

Tosca: Tango in Texas

by Dan Sharp

A disco ball throws specks of light over a small theater converted into a live music venue. Tables are set upon various terraced levels where people sit and nurse their cocktails. The club is inhabited by the regular Thursday night crowd. A few middle-aged couples are practicing their steps as they wait. A group of five bald or white-haired gentlemen sit and chat, while fashionable couples in their twenties occupy the upper reaches. The band begins to play their instruments under the disco ball's light: an accordion, a string quartet, an upright bass, and a piano. The women in the quartet are dressed nicely but unassumingly, contrasting the hockey jersey worn by the bass player, and the cut-offs and tattooed arms of the bandleader, composer, and accordion player, Glover Gill. The dancers begin their solemn embrace. Martinis continue to be shaken, and a cash register punctuates the intense, melancholy music.

Tosca Tango Orchestra began playing on Valentine's Day, 1997 in Austin, Texas. During 1999 they played three weekly gigs at the Continental Club, the Cedar Street Courtyard, and the Ritz, venues that usually host hip country rock, lounge, and swing acts. Besides these regular performances, they played a variety of other gigs and were featured on the KUT Austin Public Radio program *Eklektikos*. After attending several performances, I began to ask certain questions: Why does the Argentinian national music and dance resonate with people in Austin, Texas? How did a string quartet playing dense modern harmony sneak in the back door of clubs such as the Ritz or the Continental Club?

This paper describes the encounter between Austin musicians, dancers, and Argentinean tango. I will chart the factors that converged to spark Glover's passion for Astor Piazzolla's *tango nuevo* and the eventual formation of the Tosca Tango Orchestra. I will detail a kind of dance with the tango itself: the musical and choreographic negotiations with the tango tradition that Tosca and their loyal dancing fans

engage in, far removed from the tenements of Buenos Aires.

In elaborating these themes, I will draw upon the political economy perspective of Marta Savigliano, who sees the proliferation in the West of exotic dances such as the tango as an attempt to appropriate the “passion” of the so-called Third World that has been lost in the rush of (post) industrial capitalism. While I agree with this assessment in terms of the worldwide popularity of the tango, it is crucial to emphasize the wide variety of individual motivations for local musicians and dancers’ aesthetic affinity with the genre. I will pay special attention to Glover’s decision to give up playing the music of one dance revival, swing, in order to explore another, the tango.

Tracing the roots of this encounter between Texans and tango, I will outline Glover Gill’s musical trajectory and the history of the Argentinian tango in order to better understand why Astor Piazzolla’s *tango nuevo* piqued the Austin composer’s interest. Next, I will describe the tension between this creative individual and a foreign tradition, examining Glover’s irreverence toward and adherence to the conventions of the *tango nuevo*. I will mention the innovative reactions of dancers to Tosca’s challenging tangos. Finally, I will consider the implications of loving a tradition without living its roots, so common in this media-saturated world described as postmodern.

“Tango Does Not Swing At All”

-Glover Gill

To historically contextualize the growing phenomenon of Tosca here in Austin, it is necessary to briefly examine composer Glover Gill’s musical past. Glover has been very interested in the piano since he was young. When he was eleven years old, he bought some technical exercises on his own, to supplement self-study by ear. After playing in garage bands through adolescence, he spent a few years studying piano at St. Thomas University in Houston. He played in a jazz fusion band, One Hand Clapping, and a punk band called D-Day, which toured nationally. In 1992, as he attended the University of Texas at Austin’s music program in piano performance and composition, he formed the continental swing band 8 1/2 Souvenirs which combined the “gypsy jazz” of Django Reinhardt with other French and Italian pop artists from the swing era. The sound of 8 1/2 Souvenirs is really quite remote from what Glover sees as a cardboard style of many bands who

have recently jumped on the swing bandwagon, manipulating a few stereotyped musical formulas recognized as “swing.” He grew up surrounded by the music; he describes his father as a “walking swing encyclopedia.”

A Gap commercial featuring overenthusiastic swing dancers in khaki chino pants marked, in Glover’s mind, the height of the swing fad’s commercialization. “I’m surprised there’s not a new sport utility vehicle called ‘Swing’” he joked (Houston Press, 10-29-98). Around that time, while taking a life-changing music theory class, which transformed him into a self-described “counterpoint nut,” he wrote a rumba for 8 1/2 Souvenirs with tango elements called “Tango Lunatico.” The melody, sung in a satirical pseudo-operatic vocal tone, sounds as if Glover wanted to explore the tango, but within the form of 8 1/2 Souvenirs, he felt compelled to treat it as a spoof. Hearing the song, a friend of his, a chef at the upscale Chez Nous restaurant, gave him a recording by tango composer Astor Piazzolla.

Glover’s subsequent obsession with Astor Piazzolla offered him an opportunity to explore more complex modern harmony and counterpoint without cloistering himself within a concert hall setting. Tango is a recognizable genre that has held the attention, off and on, of people all over the world throughout the twentieth century, from Paris to Finland to Japan, yet a dance that is sophisticated and too intricate to fake. This pares down his potential audience to a certain extent, preventing the same kind of fickle mass appeal that soured him on swing. Tango is “a lot harder to learn than the twist. It tries the patience of a 90s culture revved to high gear,” according to Chiori Santiago in *Smithsonian*. This is arguable regarding certain segments of nineties culture—Tosca’s popularity is beginning to erode that assumption. Yet for Glover, the tango is not a calculated career move or a cerebral attraction. Illness becomes a more apt metaphor for his passionate interest in the tango. Although he can identify 5/7 flat 9 chords with ease, he states that “The attraction for me is not from a longhaired or theoretical viewpoint, it’s more visceral, and I think that’s the case with most people.”

He began composing tangos and calling his friends from music school to sight-read them, and soon Tosca was born. Band members and fans comment that it is exciting to hear Glover develop as a composer. Glover sees his development this way: “At first my tunes were more derivative of Piazzolla. . . . Now, I’ve found my own. I do

try to keep one 100% tango ingredient in there at all times, but I don't try to keep all the ingredients anymore. I just let it go." In order to understand what "tango ingredients" are, and what being derivative of Piazzolla means, we must examine the history of the tango, and Astor Piazzolla's role in its development.

A Brief History of the Tango and the Significance of Astor Piazzolla

All histories of the tango revolve around themes of immigration, exile, the urban struggle for survival, disillusionment, class, race, and sex. Tango was born of the disappointment of immigrants who came to Argentina in search of a new life, only to have their hopes dashed and nostalgia for home sharpened as they lived in poor tenements in Buenos Aires. The rhythms of the black Cuban slave mixed with the Spanish colonial songs of the Argentinian cowboys and the bandoneon, a German button accordion played by newer European immigrants. Like many musical genres developed in the Americas, it is a hybrid form, combining African-based rhythms with the European harmony and melody.

Marta Savigliano writes that "Tango's sexual politics were centered in the process of seduction. A fatal man and a femme fatale who, despite their proximity, kept their erotic impulses under control, measuring each other's powers" (110, 1995). A common theme in tango lyrics is a bitter lament regarding a woman who leaves the singer for a richer man. The economic frustrations of urban life in Buenos Aires are eroticized through the dance. Male powerlessness in the world is displaced onto women. The outward dominance of the man leading counterposes the lyrics that sing of the bitterness of falling prey to feminine wiles.

The tango first vaulted into the international public eye before World War I. It became the rage in Paris, and soon after that, it moved from Paris to the United States. Since then separate dance styles have developed, from the formulaic slow-slow-quick-quick-slow step of the American tango, to the roses between the teeth and large, dramatic, sweeping gestures of the tango that developed in spacious Parisian

ballrooms. Meanwhile, the tango continued to change and develop in Argentina. Until the 1910s, much of the Argentinean elite considered the tango a degenerate dance form associated with the brothels, blacks, and lower-class immigrants where it originated. When it caught on in Paris like wildfire, many Argentinian elites, who largely looked to France as the taste makers, were outraged that such a sinful, suggestive dance from their own country would be so popular. Yet, little by little, as it became an international phenomenon, the dance become more accepted (and domesticated) into Argentinian bourgeois society. Due to this long, complicated history, the tango has come to have a variety of different associations, from South American tenements to Paris ballrooms to Hollywood glitz, from controlled chess-like seduction to overt, scandalous sexuality. In this light, the contrast between Glover's tattoos and the elegant string quartet seems less incongruous.

The forties were considered the heyday of tango in Argentina, where large orchestras called *orquestras típicas* would play to a thousand dancers or more in large venues. In 1955, Astor Piazzolla returned from Paris, where he had been studying Western classical music with Alberto Ginastera and Nadia Boulanger, and formed the Octeto Buenos Aires. With this group, he sought to combine the tango with the twentieth-century harmony and counterpoint he had studied and the musical temperature of jazz groups he had heard in Paris such as the Mulligan Octet. He pared down the number of players and added an electric guitar. Most importantly, he raised the bandoneon, an accompanying instrument, to the level of a featured concert instrument. The initial outcry against these developments was strong. Piazzolla received death threats, and he was once supposedly slapped by an anonymous Argentinian while walking down the street in New York City. Eventually, Piazzolla and his style, known as *tango nuevo*, became largely accepted. By 1960, his influence was so strong that the genre is often conceived as divided between the pre- and post-Piazzolla eras. Then, he wrote both chamber music for a concert setting, and tangos for a small ensemble. He also wrote string quartets, concertos, and fugues. Musicians such as Jerry Mulligan and the Kronos Quartet collaborated with him before his death in 1992.

"He's crazier than Piazzolla"

-Argentinian tango musician, after listening to Glover Gill's tangos.

In 1999, Tosca collaborated with an Argentinean and a Brazilian singer. When they returned to Brazil, they took Tosca's recordings with them. In South America, they played the compact discs for their friends, and upon listening, one acquaintance reacted with the above quote. Although Glover was flattered, he doubts whether this is true. Austin Tango enthusiast Chris Humphrey contrasts the two by saying that "Piazzolla started with what he knew, which was tango, and then he detoured from there, and what Glover did was he started with Piazzolla's detours . . . [and then he went] even further astray (laughs)." Defending his right to play with the form, Glover says:

It's a tango because I say it's a tango . . . I've gotten more radical with my harmony, and bolder with the string writing.

For instance, there's a piece that I wrote for piano, viola, and clarinet-a trio. It's very slow, and there's a spot in the middle where time has no meaning. If that's a tango in that section, I'm Santa Claus. But it is a tango, because I say it is, goddamn it, and because the surrounding parts really have tango rhythms, and my favorite chord, the minor 6/9 chord is everywhere. . . . Except for the middle section, it has that 3-3-2 rhythm which is pervasive in almost any tango, although on this one it's very slow . . . but the dancers love it. They dance to it every time, so I must be doing something right. (1999)

The result is a mix of Piazzolla's *tango nuevo* (which, as mentioned, already includes modern harmony, counterpoint, and elements of jazz) with more overt classical references to Beethoven and Chopin, among others, and even subtle references to rock and roll. Instrumentally, the ensemble remains relatively small, as a seven-piece of accordion, two violins, viola, cello, upright bass, and piano, occasionally joined by a male singer or a clarinet player. The electric guitar, present in the Piazzolla's Octeto Buenos Aires, is absent in Tosca. Glover plays the accordion in the "bandoneon" setting with two reeds tuned an octave apart. He chooses the accordion over the bandoneon because the latter is both cost-prohibitive and extremely difficult to play, due to its design as an accompanying instrument.

Modern artists, as they strive toward individual expression, inevitably have ambivalent relationships to the conventions of the genres within which they work. In Glover's case, this is further complicated by being an outsider to the Argentinean national musical tradition. Is Glover "crazier than Piazzolla"? Can his compositions be considered *tangos nuevos*? In this next section, I will focus on a few musical excerpts in order to examine how Glover stretches the genre boundaries of the *tango nuevo*. A few factors complicate this analysis: 1. Tango is a hybrid genre, and Piazzolla made it even more so. How does one determine its exact boundaries? 2. Glover's work has developed significantly over the last few years of composing for Tosca. Keep in mind that some of the principal musical ingredients of the tango include: the bandoneon (or in this case, an accordion configured to sound like a bandoneon); dramatic, lyrical string and vocal melodies; melancholic or maudlin tone; 3-3-2 rhythm (two dotted quarter notes and a quarter note); counterpoint; prevalent minor 6/9 chords; and chordal formulas and tendencies stemming from the influences of specific tango composers. A whole variety of thematic and formal conventions also exist in vocal tangos, but for the case of this comparison, I will only use instrumental examples.

Example #1: "Mignon 3"

"Mignon 3" is one of the earlier pieces that Glover wrote following his Piazzolla-inspired awakening. It is a study in major 7ths written for string quartet, based on tone clusters containing four notes, each a half-step apart (for example, C-B-Bb-A) in ascending octaves. This cluster then descends the entire chromatic scale, the relative intervals between the notes remaining intact. The resulting sound is jarring, seemingly more akin to atonal twentieth-century chamber music than traditional tangos. The only "tango ingredients" in this piece are the 3-3-2 rhythm and the violent expressiveness of the strings. Yet, before using the radical harmony of this example as irrefutable evidence that Glover is indeed "crazier than Piazzolla," listen to "Four, for Tango" which Piazzolla wrote for the Kronos Quartet. Although it is not necessarily a study in major 7ths, one can hear similar unex-

pected *Psycho*-like glissandos, erratic rhythms, imitation between the strings, and similarly experimental, dissonant harmony. “Mignon 3,” written during Glover’s more derivative beginning period, owes much to “Four, for Tango.”

Example #2: “Humoresque”

The title of this song comes from the overly obvious way in which Beethoven is referenced both in the form of the piece, and in the chord progression of the initial solo piano section of the piece. At no time are direct musical quotes used, in contrast to the photocopied sections of Chopin which appear taped into the pianist’s score in Tosca’s “Prelude.” Starting with an expressive marking of *grave* at the beginning of the solo piano section and moving into an *allegro* section directly refers to the form of many of Beethoven’s sonatas. The voice leading of the chords in this section is highly derivative of Sonata No. 8, and the famous bah-bah-bah-bum from Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony appears later in the piece. The transition into Glover’s original tango-based material is made with quickly descending arpeggios that are common in Beethoven’s work. At the very end of the piece, the bah-bah-bah-bum returns, yet the piece ends on a weak beat of a V chord, a choice much more characteristic of the tango than of Beethoven.

Example #3: “Ballade Four”

Tosca often closes their sets for the night with this ballade. The piece is a good representative of Glover’s later work in which he has found his own compositional voice. An ascending chromatic bass line vaguely reminiscent of heavy rock riffage caused band members to nickname this tune “the rock-and-roll ballade.” The piece is relatively simple in form and tonally stable, consisting of two parts or chord progressions, two motives and two cello/bass figures. The power of the composition derives, at least in part, from the fact that all of the different parts interlock in a way that fits harmonically, with differing amounts of dissonance. Throughout the course of the ballade, most of the possible combinations of instruments, motives, and bass figures are explored. The key is E minor, and although the harmony is dense with many chromatic passing tones, the tonal center does not shift. None of these features place the ballade definitively outside the pa-

rameters of the *tango nuevo*. The 3-3-2 rhythm and prominent minor 6/9 chords serve as sonic markers of the genre, as does the instrumentation of accordion and strings, and the dramatic, maudlin tone. So is he “crazier than Piazzolla”? Perhaps at certain moments, yes. Yet more and more, Glover’s work is simply different from Piazzolla’s, rendering the question moot. He uses *tango nuevo* elements and instrumentation together with nineteenth and twentieth-century art music influences to create compositions that bridge the performance contexts of the nightclub and the concert hall.

What is the significance of classical influence seeping into venues accustomed to popular styles? To contextualize this question, I quote musicologist Robert Walser: “Mass mediation ensures that there can be no absolute separation of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture in the modern world” (63). Just hum Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkyries* to a child and chances are they’ll start singing “kill the wabbit, with my sword and magic helmet,” referring to a well-known Bugs Bunny cartoon. Walser claims that classical music “no longer signifies as it did originally, but neither are its meanings ahistorical or arbitrary. It is available to culturally competitive groups who claim and use its history, its prestige and its signifying powers in different ways” (ibid.). Even before Jelly Roll Morton spoofed Beethoven, or Bartok trekked into the countryside in search of “authentic” Hungarian folk melodies, low and high musical cultures have been traversed from both sides with a variety of ends which go beyond simply raising prestige or overcoming writer’s block. Walser cites the examples of the Modern Jazz Quartet making “a statement of black pride” through their fusions of jazz and classical, Tin Pan Alley arrangements employing strings to emphasize the sincerity of the singer (such as Bing Crosby’s “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime”), and the Beatles expanding their possibilities in terms of timbre, sparking an era of self-conscious experimentation (ibid., 61-62).

Tosca’s injection of older classical influence into *tango nuevo* has more than one potential explanation. First and foremost, Glover loves the music, and he finally has found a forum in which he can showcase his compositions using his counterpoint skills. At the same time, another significance loosely parallels the end of the original swing craze in the forties. As middle-class white America embraced an increasingly harmless incarnation of swing squeezed dry of its eroticism, Jazz men such as Thelonius Monk, Charlie Parker, and Charles Mingus developed a difficult, menacing jazz with a sense of danger (Hebdige,

48), seemingly taunting “You just try to keep up with us. We won’t cater to your taste.” Danceability ended up no longer being a priority, as the music became more edgy and subversive. Unlike Glover’s previous project, the neo-swing band 8 1/2 Souvenirs, Tosca’s focus on the point of contact between classical music and tango places them on the boundary between chamber music and music for nightclubs—danceable and not danceable music. In effect, they are using a very different idiom to express, “If you want to come along, great. But we set the terms.”

“It sure isn’t what they play at the dance studio.”

-Dancer at a Tosca show

The tension between a composer and the patrons that dance to his compositions represents another dimension of this local dance, or negotiation, with the tango tradition. When Glover first spoke to tango enthusiasts from Austin, he made it very clear that Tosca played *tango nuevo*, not traditional dance tango. When the dancers first arrived, they scratched their heads at Glover’s unusual phrasing and harmony, and cadenzas lacking a metrical pulse, such as the clarinet line in “Ballade Three” where “time has no meaning.” None of them slapped him for corrupting the tango, but some dancers have expressed that they wished “that they would just play a regular tango!” Many, however, have grown to see Glover’s tangos as a challenge. Determined to take advantage of the rare privilege of having a live tango orchestra in their city, Chris Humphrey and her fellow tango enthusiasts push themselves to adapt their dancing to what in Argentina is chamber music, not dance tango. Chris describes the tango as a very improvisational dance:

You can dance to the rhythm, you can dance to melody, you can dance to the counterpoint, you can mix and match . . . you’ve got a lot of options with every step you take. . . . So traditional dance tango . . . has a real steady rhythm but the nuevo tango takes off and goes down different (pause) avenues, which for a dancer it can be a little overwhelming, or it can be a real challenge. For a musical dancer, it can be a real source of joy to be able to take off and follow the music a little bit (1999).

I noticed that the dancers went to great lengths to adapt their dancing to Tosca's music, sometimes standing almost motionless for as much as a minute, or moving to their own pulse until the music returned to a more regular, tango-like rhythm.

"C'est pas carre mais I do what I please"
-8 1/2 Souvenirs

Exoticism, Anti-Essentialism and the Internationalization of the Tango

For centuries and for a variety of reasons, musicians have appropriated musical styles from other places. The line "I do what I please" in the title track of 8 1/2 Souvenirs 1997 record *Souvonica* expresses not only a bohemian desire to dance the night away, but also the right to play old French and Italian swing/pop tunes by Django Reinhardt and Serge Gainsberg. The aesthetic is not just to play the songs, but to play with them, and to make them their own.

Quattro quasi liberato
Le dritte swing e sono megalo
Archi achieved il secundo ouit

Perfecto e preferabile
Preferer le perfectobile
C'est pas carre mais I do what I please

Back to start we skip die linea
storia vulnerabile
Danser toute la nuit tout
ca c'est ma vie

Chris Humphrey articulates the way she identifies with a foreign music and dance in a more speculative, curious way, aware of the potential inconsistency of loving a dance without living its roots, but insistent that the connection is deep.

I find that really interesting coming from where it did. It came from these poor immigrants, in a really rough area, and the people you see doing it now are generally well-educated, middle-class people who don't have that same sense of loss and yearning that the original dancers did. I mean, these are people that left everything behind in Europe, they had come to Buenos Aires because it was the other promised land besides the United States, in hopes of maybe eventually bringing their wives or families or girlfriends or whatever over, so they had this real sense of loss and disenfranchisement that we really don't have. And yet it still touches us on a real deep level that's just . . . I really can't explain how it happens (1999).

Regarding Tosca's appeal, Glover mused, "I don't know. Maybe people think it's chic." A young fan at one of their shows echoed a sentiment that I heard many times throughout my fieldwork. "It's different. The music, it's just so beautiful and passionate."

For Marta Savigliano, author of the book *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, passion and difference are keywords implicated in the dynamics of exotic taste. Savigliano examines exoticism from the perspective of political economy. She claims that the power of exoticism stems from the feeling in economically dominant countries that their culture has lost something meaningful in the rush of industrial (or post-industrial) capitalist civilization. Romantic images from different parts of the world rush in to fill that void. To her, the stereotype of the body-oriented, sexualized, "passionate" Other naturalizes the anguish and suffering that actually have historical roots in the economic processes of colonialism. Remember, one of the principal themes of the tango is the lament "she left me for a richer man," displacing male impotence in the world (of work) onto the image of the traitorous femme fatale. This suggests a passion derived from experience in a cruel reality, not innate emotionality mysteriously resulting from life south of the equator. Within the dynamics of exotic taste, there is a hierarchy of exotics, a spectrum from more "distinguished" to more "primitive." The tango's place on a distinguished rung of this hierarchy explains, in her view, its enduring appeal internationally. Developed in large part by recent European immigrants and based on

an ambiguous figure who is part ruffian, part dandy, “Tango was a versatile, new kind of exotic that could adopt the manners of the colonizer while retaining the passion of the colonized, both at heart and on the surface” (111, 1995).

This analysis links tango’s sophisticated exoticism with the ambivalent power relationship between economically dominant countries such as the United States, and poorer nations such as Argentina. Tango has long since found a domesticated space among the “cheesy” formulaic rhythms on electric organ panels here in the United States. Mention the tango to children, and watch them adopt a stern expression and slink across the room cheek-to-cheek to enact the stereotype. But that over-dramatic stereotype, which has become a part of our collective imagination for the last century, has less to do with Argentina, and more to do with Parisian ballrooms and Hollywood, where it has appeared in countless movies from the 1930s until today. In these movies, especially the Latin musicals promoted by the United States government’s Good Neighbor policy around World War II, the tango was combined with the Cuban rhumba and the Mexican mariachi, among other genres, to create a homogenized image of sensuality and excitement south of the border. More recently, Argentinian dancers have tried to wrest back control of these representations through numerous Broadway shows and traveling Argentinian dance companies that travel the world promoting the tango and giving performances and workshops. The tango has become a sizable part of the tourist industry in Argentina, and many workshops are held to train dance teachers and students alike. Dancers, learning directly from Argentinians, have shunned the clichéd slow-slow-quick-quick-slow of the American tango.

Conclusions

Austin’s tango embrace began when Glover Gill decided to abandon a frenetic dance music, swing, in favor of exploring a slower, sultry dance music, the tango. Disillusionment toward increasingly commercialized swing music, recently honed compositional skills, and a passion for Astor Piazzolla’s *tango nuevo* led Glover to form the Tosca Tango Orchestra. A local music scene open to genre blurring and full of musicians traveling geographically and temporally in search of redeeming sounds may have played a part in opening a space for Tosca in more popular clubs. However, it was Glover’s solid reputa-

tion in Austin that caused club owners to book his new project even before they heard him, despite his warnings that the music might not fit the venue. Once booked to perform in Austin, Tosca played with the *tango nuevo* tradition, emphasizing its erudite side, and dancers experimented with new steps to keep up with the music.

It is apt that, during my field recordings of Tosca performances, the ring of the cash register and the shaking of martinis is occasionally audible. Tosca does not fall completely outside the category of commercial music. Market factors are present in the lives of any musicians who make a living playing in clubs and recording. Glover and the Tosca Tango Orchestra have managed to find a niche in a very competitive music market playing original music in which they can take advantage of their classical training and compositional skills in a popular setting. It's a move that local music industry people have described as bold and risky (Glover, 1999). The tango genre, flexible as it is, means many different things to different people, and the demographic of their audience is correspondingly diverse, from people in their twenties to people in their eighties.

Recently, Glover and cellist Sara Nelson appeared in advertisements for a local store called Forbidden Fruit, which sells bondage leather and sex toys. In the advertisements, the two wear leather corsets and latex undergarments from the store as they play their respective instruments, or rather, pose with their instruments, as her cello is also wearing a leather corset, rendering it unplayable. This confrontational, in-your-face brand of eroticism playfully mocks the sophisticated allure of the tango, and can be read as a self-parodying gesture, admitting an awareness that the appeal of their band relies on what Sara calls "the sex thing."

Glover is applying to be sponsored by the Hohner accordion company, to help him defray the costs of a expensive, fussy reed instrument that quickly goes out of tune. In the press packet he is preparing, he is going to include the Forbidden Fruit ad, showing that he is publicly known, and associated with the Hohner accordion in Austin. This unusual contribution to his press packet serves as yet another example of the way in which he has succeeded in making a living as a musician on his own terms. I am anxious to hear where his composi-

tions go next, and where the orchestra will be heard in the upcoming years. Will tango serve as a long-lasting antidote to swing? If a sport utility vehicle named “Swing” wouldn’t surprise him now, will he eventually be forced to decry a new scarlet Cadillac known as the “Tango”?

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