

Tango Noticias

Desember 05, Volume 06, Issue 11 www.tangonoticas.com

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Hot Tango Festivals

By Sherry Boemmel

It was a very, very hot summer for me and for my tango. I was happy to have great opportunities to go to festivals in new places, but I was not happy it was in the 90's nearly every day of all three festivals I attended in St. Louis, Montreal and Mt.Vernon.



St. Louis Independence Day Celebration

My first festival ever was the four-day Independence Day Celebration in St. Louis July 1-4. Shaun Sellers was the host. It featured four days of lessons, milongas and a tango performance by Mila Vigdorova and Korey Ireland at the Friday milonga.

Robert Hauk from Portland, Susana Miller from Buenos Aires, Korey Ireland from Kansas City and Mila Vigdorova from Moscow were the featured instructors. Robert, who is also a dj, and Susana are known for their teaching of close embrace. Korey, also a dj for this festival, and Mila are less easy to categorize because their teaching and dancing are more eclectic.

I took the first group lesson from Robert Hauk, but I did not take lessons from Susana this time since I had taken a

lot from her in Chicago. I have mixed feelings about trying to learn close embrace/ milongero style, but I wanted to learn more from Korey. I was interested in his informal, more improvised style of dancing even before I saw his joyful performance with Mila. I also wanted his help in trying to decode the close embrace from another point of view. What I got was a lesson on embrace which went much

deeper than I expected and could absorb, into how to make it even more of a connection. That alone made the six- hour drive to St. Louis worthwhile.

It was fiercely hot in St. Louis that weekend, even the nights. The air conditioning in Marbles Studio where everything was held was pitifully inadequate all weekend. It was definitely hot, hot tango with all those bodies contributing their heat, but there was a good turnout for the milongas and classes—about 95 dancers during the weekend. About 85 per cent were from out of town, Shaun said. Ben and I represented Chicago. Others came from Kansas City, Iowa City, Jefferson City, Memphis, and Springfield (MO) and Champaign-Urbana. Everyone was friendly and danced on despite the heat.

It is no little issue for me that some

places have nests of close embrace/ milongero style dancers like St. Louis. Since I usually dance salon style with a variable embrace, I have been sneered upon by hard-core milongero/close embrace aficionados. That means that I characteristically dance on my own axis in a relatively straight posture with an embrace which varies from chest-to-chest to more open one. According to my learning from various instructors, the milongero style requires the dancers to lean into one another to connect at the chest though the axes are still individual. This style, like salon, can be danced in small spaces, but it does not become as open or move as much around the room even when there is space available as salon usually does.

After a lot of close embrace I yearn for a dance which moves around the floor with less constraint. When I am grumpy I think of this style as endless circles with endless back walking ochos for me. I can be annoyed that I have much less control in this version of close embrace than I do in salon style even when the embrace is chest to chest. I am also annoyed that when I dance with a close embrace advocate I can be expected to assume the leaning embrace whether I like it or not. A clash of styles can be upsetting because I can have trouble following if the embrace is not quite right. I think salon embrace is more forgiving, but not everyone can dance that style either. I am happiest when leaders can transcend stylistic impediments.



Montreal International Festival

The next festival, Le Festival International de Tango de Montreal was gigantic in comparison to St. Louis. An estimate from the festival committee said 10,000 people participated in some way. The estimate does not track individuals so one person could be multiple times participating in 10 days of lessons, nine milongas and formal and informal professional performances from July 9-17. The teaching schedule offered 96 classes to 300 dancers with teachers from Argentina, Norway and Canada. Two world-famous musical groups, Color Tango and Narcotango, headlined the festival but there were four groups playing live music at the milongas every night. Two Montreal groups, Sweatshop Tango Ensemble and the Cuarteto Argentino, played for four of the nights.

There were two categories of teacher/performers associated with the festival. Eight “master” teachers were from Argentina: Aurora Lubiz and Jorge Firpo, Mariana Flores and Eduardo Cappussi, Valerie Zunino and Pablo Nievas, Dana Frigoli and Pablo Villarraza. Two were from Montreal: Gerardo Sanchez, the festival musical director, and Agata Jakubczyk. There were also “local invited teachers” from Canada and Norway, who taught the last two days: Mylene Pelletier, Marika Landry and Bulent Karabagli, Marjolayne Auger and Pasi Lauren (Norway).

There were informal performances by most teachers at the milongas the first and last nights. Some other local and visiting teachers and other dancers performed informally too. There was a formal showcase in a theater presented by the “master” teachers and Color Tango. Other optional events included a 125\$

(Canadian) formal dinner featuring music by Color Tango and some masters’ tango. Free outdoor performances by other dancers and Narcotango and Sweatshop Tango were offered to all of Montreal.

This was not a festival for the faint of foot, the short of stamina or the light of pocketbook. It was possible to pick out some parts, but a whole package with 20 lessons was 690\$ Canadian while a half package with half the lessons was 480\$/ \$390 US. The theater production was included in the packages or cost 45\$ separately. Costs for lodging, food and transportation among venues and lodging piled up though none were excessive by big-city standards. Elegant French food was a bargain. The metro was 2\$ (one way) to lessons if 11 tickets were purchased.

The 96 lessons from 15 teachers began at noon and ran until 9:30 pm. The lessons were held across from a metro station in a jewel of a studio – despite its 60 stairs to its third-floor location. There was a waiting area with seating, a snack bar for the ravenous, and some tango goods for purchase. The rooms for lessons were large to ballroom size with newly finished wooden floors and – bliss – actual air conditioning which worked very well.

The milongas, which were held in a huge room in Vieux-Port de Montreal, a complex on the St. Lawrence River, started at 8:30 pm and ended with groans of disappointment around 1 am. This floor had a concrete base though it had

a smooth finish atop it. The acoustics were not perfect for the musicians or the recorded music because of the very high ceiling, but the sound man was hardworking. It was easier to see the musicians and the dancers the first nights, but the on last night, the tables were moved much further apart and no standing in front of the door was allowed, perhaps because of a safety analysis.

I was so happy I went. I had three objectives: to learn as much as I could technically, to see outstanding performances from high-level professionals and to dance some extraordinary dances myself. All were satisfied, but I would have been happier with a few more dances.

I started with a schedule, but I discovered that I wanted to change some classes, which was easily done with the help of Andrea, the cheerful desk person. I was able to take more classes with Valeria and Pablo whom I liked very much. I was disappointed I ran out of stamina before I got to all the local teachers, but I took 9 classes from 11 of the 15 teachers. My only criticism is that it was hard to tell from the program what might be taught from what perspective, a usual failing of such descriptions. The teachers were generally exceptional in their teaching skills, but the varying abilities of the students could pull the levels down. In my two vals classes some of the students struggled with molinetes so we got stuck there in both classes.

Generally the performances were outstanding, but there was variability even in the same dancers on different nights. I was especially impressed by Mariana and Eduardo. On the first night they performed an amazing milonga with very fast and very beautiful footwork. Their comedic theatrical performance in white face was already famous. It was perfect the night I saw it, the highlight of the theatrical production. They performed short stories. In one Eduardo is a leering vampire after delicate Mariana, who was not intimidated at all. In another, Mariana told Eduardo off, and he finished the harangue by jumping into her apparently fragile arms.



This was not a festival for the faint of foot, the short of stamina or the light of pocketbook.

I was also taken by an informal performance of nuevo tango at a milonga by Mylene Pelletier, one of the local festival teachers, and Isaac OBaka, a dancer from Denver. For me, nuevo is a sort of rock and roll tango, a much less formal version of traditional tango. Just as rock and roll shocked the elders when it began to gain ground, nuevo can be upsetting to dancers who love the formality of tango.

I paid attention to the nuevo dancers at the milongas and saw a lot of good dances. Narcotango played excellent music for that style though everyone danced to it too. I liked the informality of the dancers' attire and shoes and enjoyed the creativity of their dances. They looked as though they were having fun too. There was no conflict with the other dancers; some of them danced traditional style as well. Salon was the traditional style of choice in Montreal, which calls itself the North American

capital of tango.

Though watching the milongas in Montreal and listening to the wonderful music was not to be denigrated, it was not necessarily easy for the female visitors to Montreal to find partners. Some milongas seemed limited to Montreal couples with hardly anyone left over. Someone told me that a closed group is the mark of a strong community. In this case a dancer told me 300 of the 500 attendees were from Montreal. If most of the dancers are on their own ground, it is quite different from a festival where most are outsiders. In Montreal the level of tango is high, and as it happens everywhere, dancers have their preferred partners.

My overall impression was that this was a friendly festival even if there was not as much mixing on the tango floor as some other places. I had some good dances in class, but there was little carryover

to the milongas. I was very happy with exceptional dances I had with a very creative and very good Montreal dancer. I would have liked more, but I also would have liked more time and more stamina. I got enough of what I wanted in Montreal, especially since I was new to festivals and to the Montreal tango culture.

As for being in Montreal, I hardly had time to eat, much less see the city. I had been to Montreal once before eons ago and I had some wee French skills, which provided some useful knowledge. French is the preferred language in Montreal though most people seem at least bilingual (though maybe not in English). The voice of the festival, Sylvie Belleau, sometimes spoke French at the milongas without translation, and some classes were conducted partly in French. Other classes had English, French and Spanish translations for each set of directions.

I learned a lot about the city from talkative taxi drivers. We took taxis to and from the milongas every night, and I took taxis to the theatrical performance and to parks for the free performances. Otherwise I was a metro queen (with a little trepidation just after the London underground bombings). We had two stations near our hotel, but the one we used most often for lessons was in the opposite direction from that one with food. Since I was busy with lessons and traveling, I ate a lot of Lebanese food from the underground food court close to our hotel. Combinations cost 10\$, but there was a lot of food, which tasted delicious and melded nicely as I carried it around. We Chicagoans had two fine French meals, some memorable fish and temptations from a good Chinese buffet.

Chicago was well represented in Montreal. Three of us were there all 10 days---Valerie Wright, Mary Jane Croaker and I. Lauren and Melanie Klaric came for the first few days then Juan and Carmen Pinto and their friends Vivian and Rudy Murillo, Steve Pressley and Risa, and Jeff Walters also came for the festival later.

[article continued in the next issue]

Tango Noticias Photo Page



Babbete & Karen



Daniel, Ramona & Beth



Marce & Tim



Norm & Beth



Efi & David



Margaret & Larry



Ben & Vera



Jerry & Jos



Mark & Michele



Beth & Jan



Kiyoko, Janit & Melani

**Photos are Taken by Photo
Page Editor Daniel Byrnes
byrnesdaniel@hotmail.com**

WITH MISHA AND SARAH



09
january
start of upcoming
class sessions

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.

Time: Mondays 8:30 – 9:30 pm

Cost: \$80 for a session of six classes.

Intermediate Class

This class is a continuation of the Foundations Class. It focuses on technique, musicality and connection with your partner. Prior tango experience or completion of Foundation Class is required. Registration is recommended.

Time: Mondays 7:15 – 8:15 pm

Cost: \$80 for a session of six classes.

Advanced Class

This class provides students with the techniques for complex movements in tango applying technical skills from the Foundation and Intermediate classes. Registration is recommended.

Time: Thursdays 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Cost: \$80 for a session of six classes.

Chicago Tango Project Practica

The practica is where you can practice what you have learned in class and ask questions. This practica is open to tango dancers of any level and any style.

Time: Thursdays

8:30 – 10:00 pm

Cost: \$10 includes practica & refreshments. \$5 for students registered for classes.

Our classes are conveniently located at Dance Connection Studio in Chicago 3117 North Clybourn, just south of the intersection of Clybourn, Belmont and Western.

For private lessons, performances or information on class registration call: 773.575.6906 or visit us online:

tangoproject.com



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Chicago Tango

CHICAGO MILONGAS

TUESDAY

Tango Chicago Tuesday Night Milonga

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

American Tango Institute's Tuesday Night Milonga

Palwaukee Inn (formerly Kabak)
1090 South Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, Illinois
\$10 includes entrance and AT lesson
8:30-12:am. Netza Roldan 312.287.8406,
MyTangonet@yahoo.com or www.americantangoinstitute.com

WEDNESDAY

Tango Motivo

Barba Yianni Grecian Taverna
4761 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago; 9:30pm-12:30am. Cover \$10, lessons prior to milonga.
contacts: (Somer)773-807-5704;
somersurgit@yahoo.com
(Agape)773-936-1619; findagapepappas@yahoo.com

THURSDAY

"Entre Amigos" Cabana Nights

Vida Lounge
1248 W. George Street, Chicago
Contact : Jorge Nidas 312-397-0100 or
D'Antoni Productions at 312-217-0304 or
visit www.21tango.com

FRIDAY

Milonga Vida

9pm - 2am, George Drivakos will be back in the DJ booth! \$15; sweets & savories; soft drinks; byob, \$12 for students with ID
American Tango Institute, 325 N. Hoyne Street
Chicago. Check the ATI website for details,
www.americantangoinstitute.com
or call Beth 847-846-5611; 630-254-8628

Milonga Vida-Blue Moon

4th Friday, when there are 5 Fridays in a month. American Tango Institute, 325 N. Hoyne Street Chicago. Check the ATI website for details, www.americantangoinstitute.com or call Beth 847-846-5611; 630-254-8628

Nuestro Tango

Last Friday of the month.
Latvian Community Center, 4146 N. Elston Ave., Chicago 8:30pm – 12:30 am; \$10, Contact: 262.942.4587 Valentina, 773.279.9414 Carmen, 312.342.4335 Phoebe or WindyCityTango@yahoo.com

SATURDAY

Recuerdo Tango Club

6137 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago IL, 9pm.- ?, \$15. Hosted by Carlos & Melisa Favre
contact: tango@recuerdoclub.com

SUNDAY

Tango Motivo

Except 2nd Sunday of the month.
Joey's Brickhouse, 1258 W. Belmont, 9-11pm, Chicago. \$10 with minimum \$5 consumption
Includes Tango class prior to milonga. Contact: (Somer) 773-807-5704 (Agape) 773-936-1619
E-mail: somersurgit@yahoo.com / findagapepappas@yahoo.com

Tango Motivo at FlatFile Galleries

Every 2nd Sunday of the month.
217 N. Carpenter St. Chicago, Illinois
Practica: 6-7pm; Milonga: 7-9pm
\$15 includes everything. Contact: (Somer) 773-807-5704 (Agape) 773-936-1619
E-mail: somersurgit@yahoo.com / findagapepappas@yahoo.com

CHICAGO PRACTICAS

THURSDAY

Chicago Tango Project Practica

Dance Connection Studio
3117 N. Clybourn, Chicago, 8:30 to 10:00 pm Hosted by Sarah Graff and Misha Goro.
Advanced Class prior to practica from 7:30-8:30pm. Drop-in practica \$10. Registered students \$5. Contact Sarah & Misha at 773.575.6906 or www.tango-project.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, www.tangochicago.com

ON-GOING CLASSES

Check the recently updated teachers' pages on our website www.tangonoticias.com

Central Tango

FAYETTEVILLE, AR

Contacts: Elayne's Dance - The Art of Social Dancing, www.elaynesdance.com, info@elaynesdance.com, 479.521.6683

DENVER AND BOULDER, CO

Contacts: Gabriela Carone, carone@buffmail.colorado.edu, 303-546-5520, www.ragtime.org/dance/; www.danceoftheheart.com; Boulder - Deb Sclar: deb@danceoftheheart.com; Denver - www.mercurycafe.com; Chas Gale at (303) 320-4020, hotchango@msn.com, www.thetangohouse.com; Colorado Springs www.tangosprings.com

ATLANTA, GA

Contacts: www.atlantatangofestival.com

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL

Contacts: www.centragtango.com; Joe Grohens: joe@joegrohens.com; www.tango.joegrohens.com 217.378.4751, Ron Weigel: TangoSociety@aol.com; 217.328.1311
Valerie Williams: www.vjw.biz/docs/amessocdnc.htm; v@vjw.biz; 515.232.7374;

AMES / DES MOINES, IA

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

FAIRFIELD / IOWA CITY, IA

Contacts: <http://soli.inav.net/~dance/tango.html>
Iowa City Tango Club - Gregory Kovaciny kovaciny@inav.net or tangoic@yahoo.com 319-338-0655, Fairfield Tango Community - Christopher Everett ceverett@ceverett.com 641-919-1991 cell. Kelly Custer: 641-472-1001

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

WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

Contacts: <http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~tango>
Michelle Murphy: mcmurphy@psych.purdue.edu

ANN ARBOR, MI

Contacts: www.umich.edu/~umtango; umtango@umich.edu; 734.327.0642 or 734.564.0811

DETROIT, MI

Contacts: Amy & Ray: MotorCityMilongueros.com, 313-655-4680, AmyandRay@wowway.com
Metro-Detroit area: Argentine Tango Detroit
Lori Burton: Lori@argentinetangodetroit.com; <http://www.argentinetangodetroit.com> 586.254.0560

TWIN CITIES, MN

Contacts: www.mntango.org www.geocities.com/twincitiestango Steve Lee: 612.729.5306, Lois Donnay: donnay@donnay.net, 612.822.8436; Frank Williams: Frankw@tc.umn.edu, 612.379.4565. For a weekly update of Twin Cities tango activities <http://mntango.org/mailmn/listinfo> and subscribe to 'TSOM- announce.

KANSAS CITY, MO

Contacts: Korey Ireland; at <http://www.ko-arts.com/tango.html>; korey@ko-arts.com; or 816.931.9545

MT. VERNON, MO

Contacts: Karen Whitesell: www.thelearningdepot.com/murrays-1/; 417.471.1001; Fax 417.471.1002

ST. LOUIS, MO

Contacts: St. Louis Argentine Tango Yahoo Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/St_Louis_Tango/ and <http://cec.wustl.edu/~hs3/Tango> St. Louis: <http://www.tangostlouis.com/> Roxanne McKenny: www.tangoteacher.com, 314.324.0887.
Carter Maier: tngomn@hotmail.com.
Estella & Randy: tangoartists@tangorosa.com, www.tangorosa.com, 314.849.3007;
Rick Barbarash: 314-993-3698, rbarbarash@yahoo.com, Milonga Sin Nombre- Monthly Alternative Milonga: <http://home.earthlink.net/~rbarbarash/analternativemilonga>
Tango at Washington University: www.gatewaytango.org, Shaun Sellers: sellers@wustl.edu, 314.935.6098

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LAS VEGAS, NV

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TULSA, OK

Contacts: Fred and Jessica Stowell; fjstowell@aol.com

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Contacts: Fred and Jessica Stowell; fjstowell@aol.com; or Virginia Malton at vmalton@yahoo.com
Barbara Bill @ bbillcinci@yahoo.com and Patricia Paz @ pato_paz@hotmail.com
www.CincinnatiTangoZone.com

CLEVELAND, OH

Contacts: www.tangocleveland.com
Tim Pogors: TimmyTango@aol.com, 440-748-2204; Greg Messina 330.554.8900; atanguerita@yahoo.com or 330.608.4444

PITTSBURG, PA

Contacts: PATangoS – Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society at www.pitt.edu/~mchp/PATangoWeb.htm, Trini or Sean patangos@yahoo.com or 412.521.1478

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Madison Tango Society, info@madisontango.org
<http://www.madisontango.org/> 608-236-0198
Nicole Stevens: 608-213-8301, milongamadison@yahoo.com

MILWAUKEE, WI

Contacts: www.wisconsintango.com or www.milwaukeetango.com
Marek Szotkowski: tangomarek@yahoo.com

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

Contacts: www.festivaldetangodemontreal.qc.ca

TORONTO, ONTARIO CANADA

Contacts: www.tangoacademy.org; Musharraf Farooqi at info@tangoacademy.org or 416.536.8446.

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.