonid+Desyatnikov/+wiki>.

Chapter 3: Desyatnikov's Arrangement Analysis

In his arrangement for solo violin and string orchestra, Desyatnikov didn't preserve the same order of movements as in Piazzolla's original version, but in fact changed it, so that in his arrangement, Autumn became the first movement. As a result, in Desyatnikov's published score, the order of movements is Autumn- Winter- Spring- Summer. However, performers have the interpretive freedom to choose a different order or sequence for the cycle of four movements based on their personal preferences. In this chapter, it will follow the order of Spring- Summer- Autumn- Winter. In the movement of *Primavera Porteña* (Spring), Desyatnikov starts the piece with the distinctive Nuevo Tango rhythmic pattern [3-3-2], combining with the primary Motif 1 played by the orchestra, which directly draws the audience's interest and attention.

Primavera Porteña

As described in the book of *Simultaneous Interpreting and Improvised Ensemble Playing*, "word repetition is a feature that exists in all languages and serves different purposes, rhetorical, emphatic, or otherwise,"³⁶. The music, as a universal language, uses sound to deliver composers' stories, emotions, and ideas through musical structures and phrases, rhythmic patterns, and expressive elements. In the movement of *Primavera Porteña*, the primary tango rhythmic theme is repeated and extended into variations by different ensemble parts throughout the entire piece.

The concertmaster starts a solo playing on the primary motif, characterized by the *Nuevo Tango* rhythmic pattern [3-3-2] in the first measure (Example 1). This motif is repeated in measures 1, 3, 5, and 7 to create the primary theme, including two musical phrases for this movement. Then,

³⁶ Cécile Gillet Rhona Amos, Kilian Seeber, and Benoît Kremer, "Simultaneous Interpreting and Improvised Ensemble Playing: The Role of Anticipation" (2013), 35, <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:35393>

the motif transits to the principal viola part, appearing in measures 9 and 11 with a variation in the pitch contour shifting from an up-down motion to a half-step descending line (Example 2).

Example 1. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, full score, mm. 1-8³⁷

Violini I

solo

2+ 1+1+1+1+2
3- 3- 2

Violini II

2+ 1+1+1+1+2
3- 3- 2

Example 2. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, full Score, mm. 9-12³⁸

V-ni I

mp

V-ni II

V-le

sola

2+ 1+1+1+1+2
3- 3- 2

Vc.

quasi guiro

1+1+1+1+1+2
3- 3- 2

In tango music, this rhythmic pattern is called *síncopa* (syncopation), which shifts the regular strong beats to off-beats to create syncopation, giving the music a push-and-pull feel. Piazzolla frequently uses *síncopa* to enhance the emotional depth and the dynamic level of his tango music, making it more expressive and unpredictable.³⁹

³⁷ Astor Piazzolla, *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, full score, arr. Leonid Desyatnikov (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Co. Inc., 2011), 37

³⁸ Ibid., 37

³⁹ Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (United Kingdom: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2006), 182.

After the theme is played twice in the orchestra, the solo violin enters at measure 17. Rather than following the musical phrase presented by the principal first violin in the opening, it starts emphasizing the same motif by transposing to a two-octave higher register. The solo violin extends the motif from one measure to two measures by stretching the final accented note to three times longer than its original duration, and it directly presents the motif three times in measures 17, 19, and 21. The third time, it shifts to a lower pitch register and concludes the phrase with a virtuosic ending (Example 3).

Example 3. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, solo violin, mm. 17-25⁴⁰

musica
principale

Allegro

8

1

8

2

2+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 2
3- 3- 2

18

2+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 2
3- 3- 2

21

2+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 2
3- 3- 2

24

poco ritenuto

a tempo

Following its initial presentation, the solo violin and the Violin I section restated the beginning primary motif together. At this time, they added extra accents after the motif in measures 27, 29, 31, and 33, and instead of using rests to interrupt the music pulse, these measures extend

⁴⁰ Astor Piazzolla, *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, solo violin, arr. Leonid Desyatnikov (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Co. Inc., 2011), 18

the original one-measure tango rhythmic pattern [3-3-2] to a two-measure rhythmic pattern [3-3-3-4-3]. Ignoring the strong-weak-strong-weak traditional beat counting in time signature 4/4, this new rhythmic pattern groups the eighth notes as triplet sequences and uses a 4-note group to break the continuous triplets' stability (Example 4).

Example 4. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, solo violin, mm. 26-33⁴¹

The musical score for Example 4 shows measures 26-33 of Piazzolla's *Primavera Porteña* for solo violin. The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes grouped into triplets and a 4-note group. Red brackets and boxes highlight these rhythmic groupings. Above the staff, red numbers indicate the measure counts for these groups: 3-, 3-, 3-, 4-, 3, 3-, 3-, 3-. Below the staff, red numbers indicate the measure counts for these groups: 3-, 3, 3, 4, 3. The score includes a 'meno f' dynamic marking at the end of measure 33.

The orchestra accompaniments are different from these two solo sections in measures 17-25 and measures 26-33. In the first solo section, the orchestra uses altered rhythm patterns and bowing techniques, including *sul. ponticello quasi guiro* and *col legno*. In contrast, the second solo section features the first violin doubling the solo violin's melody using a rhythmic pattern of [3-3-3-4-3], while other instruments maintain the initial tango rhythmic pattern of [3-3-2]. As a result, this rhythmic variation, combined with the repetition of the primary musical theme, creates a more dynamic and rhythmically driving pulse, increasing the energy and flow of the piece (Example 5).

⁴¹ Piazzolla, solo violin, 18

Example 5. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, full score, mm. 26-33⁴²

3- 3- 3- 4- 3 3- 3- 3- 4- 3

V-no principale
ff

V-ni I
ff

V-ni II
ff

V-le
ff

Vc.

Cb.
3- 3- 2 3- 3- 2 3- 3- 2 3- 3- 2

40

3- 3- 3- 4- 3 3- 3- 3- 4- 3

V-no principale
ff

V-ni I
ff

V-ni II
ff

V-le
ff

Vc.

Cb.
3- 3- 2 3- 3- 2 3- 3- 2 3- 2- 2- 1

⁴² Piazzolla, full score, 39-40

The rhythmic elements are consistently repeated throughout the movement. Sometimes, they are performed by the solo violin, while at other times, they are played by the accompanying orchestra. Also, the alternated playing of the primary theme and variations increases the interaction and exchange between different layers in the entire ensemble. In addition, the composer retains traditional violin techniques combined with modern string innovations, which not only display the virtuosic abilities of the solo violinist but also emphasize the significant roles of different string sections within the orchestra. More detailed technique analysis will be continuously discussed in Chapter 4, and here, the following Table 1-3 illustrates the development of the primary theme and the tango rhythmic elements in the movement.

Table 1. Piazzolla, <i>Primavera Porteña</i>, Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements				
Measure Number	MM. 1-8	MM. 9-16	MM. 17-25	MM. 26-33
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-3-2]	[3-3-2]	[3-3-2]	[3-3-3-4-3] / [3-3-2]
Accented Beats	[1, 4, 7]	[1, 4, 7]	[1, 4, 7]	[1, 4, 7, 10, 14] / [1, 4, 7]
Solo Violin	None	None	Theme 1 variation, rhythmic motif in high register	Theme 1 variation 2
Orchestra Accompaniment	Theme 1 on violin I	Theme 1 on viola	Rhythmic variation 1+ percussive effect	Theme 1 variation 2+ tango rhythm
Dynamics	Orchestra <i>mezzo forte</i>	Orchestra <i>mezzo forte</i>	<i>Forte</i>	<i>Fortissimo</i>

Table 2. Piazzolla, <i>Primavera Porteña</i>, Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements					
Measure Number	MM. 34-42	MM. 43-50	MM. 51-61	MM. 62-93	MM. 94-101
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-3-3-4-3]	[3-3-3-4-3] / [3-3-2]	[3-3-3-4-3]	[3-3-2] + [1-3-1-3]	[3-3-3-4-3]
Accented Beats	[1, 4, 7, 10,14]	[1,4,7, 10,14]/ [1,4,7]	[1,4,7, 10,14]	[1, 4, 7] + [2, 6]	[1,4,7, 10,14]
Solo Violin	Virtuosic theme 1 variation	Theme 1 variation 2	Percussion effect	Theme 2 (new material)	Theme 1 variation
Orchestra Accompaniment	Theme 1 variation 2 on violin I + percussion effects	Theme 1 variation 2+ tango rhythm	Theme 1 variation 2 canon on violin I/ II	Theme 1 variation 2 canon on violin I/ II + basso continuo	Tango rhythmic basso continuo [3-3-2]
Dynamics	<i>Meno f-ff</i> -solo <i>dim</i> / orchestra <i>sub.p</i>	Solo <i>mp</i> / orchestra <i>sf</i> – <i>dim</i>	<i>P-f</i>	Solo <i>p</i> / orchestra <i>pp-cresc-dim- mp-cresc-f-dim- p</i>	<i>Forte</i>

Table 3. Piazzolla, <i>Primavera Porteña</i>, Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements				
Measure Number	MM. 102- 109	MM. 110-118	MM.119-126	MM. 127-132
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-3-3-4-3] / [3-3-2]	[3-3-2]	[3-3-3-4-3] / [3-3-2]	[3-3-2] + [1-2-2-2-1] alternations
Accented Beats	[1,4,7, 10,14]/ [1,4,7]	[1, 4, 7]	[1,4,7, 10,14]/ [1,4,7]	[1, 4, 7] + [2, 4, 6] alternations
Solo Violin	Virtuosic Theme 1 variation	Percussive effect	Theme 1 variation 2	Percussive effect
Orchestra Accompaniment	Theme 1 variation 2 on violin I + tango rhythm [3-3-2]	Percussive effect	Tango rhythmic variation	Percussive effect
Dynamics	<i>Fortissimo</i>	<i>Fortissimo</i> - solo <i>dim</i> - orchestra <i>sub. p</i>	Solo <i>mp</i> / orchestra <i>sf-cresc- dim-cresc</i>	<i>Fortissimo</i>

From measure 133 to the end of the piece, the solo violin reveals the thematic material from the third movement of *Autumn* from Vivaldi's original *Four Seasons*. This virtuosic passage consists of running sixteenth notes, arpeggios, and chromatic descending lines, which increase the music's tension and the textures, and also show the soloist's advanced technique. Meanwhile, the orchestra provides a strong and rhythmic accompaniment with sharp, percussive accents that emphasize the soloist's phrases. All aspects coordinated together to build an intense and dramatic coda, which drives the music to a powerful and impressive conclusion.

Verano Porteño

This movement can be divided into three sections: fast-slow-fast. Desyatnikov begins the first fast section with a repeated four-measure introduction. Without the first violin section, the rest of the orchestra establishes a syncopated rhythmic Motif 1 [1-3-1-3], *síncopa* (Motif 1) in the first measure. Following in the next measure, a rhythmic variation occurs in the second half of Motif 1, which changes the rhythmic pattern to [1-3-2-2], and Motif 1 and its variation last through the entire movement. This off-beat rhythm [1-3] continuously repeats three times in the introduction, creating a sense of instability and forward motion. Then, the music lands abruptly on the beat, adding an interrupted, unpredictable feeling. Meanwhile, the divided bass parts alternately play on the beat with percussive bow techniques, *arrastre*, and *col legno*, creating a rhythmic contrast by emphasizing every beat in the passage (Example 6).

Example 6. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, full score, mm. 1-4⁴³

1-3-	1-3-	1-3-	2- 2
------	------	------	------

1-3-	1-3-	1-3-	2- 2
------	------	------	------

The musical score shows four staves: Violini II, Viols, Violoncelli, and Contrabassi divisi. The first measure is marked with a red bracket and the dynamic *p*. The second measure is marked with a red bracket and the dynamic *p*. The third measure is marked with a red bracket and the dynamic *p*. The fourth measure is marked with a red bracket and the dynamic *p*. The score includes articulation markings: *div.* (divisi), *unis.* (unison), and *col legno*. The rhythm is indicated by the notes and rests in each measure.

⁴³ Ibid., 59

After the short introduction, the solo violin joins in with a contrasting rhythmic pattern in measure 5, and creates a new material, Motif 2 [1-3-3-1] (Example 7). Meanwhile, the rest of the orchestra continuously plays Motif 1 underneath the violin solo. Motif 2 starts with a variation of Motif 1 on the first syncopation and reaches its climax on the last accented note. This final accented note is sustained for an entire measure, leading into a virtuosic descending *glissando* double-stop, which enhances the dramatic and arch-like motion in the passage. For the violin solo's first entrance, Motif 2 is repeated four times in a row, which establishes the solo violin's tone color and draws the audience's attention.

Example 7. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 5-12⁴⁴

The musical score for Example 7 shows measures 5 through 12 of Piazzolla's *Verano Porteño* for solo violin. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a metronome setting of 120. The time signature is 4/4. The score features a rhythmic motif [1-3-3-1] repeated four times across measures 5-12. The motif is highlighted with red boxes and numbers. The score includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a crescendo marking (*cresc.*). The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and a glissando.

After the solo violin's first presentation, the time signature shifts surprisingly by adding a measure of 3/4 to the beginning 4/4 in measure 13 (Example 8, mm. 13-14). These two measures interrupted the previous solo violin rhythmic pattern [1-3-3-1] and created a more compressed

⁴⁴ Piazzolla, solo violin, 26

triplet sequence by grouping three notes together with accents on the off-beats [2-3-3-3-3]. This rhythmic progression ignores the regular time signature and drives the music forward in just two measures. Then, the orchestra accompaniment takes over the lead on the rhythmic patterns. Starting in measure 15, the upper Violin-I and upper viola parts introduce the rhythm of Motif 2 [1-3-3-1]. But, instead of repeating in just one measure, the rhythmic pattern extends to a variation [1-3-3-3-2-4] in two measures 15-16, which include a total of sixteen 8th-note beats. A tie connects these two measures by the last accented 8th note in measure 15 to obtain a sustained sound effect. This variation enriches the melodic motif and emphasizes the expressive syncopated rhythm. Accordingly, the solo violin plays a *sub. pp* on an off-beat motion, adding a subtle percussive effect to the texture. At the same time, the cello part keeps the triplet rhythmic pattern [3-3-3-3-1]. As a result, the conversation between the solo violin and orchestra accompaniment adds more layers to the ensemble, enhancing the interaction of different tango rhythms and the overall depth of the music structure.

Example 8. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, full score, mm. 13-18⁴⁵

2- 3- 3- 3- 3

1-3- 3- 3- 2- 4

3- 3- 3- 3- 3- 1

V-no principale
cresc.
sub *pp*
solo
sub *pp*
altri

V-ni I div.
p cresc.
sub *pp*
altri

V-ni II
cresc.
sub *pp*
sola
sub *pp*
altri

V-le div.
cresc.
sub *pp*
altri

Vc.
sub *pp*

Cb. div.
cresc.
pp

1- 3- 3- 2- 4

3- 3- 3- 3- 3- 1

V-no principale
1- 3- 3- 2- 4

V-n I div.
solo
altri

V-ni I
altri

V-le div.
sola
altri

Vc.
sub *pp*

Cb.
3- 3- 3- 3- 3- 1

⁴⁵ Piazzolla, full score, 60-61

Starting from measure 19, the solo violin continues developing the primary theme in motif 2, while the orchestra provides an accompaniment by using a combination of previously rhythmic patterns. After the solo restates the theme, beginning in measure 35, the music returns to the introduction with a variation, where the entire ensemble plays Motif 1 together until measure 43.

Desyatnikov incorporates two quotations from the original Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. The first one appears between measures 44 and 55 (Example 9), where he integrates the motif from the first movement of Vivaldi's *Winter* (Example 10). By using rapid arpeggios and tremolos, the composer creates an energetic sound effect reminiscent of Vivaldi's original. Desyatnikov blends the elements from Baroque reference with modern tango music to have a contrasting musical dialogue.

Example 9. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 44-55⁴⁶

VERANO PORTEÑO V-no principale

⁴⁶ Piazzolla, solo violin, 27-28

Example 10. Vivaldi, *Winter*, mvt. 1, solo violin, mm. 12-18⁴⁷

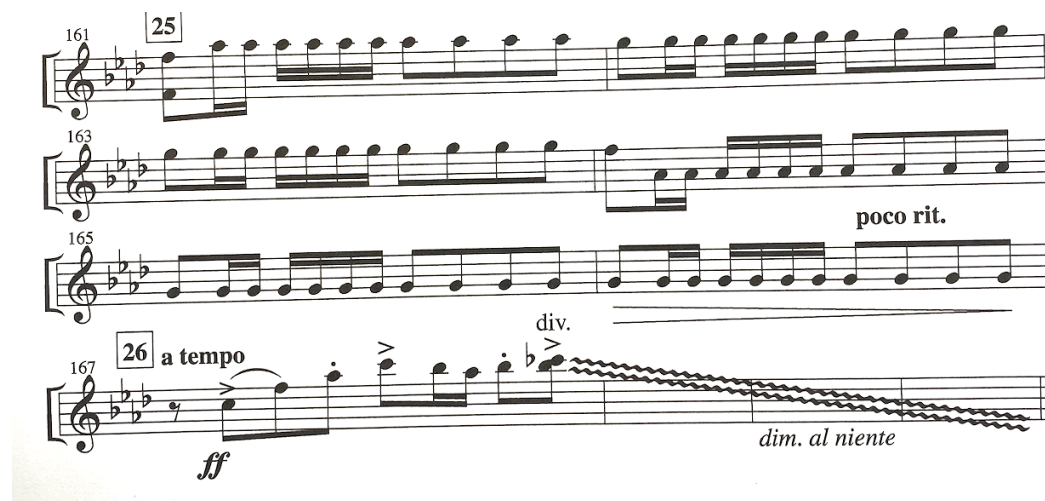


In the slow section, Desyatnikov reduces the tango rhythmic character and creates broader, flowing melodic lines. Occasionally incorporating tango rhythmic accents, the expressive violin melodies involve advanced violin techniques, using a combination of slow and fast alternating motion to convey a feeling of stifling, oppressive heat in the summer just before a thunderstorm approaches. Following an accelerated phrase and percussive rhythmic passage, the music returns to Motif 1 from the opening to introduce the third section. This section is based on the first section and is written in a higher register to emphasize the dramatic contrasts. With a series of intense ascending lines, the music moves to the coda, incorporating a second quotation, which is from measures 161 to 166 (Example 11). It features a pattern of repeated running sixteenth notes alternated with even eighth notes to imitate Vivaldi's cold and stiff mood (Example 12). Then, Desyatnikov interrupts the winter and restates the summer theme by employing a simple tango rhythm motif 2. In this movement, Desyatnikov playfully references the hemispheric contrast in the result of the summer of Buenos Aires, which aligns with Vivaldi's Italian Winter.⁴⁸

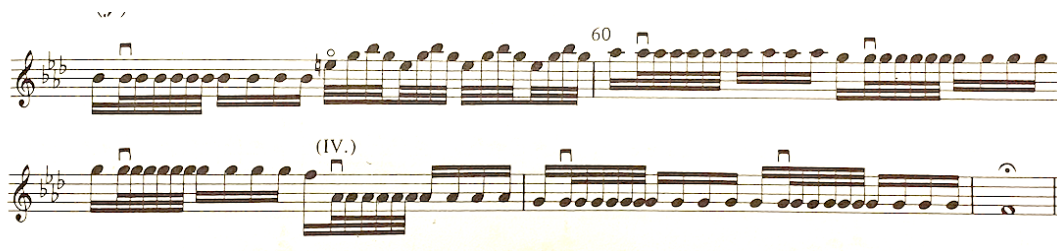
⁴⁷ Antonio Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons: Four Concertos for Violin and Orchestra*, violin and piano reduction, ed. Rok Klopčič and Alojz Srebotnjak (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 2004), 19

⁴⁸ "Vivaldi, A.: Four Seasons (the) / Piazzolla, A.: Las 4 Estaciones Portenas (Kremer, Kremerata Baltica)," Nonesuch, 2006 (CD Recording Booklet).

Example 11. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 161-170⁴⁹



Example 12. Vivaldi, *Winter*, mvt. 1, solo violin, mm 59-63⁵⁰



Otoño Porteño

Otoño Porteño (*Autumn*) is the first movement in Desyatnikov's arrangement, corresponding to Vivaldi's *Spring* in the complete cycle. It starts with a striking percussive effect played by the solo violin, *s.p. quasi guiro*, accompanied by the orchestra using techniques such as *arrastre* and *col legno*. As a unit, these sections create a dynamic percussive texture and establish the tempo.

⁴⁹ Piazzolla, solo violin, 31

⁵⁰ Vivaldi, ed. Klopčič and Srebotnjak, 21

After this energetic introduction, the solo violin starts the primary theme on measure 9 with a two-measure rhythmic pattern [1-3-3-3-3] (totally sixteen 8th-note beats) (Example 13), and this pattern is repeated exactly four times in total with two variations in measures 13-14 and 15-16.

Example 13. Piazzolla, *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 9-20⁵¹

7

2

1-3- 3- 3-

10

3- 3; 1-3- 3- 3- 3- 3;

13

3

1-3 3- 5- 4; 1-3- 3- 5-

19

4

ff

1-3- 3- 3- 3- 3

In the two-measure rhythmic pattern, Desyatnikov placed ornamental mordents on the non-accented notes. As a result, the simple triplet sequences are enriched and transformed into an even more driving forward motion. After finishing the initial statement of the primary theme, the solo violin displays virtuosity with running sixteenth notes and ascending *portamentos*. Meanwhile, the

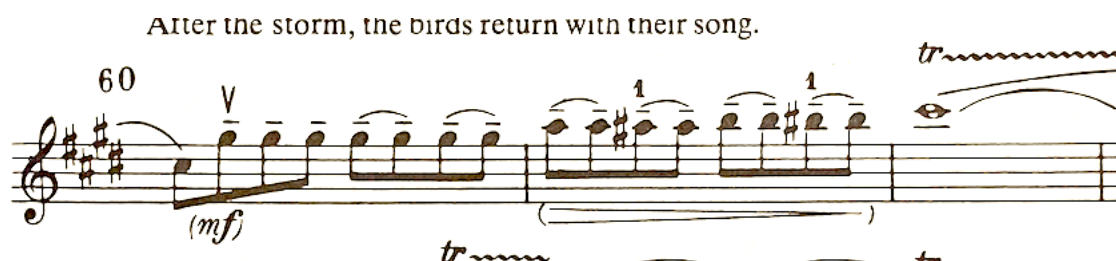
⁵¹ Piazzolla, solo violin, 2

entire orchestra reinforces the typical *Nuevo Tango* rhythmic pattern [3-3-2], with the first violin providing a dramatic descending contrast to the solo violin.

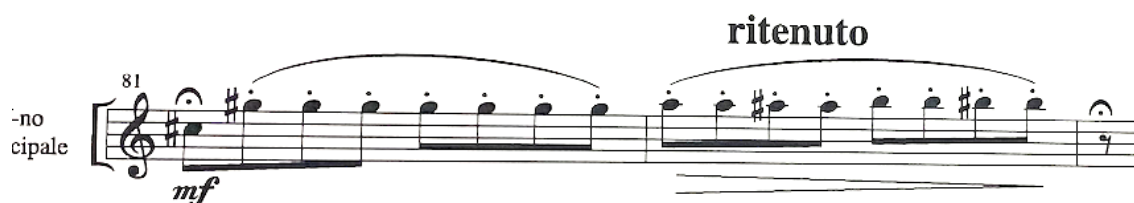
Beginning at measure 29, a rich and expressive cello cadenza captures a contemplative mood often related to the autumn season. A brief tutti interlude with the primary theme variation follows the cello solo, leading into a violin cadenza that uses the same techniques, including extended arpeggios and chromatic leaps, to explore the possibilities of the violin timbre range. A more detailed technique study will be discussed in the next chapter.

By the end of the violin cadenza, a reference quoted from Vivaldi's *Spring*, which imitates the bird's sound, is used to conclude the cadenza and connects to the subsequent virtuosic section to further explore the violin's extensive pitch range (Example 14-15).

Example 14. Vivaldi, *Spring*, mvt. 1, solo violin, mm. 60-62⁵²



Example 15. Piazzolla, *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 81-82⁵³



⁵² Vivaldi, ed. Klopčič and Srebotnjak, 3

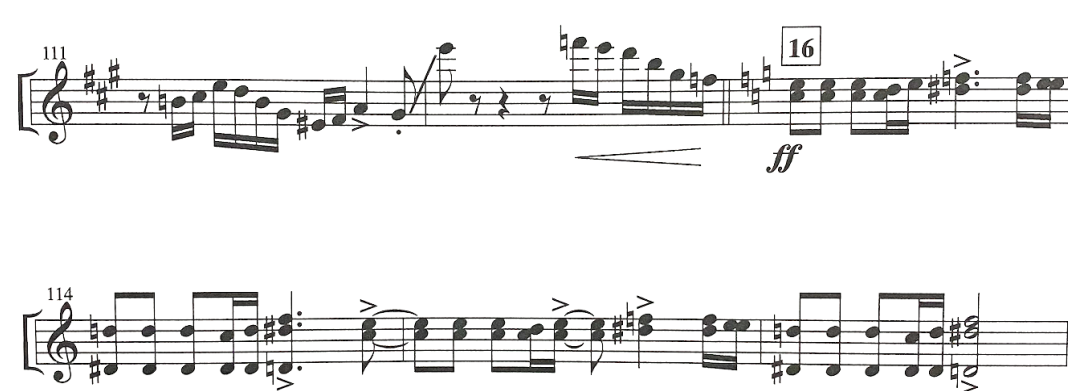
⁵³ Piazzolla, solo violin, 5

The second quotation from Vivaldi's *Spring*, combined with an intense reprise of the opening, transforms the lively classical dance into a passionate and dramatic tango through the dissonance of seconds, diminished thirds, and diminished octaves (Example 16-17). Later, the piece increases the density with a series of fast triplets, followed by compact sixteenth notes grouped in triplets by the accents, driving the piece to a powerful conclusion.

Example 16. Vivaldi, *Spring*, mvt. 1, solo violin, mm. 65-71⁵⁴



Example 17. Piazzolla, *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 111-116⁵⁵



⁵⁴ Antonio Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons*, Op. 8, 1-4. ed. Simon Launchbury (London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd., 2007), 9

⁵⁵ Piazzolla, solo violin, 7

Invierno Porteño

Invierno Porteño (Winter) starts with the lower strings, providing a brief introduction consisting of four repetitions of a short, dotted rhythmic motif 1[3-1-4]. Similar to the opening of Vivaldi's *Summer*, this passage establishes a somber and lazy mood, evoking the picture of dark, heavy clouds gathering in the sky, a sign of the approaching storm of the season.⁵⁶

Starting from measure 9, the solo violin enters with the primary theme on the syncopated rhythmic pattern [1-3-1-3], Motif 2 *síncopa*, while the accompanying orchestra provides contrast with the *Nuevo Tango* rhythmic pattern [3-3-2]. Then, the violin plays a passionate cadenza and cooperates in a duet with the solo cello, infusing the tango elements into the introduction again.

As the music progresses, Motif 1 and Motif 2 are alternated between the solo violin and the orchestra parts, and the following tables 4-6 demonstrate how this piece develops.

⁵⁶ "Vivaldi, A.: Four Seasons (the) / Piazzolla, A.: Las 4 Estaciones Portenas (Kremer, Kremerata Baltica)."

Table 4. Piazzolla, <i>Invierno Porteño</i> , Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements				
Measure Number	MM. 1-8	MM. 9-16	MM. 17-26	MM.27-38
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-1-4]	[3-3-2]/ [1-3-1-3]	None	[3-1-4]
Accented Beats	(1, 5)	(1, 4, 7)/ (2, 6)	None	(1, 4)
Solo Violin	None	Theme 1/ Motif 2	Cadenza	Motif 1 with tango elements
Orchestra Accompaniment	Intro Motif 1 with dotted rhythm	<i>Nuevo Tango</i>	None	Cello solo duet with flowing melody
Dynamics	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Cresc</i>	<i>P</i>

Table 5. Piazzolla, <i>Invierno Porteño</i> , Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements				
Measure Number	MM. 39-54	MM.55-62	MM.63-70	MM. 71-83
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-3-2] + [4-4]	[3-1-4] + [3-3-2]	[1-3-1-3]	[3-3-2]
Accented Beats	(1, 4, 7) + (1, 5)	(1, 5)/ (1, 4, 7)	(2, 6)	(1, 4, 7)
Solo Violin	Vivaldi <i>Summer</i> quotation	Intro Motif 1	Motif 2 variations	Motif 1 variations
Orchestra Accompaniment	<i>Nuevo Tango</i>	Lower strings flowing melodies	Rhythmic supportive texture	<i>Nuevo Tango</i> rhythm
Dynamics	<i>Cresc-f- p</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>Dim</i>

Table 6. Piazzolla, <i>Invierno Porteño</i>, Theme Development and Tango Rhythmic Elements					
Measure Number	MM. 85-95	MM. 96-104	MM.105-118	MM. 119-126	MM. 127-139
Rhythmic Pattern note Groups	[3-3-2]	[3-3-2]	[3-1-4]	[1-3-1-3]	None
Accented Beats	(1, 4, 7)	(1, 4, 7)	(1, 5)	(2, 6)	None
Solo Violin	Vivaldi <i>Summer</i> quotation	Motif 1 compressed with fast tempo	Cadenza on Motif 1	Motif 1 variations	Vivaldi <i>Summer</i> quotations
Orchestra Accompaniment	Motif 1 with fast tempo	<i>Nuevo Tango</i> rhythm + percussion effects	Cello solo melodic lines	Motif 1 variations	Vivaldi <i>Summer</i> quotations
Dynamics	<i>P- cresc-ff</i>	<i>FF</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>F- p-pp</i>

Similar to *Verano Porteño*, this movement incorporates two quotations from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. The first one appears between measures 48 and 54, where the solo violin preserves the melodic materials exactly as in the third movement of Vivaldi's original *Summer* Concerto (Example 18-19).

Example 18. Vivaldi, *Summer*, mvt. 3, solo violin, mm. 40-48⁵⁷



Example 19. Piazzolla, *Invierno Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 44-54⁵⁸



⁵⁷ Vivaldi, ed. Launchbury, 41-42

⁵⁸ Piazzolla, solo violin, 12

The second quotation is from measures 88 to 95, and in this section, the violin solo represents Motif 1 on variations, while the orchestra imitates the thunderstorm from the same original movement (Example 20-21). However, Desyatnikov combines the Baroque melodies with the tango's characteristic rhythmic pattern [3-3-2], creating a contrasting dynamic interaction between the elegant Baroque music and the driving-forward syncopated tango pulse. By juxtaposing these two different genre elements together, Desyatnikov develops his composition style and improves the depth and complexity of his music.

Example 20. Vivaldi, *Summer*, mvt. 3, solo violin, mm. 8-19⁵⁹



⁵⁹ Vivaldi, ed. Launchbury, 37-38

Example 21. Piazzolla, *Invierno Porteño*, full score, mm. 88-95⁶⁰

88 12 INVIERNO PORTEÑO

V-no
rincipale *ff*

V-ni I *f*

V-ni II *f*

V-le *f*

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

91

V-no
rincipale

V-ni I

V-ni II

V-le

Vc.

Cb.

94 13 **più mosso**

V-no
rincipale

V-ni I *s.p. quasi guiro*

V-ni II *div.*

V-le *div.*

Vc.

Cb.

Additionally, Desyatnikov arranged the melody quotation, which is from the solo violin part at the beginning of the second movement of Vivaldi's *Winter* (Example 22), on the solo violin part in measures 127 and 130 (Example 23). Besides the *Winter* reference, the ending coda also quotes the famous ostinato ground bass line and ostinato harmonic progression of Johann Pachelbel's *Canon in D major* (Example 24) in measures 127-139, which originally is I-V-vi-iii-IV-I-IV-V. In Desyatnikov's arrangement, he manipulates Vivaldi's theme in four measures, instead of just two measures in the original *Winter*, with the harmonic progression being simultaneously quoted in the accompanying orchestra.

In the *Canon* quotations, Desyatnikov made a slight change to I-V-vi-iii-IV-I-II-V in the ground bass line in measures 127-130. Then, after a short transition, he followed the original chord progression by having the entire ensemble play broken chords super softly at the end of the coda. Desyatnikov didn't use any tango elements to conclude this movement, which gives the music a different texture and mood.

Example 22. Vivaldi, *Winter*, mvt. 2, mm 1-2⁶¹

83

The musical score for Example 22 shows the first two measures of Vivaldi's *Winter*, mvt. 2. The score is for a string ensemble and includes parts for Violino solo, Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello solo, and Basso Continuo. The tempo is marked 'Largo' and the key signature has two flats. The Violino solo part features a melody with a trill. The Violino I and II parts play a rhythmic pattern marked 'pizz.' and 'f La Pioggia'. The Viola part plays a sustained chord marked 'pp'. The Violoncello solo part plays a rhythmic pattern marked 'f'. The Basso Continuo part plays a ground bass line marked 'sempre p'.

⁶¹ Vivaldi, ed. Launchbury, 83

Example 23. Piazzolla, *Invierno Porteño*, full score, mm 125-130⁶²

The image displays a musical score for Piazzolla's *Invierno Porteño*, measures 125-130. The score is arranged for a string quartet (Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello) and Contrabasso. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4.

Annotations and markings include:

- Measure 125:** Violino I and II are marked "solo". Viola and Violoncello are marked "sola".
- Measure 126:** A green box labeled "Canon chord progression imitation" spans measures 125-126. An orange box labeled "Canon chord progression imitation" spans measures 126-127.
- Measure 127:** A red box labeled "Vivaldi Winter" spans measures 127-128. A green box labeled "I- V" is placed below the Violoncello staff. An orange box labeled "I- V-" is placed below the Contrabasso staff.
- Measure 128:** A red box labeled "Vivaldi Winter" spans measures 128-129. A green box labeled "vi- iii- IV- I- IV- V- I" is placed below the Violoncello staff. An orange box labeled "vi- iii- IV- I- II- V- I" is placed below the Contrabasso staff.
- Measure 129:** A green box labeled "I- V" is placed below the Violoncello staff. An orange box labeled "I- V-" is placed below the Contrabasso staff.
- Measure 130:** A green box labeled "I- V" is placed below the Violoncello staff. An orange box labeled "I- V-" is placed below the Contrabasso staff.

⁶² Piazzolla, full score, 33

Example 24. Johann Pachelbel, *Canon and Fugue in D major*, P 37, mm 1-7⁶³

Sostenuto. (♩ = 56)

Violino I. *p espr.*

Violino II. *p espr.*

Violino III. *p espr.*

Violoncello. *mf*

Cembalo. *mf*

Canon chord progression

(I-V- vi-iii- IV-I- IV-V)(I-V-vi-iii-IV-I-IV-V)

By analyzing the structure and development of its musical phrases, we can observe how Desyatnikov incorporates distinctive tango rhythms, syncopations, and expressive gestures to reveal the dramatic essence of Buenos Aires' tango tradition. A closer analysis of the melodic lines, rhythmic patterns, and dynamic contrasts will demonstrate how he infuses the classical techniques into tango's distinctive musical language, creating a rich, stylistic composition that demands the performer's technical and interpretive abilities. This analysis will provide perspectives for recognizing and understanding similar stylistic elements throughout the entire suite.

⁶³Johann Pachelbel, *Canon and Gigue in D major*, P. 37, reprinted ed, Organum, 3. Reihe, No. 24 (Köln: Fr. Kistner & C.F.W. Siegel & Co., 2009), 3

Chapter 4: Performance Practice, Performance Data Collection and Analysis

Interpretation of Accent

Accent playing, notated with “>” on the top of the note, is an essential technique in tango violin music that gives the style its unique character and conveys the soul of the tango rhythm. In Desyatnikov's arrangement, violinists should consider both left-hand and right-hand techniques to capture the essentials of the tango.⁶⁴ To play an expressive and powerful accent, violinists could focus on three key aspects. The first is right-hand bow techniques. In Desyatnikov's arrangement of *Primavera Porteña*, he put the accents on the solo violin part to emphasize the distinctive *Nuevo-Tango* rhythmic pattern [3-3-2] in measures 17 and 19 (Example 25). To properly play these accented notes, the traditional bow technique, *Martelé*, should be considered the best option.

Example 25. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, solo violin, mm. 1-20⁶⁵



⁶⁴ Robert Riggs, ed., *The Violin*, vol. V. 135. , Eastman Studies in Music (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2016), 241.

⁶⁵ Piazzolla, solo violin, 18

Martelé means hammered in English, and as described in Ivan Galamian's book *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, it is a bow stroke with a sharp accent at the beginning of each note and always a rest between bow strokes.⁶⁶ This bowing technique creates a sharp, percussive effect, mainly used for interpreting the rhythm of tango music.

The violin pedagogue Kurt Sassmannshaus summarized three elements to achieve this unique bow technique. First, start the bow on the string and apply a certain pressure with the index finger. As a result, the bow stick moves towards the bow hair and presses the bow hair onto the string. An advanced *Martelé* can start with a *Collé* motion for a better result. Second, the bow stroke begins at a very high speed and simultaneously releases the most pressure after the bow attack. Last, at the end of the stroke, the bow rests on the string without pressure and has a slight air space between the following notes. He also emphasized that the high bow speed requires better control of the sounding point. For example, the lower string requires a sounding point close to the fingerboard, the upper string requires a sounding point close to the bridge, and the bow stays straight and parallel to the bridge. In this case, violinists should consider placing the bow close to the bridge.⁶⁷

In this example, three *Martelé* bow strokes are applied to the accented notes. Depending on the different durations of the notes, violinists need to adjust both bow pressure and bow speed. Also, the player may need to choose to emphasize the changes of dynamics through a change of register.⁶⁸ In this case, these three accents grow progressively stronger, with the third long accent having the heaviest, most sustained sound. Therefore, the first two *martelé* strokes should be performed as simple *martelé*, using fast, light bow strokes to create more delicate accents. In

⁶⁶ Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, 3rd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Shar Products, 1999), 71.

⁶⁷ "Martelé," ViolinMASTERCLASS. com, accessed April 20, 2023, <https://www.violinmasterclass.com/posts/164>.

⁶⁸ Ramiro Gallo, *The Violin in Tango*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Tango Sin Fin, 2017), 96.

contrast, the third stroke requires a sustained *martelé*, characterized by a slower, heavier bow stroke that produces a solid, dramatic accent. Only the bow beginning attack is accented, and then playing diminuendo, while the sound has to last until the next note is played.⁶⁹

The second key aspect associated with the bow stroke is the accented vibrato. Vibrato is a left-hand technique to produce pitch variations with the finger contact point moving forward and backward to create more expressiveness in the music. Non-vibrato playing presents the neutral color of the violin and is usually used for the beginning of a musical phrase to produce a transparent sound. Slow, wide vibrato on a slow-tempo passage can enhance the emotional musical flow. In the above example, solo violinists can vary their vibratos to imitate the rich sound and tone color of the bandoneón for their first presentation of the main theme. A fast, narrow vibrato with emphasis at the beginning of the first two accented notes and then change to an intense, wide vibrato would catch the attention of the audience. So, by combining the left-hand vibrato and the right-hand accent techniques, performers can change the way of playing speed to express the different musical moods of the tango.⁷⁰

The final aspect is the rhythmic precision. Tango rhythms frequently feature syncopated accents, where emphasis falls on weak beats. This off-beat character gives the tango music its distinctive pulse. In the above example, all three accented notes occur on the first, fourth, and seventh 8th -note, which typically reveal the soul of tango music [3-3-2]. Practicing with a metronome and playing along with recordings is an effective way to master these syncopated patterns.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁰ Link and Wendland, *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music, Currents in Latin American and Iberian Music*, 293.

Interpretation of Sliding Techniques

Portamento

In his book *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, violin pedagogue Ivan Galamian emphasized that *portamento* should be used as an expressive left-hand technique rather than a mechanical shifting between different positions. He mentioned that *portamento* enhances the musical expression by a series of continuous movements between pitches. He also suggested that it would be most effective when it reflects the character of the music. By considering this, violinists need to adjust the sliding finger, finger pressure, and speed to match the desired expression.⁷¹

Unlike the use in classical music, *portamento* in tango violin playing is a crucial expressive technique that adds exaggerated passion to melodic phrases to reflect tango music's dramatic nature. Violinists should think of two aspects while playing *portamento* in tango music. First, it is an intentional, expressive slide between notes on ascending or descending lines to create a smooth, continuous motion. The second aspect is to consider the timing and placement of the *portamento*, often placed on important melodic notes or in emotionally intense moments. In Example 26 below, all *portamentos* are ascending lines with slow motion as *adagio*. The first three lead to an indefinite high pitch, where the fingers remain on the same strings, while the last one requires a string crossing with a finger change to reach the particular note. Depending on different rhythms, violinists also need to coordinate their right-hand to maintain a consistent tone during the slide and avoid unintended accents. In tango music, *portamento* enhances the violin's vocal-like tone color and imitates the expressive emotion of tango singers.

⁷¹ Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, 27.

Example 26. Piazzolla, *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 24-29⁷²



Ascending *portamento* can be executed in three distinct ways: sliding with the same finger, known as “overslide” in the French school style; using a different finger, referred to as “underslide” in the Russian school style; or combining both approaches by changing fingers in the middle of the slide.⁷³ But in the descending *portamento*, it is more common to perform by sliding the finger from the note of departure and changing it just before arriving at the following note.⁷⁴ For instance, in Example 27 below, the *portamentos* appear in short descending motifs, with accents placed on the initial notes of each phrase.

Example 27. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, solo violin, mm.126-132⁷⁵



⁷² Piazzolla, solo violin, 3

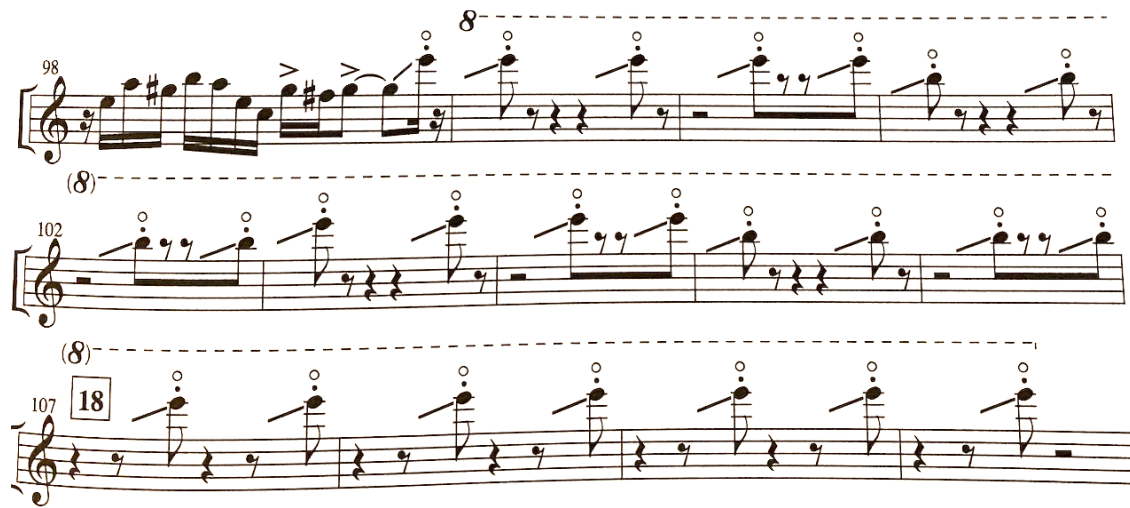
⁷³ Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, 27.

⁷⁴ Gallo, *The Violin in Tango*, 111.

⁷⁵ Piazzolla, solo violin, 22

Arrastre is the third type of *portamento*, which is also widely used in tango violin playing. It is notated with a short dash in ascending direction before the note, usually going up to a harmonic. To execute this technique, the finger begins from an indefinite pitch slightly below the note, creating a slide that leads into the desired note. The performer can adjust the length and timing to fit the rhythm and the needs of the phrases.⁷⁶ Refer to Example 28 for demonstration, and here, violinists play a fast, intense ascending slide to a pitched note.

Example 28. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 98-110⁷⁷



⁷⁶ Gallo, *The Violin in Tango*, 111.

⁷⁷ Piazzolla, solo violin, 29

Chromatic glissando

Another similar sliding technique to the descending *portamento* is *chromatic glissando*, but they are different in sound effect, execution, and expressive purpose. The table below shows the major differences between these two sliding techniques.

Table 7. Differences Between <i>Portamento</i> and <i>Chromatic Glissando</i>		
Feature	<i>Portamento</i>	<i>Chromatic Glissando</i>
Sound Effect	Smooth and continuous slide	Mechanical and stepped audible effect
Emotional Quality	Expressive and vocal-like	Decorative, virtuosic and playful
Speed	Varies speed for music expression	Faster moving finger across all chromatic pitches, even and precise
Music Usage	Romantic or lyrical music phrases	Technical effects, virtuosic or playful music phrases

In summary, *chromatic glissando* emphasizes articulating all intermediate chromatic notes for a sharply defined and decorative sound. Unlike the piano and harp, which have fixed semitones, violinists need extra effort to produce an even and articulate sound effect while playing the descending *chromatic glissando*. This technique can be approached similarly with the right-hand down-bow staccato, with slight arm-vibrato emphasis on certain notes. The left finger, making the glissando, should remain in a stretched position, with the left wrist curved outward toward the

violin scroll. The entire left hand and arm need to keep the tension, maintaining solid finger pressure, throughout the entire process.⁷⁸ Example 29 below indicates this advanced technique appearing on the double-stops in four consecutive phrases. Depending on the playing skills, this technique is a big challenge to the performer. Musicians can approach this special technique with different speeds, different dynamics, and can also improvise to create their own sound effects.

Example 29. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 1-13⁷⁹



látigo

The last kind of sliding technique in Desyatnikov's work is *látigo*, which is a sweeping, rapidly executed *glissando*. It starts on a notated note and ends precisely and rhythmically at an indeterminate pitch, usually infinitely high, to create an ascending whistle-like sound effect. It is usually played on the fast up-bow stroke, with a slight lift at the end of the bow stroke. Besides the right-hand motion, musicians should make a decision on which left finger to execute the sliding motion. Depending on the fingering played on the preceding note, the sliding finger starts from an

⁷⁸ Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, 31.

⁷⁹ Piazzolla, solo violin, 26

inaudible sound and increases to an abrupt, rhythmic end. The real-time execution coincides with the arrival at an indeterminate sound in the upper register, where the bow and finger leave the string rhythmically at the same time.

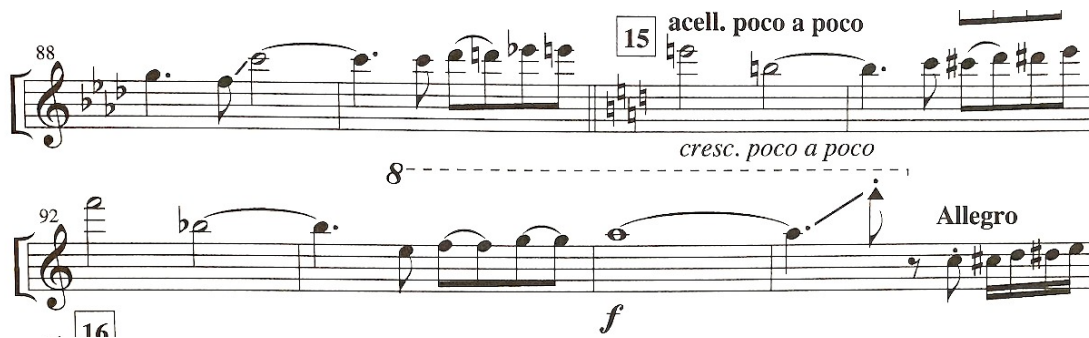
In Desyatnikov's *Verano Porteño*, there are two musical phrases that end with *látigo*, as shown in the examples below (Example 30-31). The first one occurs in measure 27, where the melody ascends through three short phrases and concludes with a rapid, short slide. With the *látigo* and the rests at the end, the music is interrupted suddenly after an ascending sequence and starts a new musical phrase in the next measure. The second instance appears in measure 95, where the melody starts softly and slowly, then accelerates towards the end of the section, reaching into a super-high register. This passage conveys a deep sense of peaceful calm, revealing the beauty of autumn.

Example 30. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm 17-29⁸⁰



⁸⁰ Ibid., 26

Example 31. Piazzolla, *Verano Porteño*, solo violin, mm 88-95⁸¹



Interpretation of Percussive Sound Effect

In Piazzolla's quintet version, bandoneón plays a dominant role. By adjusting the traditional classical playing technique, the violin can imitate the sound articulations and tone color of the bandoneón. Furthermore, the bandoneón's size and playing technique make it hard to play long and sustained notes on it. Therefore, it is also important to utilize new techniques to simulate the bandoneón's percussive sound effects.⁸²

Chicharra

In tango music, *chicharra* (Example 32) is a common violin technique that creates a buzzing, percussive effect to imitate the sound of a cicada. Named after the insect (called *cigarra* in Spanish), which fills Buenos Aires neighborhoods with its loud chirping sounds throughout the summertime. This sound effect adds rhythmic and textural depth to the tango performances.

⁸¹ Ibid., 29

⁸² Riggs, *The Violin*, 257.

Example 32. *Chicharra* notation example⁸³

chicharra

+chicharra

chicharra

NOTATION
The word 'chicharra' is written as a series of 'x' marks on the lines of the staff, then a similar notation is used for the beginning of the phrase.

If the notes are written as a series of 'x' marks on the lines of the staff, although the notes are not written.

To play the *chicharra*, violinists need to place the bow behind the bridge, close to the colored end of the string near the tailpiece, where the vibration of the tailpiece produces this particular sound. The bow should remain closer to the tailpiece than to the bridge. Although the sound could be rasping, it should never be unpleasant or harsh. The bow contact point is near the colored end of the string, and for better projection, the whole bow frog should be gripped with the fingers while the index finger extends over the stick. Minimal bow distribution with an unusual heavier pressure is a better choice to produce this sound effectively. The left-hand finger may lightly touch the string instead of fully pressing down to avoid producing a clear pitch, and the amount of bow hair controls the dynamic level by varying the contact with the string. This technique, prominent in Astor Piazzolla's original chamber compositions, is one of several violin techniques that define the expressive and percussive qualities of his *Nuevo Tango* style.⁸⁴

⁸³ Ramiro Gallo, *The Violin in Tango*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Tango Sin Fin, 2017), 119

⁸⁴ Ibid., 119

S.P. Quasi Guiro

Desyatnikov uses a unique bow technique, as marked *s.p. quasi guiro* at the beginning of the *Autumn* movement (Example 33). This musical term refers to a percussive sound effect that imitates the sound of a *guiro*, a Latin-American percussion instrument in gourd-shape known for its scraping, raspy sound. Unlike the more tango-specific *chicharra*, it is a broader technique commonly used in contemporary or folk-inspired music to create distinctive textural effects. This bowing technique emphasized *sul ponticello* bowing, which requires placing the bow on the bridge, with scraping and rhythmic strokes, contributing a rich, percussive element to the music. Compared to *chicharra*, it has certain key differences, shown in Table 8 below.

Example 33. Piazzolla, *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, mm. 1-8⁸⁵

The musical score for Example 33, Piazzolla's *Otoño Porteño*, solo violin, measures 1-8. The score is written in treble clef with a common time signature. It features a series of rhythmic strokes marked with 'x' above the notes, indicating a 's.p. quasi guiro' (sul ponticello quasi guiro) technique. The first measure is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The score is divided into three lines: measures 1-3, 4-6, and 7-8. Measure 1 is marked '1' and measure 7 is marked '2'.

⁸⁵ Piazzolla, solo violin, 2

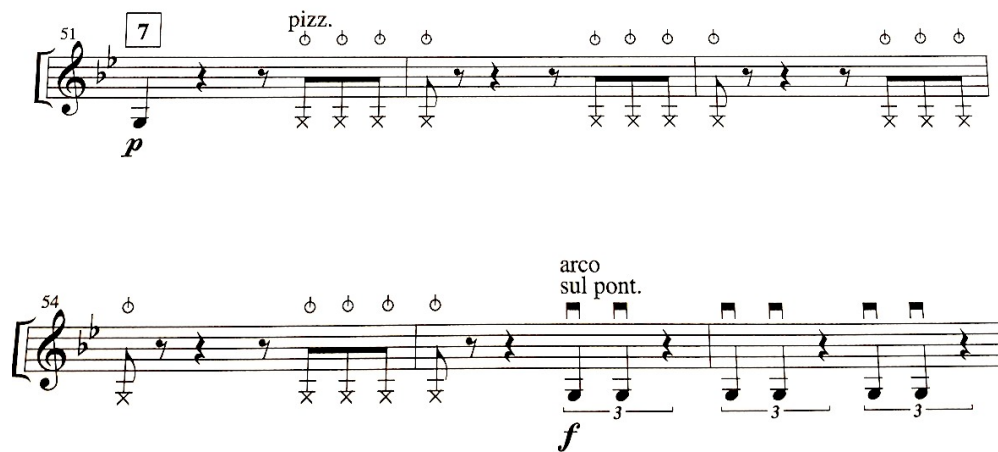
Table 8. <i>Chicharra</i> and <i>S.P. Quasi Guiro</i> Key Differences		
Aspect	<i>Chicharra</i>	<i>S.P. Quasi Guiro</i>
Origin	Specific to tango violin technique	Found in contemporary classical and modern music
Sound Imitation	Mimics a cicada's buzzing sound	Mimics the scraping sound of a guiro
Bow Contact Point	Behind the bridge and close to the tailpiece	Near or on the bridge
Bow Speed and Pressure	Short, rapid, or accented bowing	Continuous and rhythmic back-and-forth scraping motion
Usage	Primarily used in tango music	More common in contemporary or avant-garde music

S.p. quasi guiro and *chicharra* are similar percussive bowing techniques that are approached by similar execution methods. They are both intended for rhythmic or textural effects rather than melodic purposes. When performing Desyatnikov's arrangement, violinists may follow the specific marking *s.p. quasi guiro* to obtain the intended sound effect. However, as an alternative, more musicians nowadays decide to choose the *chicharra* technique, which is typical of tango music, to make a more expressive and percussive sound.

Bartók Pizzicato

Bartók pizzicato (Example 34) refers to a distinctive string-playing technique named after the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, who brought it to prominence through his compositions. Unlike the standard *pizzicato*, which involves plucking the string gently to produce a soft, resonant tone, *Bartók pizzicato* creates a sharp, percussive effect that adds a striking rhythmic character to the music. Described as a “snap-string *pizzicatos*,” this technique is executed by pulling the string firmly away from the fingerboard and releasing it forcefully so that it snaps the string back against the fingerboard, producing a characteristic “pop” sound. This dynamic articulation requires extra tension and precise control to achieve the desired snapping effect without damaging the strings or the instrument.

Example 34. Piazzolla, *Primavera Porteña*, solo violin, mm. 51-56⁸⁶



This sound effect from *Bartók pizzicato* contributes a unique tone color, adding a percussive, dynamic texture to the music. Its energetic, rhythmic quality, which typically incorporates folk-inspired dance rhythms, bold contrasts, and vivid timbre, reveals Bartók’s style. *Bartók pizzicato* was first introduced in the fourth movement of his *String Quartet No. 4* and later

⁸⁶ Ibid., 19

widely influenced other composers to achieve rhythmic intensity and unique musical texture.⁸⁷ In this example, *Bartók pizzicato* and the following *sul ponticello* both are massive and energetic bow techniques. The combination of these two techniques adds dynamic force and a unique timber quality to emphasize the rhythmic drive and increase the tension of the music.

Performances Analysis

Desyatnikov's arrangement masterfully blends Piazzolla's signature tango style with classical elements, offering a fresh, dynamic dialogue between two musical traditions. Kremer's interpretation brought international acclaim to the piece, showcasing its rich textures and rhythmic complexities. Today, this arrangement is embraced by a growing number of violinists around the world. Its increasing popularity reflects not only its technical brilliance and emotional depth but also the captivating fusion of traditional tango spirit with classical virtuosity. As more musicians discover the expressive power of *Estaciones Porteñas*, the suite continues to inspire diverse interpretations, and it becomes more popular in the standard contemporary violin repertoire and is frequently performed in concert halls and chamber music recitals around the world.

The following research will examine performance examples from distinguished violinists in different generations, as well as rising young talents. Comparing and discussing their similarities and differences provides better options for violinists seeking to enhance their interpretations and playing of this masterpiece.

Performance Order

As mentioned earlier in Piazzolla's music analysis, there is no confirmed order for the four movements. Piazzolla composed and performed in different orders, and other reproductions of his

⁸⁷ Jerry Dubins, "Bartók: String Quartets Nos. 1-6," *Fanfare (Tenafly, N.J.)* 42, no. 4 (2019): 131-32.

recordings vary in order, too. But Desyatnikov published his arrangement in the order of Autumn- Winter- Spring- Summer, which is an inversion of the order of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Spring- Summer- Autumn- Winter. This reflects the inverted relationship of the seasons between Argentina (Piazzolla's homeland in the southern hemisphere) and Italy (Vivaldi's homeland in the northern hemisphere). In addition, to highlight this inversion further, Desyatnikov inserted several quotations from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* into his arrangement, thus creating audible connections between the opposing seasons in the Vivaldi and Piazzolla cycles.

Among these three sets of concerto suites, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* concertos, Piazzolla's *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, and Desyatnikov's arrangement, Desyatnikov made an excellent connection between Piazzolla and Vivaldi. At the end of the arrangement, *Primavera Porteña* (Spring), he provides two different choices to end this movement, either finish with *cembalo* (harpsichord, a keyboard instrument with the strings plucked) or end with the second violin sectional quartet in the orchestra. The musicians can finish this movement in measure 152 after the quotes from Vivaldi's *Autumn* opening motif, while they can also continue finishing with five extra measures (Example 35) quoted from Vivaldi's *Spring* opening theme (Example 36). But the *Spring* theme is not completely arranged in the ending. Instead, it ends with an unresolved chord, which leaves the audience with the feeling that it needs to continue playing on.

⁸⁸ Piazzolla, full score, 55

⁸⁹ Vivaldi, ed. Launchbury, 1

⁸⁸ Piazzolla, full score, 55

⁸⁹ Vivaldi, ed. Launchbury, 1

As stated in the music score, when the entire suite along with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in a circle, musicians can choose the extra options for the end, and follow Gidon Kremer's performance order, which form in Vivaldi *Spring*- Piazzolla *Summer*- Vivaldi *Summer*- Piazzolla *Autumn*- Vivaldi *Autumn*- Piazzolla *Winter*- Vivaldi *Winter*- Piazzolla *Spring*.⁹⁰ If played in this order with the optional ending, the *Spring* theme is the clue to connect with the first piece played in this circle.

Nowadays, the violinists choose to start with Piazzolla's first work, *Summer*, and then follow the calendar year, *Autumn*, *Winter*, and *Spring* when playing the arrangement alone. Some of them played with the original ending with the *Autumn* quotation for the *Primavera Porteña*, and some others chose to play the extended ending with the *Spring* quotation. Violin virtuoso Gidon Kremer premiered Desyatnikov's arrangement along with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in one recording. He started with Vivaldi's *Spring*, and alternately played Vivaldi and Piazzolla's works in the calendar year order, then he finished with Piazzolla's *Spring* on the optional ending, played by the harpsichord with the orchestra. Musicians could either follow the published arrangement order or have their own performance order according to their preference.

Gidon Kremer

In 1996, Desyatnikov started his arrangement of Piazzolla's chamber suite *Estaciones Porteñas* at the request of Gideon Kremer, the renowned Latvian violinist recognized as one of the world's leading performers. And three years later, he finished the arrangement, and Kremer premiered and recorded this suite in September 1998 with his world-renowned chamber orchestra, Kremerata Baltica, which was founded by Kremer in 1997 with talented young musicians primarily from the Baltic States- Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.⁹¹ The orchestra's name reflects

⁹⁰ Piazzolla's *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, Arranged by Leonid Desyatnikov, (Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc., 2011), 55.

⁹¹ Sciannameo, *Experiencing the Violin Concerto: A Listener's Companion*, 169.

the connection to both Kremer and its regional roots. Because of its outstanding playing and widely engaged performances from classical to contemporary repertoires, Kremer and his ensemble gained an international reputation quickly and collaborated with distinguished composers and artists worldwide.

As titled in this recording, *Eight Seasons*, Kremer performed Desyatnikov's arrangement along with Vivaldi's original *Four Seasons*, pairing each season one by one. The remarkable contrast between the Baroque and tango music in this performance creates a brilliant collaboration of styles, centuries, and musical eras. Due to this outstanding recording, the concept of "seasons" has become a motif for the Kremerata.⁹²

Kremer and his orchestra's performance is lively and straightforward. In the recording, the bright tempo with fresh energy preserves the essence of Vivaldi's work and introduces Piazzolla's less-known (at that time) but highly deserving composition to the audience. As always, Kremer's solo in this piece is terrific, with the dynamic intensity of the full-string orchestra delivering a "startling counterpoint, especially on the *Verano Porteño*."⁹³ The recording shows Kremer's performance order for this arrangement, which is more widely accepted by violinists around the world: *Verano Porteño* (Summer), *Otoño Porteño* (Autumn), *Invierno Porteño* (Winter), and *Primavera Porteña* (Spring).

Ray Chen

On July 25, 2023, Ray Chen performed this arrangement suite with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Tianyi Lu at the "2023 Pay with Ray" concert. He started this piece

⁹² "The Seasons of Gidon Kremer: In the Case of This Formidable Violin Superstar, One Learns to Expect the Unexpected," *Strings*, accessed March 10, 2024, <https://stringsmagazine.com/the-seasons-of-gidon-kremer-in-the-case-of-this-formidable-violin-superstar-one-learns-to-expect-the-unexpected/>.

⁹³ "Eight Seasons Reviews," *Nonesuch*, 2000, accessed March 7, 2024, <https://kremeratabaltica.com/discography/eight-seasons>.

with the *Summer* movement in the common performance order and finished with the *Spring* movement on the optional ending played by the second violin sectional quartet. In the concert, his active left hand produces a wide and fast vibrato that brings out the beauty in that special violin. For example, in the slow section of *Primavera Porteña*, his playing evoked a deeply emotional sound that presented the quiet and peaceful atmosphere typically found in autumn. Besides following the score, Chen improvised in his performance and displayed his virtuosic playing techniques by adding extra *portamentos*, double-stops, and *glissandos*. Additionally, he also extended the note duration to minimize rests and create smoothly flowing melodic lines. With all these aspects, he pushes the boundaries of the violin's capabilities and explores the violin's unconventional tone colors.

For instance, Chen applied extra *portamento* leading into the final accented note in measure 28. As a consequence, the violin produces a richer, more expressive sound on the melodic line, where the primary theme is presented in the third statement, and creates a contrast before transitioning into a new tango rhythmic pattern. For the typical sliding *arrastre*, as in Chen's performance, we can achieve a whistle-like sound effect by placing the bow closer to the bridge and using a longer bow stroke at a fast bow speed. While for the descending chromatic *glissando*, Chen employed different bow strokes to produce a powerful, dramatic sound.

In the movement of *Otoño Porteño*, Chen improvised an additional descending *portamento* in order to connect the large leap following the first cadenza in measure 83. He also applied extra bow strokes with powerful double-stops to create a passionate, intense moment leading into the final section. Through watching Chen's performance, violinists could have different interpretations and focus on bringing out different tone colors to make the music more distinctive and attractive.

Jumi Kang

In comparison, violinist Jumi Kang's performance with Sejong Soloist on Mar 19, 2018, in Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow is more conventional. She basically followed the music score but added personal interpretations on dynamic levels. For instance, in the movement of *Verano Porteño*, Chen keeps the primary theme consistently soft with the same dynamic marking *p* in the score. On the contrary, Kang distinguished the two identical phrases by playing the first one softly and repeating the second one much louder to emphasize the theme. Same as Kremer, Kang played the same musical phrases with different interpretations. In this concert, she started this suite with *Summer* as well, but she didn't play the extended ending of *Spring*.

This piece is a standard performance repertoire on Kang's list. Prior to this performance, she played it with the East Coast Chamber Orchestra at Butler University's Schrott Center for the Arts in 2014. In one of the concert reviews, it was mentioned that Jumi Kang infused the piece with her unique intensity, which constantly turned the character from sultry, slide-filled passages to an urban, ghostlike aura and back to a powerful, driving rhythm.⁹⁴ Compared to her earlier performance with the KNUA String Ensemble in Seoul on July 4, 2010, her later interpretation shows greater maturity and steadiness. Especially in the slow sections of each movement, she took a more relaxed tempo, embraced expressive sliding shifts, and explored a wider range of dynamic contrasts, which brought out the natural beauty in each season's reflective moments.

Liv Migdal

German-Jewish violinist Liv Migdal recorded all eight seasons of Vivaldi and Piazzolla together with the German Chamber Orchestra, released in May 2016. She also played the extended

⁹⁴ "Review: 2010 Ivci Gold Medalist Clara- Jumi Kang Plays with the East Coast Chamber Orchestra," Violinist.com, 2014, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://www.violinist.com/blog/laurie/20149/16193/>.

ending the same as Kremer and recorded all eight seasons in one recording. But, different from Kremer, she performed the full works side by side rather than pairing each season individually, the whole Vivaldi's four concertos first, and then Desyatnikov's arrangement in the calendar year order. One review described that Migdal's performance was rhythmically charged with a lively foundation provided by the double bass and cellos. The overall performance was comfortable, and Migdal created some truly rich moments with her warm vibrato. The orchestra responded to her lead like a graceful dance partner. Even though Migdal's playing can feel a bit rough during the cadenza-like climax of *Primavera Porteña*, she still successfully delivered the humor and rhythmic spirit of Piazzolla to her audience.⁹⁵

Katherine Yoon

The talented violinist Katherine Yoon from LGT Young Soloist, which is one of the finest youth orchestras in Europe, started the piece with the *Summer* movement in a concert of the Copenhagen Summer Festival on August 12, 2022. Later, in the opening section of *Autumn*, she used the *chicharra* bow technique instead of the *s.p. quasi guiro* technique as marked in the score. The *chicharra* technique involves playing with the bow behind the bridge, which is known as a hallmark of traditional tango playing. She also used a bow hold with a straightened index finger, which makes it easier to apply pressure to the string and enhances the resonance of the playing. She is one of the few musicians to use the original bow hold for the *chicharra* effect in this movement. After her playing, another young musician, Honney Kim, continuously played the *Winter* and *Spring*. She finished the suite with the regular original ending.

⁹⁵ "8 Jahreszeiten - Piazzolla: Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas; Vivaldi: The Four Seasons," *The Strad*, 2016, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://www.thestrad.com/8-jahreszeiten-piazzolla-cuatro-estaciones-portenas-vivaldi-the-four-seasons/176.article>.

After Kremer's premiere, most performers start this suite with *Verano Porteño* in a faster tempo than the original tempo marking, which is a quarter note equal to 120. The tempo range is typically between 135 and 140. In Kremer's recording, he started at a fast tempo, around 140, setting a good example for creating a lightly moving mood. Depending on different interpretations and preferences, violinists can choose their own tempos with more options for technique practice or musical phrases for the slow expressive section in each movement.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Leonid Desyatnikov's arrangement of *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* by Astor Piazzolla for solo violin and chamber orchestra is a good example of the fusion between tango elements and classical traditions. It incorporates Piazzolla's renovated modern tango style, *Nuevo Tango*, with baroque-inspired materials, including direct references to Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, blending genres across time and geography.

In this arrangement, Desyatnikov expands modern violin techniques beyond traditional boundaries, not only improving the violin playing technique but also exploring more possibilities of violin sound. As a result, the violin transforms from a string instrument, which is typically characterized by its lyrical and melodic beauty, into a dynamic percussion instrument. Due to the intense and passionate emotions, with the unusual percussive tone colors and new tango rhythmic functions, this piece is widely accepted by violinists for their contemporary repertoire all over the world. By studying the original piece and the arrangement, musicians can improve their musical understanding and deliver more expressive interpretations through this piece.

Appendix: Musical Terms Explanation and Interpretation⁹⁶

Musical Terms	Techniques	Explanation and Interpretation
<i>Arrastre</i> [Span]	Left-hand	“sweep,” a type of <i>glissando</i> , place the finger below the real note and slide up to the note to create a crunchy <i>gliss</i> sound
<i>Chicharra</i> [Span]	Right-hand / Bow	“cicada,” place the bow on the colored ending of the D string behind the bridge, producing a loud chirping sound effect to imitate the sound of the insect
<i>Collé</i> [Fr]	Right-hand / Bow	“glued,” an off-string bow stroke started from the air then sharply pinched the string for the attack effect
<i>Glissando (Gliss.)</i> [It]	Left-hand	“to slide,” finger rapid, sliding movement, usually played on instruments having fixed semitones, like piano and harp
<i>Látigo</i> [Span]	Left-hand	“whip,” a rapid ascending <i>gliss</i> finishing on an infinitely high pitch, usually a harmonic, to produce a whistle effect
<i>Martelé</i> [Fr]	Right-hand / Bow	“Hammered,” an on-string percussive bow stroke with a sharp attack at the beginning of each note, and short pause between strokes
<i>Pizzicato</i> [It]	Right-hand / Bow	“to pluck,” pluck strings with fingers, instead of using a bow
<i>Portamento</i> [It]	Left-hand	“to carry,” to produce a gliding expressive sound effect without articulating the pitch between notes
<i>Sul ponticello quasi guiro</i> [It]	Right-hand / Bow	“on the bridge as if guiro,” <i>guiro</i> : percussion instrument in gourd shape. Play on/ close to the bridge to produce <i>guiro</i> -like sound

⁹⁶ The sources are from the following documents. [1] Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, 70-74. [2] Gallo, *The Violin in Tango*, 103, 10, 19. [3] *Grove Music online*. [4] "12 Tango Music Techniques for string Players, *the Strad*, August 14, 2016, <https://www.thestrad.com/playing-hub/12-tango-music-techniques-for-string-players/34.article#commentsJump>.

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