

Tangos

Most versions of the *tangos* are for fun, pleasure and pure joy and are called *chico* (light, happy) songs and dances. Some *tangos* are also called *tientos canasteros* (a flamenco term for wandering Gypsy basket weavers). The dance is generally sensual and exciting and more subtle than the *rumba gitana*, another flamenco dance with a similar rhythm.

Many scholars think that the rhythm and song entered southern Spain from Argentina through the port city of Cádiz (this type of flamenco song, which also includes the *rumba Gitana* and flamenco *guajira*, which originated in Cuba and Puerto Rico respectively, are called *cantes "ida y vuelta"* or round trip songs). Others believe the song and dance form originated in northern Africa, later arriving in southern Spain.

The following verse refers to Triana, a neighborhood in Seville on the west bank of the Guadalquivir River, the city's traditional *Gitano* (Spanish Gypsy) quarter. Triana is considered one of the birthplaces of flamenco, so much so that anyone baptized in the font at the Parish Church of Santa Ana is blessed with the gift of *cante* – flamenco singing:

Triana

Triana. Triana..

Que bonita esta Triana

Que bonita esta Triana

Que bonita esta Triana

Cuando le ponen al puente

La banderita Gitana

Triana, Triana

How pretty Triana is.

When they put the little Gypsy flag
on the bridge.

This second verse talks about a boat trip one can take across the Bay of Cádiz from the port of Santa Maria to the city of Cádiz (Cai is the Gypsy abbreviation for Cádiz). Cádiz is called the "little cup of silver" because the air is suffused with ultra fine sand blown in from the North Coast of Africa, which gives it a silvery glow.

Although now a small resort town, EL Puerto Santa Maria is significant in American history as the starting point for ships sailing to the New World. You can still see the fountain where ships took on water for the voyage. Columbus' flagship, the Santa Maria, was named after this small town:

Tangos Puerto Santa Maria

Mañana me voy pa' Cai

Salgo del Puerto Santa Maria..

Ay mira que en el vapor

Pa' contempla esa bella bahia

Tomorrow I'm going to Cádiz

I'm leaving from Puerto Santa Maria

Just see how in the little boat

you can gaze at this beautiful bay

Tacita de plata...Reina del salero

Little cup of silver, Queen of gracious style

*Con este cante por tango yo
Quiero decirte lo que te camelo*

With this little tango song,
I want to tell you how you captured me.

*Que si que si, que no que no
Que este Gitano me lo duermo yo*

Yes or no?
I'm going to sleep with this Gypsy.

The song is in 4/4 rhythm and is broken down by dancers into four beat phrases. The rhythm is performed by stamping or holding count 1 in silence, while counts 2, 3, and 4 are clapped. Often, the "and" count between counts 2 and 3 is also clapped:

Beat	1	2	3	4
Clap		X	X	X
Or Clap		X	X	X
Stamp or silence	X			

Dance phrasing and sequences:

As well as footwork and marking steps, dance steps also include hip rolls and beautiful arm and hand gestures. The verses - *letras* - are usually broken up into several sequences, for example; the first line of a song may be sung, and the second line doesn't follow for several *compás* while the dancer performs footwork sequences, marking steps and long calls or cues - *llamadas* or *desplantes*. Mimed gestures are often performed in this dance, which is similar in feel to the bulerías.

Although there are many variations, the following is a traditional dance structure:

1. Guitar *Falseta* – guitarist's introduction of the song/tempo/mood.
2. *Llamada* from the dancer (calls in the singer)
3. *Letra* - 1st verse, broken into sections (where dancer inserts footwork or a *desplante*)
4. Guitar *Falseta* – dancer can interpret with choreography or *palmas*
5. *Letra* 2nd verse, similar to the 1st
6. *Escobilla* – long footwork section
7. Guitar *Falseta* – dancer interprets with choreography or *palmas*
8. *Llamada* (final cue going into the exit) and *Salida* (exit), also often called the *Cierre* if the dance finishes on stage.