

# Chacarera for tango DJs

In most milongas of Buenos Aires, folk, [zamba or chacarera dances are performed depending on the floor](#). For the past fifteen years, I have been trying to offer a tanda of folklore in the milongas that I host. The chacarera is starting to take well and I even had the pleasure to see zambas danced, especially in Toulouse (France).

To help develop the phenomenon, I offer some tips for choosing chacareras that will not confuse novice dancers.



## Choreography of the regular chacarera and announcements

The chacarera is a dance in separate couples and dances in lines. This is categorized in Spanish as "de pareja," "suelta y independiente." The dancers recognize a partner, they do not touch each other and do not interact with other couples. However, the lines of men and women give an overall effect because they are synchronized by the music. There are other ways to dance the chacarera, but it is not the role of the DJ to present them, dancers who know them can use it if they wish.

### Musical introduction<sup>1</sup>

The latter can sometimes be quite long and it is therefore advisable to avoid when the dancers are not very advanced to avoid the wrong starts, especially when it is the second chacarera.

- During this introduction, the DJ can make some reminders of the choreography and help organize the lines that are usually perpendicular to the scene. Normally, men are in one line and women in the other, but in case of imbalance, women can place themselves on the side of men to allow access to other dancers.
- He will be able to speak on the courtyard and garden sides with clear signs to help couples position themselves by avoiding using the terms left and right that can be ambiguous...
- In practice, a summary chacarera "course" can be considered and reference dancers can be placed to help track movements. It should not take more than a minute not to break the atmosphere of the milonga.

### Introducing chacarera

This introduction usually takes 6 or 8 times (compasses). Often, the dancers get it wrong and start dancing it, whereas it is only for the clapping.

---

<sup>1</sup> The framed parts on a yellow background are not strictly part of the choreography. These are useful moments for the DJ to help the dancers prepare.

- The DJ can announce "Palmas" or "hit hands" by monitoring that no one starts during this game.

### "Adentro!"

This is the moment when the dance really begins. Very often, the orchestra announces "Adentro." When the chacarera is sung, it is the beginning of the song. It is therefore appropriate to favour sung chacareras, because the parts are easier to recognize than in a purely instrumental version.

- The DJ can announce Adentro, with possibly some preparation lyrics for novice dancers.

### Entrada - Advance y retroceso (4 music's times)

This is the very beginning of the dance. The lines move forward and recede, each dancer with his partner, but in an overall effect.

- Since the DJ has announced "Adentro" and there is usually no need for further announcements. However, with beginner dancers, you can say "you're moving forward" and "you're backing down." The figure takes 4 times and is therefore sung when the chacarera is not instrumental.

### Giro (4 times)

The dancers take a little turn moving forward and backward. So they turn their backs on their partners on the return, unlike the first movement.

- The DJ will be able to announce "Giro" and will ensure that the dancers have taken up the initial position in order to perform the vueltas in good conditions. This figure is musically almost identical to the previous one and is therefore sung when the chacarera is not instrumental.

### Vueltas (6 or 8 times)

During the vueltas, the dancers change sides and return to their position. This is where the first difficulty appears. Indeed, like introductions that can be 6 or 8 times, vueltas can also do 6 to 8 times. With experienced dancers, this is not a problem, they will have spotted the intro and will know that they have 6 or 8 times to perform the vueltas. To simplify the task of the dancers, the DJ will be able to select only vueltas on Eight times. So the dancers have time to go back and forth at the same pace. With vueltas over 6 times, they think they can take their time because the media vuelta can be done over 4 times, but there will be only two left to return to the initial position. In short, it's a great way to mess with beginner dancers. If the dancers are more advanced, the 6-stroke vuelta allows for a more dynamic dance, the end of the vuelta and the mudanza being more linked.

- The DJ will be able to announce "Vuelta" or "Vuelta redonda" or "Vuelta entera". If the chacarera has 8 times for this part, he will be able to announce Vuelta a second time

at the end of the first 4 times to tell the dancers that they still have 4 timesto get back in place. If the chacarera has only 6 times, it will ensure that the dancers find themselves on the right side...Vueltas are not usually sung. It is therefore an excellent reference point for distinguishing vueltas from Mudanzas.

#### Mudanzas / Zapateos Zarandeos (8 times)

The men stay relatively on the spot by performing zapateos intended to impress their partner.

- The DJ will be able to announce "Zapateos y Zarandeos". Unfortunately, it is not possible to help many dancers in this part, other than by clapping their hands on the rhythm or with tongue slamming.

#### Vueltas (6 or 8 times)

Ditto above

#### Mudanza / Zapateos Zarandeos (8 times)

Ditto above

"Aura!"

This announcement is often made by the orchestra to say that the dance will end.

- The DJ can announce Aura, but it will usually be more useful to announce the final Vuelta...

#### Media Vuelta (4 times)

The dancers change sides over 4 times, but they don't return to their starting point.

- The DJ will be able to announce "Media Vuelta". When the milonga is sung, the singing usually continues on this part, which tells the dancers (in addition to the aura) that it is the end of the dance.

#### Giro y coronacion (4 times)

The dancers perform a giro over 2 times, then the coronacion. The dancers are thus close, face to face and on the opposite side to the starting side.

- The DJ will be able to announce "Final Giro/Coronacion" or simply "final". The goal is for the dancers to stop at the right time and not leave in a vuelta...Even with a sung chacarera, some dancers do not pay attention and embark on a second vuelta...

## Musical interlude

The chacarera is usually danced twice (sometimes once and sometimes three times). Again, common sense means that chacareras will be preferred, dancing twice with inexperienced dancers.

The musical interlude can sometimes be very long (one minute). This is in my opinion to avoid, because the dancers demobilize and feel a little ridiculous to wait so long. Often, when the initial musical introduction is long, the musical interlude is also long. However, the DJ can shorten the interlude by placing a CUE point on the beginning of the second introduction of the chacarera or by preparing the file in software adapted to remove the lengths.

## Part Two

Often the orchestra announces "the secunda." Otherwise, the DJ can do it. It will ensure that everyone returns to their original place, as the positions of the lines of partners are opposed to the initial situation. Dancers usually have the elegance to accompany the dancers to their new location.

At the end of the musical interlude (when there is one), we repeat the steps above.

At the end of the second part, depending on the success of this chacarera, a second chacarera is usually offered. The DJ can take the opportunity to attract on the track couples a little shy who had not dared to launch themselves at the premiere.

This second chacarera will usually be of the same type as the previous one if the dancers are unsophisticated, but with experienced dancers, you can choose a chacarera of a different type and then even propose another dance, like a zamba. But in this case, it is better to announce that there will be a zamba at the very beginning of folklore tanda so that the dancers can bring their panelito.

## Chacarera and chacarera doble

In folklorist circles, the doble chacarera is practiced. However, this genre is not used and it should not be offered in an ordinary milonga.

We recognize the chacarera doble, because its structure is different. We're not going to see the choreography, we're just learning to recognize it so we don't want to broadcast it by mistake.

The onset is very similar to normal chacarera. Sometimes the orchestra announces "Chacarera doble." The DJ can do this if he voluntarily broadcasts this type of milonga (but I strongly advise against it in milongas that are not customary, including in Buenos Aires).

An easy trick to identify a double chacarera is to choose a sung chacarera. We will have the 4 time of progress and recoil, which will be sung, then 4 giro time, also sung, but instead of an

instrumental part for the vueltas, we will have a new part sung, 4 times that is danced with a giro. So if you hear a chacarera with three parts of 4 times sung in a row, it's a doble chacarera. Be careful not to confuse with the purposes of parts of the charareras or the media vuelta is sung.

When you are comfortable identifying the sung chacarera dobles, you can also do so for instrumental dobles chacareras, but again, I advise against their use, except with experienced dancers that are found more in the peas than milongas, even in Argentina.

## Listening and ranking guide

Before broadcasting a song in milonga, it is of course better to have checked the song. However, when you have several hundred titles to file, it may be helpful to adopt a procedure to make it easier.



- 1) Listen to different passages of the music to check that it is chacareras. This first coarse sorting will have to be refined, because other dances are similar to listening and this criterion alone cannot suffice.
- 2) Listen to the beginning. Find out if the introduction of chacarera is 6 or 8 times and if the musical introduction is not too long or talkative.
- 3) "Dancing" with his fingers (or other) chacarera with music. Mark the cuts 2 and 4 times to find your way around.
- 4) Listen to the first vuelta to identify if it is on 6 or 8 times. If instead of the vuelta, we have another passage of 4 times, it's a chacarera doble ...
- 5) At this point, you will have identified and separate the chacareras at 6 or 8 times and the chacareras dobles. The goal is to exploit the chacareras at 8 times, this activity can be very fast. There will always be time later to look for less typical chacareras when you have to make experienced dancers dance.
- 6) If the title is just over two minutes long, it is likely to be well compatible. A much longer duration may indicate particularly long glosas, musical introduction or interlude. In

some cases, chacarera is played three times. If the title is less than two minutes long, it is prudent to check it out, it may be missing a game.

With a little training, you can lighten this device, but of course I advise you to always listen to the entire tracks before broadcasting them for the first time.

### For more information:

For the tangoDJ, in my opinion, the main thing to know is in this document. For the dancers, we can refer to the excellent works of Hctor Aric, those of Pedro Berruti or Ricardo de Castro. These books also provide advice on the outfit, the wearing, the attitude to adopt, the history and distribution of these dances. They are essential to any dancer who wants to go further.

Many videos on YouTube describe the choreographies and websites are easy to find in [a search engine](#).

