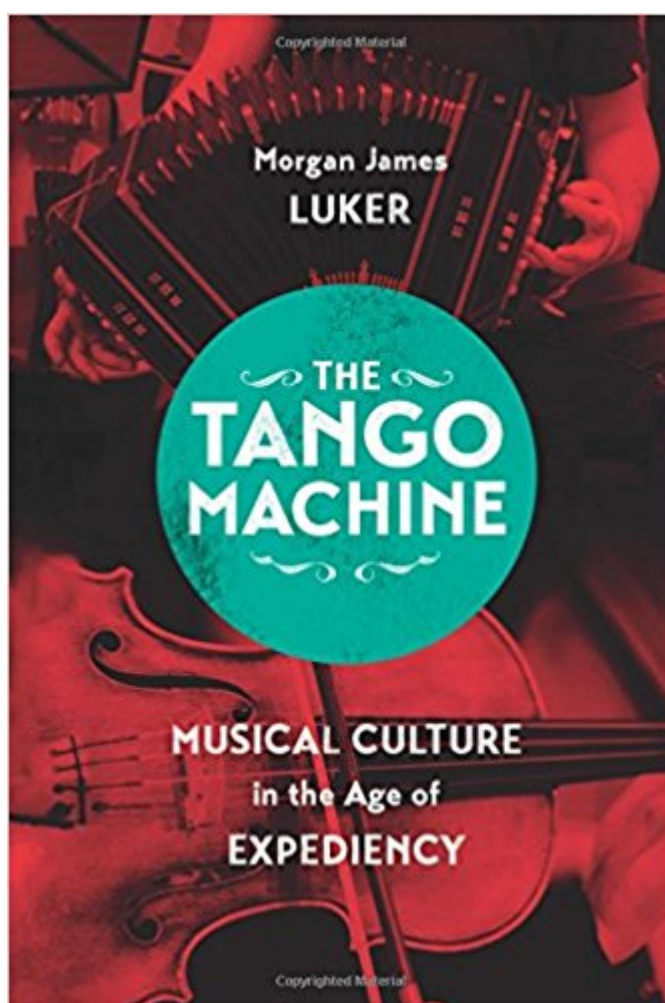


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The Tango Machine: Musical Culture In The Age Of Expediency (Chicago Studies In Ethnomusicology)



Synopsis

In Argentina, tango isn't just the national music—it's a national brand. But ask any contemporary Argentine if they ever really listen to it and the answer is no: tango hasn't been popular for more than fifty years. In this book, Morgan James Luker explores that odd paradox by tracing the many ways Argentina draws upon tango as a resource for a wide array of economic, social, and cultural—that is to say, non-musical—projects. In doing so, he illuminates new facets of all musical culture in an age of expediency when the value and meaning of the arts is less about the arts themselves and more about how they can be used. Luker traces the diverse and often contradictory ways tango is used in Argentina in activities ranging from state cultural policy-making to its export abroad as a cultural emblem, from the expanding nonprofit arts sector to tango-themed urban renewal projects. He shows how projects such as these are not peripheral to an otherwise "real" tango—they are the absolutely central means by which the values of this musical culture are cultivated. By richly detailing the interdependence of aesthetic value and the regimes of cultural management, this book sheds light on core conceptual challenges facing critical music scholarship today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In the process of developing his masterful model of musical culture in the age of

expediency, Luker addresses many aspects of musical life that have all too often been neglected by ethnomusicologists, including the roles of NGOs, diverse kinds of media companies, government policies, and international cultural heritage projects. His broad insights, based on a rich multilevel ethnography of tango music in Buenos Aires in the twenty-first century, have implications for music throughout Latin America and beyond. (Anthony Seeger, University of California, Los Angeles)

“On one level, *The Tango Machine* fills a surprising gap in the English-language literature, serving the need for an analytical yet accessible monograph on contemporary tango. Yet it does much more than this: it also treats tango as a case study of music as a multi-faceted cultural resource in the Age of expediency, and its theorization of how music is used in Buenos Aires, the managerial regimes that organize it, and the multiplicity of values, contradictions, and synergies that it accrues, will shed light far beyond Argentina.” (Geoffrey Baker, Royal Holloway, University of London)

Morgan James Luker is associate professor of music at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

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