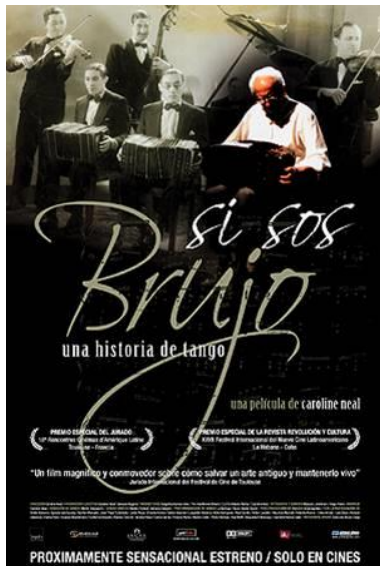


Three magicians

SI SOS BRUJO

Si sos brujo was composed by Emilio Balcarce. Emilio Balcarce had run an own orchestra in the forties; from 1949 he was violinist in Osvaldo Pugliese's orchestra, and arranger for various orchestras, among them Troilo, Gobbi, and Francini - Pontier. Balcarce's song was recorded by Osvaldo Pugliese in October 1952, Francini-Pontier in May 1953, and Alfredo Gobbi in October 1953. Much later, 2001-2008, Emilio Balcarce was the first director of the Orquesta Escuela de Tango, where young musicians from all over the world are educated in playing tango. A documentary about this orchestra appeared 2005, with the name "Si sos brujo".



These are the versions:

Osvaldo Pugliese, 9th of October, 1952

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv74WyiYr2o>

Alfredo Gobbi, 27th of October, 1953

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELHIZ1ot8eM>

Francini-Pontier, 6th of May, 1953

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABUbg1vyVpM>

From the DJ's point of view, all three versions are "equivalent" in the sense that they are candidates for the same moments in a milonga. And not only functionally, but also stylistically the versions have a lot in common. This music is very challenging for the dancers, because it doesn't have a melody to remember and to hum, it has instead short melodic motifs and a "rhythmic melody" played by the bandoneons that drive the rhythm in both versions with arrastres.

Pugliese's version:

The orchestra plays with extreme contrasts between powerful rhythm driven by the bandoneons playing with heavy arrastres, and almost silent moments without any marked rhythm, where bandoneons and violins are playing in a meditative dialogue. The song starts with an intro ascending in scale and with enormous crescendo, through a short meditative moment, and then the strong driving rhythm of bandoneons and double bass comes in with increasing intensity, leading to a dramatic moment in fortissimo that ends quietly with gentle piano and violins, until the rhythm machine approaches again... From 2:25 we hear a wonderful warm violin solo, with the rhythmic bandoneons in the background, leading to another crescendo and the strong final.

Gobbi's version:

In the first part, the arrangement is very similar, there are strong contrasts, but not as extreme as in Pugliese's version, and with less volume dynamics. The rhythmic parts played by the bandoneons and the double bass are softer and more elastic. Alfredo Gobbi's long violin solo starts at 2:15 in, it's less warm than Camerano's in the Pugliese version, but very brilliant, and the rest of the violins play a countermelody in the background; and the violins continue with the countermelody when the bandoneons come back with the rhythmic melody that finally ends in a beautiful bandoneon variation and dramatic final.

Francini-Pontier's version:

This version is more "regular" than those of Pugliese and Gobbi, the contrasts between rhythmic and meditative parts are there but less pronounced; and with less changes of tempo and volume. The overall mood is rather "academic" instead of solemn and dramatic, the bandoneons play less heart-wrenching and the violins less warm. The rhythmical parts have a nice, catching drive, with well-placed arrastres. The violins are outstanding, sounding ethereal when they play together and extremely brilliant in Enrique Francini's solo. In the end, Armando Pontier plays a wonderful organ-like solo, culminating in a virtuous variation. For me, this is the most "dancer-friendly" version.



Ovaldo Pugliese with Emilio Balcarce (second from the left) and other musicians



Alfredo Gobbi and his orchestra



Orchestra Francini - Pontier