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EL ALCANCE GLOBAL DEL FANDANGO EN MÚSICA, CANTO Y DANZA

SPANIARDS, INDIANS, AFRICANS AND GYPSIES:
THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE FANDANGO IN MUSIC, SONG, AND
DANCE

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FANDANGO IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY THEORY AND ON EUROPEAN STAGES

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Resumen:

Teorías coreúicas trataron al *Fandango* como parte de la “hispanomanía” de la Europa del siglo XVIII; coreografías de esa época demostraron el uso de ese bombo publicitario sobre las escenas de danza. ‘Lo español’ fue considerado como ampliación del léxico coreúico utilizado hasta ese momento en la danza teatral. Es más, permitió que los bailarines desarrollaran formas más expresivas y personales de bailar. Así (o también), los maestros de ballet utilizaron un gran número de bailes españoles en sus obras. Henri Justamant (1815–1886), uno de los coreógrafos más prolíficos de su época, dejó más de 100 ‘livrets de mise en scène’, es decir, anotaciones y descripciones de sus producciones teatrales. Esos manuscritos contienen la documentación y uso dramátúrgico de un gran número de bailes españoles. A partir del análisis detallado de un Fandango, incluido en el ballet *Les Conscrits Espagnols* de 1850/51, pretendo ejemplificar algunos conceptos, así como programas prácticos del Fandango en la cultura europea dancística.

Palabras clave:

Henri Justamant, Hispanomania, Fandango, *Les Conscrits Espagnols*

Fandango en Teoría del Siglo XIX y en los escenarios europeos.

Abstract:

Dance theory discussed the Fandango as part of the Hispanomania in nineteenth-century Europe; choreography displayed the use of this cultural hype on dance stages. ‘Spanishness’ was considered to broaden the movement vocabulary used so far for theatrical dancing. Furthermore, it allowed the dancers to develop more expressive and personal performance modes. The ballet masters, thus (or as well), included a great number of Spanish dances into their works. Henri Justamant (1815–1886), one of the most prolific choreographers of his time, left over 100 ‘livrets de mise en scène’, i.e., notations and descriptions of his many stage productions. These manuscripts present the documentation and dramaturgic usage of a great number of Spanish dances; a Fandango, notated in the ballet *Les Conscrits Espagnols* of 1850/51, will be the topic of a close reading in this lecture that intends to exemplify some concepts as well as practice-based programs of the Fandango in European (dance) culture.

Key Words:

Henri Justamant, Hispanomania, Fandango, *Les Conscrits Espagnols*

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INTRODUCTION

As one aspect of nineteenth-century Hispanomania, contemporary dance theory became concerned with Spanish dances and especially with the fandango; choreography (= the arrangement of dance movements) and choreo-graphy (the notation of dance movements) displayed the use of the Hispanic hype on the dance stages. The Spanish elements seem to have been considered to broaden the movement material that had been used for theatrical dancing up to that point. Furthermore, they allowed the dancers to develop more expressive and personal performance modes. As a result, the ballet masters included a great number of Spanish dances into their works.

One of the most prolific choreographers/choreo-graphers of his time was the French Henri Justamant – who left behind over 100 '*livrets de mise en scène*', i.e., notations/descriptions of his stage productions. These manuscripts include a great number of Spanish dances, among them a Fandango in the ballet *Les Conscrits Espagnols* (*The Forced Recruitment*) from 1851.¹⁾ Relating the extensive theoretical discussion and the less numerous staging information on the Fandango will allow me to highlight some stereotypical as well as particular aspects of the concept and the practice-based program of the fandango in nineteenth century European (dance) culture.

¹⁾ *Les Conscrits Espagnols* ou le recrutement Forcé. Ballet Comique en un acte Par Mr Justamant / Musique de Mr. Tozet / Représenté pour la première Fois à Lyon sur le grand théâtre en mars 1851. The manuscript is located in Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung Schloß Wahn, Cologne.

FANDANGO PERFORMANCES: TEXTS AND IMAGES

In nineteenth-century central Europe, the reception of the Fandango seems to have occurred primarily through the theatre. In 1820, Spanish dance theoretician Antonio Cairón classifies the Fandango as an “old dance” which was (only) in use in the theatre – as “*Baile antiguo español, y el que se ha conservado mas tiempo en uso sobre el teatro.*” (Cairón 1820: 110). According to Cairón, the theatricality made necessary a stylization both in Fandango music and Fandango movement.

The concept of Fandango movement is also of central concern in an 1828 treatise by the Italian author Carlo Blasis, distinguishing between two forms of the Fandango – the theatrical one and the socially popular one:

[The Fandango] was formerly danced much more generally by persons of quality, after the regulations enacted for the theatre, which introduced more dignity, more formality, and unaccompanied by the slightest movement that could give offence to modesty, or shock good taste. The lower orders, amongst whom this dance is in high request, accompany it with attitudes which savour of the vulgarity of the principal performers, and their extravagant movements never slacken, never cease, till they are fairly tired out (Blasis 1828: 33).

Carlo Blasis and his German colleague Theodor Hentschke (1836: 206) base their discussions of the fandango on a poem in which a poet by the name of, alternatively, Marino or Marini, describes what is – in their opinion – a typical fandango, or at least a precursor to the dance. If this is the famous Italian poet Giambattista Marini, who lived from 1569 to 1625, then the fandango has a long history; this, in any case, is Blasis’ and Hentschke’s interpretation. According to Blasis’ translation, Marini’s poem brings up the following characteristics:

A young girl, of ardent temperament, places in her hands two castagnettes of sonorous wood. By the aid of her finger, she produces a clattering noise, and to that she keeps time, with the graceful movements of her feet. The young man, her partner, holds a tamboureen, or tambour de basque, which however is not now much in use. He strikes the little bells of this instrument, shewing a wish to invite his companion to accompany him in gesticulation. While dancing, both alternately play the same air, and both keep good time to the measure. Every description of lascivious motion, every gesture calculated to offend decency, or corrupt innocence, is represented by these dancers, to the life. They salute alternately, and exchange amorous looks; at times they give to their hips certain immodest motions, then meet and press their breasts together, their eyes appear half closed, and they seem, even while dancing, to be approaching to the final consummation (Blasis 1847: 27).

narrative and eroticism, Blasis traces the fandango not only to the renaissance (by means of reference to Marini, as mentioned above) but also to antiquity, positing it as a kind of archetype; this strategy is frequently applied in eighteenth and nineteenth century dance theory as a justification for presenting and codifying unassimilated dance forms.²⁾

Following Blasis and his writing colleagues, the actual aesthetic of the fandango is charged with eroticized narration and indebted to its execution by a particular type of woman. We observe an overlap of the image of Spanish women with the de-aristocratized beauty ideal of the period; thus, ambivalently received erotic activity is controlled by shaping it stereotypically.

When [the Fandango] is completely and perfectly performed, and the head, arms, feet and the whole body all contribute to its extraordinary movements, we are alternately struck with admiration, astonishment, fear, delight, and desire. [...] Upon seeing Spanish women in the Fandango, we are ready to remark that they seem made expressly for such a dance; their peculiar shape adds greatly to the attraction of the dance. They have a dark complexion, their feet are handsome and small, their hair black and shining like ebony; large eyes full of fire and expression; their mouth is small and well formed, with lips of vermilion between which appear their white teeth. They are slender about the waist, and every part of the body well proportioned, while every movement is graceful and picturesque. [...] Spanish dancers [...] accompany themselves with castanets, and very frequently with tambourines. They can also dance while playing the guitar, which is their beloved instrument: [...] (Blasis 1847: 29).

Beyond his focus on the beauty of Spanish women, Blasis considers the fandango as a partner dance. There are several similar or identical descriptions by his contemporaries—a German version by Paul Bruno Bartholomay reads as follows:

Beside himself with desire, he approaches her once more; she advances towards him with the same feelings. Their glances devour each other, their lips seem to open, only sweet shame feebly restrains them; but the strings begin to sound more powerful, fiery and vehement, and the dancers' movements become more impetuous. Intoxication, delirium, voluptuousness seem to unite the couple, every muscle to yearn for indulgence, every moment to flee toward the last one. Suddenly the music stops! The dancers disappear in sweet fatigue, and the audience wakes from a sympathetic feeling or a pleasant dream. Everything which may spoil a pure mind is executed without restraint by this dancing pair. Now the one, now the other

²⁾ Blasis 1847: 29. "The Fandango is [...] of ancient origin. [...] The Spanish dance of which we are speaking now made the tour of the world, and is well known in other countries as well as in Spain; the Fandango, in fact, is danced in every country in Europe; [...]."

sends kisses to the other, and both make tender signs to each other. They let their hips make undulating movements, their bodies nearly meet, their eyes are half closed and it seems as if they would reach the highest embraces even while dancing (Bartholomay 1838: 222, translation Lisa Jeschke).

To summarize: nineteenth-century dance theories concentrate on mentioning two central aspects as constitutive of what is attractive in the aesthetic of the fandango: on the one hand, the relation between the erotic narration and energetic execution—as conditioning each other and pointing to the potential of personalized performance; and, on the other hand, the significance of the rhythm as produced and made audible by the dancers themselves in using stomping and playing the castanets. Both aspects lead to an intensification of vigor and energy testing the limits of the period's socially accepted behavioral norms.

While the dominant French dance tradition emphasizes the formal components of dance by means of the geometric and two-dimensional in the way it makes use of the space and the body, the fandango as well as other Spanish dances are more interested in narrative, multi-perspectival interaction with either dance partner or audience; the body as a whole becomes an instrument.

The agitation of the body, the footing, the postures, the attitudes, the waverings, whether they be lively or dull, are the representations of desire, of gallantry, of impatience, of uncertainty, of tenderness, of chagrin, of confusion, of despair, of revival, of satisfaction, and finally of happiness (Blasis 1828: 33).

I have in a different context referred to the specific qualities of the body orientation and the dynamic and mimic movement repertoire of the Spanish dances³⁾; these can also be observed in the fandango. Arm and leg movements model the body less two-dimensionally than three-dimensionally, in a sculptural manner. There is great scope for the arms, which bend and stretch in all directions, which move both close to and distant from the torso, and go across the center of the body. The actions of the legs, too, generally support the body movement and show less virtuosity than traditional dance. The torso can bend along the body center and be brought into twisted positions; as a consequence, it becomes possible not only to define the body's environment as its own space, but also to posit personally differentiated relations with regard to partner, space and audience members.

In terms of stage dance, the personalized and narrative performance style associated with Spanish dance is received positively, as innovative and varied; in terms of social dance, however, it is rejected. The erotic interaction between man and woman is considered as immoral; hence another German, Eduard David Helmke, suggests the following in order to

³⁾ Jeschke 2003: 120-121.

ban the danger of indecent behavior:

If you know the fandango, you will not want to get to know it, for even the desire to do so makes you blush with shame; and even so, certainly no lady would forget herself to the point of dancing it with a gentleman in public. If it is to be danced, this can only occur between two ladies; [...] then it will appear as [expressing] the rapture of reunion, reconciliation and warm sisterly affection (Helmke 1829: 119, translation Lisa Jeschke).

FANDANGO PERFORMANCE: CHOREO-GRAPHY

The story of Les Conscrits Espagnols.

The ballet is set in a Spanish village in the season of the hay harvest. Two men, Béplo and Nigodo, are courting a young woman, Inès. Inès wants to marry the worker Béplo, whom she loves; she dislikes the laziness of her cousin Nigodo, the mayor's son. The two men start a quarrel which is followed by a pas de deux of Ines and Béplo. The first part of the ballet ends with a fandango for four couples.

The second part tells the story of the village's young men who expect to be conscripted soon. Béplo makes the mayor promise that he will give Inès to him and not to his son Nigodo if he manages to prevent the recruitment. The young men disguise themselves as pseudo-invalids in order to prove that they are unfit for service. However, the ruse fails. In the scenic version, the wedding between Ines and Béplo is celebrated nevertheless. In the libretto version, there is no wedding; however dances take place (three more Spanish dances)—motivated by an atmosphere (not narration) of reconciliation concluding the story's confrontation between generations and of state and citizen.

In Justament's livret de mise en scène, the fandango appears as a rural, popular dance. Placed right after the pas de deux between Inès und Béplo, and concluding the first part of the ballet, it takes up the positive man-woman relation conveyed through the pas de deux while weakening the closed unity of its communication by expanding the structure to four dancing couples. However, the reverse interpretation is just as thinkable: the expanded set-up of four couples (and it remains unclear whether Inès and Béplo are one of them) might intensify the ecstatic dimensions of the action. The fandango-typical, spatially closed couple figurations rendering possible the eroticized interaction remain stable throughout the action; only in the last two parts of the choreo-graphy do the dancers form a row.

In the context of this presentation, there is not enough time to describe the dance in detail, but I can at least provide an initial gloss of Justamant's fandango-notation: In the top right, 3/4 is given as the time signature—but there are no further indications of what the music composed by 'Mr. Tozet' is like⁴); underneath, the number of bars for the individual dance

The musical score of this ballet, which would also provide insight into the performance mode of this fandango, is yet to be found.

figurations (11 in this dance) is noted. You can see male performers sketched in black and female performers sketched in red, and their movement across the dance floor. (figure 1 shows the figurations 8 to 10 of this fandango). While the shape of the stick figures is standardized, there are at least some hints of arm movement and body posture. Furthermore, the notation involves step designations taken from classical vocabulary – such as *brisé soubressau* [sic] or *jeté ordinaire* and is enhanced by specifications such as ‘*pas marché et trainé le pied*’; we also find a ‘nationalized’ indication which is a ‘*Cachucha*’ step forwards and backwards.⁵⁾ In general, the vocabulary favors multidirectional traveling and undulating steps.

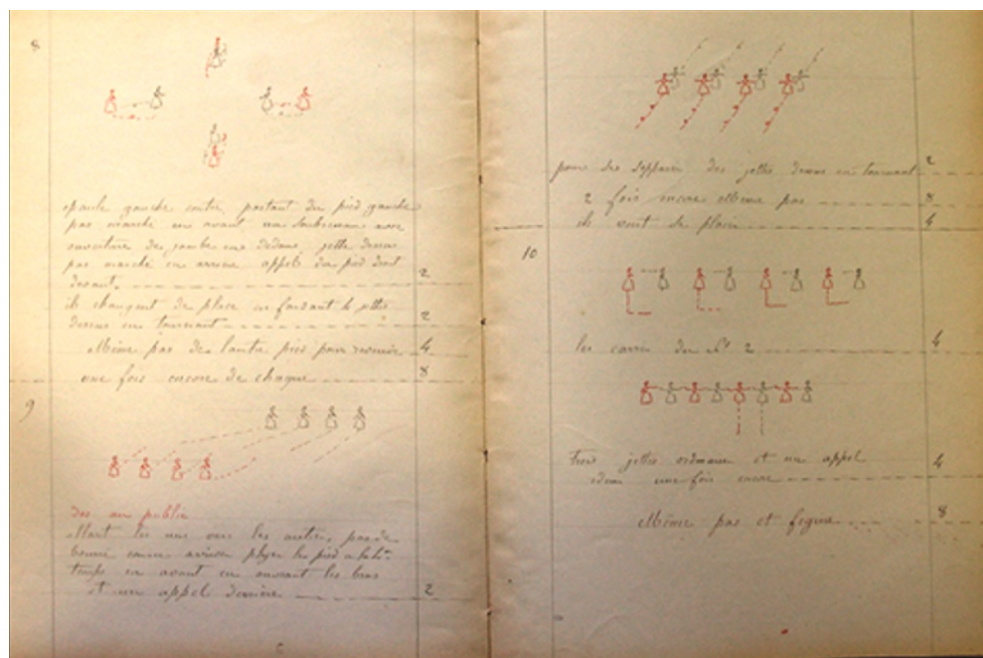


Figure 1. Les Conscripts Espagnols ou le recrutement Forcé. Ballet Comique en un acte Par Mr Justamant / Musique de Mr. Tozet / Représenté pour la première Fois à Lyon sur le grand théâtre en mars 1851. The manuscript is located in Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung Schloß Wahn, Cologne.

⁵⁾ There is no information about the components of Justamant's understanding of the 'Cachucha' step. However, Auguste Bournonville offers a description in his own notation which had been translated into Labanotation; cf. Jürgensen; Hutchinson Guest 1990: 168. Justamant's fandango inventory comprises the following steps (in Justamant's unregular spelling of the terms): *brisé*; *soubressau*; *pas marché de coté*, *traîne le pied à terre*, *temps levé*; *pas marché en tournant 2 ronds des jamba*s, *sauter en dedans en tournant assemblé devant*; *sauts de basque naturels*; *temps de la cachucha*; *pas de tomber en balancant* (*tombé balancer*); *jeté ordinaire*; *pas de bourree desous, dessus*.

In comparison to other notations of Spanish dances in Justamant's repertoire, the noted stomping movements and clapping ('frappant les mains')—which occurs only once—is unusual; there are, however, several allusions to an action which Justamant calls 'appel', adding the remark 'sur pied'. I have preliminarily considered this as an auditory equivalent of 'frappant les mains', in this case executed by the feet. This means: the dancers accompany their actions by means of rhythmical, audible accents and thus apply a fandango-typical element.

In the context of the ballet's dramaturgy, the fandango in Justamant's notation appears as model of an easily executed, variably applicable stage dance without reference to narration or emotional, eroticized interaction. The formal structuring of the movement in space is reminiscent of typical contredanse formations from the mid-eighteenth century, which

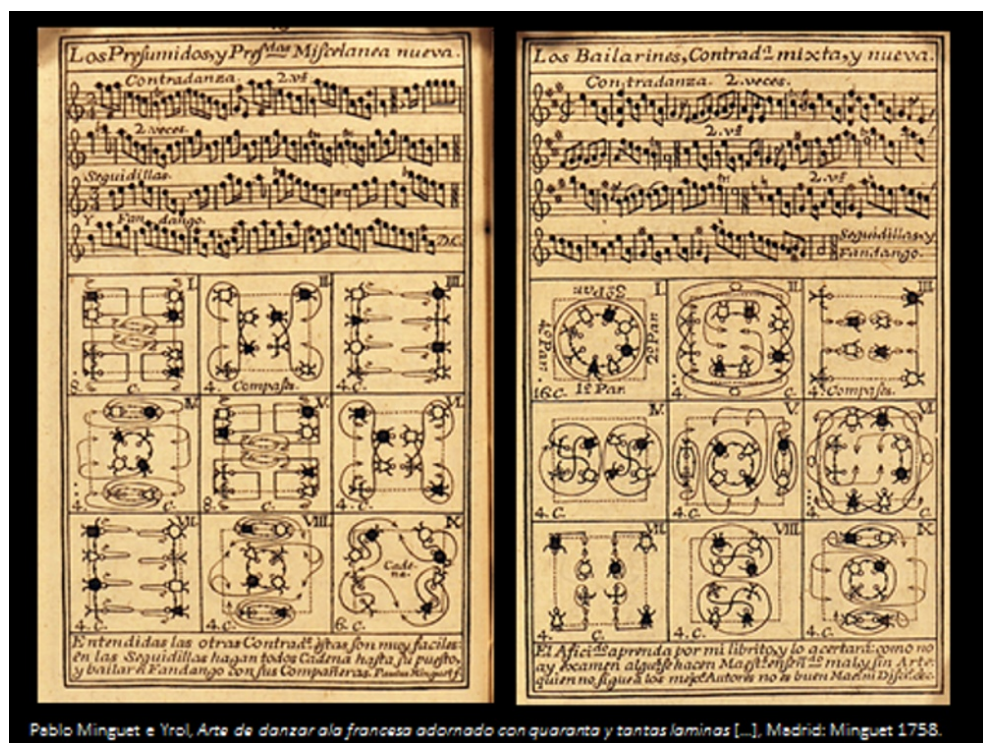


Figure 2. Pablo Minguet e Yrol, *Arte de Danzar a la Francesca*, (1758), 13–14.

were equally valid for Spanish dances. The notations of Pablo Minguet (figure 2) might be an example; this author combines seguidillas and fandango-formations.⁶⁾

Justamant's fandango appears as a sketch, a structural model. As such it does not exclude the possibility of performers adding to the dance in expression and interpretation – on the contrary: it suggests as much. In none of the numerous Justamant 'livrets de mise en scène'⁷⁾ is there a reference to a specific performance mode beside the implicit motoric and spatial characteristics of the steps themselves. In the case of this specific choreographer, it is not possible to answer the question of whether or to what extent the typical erotic or ecstatic features discussed in dance theory were exhibited by the dancers on stage and, furthermore, whether or to what extent these features were characteristic for the performances of the fandango in theatrical contexts at all. It might be possible, however, to somewhat stabilize the mobile relational fields between theory and practice by means of a comparative approach that includes more choreographic/choreo-graphic evidence of the stereotypes as well as particularities of 'performing dancing' on nineteenth-century European stages.

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⁶⁾ Minguet 1758: n.p.

⁷⁾ Cf. Jeschke; Vettermann; Haitzinger2010: 15, footnote 5.

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