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By Natalie Pepa



## Chicago Classes

**On-Going Classes:** call instructors for details or check the teachers' pages on our website [www.tangonoticias.com](http://www.tangonoticias.com):

- ▶ Al Gates
- ▶ Bob Dronski and Kathleen Kreler
- ▶ Erica Sutton
- ▶ Fred Romero
- ▶ Sean Erwin

## Chicago Milongas

### Tuesdays

*Club 720, 720 North Wells 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Chicago*  
 Sponsor: Chicago Tango Club Argentine  
 7:30 pm – midnight; \$5 cover plus \$3 for tango floor  
 Lesson from 7:30 to 8:15.  
 Contact Charlotte Vikstrom 773.493.0666 for details.

### First & Third Fridays – November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>

*Lake Street Milonga, 942 W. Lake (at Peoria), Chicago*  
 8:30 pm – 1:00 am \$7. Introductory Lesson 8:00 – 8:30 pm  
**2<sup>nd</sup>** - Mark Johnson guest teacher  
**16<sup>th</sup>** - "Sorcerer's Hat." Harry Potter fans are looking forward to the movie debuting tonight. In Harry's honor we will have the materials for you to create a wizard's hat. Call Jan Carpenter 312.258.6137 or Erica Sutton 773.505.1577 [erica@tangoparatodos.com](mailto:erica@tangoparatodos.com) for details

### Last Friday of the Month – November 30<sup>th</sup>

*Tres Tangueras Milonga; Latvian Community Center*  
 4146 N. Elston (at Hamlin)  
 7:30 pm – Midnight \$10  
 Contact Valentina Cisar 773-763-8729 for details.

### Saturdays

*Tango...nada mas; 6137 N. Northwest Hwy, Chicago*  
 9:00 pm – 2:00 am (Free Introductory Class at 8:30)  
 \$15 includes light buffet  
 Contact Bob Dronski 773.792.2099 for details.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays

*Chicago Dance Ballroom; 3660 W. Irving Park Rd. Chicago*  
 7:00 – 10:00 pm \$8  
 Includes complimentary beginning instruction 7:00 – 8:00 pm  
 Co-sponsored by Chicago Tango Club Argentine  
 Contact Charlotte Vikstrom 773.493.0666 for details.

Dance Chicago 2001 - Athenaeum Theatre

November 3 & 4



“there is surely no more ebullient event in the city’s performing arts schedule”  
 -Chicago Tribune

**Leandro and Andrea** will be performing in the opening weekend of this month-long festival in Chicago. A savory collection of Chicago’s most delectable companies featured this weekend:

- Gregory Day and Tommye Giacchino*
- Deeply Rooted Productions*
- Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago*
- The Joel Hall Dancers*
- The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago*
- Jump Rhythm Jazz Project*
- Hubbard Street 2*
- Melissa Thodos & Dancers*
- Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago*
- River North Chicago Dance Company*
- TangoDanza*
- Trinity Irish Dance Company*

Athenaeum Theatre

Sat. Nov. 3 at 8 pm & Sun. Nov. 4 at 3 pm  
 Call (773) 935-6860  
 2936 N. Southport Av. - Chicago, IL 60657



## November

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Nito and Elba Garcia Workshops**  
*Tango...nada mas, 6137 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago*

Back in Chicago! Nito and Elba are from Mar del Plata, Argentina, where they founded “La Academia de Tango.” They are the foremost performers and teachers in the resort town, as well as in some the most popular milongas in Buenos Aires, such as Club Grisel and Torquato Tasso. Their warm and generous teaching style has made them a favorite of many dancers across the U.S. All classes are two hours. Cost is \$35/person for each class or all three for \$90. Friday, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8:00 pm Saturday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 1:00 pm Sunday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> - 4:00 pm Private classes are also available Nov 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> for \$85/hour. Contact Bob Dronski at 773.792.2099 or [www.tangonadamas.com](http://www.tangonadamas.com) for details.

**12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Paulo Araujo Workshops**  
*Various locations in Chicago*  
 Paulo Araujo will make his first visit to the United States for workshops and private lessons. Paulo is a highly regarded tango instructor and performer in Brazil. Sponsored by *Windy City Tango* and Julie Koidin, who was introduced

to Paulo through Luiza Paes. All classes are 1 1/2 hours. Cost is \$25/person for each class. Discounts offered for multiple workshops and advance payment.

**Vals**  
 Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> 6:30 and 8:30 pm  
**Structure, Movement, and Interpretation**  
 Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm  
**Giros and Sacadass**  
 Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 12:00, 2:00, & 4:00 pm  
**Milonga**  
 Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> 2:00 and 4:00 pm  
 Contact Phoebe Grant at [pjg@mindspring.com](mailto:pjg@mindspring.com) or 312.342.4335 for details.

## Other News

**November 29<sup>th</sup> - Tango...nada mas on Artbeat Chicago**  
 Check out Artbeat Chicago at 7:30 pm on WTTW Channel 11. Argentine tango will be spotlighted with footage taken at Tango...nada mas on September 29<sup>th</sup> when Eduardo and Gloria were in town.

**Mid-February 2002 - Immersion Tango Tour**  
 Ah, the chill of autumn...winter's on its way. Don't despair, just plan to get away... Contact Natalie Pepa 312.217.4363 [tangona-ta@aol.com](mailto:tangona-ta@aol.com) or Phoebe Grant 312.446.6601 [pgrant@idevgrp.com](mailto:pgrant@idevgrp.com)

## Chicago Practicas

**Tango...nada mas**  
 6137 N. Northwest Hwy., Chicago  
 Fridays beginning at 8:00 pm Cost \$5  
 Contact Bob Dronski 773.792.2099 for details.

**North Shore Dance Studio**  
 6163 N. Broadway, Chicago  
 Fridays beginning at 7:30 PM Cost \$10  
 Contact Al Gates at 773.994.7929 for details.

**Gallery on Lake**  
 942 W. Lake, Chicago  
 Sundays 8:00 10:00 pm Cost \$5  
 Contact Erica Sutton 773.505.1577 or [www.tangoparatodos.com](http://www.tangoparatodos.com) for details.



## Chicago Teachers

<b>Tom Barnard*</b>	tbbarnard@hotmail.com
<b>Vito Bertucci**</b>	773.277.4398
<b>Jose &amp; Gerri Caravantes*</b>	773.286.6424
<b>Bob Dronski &amp; Kathleen Kreher**</b>	773.792.2099
<b>Emilia Boykov**</b>	773.743.2962
<b>Sean Erwin*</b>	773.274.9564
<b>Carlos Favre *</b>	773.481.1551/773.852.6555
<b>Leroy Hearon *</b>	773.276.1518
<b>Louis Gallo **</b>	773.878.8089
<b>Mark Johnson *</b>	312.446.0468
<b>Gadi Lissak **</b>	773.472.8776
<b>Tina Mangos **</b>	773.282.5108
<b>Elena Robles*</b>	773.327.1667
<b>Fred &amp; Yermen Romero**</b>	773.725.0518
<b>Pamela Strateman**</b>	312.902.2803
<b>Erica Sutton**</b>	773.505.1577
<b>Charlotte Vikstrom**</b>	Argentango@usa.net

\*Privates only

\*\*Classes and Privates

# Teaching on the Floor And Etiquette at Milongas

*Bob Dronski*

The following letter was disseminated on *Tango-L*, the Internet list server on Argentine tango; Robert Hank is from Portland, a vibrant tango community. I feel this message makes some very important points. It discusses topics that many people have had concerns about and have made those concerns known to me in no uncertain terms. I hope that this becomes a point of discussion and is considered seriously by everyone, as I am sure we all wish the tango community to thrive in Chicago, and the **only** way to thrive is to nurture newcomers and not scare them away.

*Hey everybody,*

I am really happy to see how this discussion is going because our manners at milongas are probably the most important factor effecting the growth of our dance communities. I would like to add my comments to some things that have been said over the last few days in this thread.

First of all since we all seem to agree that teaching on the dance floor at a milonga is a bad thing, we all need to do something in our communities to reduce it to a minimum. As someone said earlier, this is often done by fairly inexperienced leaders who have been dancing for awhile, and who need to feel like they know something. These people usually dance only with beginners, and they teach a steady stream on the floor from the beginning of the milonga until they leave. I don't think they mean to really hurt any-

body. I think that they are happy to have the feeling that they know something, and they are still very excited about tango and want to share the fun. They are also probably still feeling insecure in their knowledge; dancing with beginners gives them the illusion of knowledge. That said, though, the constant teaching does drive beginners away.

I have seen this in our community over the years. I have been involved in running a *practica* or hosting a milonga for more than 4 years, and I can say with confidence that when there are as few as 2 or 3 leaders doing this very few beginners stick around. This is the primary effect, but also the ones doing all the teaching seem to stop learning. Since these people have such a negative effect on the growth of your community they need to be persuaded to stop teaching and just dance. They will begin to learn again and become better dancers, and you will be able to keep more of the new people who try tango. You don't have to chase anyone away; you just have to establish some good social rules.

There has been a lot of talk about whether or not beginners belong at the milonga. Manuel has said that the milonga may not be a good place for beginners; Tom stated that he doesn't like lessons for beginners before milongas. I am going to differ with these opinions in a few ways:

Certainly in a place like Buenos Aires –where there are so many places to dance, so many *practicas* to go to, and an established dance culture –beginners probably shouldn't try to dance at milongas right away. Navigation is so challenging at a crowded Buenos Aires milonga that they have little hope of doing well. They will probably disrupt the flow of the whole dance floor. Now, with that said, I need to also

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# Letter to the Editors

## Teaching, and Dance Etiquette, at Chicago Milongas

**H**aving read the article about “teaching” on the dance floor at milongas, I would also like to comment on what I have observed etiquette-wise on our dance floors. I agree that teaching on the dance floor is totally unacceptable. When I go to the milongas I go to dance...not to be “taught,” not to be talked to on the floor, not to be assaulted with sexually suggestive dialogue, and not to be impacted from kicks and hits by the people around me on the dance floor. I have been dancing long enough to feel my feelings deserve to be heard.

I do not feel beginners belong at milongas for all the obvious reasons. It takes time to master the steps, but it takes far longer to manage the dance floor. I, personally, do not want to dance with beginners...that is my choice. They should dance with people on their level because this is the only way they will grow and our community will grow. This is very important, I think. At 720 there is a top floor where they can dance and practice until they feel more comfortable with the dance. I do not appreciate in any shape or form having beginners “dumped at my door” by someone who feels he has the right to insist you dance with them whether you want to or not. I also do not feel I want to be put in a position where this is received as a personal rejection. I do not like hurting a person’s feelings...and this will happen in this kind of situation.

I also have strong feelings about etiquette at the Milongas. I absolutely hate asking men to dance with me...and would really like to know why I have to. I constantly see men at the milongas who just stand there and do not ask anyone to dance. If you do not want to dance, why are you here? I have to admit that I dance with some very nice men who do not have attitude problems, and I always enjoy dancing with them. No one should feel that they are such a great dancer that they only *should* dance with the good dancers. This is a social dance and we all want to have a good time...and should. Being a very intimate dance, it is very easy to get attached to someone you don’t know. So men and women should be very careful about showing respect to each other. Tango is a real test of the ability of men and women to show respect and to be kind to one another. With a few exceptions, I think most of us are very careful about that.

As I sit and watch, I also find it very painful to find that most dancing here does not relate to the music...it is all steps. The music is so beautiful –I do not understand why more effort is not given to interpreting the music. Personally, I have found

the most wonderful partners are those who dance to the music...and most of them dance very simply. You can really just get carried away by it. A lot of dancers here do not get it...with a few exceptions, of course. They are only aware of themselves and what they are doing. If a person would actually think about that precious man or woman that they are fortunate to have in their arms even for only a few moments, their whole perspective of this dance would change.

Since a lot of us have partners, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, those of us who are single should be sensitive to that. I find it appalling that someone would ask to dance with another person’s partner while they are sitting together at their table WITHOUT asking permission or acknowledging their partner sitting there beside them. It is only polite to ask...and it really prevents a lot of hard feelings. I am really grateful that

most partners here are willing to share their mates so that the rest of us can get to dance.

Tango like any other dance form needs time and effort to master. There are beginners who “get it” and there are those who have been dancing for a long time that will never get it. So none of us should assume anything about anyone.

Sometimes that person sitting in the corner can be truly a wonderful dance partner. If you don’t ask them, you will never know. So everyone should give everyone else a chance.

Finally, I truly love this dance form. It has changed my life. I take it very seriously and have a great respect for it. For all those who have made efforts to bring this dance form to our community, I thank you. I will continue to support the Tango community as long as I live here...even if I move away, I will

come back to Chicago. We have a great group of people. I enjoy everyone here. So I hope my thoughts have some meaning to anyone who wants to be informed on what Tango is all about here. We all need to try harder to master this dance form and to bring new people into our community. I passionately love it and will always be happy to share my enthusiasm to anyone who wants to listen.



*Name Withheld at Request of Author*



## *Nito and Elba are back!*

By popular demand, Nito and Elba Garcia will return to Tango...nada mas in Early November! Those of you who were lucky enough to attend their last workshops in Chicago know what wonderful teachers and performers they are. Those of you who missed the opportunity will want to make sure to take advantage of this chance!

For those of you who are unfamiliar with them, Nito and Elba are from Mar del Plata, Argentina, where they founded "La Academia de Tango". They are the foremost performers and teachers in the resort town, as well as in some of the most popular milongas in Buenos Aires, such as Club Grisel and Torquato Tasso. Their warm and generous teaching style has made them a favorite of many dancers across the United States. We're thrilled that they were able to work us into their busy schedule of teaching around the world!

### **WORKSHOPS**

*All classes will be geared for the intermediate/advanced student*

Friday, November 2	8 pm - 10 pm
Saturday, November 3	1 pm - 3 pm
Sunday, November 4	4 pm - 6 pm

Cost is \$35/person for each class. **SAVE**--all 3 classes for \$90/person!

### **PRIVATE CLASSES**

Nito and Elba will be available for private instruction at various times from November 1-6.

Cost is \$85/hr. Contact Tango...nada mas for details at (773) 792-2099 or e-mail us at nitows@tangonadamas.com

### **MILONGA**

Join us for our regular Saturday night milonga in their honor on Saturday, November 4. We're sure they'd be happy to perform!

**All events held at Tango...nada mas 6137 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago IL 60631**  
phone (773) 792-2099 fax (773) 792-3342 internet:www.tangonadamas.com

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#### **REGISTRATION FORM--NITO AND ELBA WORKSHOPS**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO TANGO...NADA MAS (\$35/person/workshop—all 3 for \$90)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Friday, Nov 2 8-10 pm      \_\_\_ Saturday, Nov 3 1-3 pm      \_\_\_ Sunday, Nov 4 4-6 pm

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## Champaign-Urbana, IL

### Contacts:

Rita Marvelli:  
marvelli@uiuc.edu; 217-344-2123  
Leonardo:  
Tangoleon@aol.com; 217-328-1311  
Joe Grohens: joe@wolfram.com; 217-328-1008

**Milongas:** *Tango Society of Central Illinois* — Monthly milongas held at *Phillips Recreation Center*: Sat Dec 1 from 9-12pm with lesson at 7:30; Admission \$3. For more information contact Leonardo.

**Classes:** For schedules visit [www.prairienet.org/whitesteet/tango.html](http://www.prairienet.org/whitesteet/tango.html).

## Detroit, MI

### Contacts:

**MotorCity Milongueros.com**  
Amy & Ray: MotorCity Milongueros.com; 313.561.3236  
Lori Burton:  
Argentinatangodetroit.com; 810.726.2370

**Amy & Ray:** MotorCity Milongueros.com

### Classes:

—Tuesdays at DanceSport Academy of Michigan, Dearborn. All levels 8:00 to 9:00pm.  
—Thursdays 7-9 pm followed by a Practica 9-10 pm;  
Pitsfield Grange, Ann Arbor - all levels. \$10 (\$5 with student id) for all evening.  
—Fridays at Farmington YMCA, Farmington Hills.

Class 7:30 to 9:00pm,  
Practica 9:00 to 10:00pm.

**Peña:** Every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday at the Pitsfield Grange, September through May; classes from 7-9 PM and general dancing from 9-1am. Light refreshments, \$10/students with ID \$5.

### Lori Burton:

Argentinatangodetroit.com  
or LnBrtn@compuser.net;  
810.254.0560

### Classes:

— *Argentine Tango Detroit*: every day of the week, 7758 Auburn, Utica, MI; see website for details.

### Milongas:

— *Argentine Tango Detroit/Tango Suave*; three times weekly see website for details  
*Brickhouse*. Auburn Road, Utica, MI. 8 pm; \$7.

### Visiting Teachers:

*The following teachers are being hosted by the studios of Lori Burton:*

**Nito & Elba** – November 7-14  
**Kely & Facundo** – First two weeks of January

## Ames, Iowa

### Contacts:

Valerie Williams:  
515.232.7374;  
vjw@cnde.iastate.edu

**Classes:** 7-8 pm; Beginning Class and Technique

**Tango Salon:** Dance held following class on alternate Thursday; call for information or check website.

Location: *Café Diem*, 323 Main Street, Ames, IA 50014



## Kansas City, MO

### Contacts:

Korey Ireland;  
korey@kodair.com or  
816.665.4916; also  
<http://www.kodair.com>

**Classes:** Saturdays at St Mark's, 38<sup>th</sup> & Troost — free class from 1-3pm  
**Practicas:** McCoy's Public House in Westport from 6:00-7:30pm on Sunday nights.

**Milongas:** Wednesdays at *Fedora on the Plaza*; lessons from 7-8 pm. Live tango music 8-11:00 pm.  
— *Beaumont Club* in Westport. Free tango lesson at 7PM and Live Music with *Tango Lorca*.  
— *Piropos* in Parkville on Thursdays. Contact Korey for more details

## Madison, WI

### Contacts:

Steven Fosdal:  
fosdal@mail.com;  
608.288.8339  
Anna Snider:  
atango@mail.com;  
608.848.6109

**Practicas:** *Pasión del Tango*: Every Tuesday at

Union South, Univ. of Wis. campus at the corner of Randall and Johnson streets; 7-8:30, no charge.

**Milongas:** Contact Steven & Anna.

## Mt. Vernon, MO

### Contacts:

Karen Whitesell: 417.471.1001; Fax 417.471.1002. [www.thelearningdepot.com/murrays-1/](http://www.thelearningdepot.com/murrays-1/)

### Milonga Venue:

*Murray's Vintage Venue*:  
202 S Hickory, Mt Vernon MO 65712

## St. Louis, MO

### Contacts:

Roxanne McKenny:  
stltango@aol.com  
Carter Maier:  
tngomn@hotmail.com  
Estella & Randy:  
tangoartists@tangorosa.com  
Lourdes Ylagan:  
Lylagan@path.wustl.edu

**Practicas:** First two Mondays at *Focal Point* – Maplewood, MO from 8-10pm - cost \$5; call 314.849.3007 for details.

### Milongas:

— *Club Viva*, Second Tuesday of every month;

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call Roxanne for details.  
—*Soulard Coffee Garden*;  
910 Geyer Avenue; call for  
details: 314.241.1464.  
—*Monthly Milonga*: Cost  
\$10 at Focal Point; call  
Estella & Randy for details.

**Classes:**

Estella & Randy: call for  
classes or see schedule at  
www.tangorosa.com  
Roxanne: Basic,  
Intermediate, and Advanced

**Tulsa, OK**

**Contact:**

Bob & Gretchen Manhart;  
OKTANGO@prodigy.net

**Milongas:** Contact for  
more details.

**Classes:** Every other  
Saturday 6-8 pm. \$8 per  
person or  
\$15 per couple.

**Twin Cities, MN**

**Contacts:**

*Tango Society of  
Minnesota*:: Mntango.org  
Steve Lee: 612.729.5306  
tango-1@juno.com  
Lois Donnay: 612.930.9221  
donnay@donnay.net  
Frankw@tc.umn.edu:  
952.285.9305

**Practicas: Ridgedale**

YMCA, 12301 Ridgedale  
Drive, Minnetonka, 8-10  
PM: 952.544.7708.  
Rebecca Trost's *Tango  
Practicas*: Tuesdays 9-  
10:30 pm; \$2. *Four  
Season's Dance Studio*,  
1637 Hennepin Avenue,  
Minneapolis 612.342.0902;

*Tango Class/Practica*:  
Yvette's Restaurant, St.  
Louis Park; 7PM with live  
music after lesson.

**Milongas:**

*Tango Society of Minnesota*:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday/monthly at  
*Dancesport Dance Studio* in  
Hopkins, MN. Lesson at  
8pm; dancing from 9pm –  
1am. Cost \$5 for members  
or \$8 for others.

*Steve Lee's Tango Plus*.  
Friday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of  
each month; 9 pm – 1 am;  
lesson 9-9:30 PM. \$5.

*Michael Cordner's Mini-  
Milongas*: Sundays 7-9:30  
pm \$2; *Four Season's  
Dance Studio*, 1637  
Hennepin Avenue,  
Minneapolis 612.342.0902  
*Rendesvous Ballroom*; first  
Saturday of the month: cost  
\$5 TSOM or \$8 others;  
2524 Nicollet Ave.,  
Minneapolis.

**Classes:**

*please see the following  
websites for details*:  
www.mntango.org/tsomcal  
http://i.am.tctango

**Visiting Teachers:**

**Florencia Tacetti** – *ongo-  
ing at Four Seasons Dance  
Studio*; contact at  
952.285.9305 or ftac-  
cetti@yahoo.com



# LAKE STREET MILONGA

**1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays plus an extra**

**942 W. Lake, Chicago**

**\$7 - light refreshments; BYOB**  
**Introductory lesson from 8:00 – 8:30 pm**  
**Open dancing begins at 8:30 pm**

*November 2<sup>nd</sup> – Let's Just Dance*

*November 16<sup>th</sup> – "Sorcerer's Hat"*

Harry Potter fans are looking forward to the movie  
debuting tonight. In Harry's honor we will have the  
materials for you to create a wizard's hat.  
Love to see you dressed as a wizard!

*November 23<sup>rd</sup> - "Blue Velvet"*

Join us the day after Thanksgiving for an  
extra Friday night of dancing.

*Contact your hosts for more information*

Jan Carpenter 312.258.6137 tangojan@hotmail.com  
Erica Sutton 773.505.1577 erica@tangoparatodos.com

**Advertising Opportunity in *Tango Noticias***

Advertise in both the *Tango Noticias* newsletter and our website  
[www.tango-noticias.com](http://www.tango-noticias.com). The cost of advertising per month on the  
website is only an additional 50% of the monthly newsletter fee:

Size of ad	Newsletter	+	Website	Total
1/8 page	\$25		\$12	\$27
1/4 page	\$35		\$17	\$52
1/2 page	\$50		\$25	\$75
whole page	\$85		\$42	\$127

Deadline for consideration in the next issue is November 23rd. Please call  
or e-mail Editors Sean Erwin or Jan Carpenter with your copy or questions.  
*Tango Noticias* is a not-for-profit, independent, monthly newsletter  
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**Interviewer and Writer:** Jonathan Bedi jbedi@wpo.it.luc.edu



# The Tango Singer of Abasto

When tango was appropriated by the better musicians and lyricists at the turn of the century and acquired the flavors imbued by European immigrants, its character changed. In the beginning the lyrics were crude creations improvised on the spot by locals with little schooling or knowledge of poetics. The themes had to do with the environment where tango originated – duels, prostitutes and their pimps, shady characters and criminals. Many lyrics were openly obscene and the tone was playful and jolly. What the European immigrant brought into the tango was the melancholy of the expatriate. The tango turned sad and the themes reflected it: nostalgia for things past, remembrance of old loves, heart breaks and sorrows, tears, tears and more tears.

Although there were those who sang the lyrics, there did not exist a real ‘manner’ of singing the tango. The dance had come into its own, but it was not until 1917 when the quintessential tango voice was heard and the tango-song was never the same again.

The man who transformed the tango by finally understanding how it ought to be sung was Carlos Gardel – *el morocho del Abasto* – the dark-haired one from *Abasto*. Gardel was to

become the personification of tango itself. His tragic death in an airplane crash at the apex of his career in 1935 turned him into a legend and eternal symbol of a *porteño*. Portraits of Gardel are everywhere in Buenos Aires – on buses, trucks and cars, on building walls, inside cafes, restaurants and bars, on the walls of stores and private homes.

*Carlitos* embodies the characteristics *porteños* believe represents them, what they would like to see reflected in the mirror. He was an immigrant of humble and murky origins. Some say he was born in France, others in Uruguay. There is even a question as to whether his real name was Gardel. What is known is he arrived in Buenos Aires at the age of two with his mother, that he was illegitimate, that he grew up in a poor neighborhood near the *Abasto* where his mother made a living ironing. He turned into a handsome man with a charismatic smile, who dressed with flair and charmed the ladies. His ‘style’ is so unique that only a few lines sketched on a pad of paper immediately represent him. And he is the true *porteño* hero – someone from the poor *barrio* who reaches success in the sudden burst of a flame and dies the same way.

Not only did Carlitos sing, he composed several tangos. The following, written and sung in 1931, is one of his most famous:

## TOMO Y OBLIGO

Tomo y obligo, mándese un trago  
hoy necesito el recuerdo matar  
Sin un amigo, lejos del pago  
quiero en su pecho mi pena volcar  
Beba conmigo, y si se empaña  
de vez en cuando mi voz a cantar  
no es que la llore porque me engaña  
yo sé que un hombre no debe llorar.

Si los pastos conversaran esa pampa le diría  
de que modo la quería, con que fiebre la adoré.  
Cuántas veces de rodillas tembloroso yo me he  
Hincado  
bajo el árbol deshojado donde un día la besé

Y hoy al verla envilecida y a otros brazos  
entregada  
fue pa’ mi la punalada y de celos me cegué  
le juro, todavía no consigo convencerme  
cómo pude contenerme y ahí no más no la maté

Tomo y obligo, mándese un trago  
De las mujeres mejor ho hay que hablar...  
Todas, mi amigo, dan un mal pago  
yo hoy mi experiencia lo puede afirmar...  
Siga mi consejo: No se enamore...  
Y si una vuelta le toca hociar,  
fuerza, canejo, sufra y no llore...  
Que un hombre macho no debe llorar.

Lyrics: Manuel Romero

Music: Carlos Gardel

## LET’S HAVE A DRINK

Come let’s drink and please do join me  
I need to kill my memories today  
You may be someone who’ll hear my sorrows  
I have no friendships, I’m far away.  
Come, drink with me and if my voice breaks  
while I am singing, don’t ask why  
no, I’m not crying for her betrayal,  
I’m a grown man and men don’t cry.

If the grass could tell you stories all these fields  
would say I loved her and adored her like no man.  
Countless times I’d fall on my knee, shaking, begging  
for her love, underneath the leafless tree  
where so many times we kissed.

Today, like a stab, I saw her in somebody  
else’s arms.  
Something in my pain contained me, held me back  
I know not what, for I know I would have killed her  
with my dagger on the spot.

Come let’s drink and please do join me...  
We won’t talk of women now  
They deceive and break your heart  
in my story you see how.  
Follow my council and don’t love them,  
but if by chance you fall for a lie,  
garner your power, hold back your tears  
for a true man must never cry!

Transalation: Natalie Pepa

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bunch of people who think they know something already, trying out brand new steps on the dance floor. In my experience the beginners adapt to the situation quite quickly. They are rarely the navigation hazard that the more experienced dancers (who know lots of steps) can be. Beginners tend to be modest, take smaller steps, and generally try to stay out of the way.

I have heard many dance teachers complain that it is very hard to get their students to go out dancing. It isn't hard to understand when we tell them that they shouldn't go out right away. We make it sound like it is so difficult. The truth of the matter is that for them it will never be as easy to get on the dance floor as it is right at the beginning when they don't know much. They won't feel like they have to be anything because they are just getting started; and they will stick to easier steps, and often dance well enough. They will get plenty of encouragement from the rest of the community.

About three months ago I began to crack down on some inexperienced dancers who were teaching their way through the night at the Monday milonga. Back then on a normal night about 80 people showed up. Since the teaching has mostly stopped, I have seen some dramatic growth. Now an average night is 100 - 110 people. Considering that people are on vacation and I am not seeing some of the regular dancers, this translates to between 30 and 40 new people who are dancing regularly. Surprisingly the navigation on the floor isn't impossible. The beginners join the *ronda*, the middle of the floor is empty, and I rarely get bumped into. There is a little chaos, but that just gives me more practice navigating.

Maybe you don't want beginners in your milongas, but until we have a bigger community and crowding that makes it impossible for beginners, I want anybody who is interested in tango to share our

dance floors. I want to have a friendly environment that lets people have fun. We all know that the road is long — that doesn't mean that it can't be enjoyable.

Happy dancing,

**Robert Hank, Portland**

