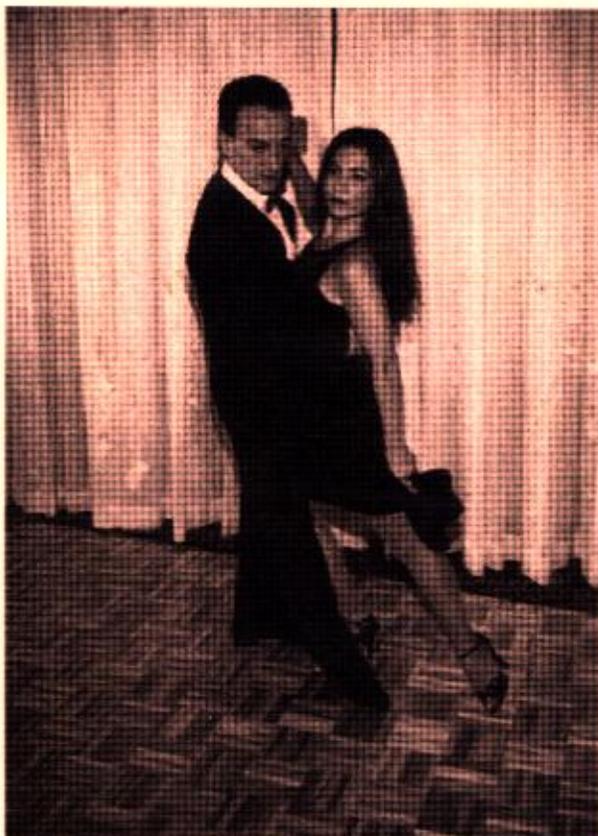




Brought to you by Toronto's longest-running  
Argentine Tango Club  
Volume 17, Nov/2002



*Miguel Angel Pla's special classes and workshops attracted both beginners and experienced dancers.*

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## Club Executive

President	Jayne Patterson
Vice-President	Marlene Jackson
Treasurer	Gord Pinnell
Executive Secretary	Bernice Pinnell
Program Director	Renée Le Messurier
	with
Web-Master	Patrick Doelle

### From the Prez....A Tango Reality

Just think, a few years ago I was the crunchy granola, blue-jeans-and-Birkenstocks type, practicing karate 3 nights a week. Yes, three nihts a week--so you know already that my husband is a pretty patient and trusting guy.

Then I fell head over heels with tango. For the first time in my life I'm wearing one-inch heels! Fish net stockings! Skirts! Necklaces! I've even ordered new shoes from Mr. Tango in Florida that are two-inchers! Good bye jock bra, hello "full support".

I thank Rocco for getting me started on the basics two years ago. I also thank him for pushing me to go to other Tango venues. For the longest time I was terrified of the Club Milonga dances because of the dress code, "elegant". Yikes!! I didn't have any elegant clothes! But I ventured out to last year's Valentine dance in "elegant" pants. When I saw that beautiful cake that said "Club Milonga loves you" and when everyone welcomed me, I was a goner.

I took on the presidency mainly because I feel strongly that a friendly and casual atmosphere for tango is just as important as the milongas where you have fun getting all dressed up. That's it, clear and simple, I love the Club and want to see it prosper.

Since the last newsletter in May, we've been movin and groovin: Miguel Pla's amazing classes and workshops, Chino's charity night, the Moonlight Ball, the demo in Mississauga, Marlene and Ed's performance for an Amnesty International fundraiser, Luis and Pascale's workshops, all of Nelson and Teresa's hard work, and Richard Dini's classes. Wow! We simply couldn't do it without all the wonderful volunteers who are too many to mention. But I do want to mention the Executive-Marlene, Renée, Bernice,

Gordon and Ed. Thank you, thank you for your continuing dedication. And Patrick! Thanks to you we have a new and cool, up-to-date website.

The most amazing incident since I've been President is the night the gym reeked with the smell of rotting meat in a turned-off fridge. Nobody went home...everybody stayed to tango despite the smell!!!

We also spent—gulp!—big bucks on a new sound system: a sub-woofer to bring up the bass and two beautiful new speakers. So hey, not only can we hear the music now, but it also sounds great!

So what's the scoop on the future? After the construction is completed in the church gym, probably at the end of the year, we're going to try our best to give the place a face lift, probably with a coat of paint. Yep, you guessed it, we need volunteers.

I'm most excited though, about our new instruction program. We have always believed that tango dancers progress when they are exposed to the style and technique of various teachers. And we have been blessed, over the years, with some of the best, most recently Nelson and Teresa. Continuing the tradition, our plan for the next year is to try our best to bring in new teachers every two or three months. And I'm counting on all of you to give us feedback.

Our June Ball was such a smashing success that we're going to make it an annual event. But none of this can happen without you, dear reader. Please, please, please help us make these dreams become a tango reality. And LET'S HAVE A BLAST!

*Jayne*

## **A Routine Experience**

*by Ed Grandy, P. Eng*

*Editor - How can we introduce the public to the pleasures and passions of our favourite dance? How can we make the Toronto tango community grow? One simple way is to show the tango to as many people as possible.*

*In recent months, several different groups were formed to perform in front of live audiences. The next three articles share some of these experiences with you.*

A routine experience is not a routine experience. To learn and perfect a tango dance

routine or routines can be anything but routine. You will have many challenges to overcome.

Just when you think you know what you are doing on the dance floor and decide to be in a choreographed tango dance routine, you realize you really do not know enough! The many challenges you encounter include learning the routine so you can perform it on your own without your partner and performing the routine to the music.

The first thing you have to do if you want to be part of a dance routine group (tango or otherwise) is to be willing to make a commitment to the group. That will include making some sacrifices along the way. You may have to put off seeing a friend, or go shopping some other day, etc. Next is to choose a partner you are comfortable dancing with and who is willing to make the same commitment. I was very fortunate to have Marlene Jackson as my partner.

The next step is to select the music. Our choreographer, Jan Harrison, had a few tango songs in mind; however, she wanted us to suggest some tangos we liked. She developed choreography to the chosen tangos.

Now the fun begins! You start learning the beginning of the routine. As you are learning the different portions, you have to begin to memorize what step follows what. From here, you build the sequence until you have the complete routine. You do not learn the routine from the beginning to the end; you actually learn the beginning, the ending, and then the middle. You will spend the most time on the ending compared to the beginning or the middle, and more time on the beginning than the middle.

As the weeks pass you will start finding certain portions of the routine do not seem to fit with the music or the steps do not seem to flow together. You start to fine-tune the routine at this time. Now that you have the steps figured out, you have to go back and ensure you are stepping on the beat of the music. This will mean you have to slow some portions down and speed other portions up. Remember, while all of these changes are happening you have to memorize all of the little details.

The next step is to work on the look of the dance. This means you have to see yourself doing the routine. The best way is to videotape the routine and to play the videotape back to see how you perform. Wow, that is a weird experience the first few times you see yourself on tape! You can be your worst critic! You learn after a while to look for the small details and as you spot them, you can correct them. Costume, or what you wear, is part of the presentation or the look of the dance. If you are doing more than one routine, then you will have to think about different costumes for different routines. This usually includes a tuxedo for the men and either a dress or a skirt for the ladies. It gave me the opportunity to purchase a tuxedo. Colour and accessories add to the overall appearance.

After the hundreds of hours of practice, rehearsals, and dress rehearsals, performance time is here! You might get stage fright at this point. This is normal! As they say, the show must go on, so you must do your best and hope things work out. Do not get discouraged when things do not work exactly as rehearsed. It is very common that the routine you perform and the routine you practice will be two different things. That is what happens! The closer the performance is to the rehearsed routine the better. The trick is to continue and to make it look like it was the choreography! One instructor told me once you can practice the routine and have it 110% perfect, however, your presented routine will be at least 80% perfect. This is where improvisational skills play a significant role. Sometimes, a portion of the routine that does not work properly most times in the rehearsals suddenly works in the performance. If this happens, be happy and thankful.

While you are learning and fine tuning your routine(s), you begin to associate certain parts of the routine to certain musical cues. This is when you realize you are progressing. Those musical cues will be of utmost importance when you actually perform. Those cues allow you to correct yourself, when you find yourself off the routine. As you hear the musical cue, you are able to adjust what you are doing and achieve the big finish.

The main point to remember when you are learning a routine is, although the middle is important, it is the ending followed by the beginning that people would remember most. That is why you practice more on the ending, than the beginning, and more on the beginning than on the middle. The routine experience is by no means a routine experience.

*The dancers were – Richard Dini, Marlene Jackson, Marie Parson, Jan Harrison, Sonia Mastroianni, and Ed Grandy*

## A Performer's Diary

*by Clive Randewich*

**Day 1** – The Club gets an e-mail. "My name's Mark. I'm organizing the Mississauga Canada Day Picnic. Will the Club please provide some tango entertainment on the Main Stage?" Kay immediately wants to go for it. I'm dead against it – I hate the idea of performing. I refuse.

**Day 2** – We email back to Mark. "Sure, we'll do it." Now, all we have to do is recruit other people, select music, come up with a routine, and practice a little.

**Day 4** – We solve a huge number of problems by asking Nelson Avila and Teresa to take charge. When in doubt, turn to the professionals. Because they are generous people who love the tango and embrace every opportunity to be involved with it, Nelson and Teresa very graciously agree to help out a bunch of rank amateurs.

**Day 8** – The logistics aren't easy to arrange, but we finally get a group together: 7 couples – fourteen people who are all available on Monday evenings for the next two months.

**Day 14** – Our first practice. Nelson has selected the music, and burned it all on to one CD, to make everything simple. He's very professional. He also has choreographed in his head the whole performance. He explains. Sounds good. We try to do it. Total shambles. We're very unprofessional.

**Day 21** – We try again. Results slightly better. Not to worry, we have loads of time. Kay reminds us that Mark in Mississauga is talking about 25,000 people attending the Picnic. We're confident. We take this information in our stride.

**Day 28** – Big panic – some people drop out of the group, new people join. Progress seems slow. Not to worry, we have loads of time.

**Day 35** – Because we have a large group, Nelson's main focus is to choreograph the overall moving and positioning of the 6 couples on the stage, including how we enter and exit. For our individual dancing, we can all select our own steps and he gives us pointers on how to make them more effective for the stage.

**Day 42** – We go through all that we did last week. We've all forgotten large chunks of it. How can we be so stupid? Not to worry, we have loads of time.

**Day 49** – The women are in intense discussions about dresses. I figure they'll probably decide on black. My guess is correct. Dresses are examined, tried on, exchanged. The subjects of hair, shoes, hosiery and jewellery come up. The men debate hats.

**Day 56** – Mark in Mississauga is now talking about 30,000 people. Practice is a disaster, we can't remember anything. I decide to start taking notes. I write 'enter stage left' and spend 3 minutes wondering if this means my left or the audience's left. This means I miss Nelson's patient and detailed explanation of what we did wrong. Not to worry, we have loads of time.

We schedule an extra practice.

**Day 59** – The parts we had trouble with last time go well. Unfortunately, we now have trouble with the parts which went well last time. Not to worry, we have loads of time.

**Day 63** – Mark asks us all to sign insurance forms in case, for example, we fall off the stage. We sign. Practice goes a little better. We are learning how to maintain sight-lines so the audience can see everybody. We are all budding professionals. The back row complains to the front row that we are hiding their great moves. The front row denies this.

**Day 70** – Dress rehearsal. All the men look great in their suits, hats and white scarves. The women are all drop-dead gorgeous. Our dancing seems way better.

**Day 72** – See 'Day 59'.

**Day 75** – The show is tomorrow. We all go out to Mississauga to practice on the actual stage. Mark is

impressed by our dedication. So am I. We are nervous, but not to worry, we have loads of time.

**Day 76** – This is it! We arrive. We have a trailer we can change in – we feel like artistes. It's 35 degrees. We men put on our suits, hats and scarves. Sweat is running off my chin, and I'm just standing still. Unexpectedly, several friends from the Club and the tango community show up to wish us all luck. Tango people are so nice!

Crisis – the drum set on stage takes up a lot of our space, and it can't be disassembled. Kay says we refuse to perform unless the drums go. They go.

We start. In what seems like one minute, our 20-minute show goes by. Nobody falls off the stage. We finish. We take our bows. As we leave the stage, Nelson shakes everyone's hand and tells us we were great.

We are all riding high with excitement. Would we do it again? Yes, yes, yes. Not to worry, we'd have loads of time.

*The Club Milonga Canada Day Dance Group were -  
Choreographer and Director – Nelson Avila  
Solo dancers - Nelson Avila and Teresa Pucci  
Dancers – Colleen Clancey and Dieter Hessel, Sue Zielinski and Steve Yee, Kay and Clive Randewich, Sian Yao and Joe Baldesarra, Maria Esther and Ernesto Pentke, Anna Zassun-Zass and Hernan Prado  
Support Crew – Marlene Jackson and Ed Grandy*

## Western Performance Tour

*by Sue Zielinski*

Summer 2002 - Of all places you'd think Winnipeg would epitomize the notion of Tango in a Cold City. But our\* brief sojourn there was anything but cold. In part because it was August but mainly because we were taken care of start to finish by warm and gracious movers and shakers from an Argentinian community that is growing by leaps and bounds right out in the middle of the Canadian prairies. Go figure!

The occasion was Folklorama which is a vastly more successful version of Toronto's Caravan thanks to busloads of Americans from just south of the border joining leagues of Winnipegians\*\* at what is really the only game in town in mid-August.

This was the first attempt at an Argentinian Pavillion at Folklorama. As the story goes, about ten or fifteen years ago, the few Argentinian families who had arrived in Winnipeg for whatever reason had to find their way alone, and cry alone, especially during the long winter months. So those same few families decided to form an association that would support new compatriotes and hopefully buffer them from a similar fate.

A Folklorama pavillion was seen to be the best way to galvanize energy and community, which became fully clear to us only after we stepped out on stage for the first of 23 performances, to greet over 500 cheering fans. The volunteer organizers had really done their homework to promote the pavillion

and keep it running like clockwork, and it suddenly sank in that we were being counted on not only to carry off a half decent show, but in some way to support Winnipeg's growing Argentinian community over the longer term. No pressure!

Fortunately, aside from a few near misses\*\*\* we did all right, as did the top notch musicians flown in from Buenos Aires and the adorable young Argentinian folk dancers, so the audience grew over the week instead of waning as is usually the case at such pavillions. Admittedly Ruben with his whirring boleodoras became a bit of a local cult figure drawing scads of young groupies who set themselves up in the front row for performance after performance. There were also quite a few people who actually lined up around the block to see the show a second and even a third time in one evening, many of them videoing as they watched. So our hosts could hardly be disappointed and they were particularly appreciative of the gringos and gringas who were there dancing the dances of their country.

It would be remiss not to credit the food with some of the success of the pavillion. It actually ran out the first day, requiring emergency food crews from across the city, and special orders from across the country to cover the following days. This was also the food that became a part of our nightly ritual following three and sometimes four performances in one night for six nights following – hearty locro soup, a white cheese and quince jam specialty, empanadas of all varieties, and sparkly Argentinian beer and cider to help it all go down.

Of course it wasn't all just dancing and eating. We did manage to squeeze in some R & R during the day, which took many forms, some of it at beaches, some of it in Spanish, some of it involving fortune telling, some of it on bicycles, some of it with tiger balm and heating pads, and some of it in local cultural exploration related to a film about a man and a fish. Performance group bonding was had by all.

All in all it was not your basic run of the mill tango performance tour. It gave us a taste of what it would be like to run away with the circus, and an even deeper understanding of how it might be to arrive from Argentina to a cold (but strangely warm) city.

*\* Ruben Bustamante, Lisandro Gomez, Sandra Rochas, Ansa Toikannen, Tatiana Melnyk, Steve Yee and Sue Zielinski*

*\*\* or -ites or -ers — we never really got the definitive answer, not for lack of trying*

*\*\*\* like a couple of boleodora head injuries and embarrassments involving boleodoras knotting themselves around boots, as well as a couple of tango jumps made more death defying by holes in the stage made by said boleodoras*

*(Editor – A boleadora is a rock on the end of a cord.  
Argentine folkdancers swing a pair lethally)*

## **I Am A Dancer – Sort Of**

*by Michael Craig*

I am proud to announce: "I am a dancer!" This doesn't mean, I hasten to clarify, that I dance for the National or Danny Grossman, or some other exalted bastion of dance perfection. Uh, uh. I'm just a barely-graduated-from-beginner social dancer, a practitioner of the sophisticated art of Argentine Tango. I can't milonga with the best of them--the best in Toronto are awesome--but I get by without making a fool of myself.

To understand what I have accomplished, and maybe be motivated to give it a shot yourself, you have to know a bit about my sorry history as a dancer.

Back in high school in the early 60s, I envied the juvenile delinquent who threw an egg at Fabian, a long-forgotten singer who wiggled his hips suggestively and imitated Elvis with no style and less voice. I envied him, the j.d., because he jived like a maniac while I hung back in the darkest corner of the smelly old gym at Niagara Falls C.V.I. Talk, I could talk, and even simultaneously chew gum. But dance, no way man!

As a young guy in my 20s I danced, sort of. My dancing, during those heady days of rhythm 'n blues, featured what I call my waltzing, rock 'n roll, two-step. Yes, I could hold a woman and shuffle about the floor. Yes, I could let loose wildly and leap about like Jimi Hendrix. But dancing as a structured discipline, with a controlled interaction between man and woman, dancing with steps, eluded me.

At the Y in the '80s I took ballroom dancing with my twelve-year-old daughter who had been taking ballet since she was seven. The bonding didn't take. Maybe all the dried-out glue was on the bottom of my shoes. She learned the steps to cha-cha or a foxtrot in one go, while I desperately prayed that they'd repeat the same lesson next week. I don't think she was intentionally cruel, but with a few "What's wrong with you dad(s)?", my fragile dancer's ego was crushed, and I retreated once again to the dark corners.

Which brings me to a dance club in Santiago de Cuba three years ago. That's where my wife Jayne, your lively President of Club Milonga, got bitten by the dance bug. She was entranced by 'son', pronounced 'sone', the traditional Cuban music, and came home with a serious addiction. Taking to lessons with the discipline of a black belt-Ph.D, which are among her other accomplishments, she mastered it all, from salsa to swing. Meanwhile, I tentatively dipped my toe into Argentine tango, the dance where the man calls the shots; but once again I was flummoxed by steps and frustrated by training which

focused on choreography. Why can't I just do it my way?

We discovered the Toronto tango community where you can dance the tango any night of the week. Where they say that a determined student can learn the steps, even the furbelows, in six months, but it takes four years to properly walk the tango. The first time I tried to walk, my left arm was determined to swing with my left leg--a Boris Karloff imitation. Meanwhile, Jayne, years ahead of me in lessons and talent, can now follow even the gods of tango.

What's more, as of the last couple of months, she can even follow me! I'm no longer a double-left-footed klutz. I sometimes fall off the beat because I listen to the melody rather than the boring-old base line. But, hey, I'm less incompetent. I thank the gods of dance for small mercies. And, believe it or not, I'm even having fun as a dancer of the Argentine tango. I might even show up at the Club!

## **Enjoy The Moment**

*by Clive Randewich*

September, 1999 was a time of sadness for many Toronto tango people, when Ian Winton passed away. With his wife, Myra, Ian was a pillar of the tango community and widely respected, not only as a fine dancer but also for his gentleness, thoughtfulness and generosity. This picture shows Ian happily at the wheel of the Jaguar model he helped to design.



Many tango people attended Ian's memorial service and also contributed to a permanent reminder of him. This consists of a bench in Scarborough's Guild Inn Park, near the edge of the Bluffs and framed by two oak trees. It has a plaque that reads:

*Enjoy the moment*

*Tango friends celebrate Ian Winton's spirit*

*1941 - 1999*

So next time you are in that neighborhood, it's not hard to find. Sit down. Relax, think of some of your favourite tango memories and enjoy the moment. Ian would like that!

## Tango – A Poem

*In previous editions of our Club Newsletter, we have looked at the lyrics of some well-known tangos, translated into English. This time, we feature a poem written in Spanish by Toronto's own Nelson Avila.*

### TANGO

Ciudadano del Mundo.

El tango en esta ciudad  
es berretín de inmigrante,  
que por alguna razón,  
aferrado al dos por cuatro  
le despierta la ilusión  
al soñador canadiense.

El se arrima a Bs.As.  
transformando sus iglesias  
en milongas inventadas,  
porque alguno le contó,  
o tal vez fue.., y las vió,  
y su alma la importó.

El punto es que aquí se baila,  
y con el calor que ella emana  
se derrite hasta la nieve,  
y si el dato no me cree,  
venga y pase por Toronto  
para aplaudir a su gente.

Los pioneros de este cuento  
son...pura sangre canadienses,  
los apoyan corazones  
de argentinos, de peruanos,  
ingleses, Escoceses,  
españoles e italianos.

Es un inmenso crisol,  
de razas que se entrelazan  
abrazándose entre sueños  
desde Israel a Japón,  
pasando por Ecuador  
y recalando en la China.

Por todos quiero brindar,  
sin olvidar a ninguno,  
no importa si te conozco,  
tampoco de dónde somos,  
es mi tango quien invita  
a un baile de rompe y raja.

Nelson Avila

25 de Mayo del 2001

*(Editor: Nelson wrote this on the date celebrated as the start of Argentine independence)*

*Here is an English translation, with thanks to Lisandro Gomez, so that you can enjoy the poetry, and perhaps improve your Spanish a little as well.*

### TANGO

World citizen

In this city the tango  
is the immigrant obsession,  
attached to the two by four rhythm  
that awakens that Canadian dreamer.

He's become closer to Buenos Aires  
transforming his churches  
into invented milongas,  
because somebody told him about the tangos,  
or maybe he himself went there, and saw them,  
and his soul imported them.

The point is that here there is dance,  
and with the heat it radiates  
the snow melts,  
if you don't believe me  
come to Toronto  
to applaud its people .

The pioneers in this tale  
are the Canadian blood  
supported by  
Argentinean, Peruvian  
English, Scottish,  
Spanish and Italian  
hearts.

It is like a huge foundry  
where the races melt together  
hugging them selves between dreams  
from Israel to Japan  
going by Ecuador  
and stopping over in China

I want to make a toast to everybody  
without forgetting anyone,  
it does not matter if I know you  
nor where we are from,  
it is my tango which invites you  
to this sudden storming dance.

*(Editor – the 'two-four' in the second verse refers to the time signature which was the fast, exciting beat of the early tangos.)*

## Tango and Human Rights

by Clive Randewich

Just after Canada Day, the renowned dancer and instructor, Rodolfo Anibal Aguerrodi (often called 'Chino'), came to teach at the Club for one special evening only. He was accompanied by his partner, the elegant Miho from Japan.

He taught simple tango walking in a way that encouraged the beginners, and slowly built on this to give the more advanced dancers further food for thought ('It looks so simple when he does it, where am I going wrong?')

As it was his birthday, Chino generously volunteered to donate his fee for the evening to Amnesty International, which sent a representative to receive the check at the end of the lessons.

Chino and Miho performed two wonderful exhibitions, and then offered to dance a third time if the Club members and guests would accept their challenge to make a further cash donation. When we 'passed the hat', it came back with over \$100. We got to watch a third exhibition, and the Amnesty representative was thrilled. Then we all celebrated with birthday cake.

This was a nice evening and a nice idea. The tango is such an intense dance that, sometimes, the tango community can perhaps be a little self-involved. It's good to remember that we are all part of a larger and often very much less fortunate world.

## How Do People Dance in Buenos Aires?

by Barbara Garvey

*Tango-I is a popular Internet-based tango discussion group, with over 1000 subscribers. In each of our Newsletters, we select from Tango-I an interesting posting in the hope of encouraging some discussion in our own tango community..*

*Many dancers have strongly held feelings on the subject of style, and here Barbara Garvey tackles this topic head-on.*

I've responded to this mistaken concept before on the Tango-L, that close-embrace, especially what is called Milonguero Style, is the only tango danced socially in Buenos Aires. In fact, away from downtown, in the residential neighborhoods where dancers usually are couples rather than singles, people dance differently, commonly known as salon style. These clubs are where the very few dancers who still remember the Golden Age of tango hang out.

What is the basis for this opinion? Six trips to BA, beginning in spring of 1987, one month after Robert Duvall's first visit. I believe that, after him, we were the second Northamericans to find real social tango. The first night, in the city center at Salon Argentina, my husband and I noticed people dancing very close, totally differently from what we had been taught by cast members of Tango Argentino and the

Bay Area's only resident milongueros Jorge and Rosa Ledesma (love to you both if you read this), who had moved here from Quilmes, a close suburb of Buenos Aires. This super-simple very close tango confused us.

We took lessons where we could find them, notably from Raul Bravo, considered one of the creators of modern tango. No one taught the close style. Then someone told us about a milonga in Villa Urquiza where we could see the 'best dancers in Argentina'. Of the over 300 milongueros (in the most respectable sense of the word!) there, almost all older than 50, all (or maybe almost all) were dancing salon style, or a version sometimes called Villa Urquiza style, quite close in walking and straight steps, further apart in turns and molinetes. We met and spent the evening (till 6 am) with Fino Rivera and Teresa. He is still considered the best dancer of the 1980's although he died three weeks after we met him. We took one lesson from him on our way to the airport. I believe that the only other Northamerican who met him, saw him dance and took lessons from him is Duvall.

Although salon style is danced close most of the time, partners separate a little to execute turns, molinetes, paradass, etc. NO ONE does high boleoss, fantasia or anything that could interfere with other dancers or stop the line of dance. The best, maybe only, example on video is the milonguero scene in Tango Bar, starring Raul Julia. These are some of the people we met. The best dancers use simple basic steps most of the time, interspersed with intricate and subtle footwork of their own. This gave birth to stage tango as it makes room for dramatic possibilities. Professional dancers such as Eduardo and Gloria, Virulazo and Elvira, Copes and Nieves, the Zottos, etc. took the techniques of salon style a step further for the stage.

What is now called Milonguero Style, based usually on the personal style of Tete Rusconi, appeared on the scene in 1994. Before that, as we discovered in March, 1987, most people in the center of the city did dance in close embrace, but much simpler, mostly walking and back ochos. Certainly many couples or leaders had their individual variations, which we were too new to distinguish. Then in 1994 Susana Miller discovered Tete and began teaching and promoting his personal style as the only true social tango; Daniel Trenner immediately brought this idea to the US, others to Europe. Since few tango tourists these days make their way beyond the singles tango clubs of the city center, the idea that close embrace is the only 'true social tango' has taken root among those who haven't explored further.

PS: there is also orillero style, best exemplified by Nito and Elba, more dramatic and open, from the outskirts and further suburbs where dance floors are less crowded.

*Barbara Garvey tangos in the San Francisco Bay Area. She and her husband were among the first few tango dancers and organizers in Northern California.*

## **A Man, A Woman and The Tango**

*by Clive Randewich*

*This is directed to tango beginners, to try to explain a little of the magic that more experienced dancers can find.*

Trying to describe dancing in words is like trying to paint music, it just can't be done successfully. However, here are some general brush-strokes.

Obviously, it's a dance done with a partner, in contrast with all those dances performed without close or physical contact with another human being. It's a very intimate human experience, in our society where touching is not the norm.

In the tango, the man leads and the woman follows. In the times we live in, perhaps this sounds outmoded. Yet the man leads only with the woman's permission, and she follows his offer, that's the implicit bargain for three minutes unlike any other you may experience. Together, you surrender to the moment, the music and each other.

There is a famous description of the tango as 'one heart with four legs'. It's true that you are dancing in close physical contact with your partner, but this saying really refers to the mental and emotional closeness which is the essence of the tango experience. For about three minutes on the dance floor, you and your partner share a very surprising and unspoken intimacy. The tango is a silent conversation between two people. Then you may each go your separate ways.

With tango, as with any human activity, you choose the level of intimacy you prefer. However, a surprising number of people are content to see and relate to each other only as dancers – your partner may be a surgeon, a bus driver, a lawyer or a home-maker, you don't know and you don't care. What matters is how you conduct yourself on the dance floor. Surprisingly, it's not just how well you do the dance, it's also the emotions you express through movement, your ability to connect to the music, your attentiveness to your partner – and many other factors.

In these hi-tech, high-pressure times, there is no better way to relieve stress. Check your worries at the door as you come in to dance, you won't miss them at all – truly.

## **Dancing Around The World**

*In this edition of the Newsletter, we visit the USA in order to -*

## **Tango in St. Louis**

*by Ed Grandy, P. Eng*

Every Friday night Roxanne McKinney and her partner, Carter Maier, hold a lesson and milonga on the second floor of the Soulard Coffee Garden & Café at 910 Geyer Avenue. They push the tables and chairs to the side to reveal a fabulous wooden floor.

The Soulard Area is St. Louis's French Quarter with local pubs on just about every corner. St. Louis's historical French base adds to the local tradition where, apparently, every February it hosts its own version of Mardi Gras. The French influence is quite evident in the architecture and atmosphere of the area.

Roxanne and Carter started the evening at 8:00 pm with a lesson in basic tango. It always interests me and amazes me how different teachers teach the "basic" slightly differently. It is refreshing to see the different perspectives. How many ways can you explain the same thing? Well, I have been surprised, once again, to see yet a different way! It was enlightening to see and to hear Roxanne's perspective of why she teaches the step that way. The interesting point that Roxanne explained was when the lady ends the *salida* she should put equal weight on both feet. It allows the lady more flexibility; especially if she does not know which foot, the man is going to step with next. In addition, only when the man is on the lady's right side should she cross at the fifth position. Otherwise, she should just continue to keep her feet side-by-side and step back when the man leads her that way.

They played an assortment of tangos throughout the evening, including milongas and vals. There was a small crowd, however, it was enjoyable dancing with the different ladies. Like most milongas, there were dancers that have been dancing for a few years and others who have only taken a few lessons. Included in the mix of tango music, Roxanne played some salsas and swing. The mix of music made for a great evening of dancing for me.

If you wanted to get a coffee and a little treat for yourself, then all you had to do is walk down the stairs to the first floor café and indulge. With such a wide selection, it could take you awhile to decide!

As an added treat Roxanne and Carter taught the steps of an Argentine Folk Dance, Chacarerra. To give this folk dance the proper look, the ladies would have to wear long flowing dresses. For someone who has never seen Chacarerra, I can only describe it as a combination of tango vals with flamenco. It is a line dance where you have a partner *per se* to dance with yet you do not embrace her until at the end of the sequence of steps and then it is for the beat of the music. It starts with the ladies lined up on one side of the room and the men on the other side, however, only about 6 feet apart. Through a series of steps, you and your partner dance towards

each other and then pass each other and turn to end with a unique elegant embrace. The pattern repeats a few times until the song ends. It was an enjoyable treat!

The evening and the people were great, and Roxanne and Carter were great hosts. So, if you ever find yourself in St. Louis, Missouri on a Friday night and wonder what to do, then be sure to check out their dance, and to enjoy the evening!

### **An Interview with Miguel Angel Pla**

*A doctor by profession, Miguel began his study of Tango in 1990 with Tango masters Carlos Sansinella, Alberto Estevez and Pepe Arena. He also studied under such names as Alfredo Porto, Pedro Gonzalez, Rodolfo Cieri, Juan Bruno, Juan Carlos Copes, Pupi Castello, Raul Bravo, Nito Garcia, Celia Blanco and Gustavo Naveira. As Tango began to envelop more and more of his time, Miguel's medical practice began to take the back seat to a Tango career. By 1993, he was the first place winner of the Tango '93 Competition, the Trofeo Gloria y Eduardo in 1993 and the Certamen Hugo del Carril in 1993, all held in Buenos Aires. He performed with the Orquesta del Tango de Buenos Aires from 1994 to 1996, when his Tango dancing was featured in the movie, 'Evita'.*

*His ability to teach Tango to others however, began to intrigue him much more than his performing career. Miguel developed a series of exercises which when done, teach and perfect the most common postures and positions in the dance. Currently he teaches at the National Academy of Tango in Buenos Aires, Argentina where he at one time taught with the famed Elvira de Virolaso before her death*

*Of the tango, Miguel has said that it is the ultimate communication between two people. It begins with an embrace, an initial sharing of affection, yet stresses individual balance. The mastering of one's individual balance is what allows two bodies to dance as one, along with a technique that is clean and uncluttered, a form that is pure, a line that is classical and an elegance that is sublime.*

*Miguel believes the most important ingredient in learning the tango is love for the tango. Part of his role as a teacher is to develop this love in his students. "I love the Tango, I love to Tango and I want to share this with as many students as possible. This is why I have chosen to teach rather than to concentrate on a performing career".*

### **Miguel, how have you enjoyed your visit to Toronto?**

Very much. This is my eighth visit, I usually come here when I arrive from Buenos Aires and when I go back. I have been to the CN Tower 4 times, as I often come with different dance partners. I know the city well, and I feel comfortable here. I like all the different cultures. This city is the most cosmopolitan in the

world. It's like Buenos Aires was, 100 years ago, identical!

### **What do you enjoy best about the tango?**

Teaching, of course.

I performed for almost three years with Argentina's National Orchestra, which had 65 musicians. After that, what is left? So now I perform only a little, as that experience was so great.

Maybe the next time I am in Toronto, we could have a conference along with the week-end workshops ... like a question and answer session?

There are many myths about tango. You must understand the roots of tango to truly understand. When people go to Buenos Aires, they usually go to places a friend has recommended, and there are just people from New York, Toronto, Paris, etc., not so many from Buenos Aires, so they don't get the authentic experience. La Boca, for example, is a tourist place.



### **Who has been your most memorable teacher of the tango? Why?**

My father, of course! But in my childhood, there was not a lot of tango. I saw my father and mother dance at parties.

Later, when I discovered tango, I was impressed the most by Carlos Sansinella. I learned from Pepe Arena, who was Carlos's partner, not from Carlos directly. I learned the basic philosophy of tango from these men.

### **How can we dance tango in a modern way while respecting its traditions?**

Through information and knowledge. I liked the Club Milonga Spring Newsletter because of what it said about our culture. If you just learn steps, it will be done without soul. It's necessary to know about people, and how a society has developed. You need to get an idea of this in your head, and after that, you can learn.

For example, your Club meets in a church. In North America's culture, this is okay, but in Buenos Aires this would be inconceivable! It's good to understand this, but also it's not necessary in North America to follow all of the social customs of Buenos Aires.

### **What would you say has been your most memorable experience as a tango dancer?**

My time with the Orchestra Del Tango De Buenos Aires. Because there were 65 musicians, we always danced in large theatres, with audience of up to 1500 people. Just my partner and I, alone on the big stage!

**You are a physician, but you gave it up for the tango. Why did you take that step?**

I practised as a doctor for 28 years, that's enough! I lost my patience. What I do now is more relaxed, and I can travel. It wasn't a difficult decision.

**Is there anything in Tango that is still difficult for you?**

My English! (*Editor – "No, it's much better than it was on your visit 3 years ago".*) I study English every day. Also, I have pain in the balls of my feet, always. When I get back to Buenos Aires, I will go to my doctor friend, who works with soccer players.

**If you could give people in Toronto some advice to help improve their dancing, what would it be?**

It's necessary to change thinking for feeling. Feeling means everything. When I start to dance, I try to feel my partner's body with me, and also my contact with the ground. I ask myself, "Who is this person in this moment?"

It's a cultural difficulty for North Americans, they don't like to touch each other like we do in Argentina.

**Miguel, thank you very much for talking to us. We all look forward to your next visit.**

*Kay Randewich*

## You, Your Stars and El Tango

*with Astrologer Maggy Miles*

*Is your dancing written in the stars? Check your horoscope, interpreted by Maggy with a tango twist.*

### ARIES Mar 21-Apr 21

**Dance**

GOOD

Very physical, Dashing. Sweeps (male) swirls (female) others off their feet. Lots of high kicks. Spirited. Immediate. Loves hot rhythms, rapid movement.

NOT SO GOOD

Can be a bit (just a bit?) insensitive.

High on lots of me-I can-do-it, but low on patience. (Better be able to keep up or get out of the way!)

**Dress**

GOOD

Sharp, snappy, the latest fashion.

Bright accents of colour, red, purple, orange. Loves hats, Flashy boots. Looks great in them. Brings action and life to the dulllest party.

NOT SO GOOD

Fashion can be overdone.

A flaming red feather hat and boots to match? Still, if one has to chose?

Aries' great "Here-I-am" fashion flair or the world's "I'm-not-sure-whether-I-should-actually-be-here-or-not" dress-down garb? Well, for tango...Aries?

**Some dancers with this sign:** Richard, Savio, Renee, Kate, Mary

### TAURUS Apr 21-May 21

**Dance**

GOOD

Purposeful. Patient

No startling out-of-the-blue foot bleeps, or double-whammies. Grounded and yet nice and musical.

Easy on the nerves!

NOT SO GOOD

Not exactly the world's most entrepreneurial dancer. When Taurean caution takes over, say "bye bye" to "wow!"

**Dress**

GOOD

Well-behaved, Taurus garb flows smoothly along life's charted pathways. No surprises. But no "oh my stars!" shockers either.

NOT SO GOOD

Taurus does not... definitely, does not like change!

Once a fashion mode finds a Taurean home it will live there for years and years, actually... forever.

Like the Rocky Mountains. Pretty solid stuff.

**Some dancers with this sign:** Bryant, Andy, Ben, John, Soheil, Marianne, Karine, Ena

### GEMINI May 21-June 22

**Dance**

GOOD

Versatile. Quick-witted. Quick-stepping. At one, heart and soul, with their dance slippers. Can't get enough of new ideas. Loves the latest everything. "What's happening here? What's happening there?"

NOT SO GOOD

"Ho hum." "But you just got here". (Gemini gets bored verrrry easily). Short attention span - the Gemini butterfly. Here, this flower. There, that flower. Then gone on a spring breeze. Oh yes...you need to catch Gemini on the wing.

**Dress**

GOOD

Always 'on the go'. Changeable. Smooth, urbane one minute. Super-casual the next. Loose, airy one minute. Button-up the next. Whatever (as a matter of fact, whoever) happens to catch Gemini's passing fancy!

NOT SO GOOD

The biggest problem? Gemini suddenly decides he should have worn that blue suit with a yellow tie. She should have worn that striped skirt with her mauve jacket. "Look, I'm sorry. I can't stand this another minute. I'll be right back. Just going to run home and change."

**Some dancers with this sign:** Gord, Norbert, Patrick

## **CANCER June 22-July 23**

### **Dance**

**GOOD**

Born with antennae that pick up the slightest vibration. In a nanosecond, they feel a partner's mood. Like the ocean crab they move with lightning speed, at any time, in any direction except....straight ahead!

**NOT SO GOOD**

Feelings get hurt. Emotions get magnified. Like looking at images underwater. Everything gets bigger. Edges blur. A missed dance step? "Oh.I'm sorry. Oh dear I am sorry for forgetting to stop saying I'm sorry".

### **Dress**

**GOOD**

At their best when they dress according to mood, Cancerians have a knack for tuning in on the atmosphere of any occasion. When they feel good, they look extra good.

**NOT SO GOOD**

However, when they dress, not according to their own mood, but to someone else's, they sense a disturbing cross current. Then they can't tune in. And, of course, they feel bad. And, of course, they look extra bad.

**Some dancers with this sign:** Lou, Kay, Lily, Rehan, Ingrid, Jackie

## **LEO Aug 23-Sept 23**

### **Dance**

**GOOD**

Dramatic. Great showmanship.

Right into every dance - slow, fast, happy, sad.

Thrives on attention, applause. And why not? Leo fills every party with dancing sunbeams.

**NOT SO GOOD**

Sometimes shoots for superstar status but too lazy to learn the ropes. And remember, only Leo knows best. To question the Mighty Lion is to offend.

### **Dress**

**GOOD**

What do Leos love? They just love it when all the eyes in the restaurant turn as they make an impressive entrance. Happiest when 'dressed-to-kill' wearing only the absolute top of the line fashion.

**NOT SO GOOD**

It can happen. Too showy, too mad for attention, too self-aggrandizing. Result? An enclosed Leo self-world wall allows room only for applause. Yikes! Boring!

**Some dancers with this sign:** Nelson, Lisandro, Clive, Don, Mario, Harry, Sue, Riaja, Shirley

## **VIRGO Aug 23-Sept 23**

### **Dance**

**GOOD**

Analytical Virgo will learn to dance the tango well. And if lucky enough to find the right salon, will come up with all kinds of ingenious tango variations.

**NOT SO GOOD**

Quick to criticize and slow to praise, nothing flattens a bright moment more than a Virgo seeking to display intellectual assets via fussy nit-picking...what a wet blanket!

### **Dress**

**GOOD**

Virgo wardrobes like to move to the back of the room where their neat but neutral appearance creates a kind of mental space where others feel free to enter and express their thoughts.

**NOT SO GOOD**

Finding lively display somewhat disturbing, Virgo's prim looks do their best to chill out those who dress as if life is just great and "We're out to have a bit of fun!"

**Some dancers with this sign:** Fernando, Michael, Dieter, Regina, Fenny

## **LIBRA Sept 23-Oct 23**

### **Dance**

**GOOD**

At one with all things bright and beautiful, the tango salon is a natural habitat for Librans. Light-footed lovers of harmony, they can smooth their way as easily through a social glitch as a tango fumble.

**NOT SO GOOD**

Librans often end up in awkward social tangles when their smooth flirtations catch them an attractive, but tenacious fish. Your Libran likes the chase but not the capture.

### **Dress**

**GOOD**

Libran's natural vanity (the eyes of the world are their mirror) demands they pay close attention to dress. Blessed with a flair for elegance, Librans can look very at home at a royal wedding (even if they don't have the carfare home.)

**NOT SO GOOD**

Sometimes Libran dress can be too 'exquisite'. The man becomes foppish (cravat and walking stick). The woman absolutely drips with too, too divine jewellery. Voila! A lovely gusting wind swoops down and carries them off.

Up and away to Cloud Nine!

**Some dancers with this sign:** Ernesto, Scott, Tom, Julie, Pam, Maria Esther

## **SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 22**

### **Dance**

**GOOD**

Scorpio does nothing by halves; will take every activity to the limit. Whether driven by desire for dining or dancing, intense Scorpio goes all the way.

**NOT SO GOOD**

Always a purpose in mind. Dance with a Scorpio and at least half your partner's attention will be on a new step, a new combination.

### **Dress**

GOOD

Scorpio dress always speaks of hidden, magnetic force. The intense tango clearly resonates to Scorpio. And what fashion colour prevails? Black. Dark, mysterious, secretive, black.

NOT SO GOOD

Stubborn. Immediately polarized. Scorpio finds it hard to change gears fashionwise. They either really like something, or they really hate it. Result? Life can get pretty inconvenient.

**Some dancers with this sign:** Leonardo, Ed, Ruben, Mack, Sandra, Marlene, Beverley, Dana, Sian, Create, Gladys

## **SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 22**

### **Dance**

GOOD

They speak the same language - the high-spirited Sagittarian and the fast-moving milonga. Like the horse of the zodiac, hoofs flying, Sagittarius sees the dance floor as a great wide open plain. Keep clear!

NOT SO GOOD

Claustrophobia can quickly take over.

Is the room too small? Is a dancing partner closing in to stake a claim? Watch out! Super-honest Sagittarius will deliver the unadorned straight goods. Forget diplomacy!

### **Dress**

GOOD

Sagittarius sees life as an open road. Casual easy-to-move-around-in clothing appeals. However, freedom-loving though they be, your Sagittarian won't break with convention. They abide by the current fashion mode.

NOT SO GOOD

Rarely out of line themselves, if you've gone out on a fashion limb, don't go near a shoot-from-the-hip Sagittarian within listening reach of others. You won't want anyone to hear "What's that you're wearing? It's a real turn off!"

**Some dancers with this sign:** Michael Craig, Myra, Carol, Juanita, Bernadette

## **CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 20**

### **Dance**

GOOD

Wherever tango is danced, the ambitious Capricorn mountain goat will be making its way, one foot after another, up up up to the top of the pile. And, boys and girls, you can put this down in your notebooks - it's hard work and discipline that get them there!

NOT SO GOOD

With an eye unblinkingly on the upward climb, partners can sense they're dancing with an ambitious

Capricorn 'project' rather than a living, breathing, heart-beating partner.

### **Dress**

GOOD

Capricorns dress with an eye towards getting a foothold on the next rung of the social ladder. Usually trim and a little formal, Capricorn dress creates a smooth, urbane look.

NOT SO GOOD

Capricorns can be tight with money. And this, if coupled with anxiety and fear for the future, can incline them to pinch every penny. Then public image takes second place. Gone 'suave'. Enter down-spirited, limp, worn-out-long-ago attire.

**Some dancers with this sign:** Steve, Joe, Teresa, Antonia, Natalia, Elena, Joan

## **AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 20**

### **Dance**

GOOD

If you're looking for a partner you can really tango-bond with, I-want-to-be-me Aquarius is not for you. But if you're looking for a partner that's imaginative, inventive, and won't 'lay any trips' on you, you can't do better.

NOT SO GOOD

It can feel like a little stab in the heart when you realize the same bright, interested look an Aquarian beamed at you when you shared a dance moment supreme, also gets beamed at all your Aquarian's other partners as they too, share a dance moment supreme.

### **Dress**

GOOD

Belonging more to the future than the present, Aquarians dress ahead of their time. On-the-edge fashions are like a breath of fresh air to them and...they loosen things up for everyone else.

NOT SO GOOD

But...unpredictable and eccentric, some Aquarians love to shock. They may appear at a tango salon wearing a nose ring and rubber boots. If your taste runs to Aquarians, be prepared to be a good sport. **Some dancers with this sign:** Alfredo, Peter, Doug, Erika, Norma, Maggie

## **PISCES Feb 20-Mar 21**

### **Dance**

GOOD

Born romantics, Pisces will give their hearts and souls to each tango moment. Endowed with intuitive natures, like running brooks in a forest, they easily slip into one step after another - easily tune in to the music, to their partner.

NOT SO GOOD

Prepare yourself for the long sigh which must have been invented by a Piscean. These famous sighs seem to say "If only this were a more wonderful

world, a more wonderful evening, a more wonderful you". Oh well...

### **Dress**

GOOD

Clothes always look softer on a Piscean. At her best, the woman, a floating vision in rippling chiffons. At his best, the man, a poet-dreamer, soft woven fabrics easing their way about his body. And Piscean eyes. Dreamy. Other-worldly. Straight from the soul!

NOT SO GOOD

But..when Pisces sinks into a slump, what a slump! And dress follows close behind. All just because the world isn't going to be a better place, at least not by tomorrow. Now scuffed shoes, shirts not tucked in, drooping skirts, half-combed hair and...lots of sighs.

**Some dancers with this sign:** Ron, Al, Jayne, Shahla, Betty, Colleen, Bernice

And now with this last starry sign  
These words come to an end  
'Tis hoped they prove themselves to be  
A silent helpful friend

Maggy Miles  
Astrological Birthchart Readings  
416-469-0501

### **YOU AND YOUR STARS**

ASTROLOGY  
with  
MAGGY MILES

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### **Club Information**

Club Milonga meets every Tuesday at Danforth Baptist Church. Enter on Bowden St. between Chester and Broadview.

Beginner lesson	7.30pm to 8.15pm
Intermediate lesson	8.15pm to 9.00pm
Dancing (practica)	9.00pm to 10.30pm

Cover charge for non-members is \$8.

Phone (416) 699-0875

Website [www.tangotoronto.com](http://www.tangotoronto.com)

You can email the President, Jayne Patterson, at [president@tangotoronto.com](mailto:president@tangotoronto.com)

### **Would You Like To Contribute Or Advertise?**

Suggestions, contributions and ads for the next newsletter are welcome.

Published by Club Milonga  
Editor: Clive Randewich

Club Milonga Membership has its  
privileges!!  
Before or after tango, be sure to drop  
in to the  
**Vive Restaurant and Cafe**  
for a tasty snack or a meal and  
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It's right on the corner of Danforth and  
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## Mad for Tango!

Dancing every Saturday 9pm.

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Lesson at 8pm. \*10. - Lesson & dance only \*15.  
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416-696-5950 [www.tangosoul.ca](http://www.tangosoul.ca)



### HOLIDAY HOURS!

There will be no lessons from November 23rd until  
early January when Natalia & Bryant return from  
Argentina.

November 23rd, 30th, December 7th, 14th - Dance only, 9pm.

December 21st, 28th - CLOSED

January 4th, 2003 - Dance only, 9pm.

presented by - RAJIA & MICHAEL

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