

## **My step is more tango than yours! Choreomusicological Analysis of Tango Argentino Walking**

Abstract of the Paper Presentation Christopher Dick and Kendra Stepputat at the Meeting of the Study Group on Sound, Movement and the Sciences, Graz (Austria), 20 – 22 September 2018

In current international tango argentino practice, there is not one homogenous tango dance style or movement norm. Several styles co-exist, some of them are labeled (e.g. milonguero, nuevo, salon), others exist in niches only. Tango teachers use this variety to position themselves in the market, discussions among dancers about the 'best' style - for instance subjective qualities as originality, comfort, elegance, intimacy etc. - are ongoing and trigger tango sub-scenes as well as market opportunities. But are the differences really that essential, or are they more constructed perception of the same basic tango movement repertoire? To answer this question, we used motion capture data that we collected in the course of the project "Tango-danceability of Music in European Perspective". The data was collected during three sessions in the lab, each with a professional and widely influential tango argentino couple dancing in a different style. For the sake of comparability, we chose to focus on the analysis of tango walking. Movement analysis of tango steps is the basis for our approach here, yet tango argentino is an artform danced to music, and the sound should not be ignored. We therefore chose a choreomusicological approach in relating the movements to the tango sounds, to capture tango walking in its sound-movement-interconnection.

We argue, that exploring tango styles on an in-depth level, from a choreomusicological perspective and supported by quantitative motion and sound analysis (such as biomechanical analysis and music information retrieval) can help to understand actual differences or commonalities in style, aside tango scene inherent controversies. It is here that our research can provide useful information for 'culturally relevant' questions, raised and discussed by tango scene members themselves.