

PART I – DANCING BETWEEN WORLDS

Lúa descolorida, Osvaldo Golijov (1960-)

Los pájaros perdidos and Balada para un loco, Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992)
Aria (*Cantilena, Bachianas Brasileiras No 5*), Heitor Villa Lobos (1887 –1959)

This part of the programme dances between worlds – in many ways and senses. Integration over time is one of the main features of *slitscan* photography, connecting instances of time to each other. We observe movement and rhythm as dancers perform in front of our camera, being recorded in a continuous image in time. We will discover how three very different South American composers enchant with their music, how they float between the European and South American inheritance, carrying their legacy into a new world, finding their truly distinct style. Enjoy!

The cosmic horse ... returning to Europe. Golijov's **Lúa descolorida** was inspired by the work of the French Baroque composer Couperin and, most of all, 'the voice of American soprano Dawn Upshaw. The original text, written in Gallego, stems from a poem by the 19th century Galician writer and poet Rosalía de Castro. Instructions in the vocal score read "slowly rocking" or "slow motion ride on a cosmic horse".

In one of his last interviews, Piazzolla said *"Tango is sad, dramatic, but not pessimistic. Pessimistic were the old, absurd tango lyrics."* And true to his word, working together with Uruguayan writer Horacio Ferrer, their song **Balada para un loco** marks an extraordinary change in the history of tango lyrics in the seventies. "Piantao, piantao, piantao" (Crazy, crazy, crazy) eventually replaces the tame euphemisms for the craziness of love: "Rechiflao en mi tristeza" (mad in my sadness). In the same interview Piazzolla was asked about the Europeanisation of South American music. *"...Don't you think that the critique that was applied to Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos would be applicable to you? I mean that he made his music more European to be liked by a European public?"* He replied: *"No, that is silly. I think Villa-Lobos is 100 per cent Brazilian. His chamber music is excellent, and totally Brazilian. Because if Brazil has anything, it is popular music ... "*

Heitor Villa-Lobos named his series of nine suites the *Bachianas Brasileiras* – the Brazilian Bach pieces. They were written between 1930 and 1945 for various combinations of instruments and voices, one of the more popular pieces being the **Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5** for soprano and (originally) eight cellos (Villa-Lobos himself being a skilled cellist). The suites represent an attempt to generously adapt a number of Baroque (Bach) harmonic and contrapuntal procedures to Brazilian music.

In 1953 Piazzolla won a grant to study in Paris with the well-known French composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. She questioned him about his music

saying "...It's very well written'. [] 'Here you are like Stravinsky, like Bartok, like Ravel, but [] I can't find Piazzolla in this'. [] 'You say that you are not a pianist. What instrument do you play, then?' And I didn't want to tell her that I was a bandoneon player []. Finally, I confessed and she asked me to play some bars of a tango of my own. She suddenly opened her eyes, took my hand and told me: 'You idiot, that's Piazzolla!'. And I took all the music I composed, ten years of my life, and sent it to hell in two seconds."