

Tango Noticias

DECEMBER 04, VOLUME 05, ISSUE 11 www.tangonoticas.com



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CARLOS GARDEL:

the Soul of Buenos Aires (1890-1935)

By Natalie Pepa

He has been gone for almost seventy years yet you still feel his presence in Buenos Aires. On my ride from the airport I see his image everywhere—the familiar smile, the tilted hat, the wisp of smoke from his cigarette. His face is on buses, trucks and cars, on building facades, inside cafes, restaurants and

bars, on the walls of stores and private homes. Even the taxi driver has a picture posted on the back of the front seat. Carlos Gardel sang tangos like a nightingale and December 11, his birth date, is now the official “Day of Tango.” A statue of Carlitos, el morocho del Abasto—the dark one from Abasto—greet us at a street corner outside El Abasto—originally the town market and now a giant shopping mall.

There is good reason to honor him. Until he came along, tango had found its magic in the feet but not in song. Carlos Gardel discovered the quintessential way to sing the music of Buenos Aires. True, tango lyrics existed and were sung before, but without a particular style. Just as opera or jazz requires a certain type of voice, grading of tone, and expression, so does tango. Can you imagine Luciano Pavarotti’s sleek tenor rendition of “Hello Dolly” or Louis Armstrong singing “Pagliacci” in his gravelly voice? Tango also requires its own musical interpretation.

Carlitos embodies the characteristics portenos 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 if his real name was Gardel. What is known is that he arrived in Buenos Aires with his mother when he was only two, that he was illegitimate, that he grew up in a poor neighborhood near the Abasto where his mother made a living ironing. He grew into a handsome man with a charismatic smile and a voice like warm honey that charmed the ladies. Barely twenty, he hung out in pool halls and cabarets to sing popular local songs. In 1917 he became fascinated by the lyrics of a particular tango—a sappy tale about a pimp who pines for a former whore—Percanta que me amuraste en lo major de mi vida—woman, you’ve shut me out at the best time in my life. The song ends with a wistful reference to mi noche triste—my sad night—which became the song’s title. Against the advice of most of

his friends, Gardel sang it in the theater and the audience went wild. In his deep, smooth baritone, brazenly sentimental, he found the way to express tango. Even today he seems on the verge of tears in songs about love and betrayal, about his beloved Buenos Aires, or nostalgia for times gone by.

After that decisive performance, Gardel's career took off. What followed were numerous recordings, radio appearances and concerts. He toured South America and Europe and was received by an adoring public. In 1928, he sang with Josephine Baker in Paris and in 1931 on Broadway, then he began making Spanish language movies in the U.S.A. In 1935, at the peak of his career when he appeared to be gaining international fame and after a singing tour in Colombia, his plane crashed at take off and he was killed in the blaze. He was forty five.

His death touched off mass grieving and more than a million people accompanied the funeral cortege through the streets of Buenos Aires. Carlos Gardel is buried in the cemetery of Chacarita and a statue marks his grave. Every day someone puts a fresh flower in his lapel and a lighted cigarette between his bronze fingers.

Carlitos' brief stardom cut short by death made him a true porteno hero--someone from the poor barrio who succeeded and then went out in a puff of glory. His name is the epitome of perfection; to complement an Argentinean you simply tell him "you are a Gardel!"

He dressed with flair and urbane refinement—his black hair slicked back, an impeccable wardrobe and shiny shoes. And he was always surrounded by women—in love with many but faithful to none. Like tango itself, he rose to fame from illegitimacy and humble beginnings to become what he projected: a rich playboy. For a porteno, image is reality.

When I was a child growing up in Buenos Aires I often heard Gardel on the

radio. My head and heart were elsewhere then—boleros, rock and roll—the voice of Carlitos did not affect me in those days. But now his voice touches me deeply, and when I hear him sing I am stunned by the power of this voice coming from the past. Perhaps it is correct what portenos say : Cada dia canta major—Carlitos sings better every day!

Gardel

by Humberto Costantini
translation: Natalie Pepa

If you ask me--we invented him. Surely it was on a Sunday afternoon, with mate, memories and sadness, with soft dance music on the radio, after the sporting events.

Surely there was grief in a snapshot on the wall, in a certain "I don't feel like it," in some book. I think we would have gone on like that, dumb with boredom, roaming without purpose, old and lonely without a woman or money, and tasteless.

Surely we must have felt suddenly and terribly alone, orphaned, like little children. Perhaps we touched bottom. Perhaps someone thought about punishment.

Then, who knows why, something strange happened to us. It came upon us like an angel from within, we became prophets, we woke up biblical. We looked at cobwebs on the ceiling and said to ourselves:

"Let us make a God to the likeness of what we would like to have been but could not.

Let us give him the best, the most dreamy and birdlike of ourselves.

Let us invent a name, a smile, a voice that lasts centuries, a standing in the world, lovely, easy like throwing aces at destiny."

And of course we wished it, and it came to pass. And he turned out glorious, dark hair slicked back with pomade, eternal like God or a record. The skies opened sideways and his voice sang to us: mi Buenos Aires querido

It was around six, the hour when the dancing starts, and soccer matches are all done.

The record shows that snow fell on Buenos Aires in 1918 and 1955. Portenos say that when it snows in the city again, another Gardel will be born.

Portenos: The residents of Buenos Aires—people of the port.

Esquina Gardel: Cul-de-sac along Anchorena Street, in front of El Abasto, where Gardel's statue stands.

Mi Buenos Aires querido (My dear Buenos Aires): Title and first line of one of the most popular tangos written and sung by C. Gardel.

Mate: Tea-like drink, very common in Argentina.

TANGO WORKSHOPS AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST LOUIS MO:

• Brigitta Winkler & Tom Stermitz,
December 10-12, 2004

• Alicia Pons,
February 18-20, 2005

Website: <http://cec.wustl.edu/~hs3/>
Email: sellers@me.wustl.edu

Accommodation provided by local dancers

03

January 03 New Class Sessions Begin

The second class sessions in
2005 begin February 14



TANGO

**WITH MISHA
AND SARAH**

Dance Connection is located at 3117 North
Clybourn, just south of the intersection of
Clybourn, Belmont and Western.
Ample parking.



Foundation Class

This class is designed to give students the foundations of tango technique. Absolute beginners are encouraged to start their tango experience here but seasoned dancers may find this class useful and are welcome as well. Registration is required. The upcoming session starts on January 03.

Time: Mondays 8:30 – 9:30 pm
Cost: \$70 for a session of six classes

Intermediate Class

Registration is recommended. Prior tango experience or completion of foundation class is recommended. Our classes focus on technique, musicality and connection with your partner.

Time: Mondays 7:15 – 8:15 pm
Cost: \$ 11 per class or \$60 for a session of six classes.

Practica at Dance Connection

Come and practice your steps in the best dance studio in Chicago!

Practicing can be fun and rewarding when you work on your tango technique in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. We open the practica with warm-up exercises and a workshop designed to fine-tune your techniques. Then we open the spacious dance floor for the guided practica where you can practice anything you have in mind without the pressure of the milonga and in front of the mirrors. Dancers who come to the practica always switch partners, exchange ideas, and socialize until we close at 10pm. Come and see how much fun you can have while also making yourself a better dancer.

Time: Thursdays 7:30 – 10:00 pm
Cost: \$10 includes practica, opening workshop & refreshments



**For private lessons, performance or
information on class registration go to:
www.mgoro.com/tango.html or call:
773.575.6906**

Tango Noticias Photo Page

Photo Page Editor Daniel Byrnes, byrnesdaniel@hotmail.com



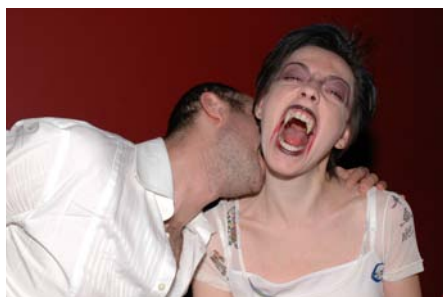
Recuerdo Club: Monica + Jacqui



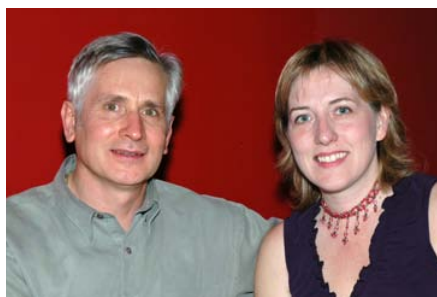
Milonga San Telmo: Fred + Yermin



Mariposa: Ewa + Marc



Recuerdo Club: Misha + Sarah



Recuerdo Club: Geary + Sheila



Mariposa: Rick + Jova



Recuerdo Club: Lidia + Evan



Recuerdo Club: Jose + Liaina + Gladys



Mariposa: Davit + Christiane



Recuerdo Club: Michele +Fester + Carlos



Recuerdo Club: Janit + Renie



Kabak: Babette + Netza



Carmen and Valentina

“La Boliviana” and Chicago Tangueras

Carmen Aida Céspedes-Mendoza



Ninoshka and Erick

On a glorious September Sunday I introduced “La Boliviana”, an unlikely new label of sexy attire for tangueras, to some Chicago friends. It is something I would not have dreamed of doing three months earlier, an unexpected turn in the road.

In the same way that all tango *obsesionados* have their highly personal tango narratives, “La Boliviana” has a story which the women received with appreciation, warmth and sympathy. In a subsequent feeling of camaraderie reminiscent of our adolescence, we indulged ourselves in the pleasure of squeezing into and exclaiming over oodles of Bolivian clothes. It was a sight that Bolivian women would have enjoyed!

I arrived in Bolivia in early summer with plans to research the feasibility of a project on indigenous women’s identity and to enjoy my return home after years of absence. The economic and political struggles that had made front-page international news last fall were at the forefront of my mind: Bolivia was the

implausible little country that had said “no” to the globalization agenda, lost 80 common-folk dissidents in a massacre in October 2003, and unseated its president. But proximity has a way of intensifying one’s reactions, and I began to feel the staggering effects, not only on the “designated” poor with whom I was to work, but also on professional, middle-class women struggling under displacement from the workforce and its consequences, especially for their children. In discussions with several groups of women, we turned over and over again the question of what to do to improve life, even if in the short-term, and even for a few women.

In late July, I made my long-awaited pilgrimage to Buenos Aires to meet Valentina Cisar and spend a week in the rarified environment of the tango. My bus trip across the Bolivian-Argentine plains was shattering. Now I realize how we often try to protect ourselves by creating and keeping our categories separate. I had devised my own expedient set of borders, placing the implied “first world” far away, like in the US or Europe. So, I was unprepared to see first world hallmarks a stone’s throw away from my own country, Bolivia, one of the “least developed” is the term they now use, in the world. But, some harsh realities simply refuse to knuckle under to linguistic artifice. Waiting to cross the border into Argentina, you can see scores of indigenous people, like so many beasts of burden, lurching under massive loads of products that they transfer from Argentine to Bolivian transport. Human conveyor belts, they work for cents a day. I noticed a journalist taking pictures of this mostly female workforce, and saw the women smiling shyly into the camera. The poverty on the Bolivian border was

staggering enough, but the contrast across the divide was more disconcerting. Once across the border, the roads widen out; the buses have amenities, and even the physical traits of people change. You see a different world.

In the face of the disparity, I felt enormous incoherence and conflict. I was sick, angry, powerless, guilty, and ashamed. I questioned what I was doing going to the tango Mecca to dance.

Ms. Cisar, a world traveler, set me straight. We returned to Santa Cruz, Bolivia where, by her account, she spent some of the finest moments of travel she has ever experienced. Through her eyes, I acknowledged a set of social norms and personal attributes that are nothing if not “first world”: civility, charm, good will, generosity, and dignity in the context of struggle. The Cruceno’s (from Santa Cruz) love of their local identity and the amazing variety and freshness of food were special attributes for Valentina!



Ninoshka with a singer and one of the musicians who provided live music at the milonga.



Chicago Tangueras

Santa Cruz sits at the foot of the Andes to the west and shares the Great Pampas with Argentina on the east. We also share the tango, but as song, and while the dance did not take root in Bolivia, it holds for us that familiar “no sé qué...” allure. In early June, I met Ninoshka, a Bolivian dancer with a zest for show tango. On hearing that my friend, a tanguera from Chicago, was to visit me Ninoshka and her budding group of tangueros put their energies into planning a milonga. In August, Santa Cruz notables, Argentines living there, and others captivated by the tango received invitations to the first milonga anyone could recall. At the “Candelas” restaurant, Valentina taught a group lesson and we opened up the floor for dancing to live music. Ninoshka’s nervous performers relaxed and the evening finished to great applause. The group milled about asking questions, getting more instruction, and as anyone could see, sorry to let the evening escape. In the ensuing days, Valentina offered lessons to this group of mostly young men overtaken with their first love of the tango, and wherever we went, people asked for tango.

In making our rounds of the city, we noticed tango-ish clothes—such as on the little girl with her mother working in a market stall in a little black... yes...tango dress in broad daylight!

We were impressed with the high quality of the clothes and the remarkable number of first-rate seamstresses and jewelers. In the leave-nothing-to-the-imagination idiom of American teens, we felt this was a “no-brainer.” In the final two weeks of our stay, we began putting together an inventory of hand-made clothes and dazzling hand-made jewelry to introduce to Chicago women at great prices. Our Bolivian associates waited to see how the idea fared, and as for me, at a very personal level, I felt that parts of my life and identity, which I had needed to keep separate, were coming together.

So it happened that a dozen Chicago tangueras and other supporters gave a promising start to a potential Bolivian women’s project on a sunny September afternoon. They exclaimed over the quality and style of the clothes and jewelry, asked for adjustments, purchased the entire inventory we had brought, and await a fresh array with that special “tango-appeal.”

My fellow tangueras and other women friends participated with me through a characteristic challenge that we all face; they showed me that it is possible to bring disparate aspects of oneself into coherence through simple acts of genuine humanity that take into account, but never patronize, the adverse condition of others. It’s one way of “making a small difference” for other women while doing what we all love to do.

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Dec. 8-15

Mario couldn’t stay away!!! His unique style expresses his own creativity, musicality and fluidity. Although labeled as a “nuevotango” pioneer, his fundamentals are grounded in the classic techniques of the



history and richness of Argentine tango. In all of his classes, Mario shows the movements in close as well as open embrace. Musicality is inherent in everything he teaches; Mario helps us develop our ability to play with the rhythms and structure of the music—whether Canaro, De Sarli and D’Arienzo or Pugliese, Piazzolla and Caceres. Private lesson times are filling, so contact Phoebe at WindyCityTango@yahoo.com or (312) 342-4335 or to schedule yours or to pre-register for the workshops. Please see the WCT, Inc. ad featuring their schedule in Tango Noticias; any updates will be posted on www.tangoparatodos.com, www.TangoCorner.com and www.ChicagoTango.com

Tango á la Lero y Phoebe

Thursdays

Dec. 9 Guest Instructing by Mario Consiglieri
 Dec. 2 & 23 7:00-8:15p. Fundamental Techniques
 8:30-9:45 p. Intermediate / Advanced
 Dec. 16 & 30 7:30-9:30 p. Practica



Milongas on Mondays at Mariposa
 Milongas Rubia y del Morocho 8:00 p. – 1:00 a.

Milonga Rubia (Dec. 13) 2nd Monday

Experience an intimate milonga a la Buenos Aires.
 Felicia special – Rubias (e.g., “blondes”) entry _ price!!!

Milonga del Morocho (Dec. 27) 4th Monday

Chicago’s first & only “alternative” milonga – add your favorite jazz, blues, pop, classical music to our play list!

Milonga M (Dec. 6 & 20) 1st, 3rd and “Blue” Mondays

Hosted by Tango Vida

Details in Chicago Events section Contact Phoebe J. Grant
 at (312) 342-4335 or WindyCityTango@yahoo.com for more info
 or visit www.tangoparatodos.com, www.TangoCorner.com or
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoTango/>

Coming to Chicago in 2005 with WCT, Inc. (plus others!!!)

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 “El Pulpo” y Luiza Nito & Elba Garcia
 Lorena Gasse & Ariel Barrionuevo
 Brooke Burdett Florencia
 Antonio “Junior” Cervila Kara Wenham
 Nina Tatarowicz Cecilia Gonzalez
 Marcelo Martins e Vanessa Galvao
 Another Brazilian discovery by Julie Koidin

Contact Phoebe J. Grant

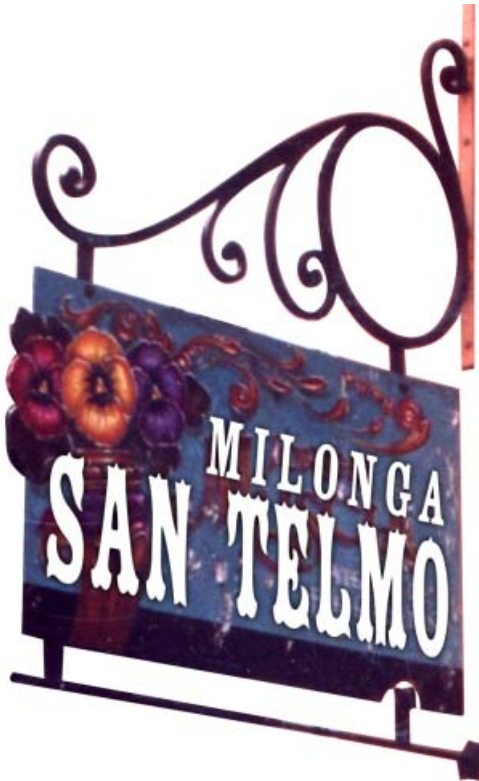
WindyCityTango@yahoo.com (312) 342-4335

for details these events & on tango trips with Paulo Araujo in Dec. & Jan.

or visit www.tangoparatodos.com

To receive WCT, Inc. updates, sign up on www.TangoCorner.com

or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoTango/>



Authentic Argentine Tango Milonga Every Wednesday Night From 9pm to 12:30am

Club Mambo

3336 North Milwaukee Avenue, just minutes west off the Belmont exit of the Kennedy Expressway. Club Mambo features a large dance floor with a surround sound stereo system, a full service bar and a *new* chef cooking up Mexican and Carribean additions to the Cuban menu. Free parking across the street at the Aldi's parking lot after 7pm. Presented by Daniel Byrnes.

Tango classes

This class is for all levels with a focus on close embrace techniques.

Cost: \$10

Time: Every Wednesday before milonga from 7pm to 8:15 pm.

**For more information on milonga and classes contact Daniel Byrnes.
Telephone: 312-953-0494
byrnesdaniel@hotmail.com**

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Have you visited our Calendar Page lately

The Calendar Page on the Tango Noticias website is the most up-to-date resource for Chicago Tango events. While the Chicago Tango Page in the newsletter informs you about milongas and practicas the TN website calendar is more detailed and includes even more tango activities. Updated weekly (sometimes daily) this page will give you all the information you need on upcoming workshops, special events, milongas, and practicas. Our new Chicago Tango Editor, Cindy Pamintuan, has created a detailed calendar that is extremely user friendly and the most accurate resource in Chicago. Check it out at: www.tangonoticias.com/calendar/month.php?LocationID=

Looking for Argentine tango classes or an instructor for private lessons? Visit the Tango Noticias Chicago Teachers Page on our website: www.tangonoticias.com



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Sarah Graff 1929 West Crystal #3B, Chicago, Illinois 60622

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Chicago Tango

Chicago Milongas

MONDAYS

Milonga M

1st & 3rd Monday of the month.
Milonga M – Blue Moon
Every 5th Monday of the month.
Mariposa, 346 N. Justine St., #300
Chicago, 8pm – 12am; \$10
Contact: Beth Braun 847.846.5611

Milonga Rubia

2nd Monday of the month.
Mariposa, 346 N. Justine St., #300,
Chicago, 8pm – midnight, \$10.
\$8 after 10pm. Contact: Phoebe
Grantat 312.342.4335 or
WindyCityTango@yahoo.com.
Contact Phoebe at 312.342.4335 or
WindyCityTango@yahoo.com.

Milonga del Morocho

4th Monday of the month
Located at Mariposa, 346 N. Justine St.,
#300, Chicago, \$10; \$8 after 10pm
Contact Contact: Phoebe Grantat 312.342-
4335 or WindyCityTango@yahoo.com.

Cousin's Restaurant

3038 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago. 9pm to
midnight - \$5. Tom Aksoy at 773.968.0101
or www.chicagotangoloop.com

TUESDAYS

Tango Chicago Tuesday Night Milonga

Tango Chicago Dance Centre. 1043 W.
Madison, Chicago, 8:30 pm – 12 midnight,
\$10. Al Gates at 312.850.1078 or
www.tangochicago.com

Milonga at Kabak

Kabak Supper Club and Vodka Room
1090 South Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling
8:30 pm - 12:30am, \$10 includes milonga &
1 drink. Contact: Vadim Muchnik 847.My-
Kabak or Netza Roldan 312.287.8406
MyTangonet@yahoo.com
www.mykabak.com

WEDNESDAYS

Milonga San Telmo

Club Mambo, 3336 N., Milwaukee Ave.,
Chicago, 9:00 pm -12:30 pm. \$5
Contact Daniel Byrnes, 312.953.0494 or
byrnesdaniel@hotmail.com

Cousin's Restaurant

2833 N. Broadway, Chicago.
9pm.m.– midnight, \$5. Contact Somer at
773.807.5704, or Agape 708.945.4140
findagapepappas@yahoo.com or visit
www.tangoardiente.com

THURSDAYS

Tango "Entre Amigos"

Pasha Restaurant & Club, 642 N. Clark,
Chicago (312.397.0100), 9pm to midnight,
\$5 cover. Contact Jorge Nidas
312.437.2122 or visit www.21tango.com

FRIDAYS

Milonga Vida

1st and 3rd Fridays of the month

Milonga Vida-Blue Moon

4th Friday, when there are 5 Fridays in a
month. 346 N. Justine Street, #300
Chicago, 9pm-2am; \$12. \$8:students with
I.D. Contact Bethdance11@aol.com;
847.846.5611, MariLiz7@aol.com;
630.254.5628.

Los Besos Milongita

2nd Friday of the month. 346 N. Justine
Street, #300 Chicago, 9pm - 2am; \$12;
Ellen's sweets & savories; BYOB. Contact
Ellen & Oleg Mashkovich at
una_emocion@yahoo.com

Nuestro Tango

Last Friday of the month. For this month
only, on Dec. 31st Nuestro Tango will be
closed. To resume next month, Jan. 28th.

SATURDAYS

Recuerdo Tango Club

6137 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago, IL,
9pm.-? \$15. Contact: Michelle Costello or
Carlos Favre 312.593.3553
or visit www.recuerdoclub.com

SUNDAYS

Cousin's Restaurant

2833 N. Broadway, Chicago, 8pm-11:30pm,
\$5. Contact Somer at 773.807.5704 or
Agape 708.945.4140 or visit
www.tangoardiente.com

Chicago Practicas

WEDNESDAYS

Recuerdo Tango Club

The Recuerdo Club Practica is taking a
hiatus for the month of December.

THURSDAYS

Practica at Dance Connection

3117 N. Clybourn, Chicago, 7:30 to 10:00
pm. Hosted by Sarah Graff and Misha
Goro. Drop-in workshop from 7:30-8:30
p.m. followed by practica until 10 p.m. \$10.
Contact Sarah & Misha at 773.575.6906 or
www.mgoro.com/tango.html

Tango a la Leroy y Phoebe

Mariposa, 346 N. Justine St., #300
Chicago, 7:30pm – 9:30pm
Practica in place of classes approx. every 3
wks. Contact: Phoebe Grant 312.342.4335
WindyCityTango@Yahoo.com

FRIDAYS

Tango Chicago Dance Centre

1043 W. Madison, Chicago. Practica
7:30p.m.-11:00 p.m, open to all levels, \$12.
Contact Al Gates at 312.850.1078 or
www.tangochicago.com

SUNDAYS

Tango Para Todos Practica

Schopf Gallery on Lake 942 West Lake
Street 9pm - 10pm; Free. Contact: Erica
Sutton erica@tangoparatodos.com
or 773.505.1577

Tango Sentido Productions Practica

Drucker Center, 1535 N. Dayton St.
Chicago, 6pm – 9pm, \$10. Contact: Dany
Novakovich 312.296.1955;773.550.2646
info@TangoInChicago.com
www.tangoinchicago.com

Central Tango

Fayetteville, AR

Contacts: Elayne Hency at Elayne's Dance-The Art of Social Dance; www.elaynesdance.com or info@elaynesdance.com; 479.521.6683 or 479.263.6683

Denver and Boulder, CO

Contacts: Web Sites: www.ragtime.org/dance/; www.danceoftheheart.com
Boulder - Deb Sclar: deb@danceoftheheart.com
Denver - - www.mercurycfe.com;
Chas Gale at (303) 320-4020, hotchango@msn.com, www.thetangothouse.com
Colorado Springs - www.tangospings.com

Atlanta, GA

Contacts: Web Site: www.atlantatangofestival.com

Champaign-Urbana, IL

Contacts: Web Site: <http://tango.joegrohens.com>
www.centraltango.com;
Joe Grohens: joe@joegrohens.com;
217.378.4751, Ron Weigel:
TangoSociety@aol.com; 217.328.1311

Ames, IA

Contacts: Valerie Williams:
www.vjw.biz/docs/amessocdnc.htm;
v@vjw.biz; 515.232.7374;

Des Moines, IA

Contacts: Valerie Williams:
www.vjw.biz/docs/amessocdnc.htm;
v@vjw.biz; 515.232.7374.

Fairfield / Iowa City, IA

Contacts: Fairfield Tango Community - Sheryll Ryan: sryan@humanfactors.com, 641.233.1011, Kelly Custer: 641.472.1001

Indianapolis, IN

Contacts: www.tangoindy.org;
info@tangoindy.org, David Crosley:
dcrosley@challenge-inc.com; 317.407.8181
Barb Bill: 513-321-3546;
bbillcinci@yahoo.com

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Contacts: www.umich.edu/~umtango;
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Twin Cities, MN

Contacts: Web sites: www.mntango.org
www.geocities.com/twincitiestango
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Frank Williams: Frankw@tc.umn.edu,
612.379.4565. For a weekly update of Twin
Cities tango activities, go to
<http://mntango.org/mailmn/listinfo/> and
subscribe to 'TSOM- announce.'

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NOTE: Please send any information regarding contact information for Argentine tango events in the Midwest to central_tango@yahoo.com and we will be sure to update each community's contact listing. Also, let us know if you'd like your community featured in an upcoming issue.