

Tango

N O T I C I A S

Volume 1, Issue 9

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December 2000

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CHICAGO EVENTS CALENDAR

December

1st - Friday: Recuerdo de Buenos Aires

Hilton Arts, 400 South Green Street, Chicago

Participants from the Buenos Aires trip last month will share their pictures, videos, and memories. Stay for the milonga. 6:30 pm Cost: Free. Light Refreshments
Contact Elena Robles at 773.327.1667 for details

1st - Friday: Milonga Workshop

Tango...nada mas, 6137 N. Northwest Hwy., Chicago

Pick up some tips and steps on dancing the fast paced milonga. Stay for the Practica

7:00 - 8:00 pm Cost: \$10

Contact Bob Dronski at 773.792.2099 for details

2nd - Saturday: Melina and Julio Review Practica

Dancers Delight, 1623 W. Melrose, Chicago

Here is your chance to review what you learned at Melina and Julio's workshop. If you were not able to attend the workshops, come and pickup some of the information you missed. Partners not necessary.

11:00 am – 1:00 pm Cost \$10 or \$9 if paid in advanced

Contact Elena Robles at TangoSentido@Teacher.com
773.327.1667 or Tiffany Asta, 312.666.4854 for details.

7th - Thursday: Tango 21's 10th Anniversary Milonga Finale for Jorge Nidas and Sandra Adrian

Fine Arts Building 410 S. Michigan 10th Floor, Chicago

This is a special evening honoring ten years of dancing together. Hors d'oeuvres and champagne

7:30 – 10:00 pm Cost: \$13.00

Call 888-Tango21 for details and reservations

9th – 16th - Saturday: Joaquín Amenábar, Bandoneonista returns to Chicago

This world acclaimed Bandoneónista will perform and give workshops. Don't miss the opportunity to dance to live bandoneón, the heartbeat of tango.

Workshops:

Tango...nada mas 2:00 – 4:00 pm Cost \$30/each

▶ **9th - Saturday: "The History of Tango"**

Understanding the different styles of tango music enables you to dance with more confidence and enjoyment. You will leave this seminar with an understanding of tango's greatest hits, greatest composers and a suggested discography.

▶ **16th - Saturday: "Tango – The Music"**

Learn about tango music from the perspective of a professional bandoneón player. Professor Amenábar will lead you through the intricacies of tango music. This seminar will tune your ears to tango in a way that will enable you to better express your own personal interpretation of the music when you dance.

Contact Bob Dronski at 773.792.2099 for details.

See advertisement page 9.

Performances of Amenábar:

12th - Tuesday: Club 720

720 N. Wells 3rd floor, Chicago. Sponsored by Chicago Tango Club Argentine, Academy V of Music and Dance, and Club 720. Cost \$10 with 20% discount for members of the tango club.

16th - Saturday: Tango...nada mas, 6137 N. Northwest Hwy.

Performing with Duo Select at the Saturday milonga

11th – 21st: Special Workshops

Tango...nada mas, 6137 N. Northwest Hwy., Chicago

Take time during the busy holidays for these workshops offered 8:00 – 9:30 pm:

- ▶ **11th Close Embrace** – Understand the secrets of dancing close and learn how this dance position can enhance the connection between you and your partner. Cost \$20
- ▶ **18th Tango Libre** – Learn how to dance free of patterns, still within the constraints of tango. Cost \$20
- ▶ **21st Men's class** – Men, start to think about how your movements affect the women, how to adapt your lead to different partners and things you can do to make the dance more enjoyable. Women admitted free as assistants! Cost \$15

Contact Bob Dronski at 773.792.2099 for details

14th and 21st – Tango 21 Continues a Month of Milongas

Fine Arts Building 410 S. Michigan 10th Floor, Chicago

After last week's anniversary and before the New Year's Eve party on the 28th, don't miss these special seasonal milongas.

7:30 – 10:00 pm Cost: \$13.00

Call 888-Tango21 for details and reservations

28th – 30th Three New Year's Parties – Pick One or Go to Them All!!

▶ *Thursday, December 28th – Tango 21, sponsor*

410 S. Michigan 10th floor, Chicago

7:30 – Midnight Cost: \$13.00

Call 888-Tango21 for details

▶ *Friday, December 29th – Tres Tangueras, sponsor*

4146 N. Elston, Chicago

7:30 pm – 1:00 pm Cost \$15.00

Contact Valentina Cisar 773.763.8729 for details

▶ *Saturday, December 30th – Tango...nada mas, sponsor*

6137 N. Northwest Hwy, Chicago

9:00 pm - ??? Cost TBD

Contact Bob Dronski at 773.792.2099 for details

Sunday, December 31st – You're on your own!!!

January

11th – 14th Brooke Burdett Workshop

Workshops and private lessons will be offered. Details next month. Sponsor – Erica Sutton 773.505.1577 or tango@argentinamail.com

13th – 21st Tango Tour to Buenos Aires

Natalie Pepa will be your resident host for this second trip. Contact Elena Robles, TangoSentido, 773.327.1667 or TandoSentido@teacher.com

February

1st – 10th Melina Brufman and Julio Altez Workshop

Workshops and private lessons will be offered. Details next month. Sponsor – Tiffany Asta 312.666.4854 or tiffanytango@hotmail.com

23rd – March 2nd Florencia Taccetti and Maricio Castro Workshop

Workshops and private lessons will be offered. Details next month. Sponsor – Erica Sutton 773.505.1577 or tango@argentinamail.com

Argentine Tango: Level 2 mini-session 3 Sundays: December 3, 10, 17 5:15 - 6:30

Come to this Level 2 class if you know the basics and are ready to enhance your skills and expand your repertoire. We will focus on simple, elegant dancing... always with an emphasis on lead and follow, the music, and communication within the dance.

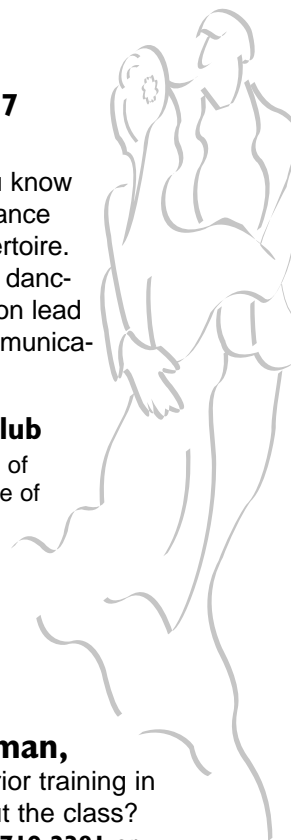
Presidential Towers Health Club

Enter building on Madison just west of Clinton. Take escalator on west side of lobby to the 2nd floor and sign in at the service desk.

\$37.50 3-week session

Advance registration is required. Please call PT Health Club at **(312) 902-2040** to register.

Instructor: **Pamela Strateman**, a six-year tango devotee with prior training in modern dance. Questions about the class? Please contact Pamela at **(773) 719-2381** or ps@wedgewood.net. Private instruction also available.



JORGE NIEDAS: 10 YEARS OF CHICAGO TANGO



By *Linda Amrich*'

Congratulations go out to Jorge Nidas and his Tango partner, Sandra Adrian along with all of Tango 21, as they celebrate the successes of 10 years of Tango in Chicago.

Nidas was born and raised in Buenos Aires where he grew up with tango as an integral part of his everyday life at family parties and dancing in the streets with friends. He arrived from his native homeland in late 1989 forming his tango company, Tango 21, in 1990.

Jorge has trained in dance his entire life. Though predominantly disciplined in ballet, he also has had years of experience directing different types of dance productions. He has excelled in lead roles of major ballet productions and evolved into a highly acclaimed choreographer. He has studied, performed and choreographed in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela as well as in the United States.

After being encouraged to put his artistic and unique tango choreography on stage, Nidas choreographed, directed and performed a tango production called "Café 2001." Held at Chicago's prestigious Ravinia Theatre, Jorge's show twice filled the house, and he received standing ovations for his dancing. After numerous requests, Nidas is presently working on his newest tango production, which he hopes will be ready in the late winter or early spring of 2001.

This 10th-year anniversary observance is also a celebration of his partnership with Sandra Adrian. Nidas met Adrian while they were both dancing professionally with the Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet. He trained Adrian in tango and they have since performed as the core of Tango 21 dancing together at Chicago's most prestigious theatres, hotels and universities. They have also performed in other major cities in the US as well as in Costa Rica, St. Thomas and Mexico.

Members of Chicago's tango community are very proud of the strong influence Nidas has had on tango in Chicago. Tango is now being enjoyed and danced by more people than ever before. Nidas hopes the love of tango will grow along with respect for tango's origins in his native Argentina. "Tango is a very emotional and intimate dance," says Nidas. "Subtly, tango is a way we can walk through our life's experiences in a dance."

The newest addition to Tango 21 is the performing arm of a group of his students. "I am so proud to show people the different levels of some of my students and how they can learn the artistic side of dancing tango through a performing opportunity." Nidas insists, "Tango-dancing should be an art form, not just learning steps."

A celebration milonga, "A Night of the Stars," will take place on Thursday, December 7th at 7:30 PM in the Fine Arts Building of 410 South Michigan Avenue. This special evening will offer Tango performances, hors d'oeuvres, champagne, beautiful music and dancing. The occasion will also honor Jorge Nidas for his encouragement of Tango in Chicago, his partnership with Sandra Adrian, and the growth and over-all success of Tango 21. ❖

1. Researched, composed and submitted to Tango Noticias by Linda Amrich. The views expressed here do not necessarily express the views of the editors of Tango Noticias.

CHICAGO TANGO

Chicago Milongas

First Sunday of the Month – December 3rd

Chicago Dance Ballroom

3660 West Irving Park, Chicago

7:00 – 10:00 pm

\$6, free class at 7:00 pm

Contact Charlotte Vikstrom 773.493.0666 for details.

Tuesdays

Club 720

Sponsor: Chicago Tango Club Argentine

720 North Wells 3rd Floor, Chicago

7:30 – 12:00 pm \$5 cover

Lesson from 7:30 to 8:15

Contact Charlotte Vikstrom 773.493.0666 for details.

Thursdays

Tango 21 – Fine Arts Building

410 S. Michigan 10th floor, 7:30 – 10 pm

Lesson from 7:00 to 7:45 \$13

Call 888-TANGO 21 for details.

Fourth Friday of the Month – December 29th

Tres Tangueras Milonga –Latvian Community Center

4146 N. Elston (at Hamlin) , 7:30 – Midnight \$15

See Events for the New Year's Eve party details

Contact Valentina Cisar 773-763-8729 for details.

See advertisement page 9.

Fridays (except last Friday of the month)

Hilton Arts

400 South Green Street, Chicago

7:00 pm – Midnight

\$10 Contact Arica Hilton 312.226.1118 for details.

Saturdays

Tango...nada mas

6137 N. Northwest Hwy., Chicago

9:00 pm – 2:00 am (Free Introductory Class at 8:30)

\$10 includes light buffet

Contact Bob Dronski 773.792.2099 for details.

Chicago Classes

New classes:

- ▶ Pamela Strateman – Level 2 mini session on three Sundays beginning December 3rd, 5:15 - 6:30, at Presidential Towers, Madison & Clinton in Chicago. See advertisement Page 3 for details.

On-Going Classes – call instructors for details:

- ▶ Bob Dronski and Kathleen Krehler
- ▶ Fred Romero; See advertisement Page 10
- ▶ Jorge Nieras

Chicago Practicas

Tango...nada mas

6137 N. Northwest Hwy., Chicago

Fridays beginning at 8:00 pm Cost \$5

Note: No practica on December 29th

Contact Bob Dronski 773.792.2099 for details.

North Shore Dance Studio

6163 N. Broadway, Chicago

Fridays beginning at 7:00 PM Cost \$8

Contact Al Gates at 773.994.7929 for details.

Chicago Teachers

Tom Barnard*	tbarnard@hotmail.com
Jose & Gerri Caravantes*	773.286.6424
Bob Dronski & Kathleen Kreher**	773.792.2099
Emilia Boykov**	773.743.2962
Sean Erwin*	314.862.8504
Carlos Favre *	773.481.1551/773.852.6555
Leroy Hearon*	773.276.1518
Louis Gallo **	773.878.8089
Gadi Lissak *	773.293.3249
Tina Mangos **	773.282.5108
Jorge Nieras**	888.826.4621
Elena Robles*	773.327.1667
Fred & Yermen Romero**	773.725.0518
Pamela Strateman**	312.902.2803
Erica Sutton*	773.505.1577
Charlotte Vikstrom**	Argentango@usa.net

*Privates only

** Classes and Privates

CENTRAL TANGO

Regional Supplement to *Tango Noticias*

Central Illinois

Contacts:

Rita Marvelli: marvelli@uiuc.edu; 217.344.2123
Leonardo:Tangoleon@aol.com; 217.328.1311
Joe Grohens: 217.328.1008

Practicas: Thursdays 8-10 pm: Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities at 805 West Pennsylvania, Urbana. An ongoing class in *Tango Topics* precedes practica.

Milongas: Monthly milonga held at *Phillips Recreation Center*, December 9th, \$8 includes workshop prior to milonga.

Classes: Joe Grohens & Carlota, *White Streets Art Center*: 3041/2 East White Street, Champaign, IL. Ongoing classes Tuesday nights at White Street Arts Center.

Detroit

Contacts:

MotorCityMilongueros.com

Amy y Ray: AmyRay@mediaone.net; 313.561.3236
Lori Burton: Argentinetangodetroit.com; 810.726.2370

Amy & Ray: MotorCityMilongueros.com

Classes: Thursdays 7-9 pm followed by a practica 9-10 pm; Pitsfield Grange, Ann Arbor; all levels. \$10 for all evening.

Peña: Every 4th Saturday at the Pitsfield Grange. Performance during show segment open to anyone. Class 7-9 pm. Dinner at 9 pm followed by show and general dancing. Folk-loric dance played throughout the evening; \$20 covers class & dinner show. **Peñas will be cancelled until January 13th.**

Lori Burton: Argentinetangodetroit.com

Classes: Wednesdays 6-8 pm (Intermediate & Vals/Milonga); Fridays 8-9 pm (Beginners); Sundays 2-5 pm (Vals/Milonga, Advanced)

Milongas:

- *Sangria Club*. Thursdays 7-9:30 pm; \$5; 401 South Lafayette Street, Royal Oak, MI.
- *Brickhouse*. Auburn Road, Utica MI. 8 pm; \$7.

Visiting Teachers:

Facundo & Kely Pasodas – February 17th and 18th

Iowa City

Contacts:

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

Classes: 7-8 pm: Beginning Class and Technique

Tango Salon: Dance held following class on alternate Thursdays; call for information or check web-site.

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

Kansas City, MO

Contacts:

Elizabeth O'Keefe: tangotempress@hotmail.com
Midwest Argentine Tango Society: masociety.org;
816.361.1281

Milongas: Wednesdays at *Fedora on the Plaza*; lessons from 7-8 pm. Live tango music 8-10:30 pm.

Visiting Teachers:

Mauricio Castro – February 2001

Madison

Contacts:

Steven Fosdal: fosdal@mail.com; 608.347.2718
Anna Snider: annatanguera@mail.com

Practicas: *Pasión del Tango*: Weekly; University of Wisconsin campus in Lathrup Hall. Steve and Anna teach and answer questions; free.

Milongas: Date and time to be announced. Call for details.

St Louis

Contacts:

Roxanne McKenny: stltango@aol.com
Estella & Randy: akapros@stlnet.com
Sean & Yanira: drtango@hotmail.com
Lourdes Ylagan: Lylagan@path.wustl.edu

Practicas: Mondays at *Focal Point*, 2720 Sutton, Maplewood, MO. 7:30-10:30 pm; \$5.

Milongas: *Focal Point*, Maplewood MO 4-8 pm. \$10; call 314-849-3007 for details.

Classes:

- Estella & Randy: Call for classes.
- Roxanne: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced:
- Sean & Yanira: Privates and Semi-privates, ongoing.

Visiting Teachers:

Brooke Burdett – January 19th-29th. Contact Sean Erwin for details: 314.862.8504

Tulsa, OK

Contact:

Bob and Gretchen Manhart. OKTANGO@prodigy.net

Milongas: Contact for more details.

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

Twin Cities

Contacts:

Tango Society of Minnesota: Mntango.org

Steve Lee: 612.729.5306 tango-1@juno.com

Lois Donnay: 612.930.9221 donnay@donnay.net

Practicass: *Rebecca Trost's Tango Practicas:* Tuesdays 9-approx. 10:30 pm; \$2; *Four Season's Dance Studio*, 1637 Hennepin Avenue, Mpls. 612.342.0902

Milongas:

- Live music at *Hopkins Dance Center* with Severin Behnen's *Cambiando Sombras*. 816? Main Street, Hopkins 612.938.0048; \$10 (\$13 non-members)
- *Steve Lee's Tango Plus*. One Friday of each month, usually the 3rd one. 9 pm-1 am; lesson 9-9:30 pm, dancing until 1 am. \$5; *Lake Harriet Dance Center*, 6438 Lyndale Ave. S., Richfield. Call for Information: 612.729.5306.
- *Michael Corder's Mini-Milongas:* Sundays 7-approx. 9:30 pm. \$2; *Four Season's Dance Studio*, 1637 Hennepin Avenue, Mpls. Info: 612-342-0902.
- *Rendesvous Ballroom;* lesson 8-9 pm; dancing beginning at 9 pm. 2524 Nicollet Ave, Minneapolis

Classes:

- Mondays 8:30-9:30 pm, combinations class followed by practica 9:30-10:00 pm. *Lake Harriet Dance Center*, 6438 Lyndale Ave. South, Richfield MN.
- Carol Fritchie's basic Argentine Tango in Roseville. 651.429.4785 or email cfritch@MR.Net.
- Rebecca Trost's intermediate tango. 8pm followed by practica until 10 pm. *Four Seasons Dance Studio*, 1637 Hennepin Ave., Mpls; 612.342.0902
- Lois Donnay's tango class/practica, 42nd Ave. Ballroom, 705 42nd Ave. N, Mpls, 8 pm, \$6

Visiting Teachers:

- **Ricardo & Zulema** for a visit of indefinite length. Call 612.872.1562 for more information or to schedule private lessons.



Advertising Opportunity in Tango Noticias

Tango Noticias is now accepting advertising. Monthly rates for advertising are as follows:

1/8 page	\$25	1/4 page	\$35
1/2 page	\$50	whole page	\$85

Deadline for consideration in the next issue is December 20th. Please call or e-mail Editors Sean Erwin or Jan Carpenter with your copy or questions.

TANGO — THE ANSWER

Jonathan S. Bedi

If you are reading this then you have some interest in dancing tango. But have you asked yourself why you have that interest? Why do you dance? The tango community is filled with people from all different walks of life. Those that choose this dance are as diverse a group of people that one will find participating in the same activity anywhere. In Chicago there are doctors, painters, artists, actors, teachers, writers, musicians, students, firemen, dentists — the list is endless; the people dancing are young, old, short, tall, married, single, divorced; they come from every part of the world. What then is the driving factor, the characteristic these people share that sparks their common interest? What is the one thing that makes all of these different people put the rest of their lives on hold for a few hours to conjugate in the same place and dance tango? This is the question I wanted to answer, so I interviewed members of Chicago's tango community to discover the driving force behind their passion.

The majority of people apparently begin to dance for two reasons: They either see tango and decide that it is something they must try or, someone invites them to begin dancing and then, on their own, they make the decision that they must take up the dance. These two causes seem to stem from the visual effect tango has on people who are not accustomed to seeing the dance. Without a doubt, though, the two greatest influences on people in Chicago are the shows, *Forever Tango*, and *The Tango Lesson*. Almost every person I interviewed spoke of these two productions as their reason for wanting to get better — “I want to dance like Gavito” said one young man new to tango. “My father introduced tango to me. He sat me down and showed me *The Tango Lesson*. I was so taken with it that I had to try it, and once I tried it I couldn't stop,” said one young dancer. But many people also cited performances at small-venues with non-professional dancers as their first tango experience. “I saw tango for the first time in Houston. There were four couples at Spinner's Lounge in a Holiday Inn; I watched and thought I can do that, I want to do that” said one woman who has been dancing for four years. Another principal reason people have for beginning to dance is the fact that a friend had once motivated them to try it: “A friend of mine took me

to the Tango Ball here in Chicago and, once I saw people dance, I knew that it was my dance,” says one passionate dancer who has now been to Argentina a half-dozen times. Another dancer explained why he decided to accept an invitation to accompany a friend to a tango class in this way: “it was an easy decision to make, it is tango after all — who wouldn't want to learn that.”

“I like the various levels of complication of the dance; it is danced on many levels.”

And yet, many people who start to dance tango soon stop. This is evident in the number of people that take beginning-classes but do not then continue. So, there must be something, some reason or some force, that drives people to keep up with the dance after they start. People continue to dance for a number of reasons: they continue because they like the music, they like the people, and/or they like tango's dizzying levels of complexity. Though no one person cited all of these aspects, all cited at least one in their responses. The majority of the people like the music and would not dance this dance without it. “I love the music — I listened to it before I danced and I will listen to it when I get too crippled to dance,” offered a man who has been dancing for seven months. Another group of people cited the difficulty they have with tango as the reason that keeps them coming back. “I like the various levels of complication of the dance; it is danced on many levels,” says a former ballroom teacher. The complexity of the dance seems to be important to people that dance in Chicago. It appears to be this thirst for knowledge that hooks in and holds some people. Thus, a reason that one dancer gives for continuing is that she is very goal-oriented and she feels that she is not done learning the dance. “I have not found the end-point yet; I like to finish projects and I have not finished this one. I don't know what the end is. Maybe I will be doing this for my life. I don't know.”

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¡Tango, Tango, Tango!



Direct from Buenos Aires

TANGO...NADA MAS

6137 N. Northwest Hwy.
Chicago, IL
(773) 792-2099
www.tangonadamas.com

Chicago's premiere tango salon comes alive on Saturday evening, December 16, with the sound of live music. The milonga begins at 10 pm and features bandoneón virtuoso JOAQUÍN AMENÁBAR in a tango ensemble with some of Chicago's finest musicians.

Tickets \$15

Don't miss two workshops:

"The History of Tango"

December 9 from 2 - 4 pm

"Tango - The Music"

(a multimedia workshop for dancers...and the musically curious)
December 16 from 2 - 4 pm

\$30 per workshop

Tango Noticias is a not-for-profit, independent, monthly newsletter whose objective is to provide timely information about happenings of interest to members of Chicago's Tango community. Your comments and suggestions are welcomed.

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One thing I discovered, though, is that a myth about tango exists; many suppose that tango is danced for the sole purpose of finding a sexual partner. Though this may have once been true, this proved not to be the reason that compels most of the people in the Chicago area to dance. Only one person I interviewed made any reference to the potential for sexual activity through tango. "The first time that I slept with a woman she played Piazzola" one young dancer said. "Then, a couple of years later, every time that I would come to 720 my girlfriend used to spend the night at my place. This was the only night that she would do so, and this lasted for about a year. So, now, I have this connection between sex and tango." This fellow is in the minority; most of the people I interviewed do not explicitly identify tango with sex.

Personally, I started to dance because a girl made a bet with me. She bet me that I would not be able to dance tango on a social floor. I took up the gauntlet and attended six weeks of classes — even going three times a week in my urge to win this bet. What I won, however, is the topic for a different article. When the bet, along with the girl, were past me I knew that I just liked dancing tango. So, I kept doing it. I think that part of the reason that I continue to dance is because I just like it. I like dancing, and I like telling non-dancers 'I dance tango' and seeing their expression. I like asking people to dance and hearing, 'Yes.' Tango brings something into a person's life that was not there before. As one tango dancer put it: "tango is the answer — the question is what I have trouble with". ❖

New Year's Eve Party

Milonga Tres Tangueras

Tango New Year's Eve Party in Chicago
Friday, December 29, 2000

7:30 pm – 1:00 am

Latvian Community Center
4146 N. Elston (at Hamlin)

\$15 per person

Questions? Contact

Valentina 773-763-8729 (h)

Carmen 773-282-2166 (h)

Jan 312-258-6137 (w)

- dancer's showcase
- raffle
- food
- party favors

Future milongas - Jan 26th, Feb 23rd, Mar 30th, Apr 27th, May 25th, Jun 29th

INITIATE

By *Adrienne Kovalsky*

It was one of those nights in Chicago when one would expect to hear foghorns, when waves crashed against the concrete shores of the lake. It was the type of autumn night when the bright lights of the high-rises all ended sharply at 25 stories in a layer of low-hanging, softly glowing clouds. The air, though, was only slightly chilly and yet, when my aunt came to pick me up, she wore a long black coat buttoned to the chin. “Can’t have the doormen thinking,” she responded at my questioning glance.

Last summer, apartment-sitting at my aunt’s place off the Mag mile, a girlfriend accidentally made an odd discovery. She called me over. “What does your aunt do for a living?” she asked, pointing to a section of a hanging closet enclosed in mirrored doors. “How old is she, anyway?”

The closet held a shocking, colorful array of tight, bejeweled, shimmery slitted skirts arranged with every variation in cut, shape, and fringing; fishnets in a rainbow of decently subdued colors; tall strappy shoes with razor-like heels. It seemed the wardrobe of a professional figureskater - or something else - it was not what I expected to see in my aunt’s closet. We knew nothing then about her secret passion for tango. Tonight, now nearly a year later, I would finally get a glimpse of her other life.

We battled the perpetually hyperactive Michigan Ave. before turning off to cruise the peaceful sidestreets to the club where we parked beneath the now silent tracks of the ‘El.’ Expecting a lot of noise and at least a queue, I was surprised when we approached the club’s entrance where a lazy doorman sprawled on the steps, absently counting a tiny wad of bills.

Inside a few people danced to a surprisingly slow salsa and the bar was nearly empty. We passed among the couples and climbed an empty staircase in the club’s rear. Three floors up and I was greeted by a vibrant swirl of people and tossed about in dozens of introductions.

When I finally broke away to observe, I found a dizzying collection of couples smoothly cruising the dance floor, somehow avoiding collision. The legs drew me immediately, seductively hypnotizing. It was a mating dance, a flirtatious game. The women, sharp-stockinged legs sleek and shiny, were continually teasing the men, always one step ahead, spiraling, spinning, fluidly coasting the dance floor. Their upper bodies touched but lower bodies, hardly inches apart, never met. It seemed perfectly choreographed yet, at the same time, wholly improvisational.

Watching the dancers was so electrifying that I finally accepted the offer of a crash course — by a tall man with long black hair and, of course, a seductive Latino accent. He led me up to a balcony overlooking the dance floor where I absorbed a lesson.

“We are like lovers, courting,” he explained. “Our bodies play games with each other, each action has a response...” I interpreted his words in my own way, remembering my aunt’s warning about the men, and, after mastering the basic steps, joined the dancers below. For a good long time, hardly aware that I was continually switching partners, I became absorbed into the game - a game where I floated across the floor, avoiding ever impending obstacles, pausing, continuing on and down and around as I progressively lost myself in the flow. ❖

Argentine Tango *Fred Romero*

773.725.0518

tangobm2@email.msn.com

Group Lessons • Private Instruction • Shows

Visit our website — www.chicagotango.com

