

# TANGAZO

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## Piazzolla's tango studies: rhythmic and melodic reflections

Piazzolla's fast music base its movement and energy on rhythm and articulation.

The articulation supports the rhythmic, and determines the type of sonority that we are going to use.

It is a mistake to think first of defining the sound and then incorporating the articulation.

There are different ways of articulating the sound in Piazzolla's work, depending on whether the note has an accent, a point or if it is the second slurred eighth note of two.



The most important rhythm we find is the famous **3-3-2**.

It is always into Piazzolla's music and it comes from the milonga.

The 8 eighth notes are grouped in **two groups of 3** and **one of 2**.



The studies share similar rhythms and articulations, although in many cases they are grouped in different ways.

### Etude N° 3 (wide intervals)



### Etude N° 6 (joint grades)



### Etude N° 5



There may also be alternative groupings as in Study No. 1 where there are four tempos in **3/8** and two in **2/4**.

Could we think of it in a metric of **12/8 + 2/4** ?

Sure it would! it would help us with the phrasing.



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Let me give you some tips on how to begin the study of this **3-3-2** rhythm in the tango studies. There are three fundamental steps that I must carry out:

- 1- **Study N° 3.** I just practice accented notes. In this case I can consider one bar in 4/4 and the other in 2/2. This is the *rhythmic key* of the 3-3-2.



- 2- Then I add the second eighth note slurred to the accent and it must be short and with less dynamic.



- 3- Finally complete the whole passage marking the accents and the short notes.



- 4- In the **Study N°6** we can consider the same practice but the melody was built differently.

In the first ten bars the ritmic is in **3-3-2** formula and with a simple melody.  
We apply the same formula as in the previous Study N°3.



- 5- Then with the second slurred eighth note.



- 6- Finally the whole passage.

It is very important to mark the accents with some tango swing, moving the beats subtly.

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7- In **Study No. 5** another different rhythmic formula appears... first bar **3-2-3** and second bar **3-3-2**.



8- The silences in this passage of Piazzolla's Study N°5 must be breathed, they are the impulse that the musical phrasing needs. The notes in red need a lot of air support.



9- In measure 35 of Study No. 1, the marcato begins with a lot of articulation in extreme notes of the low register. It is not easy to play these low notes with a good sonority without tension in the articulation. The practice is gradual, first we focus on the sonority and then we incorporate different articulations without losing the quality of the sound. We start with large values and end with eighth notes.

