

TANGO SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

TANGO MOMENTS

DEDICATED TO FOSTERING AND SUPPORTING ARGENTINE TANGO IN MINNESOTA

Summer 2011 • Volume 13, No. 2

La Glorietta

By Kate Shannon

We have been planning and dancing all year, and we are finally here. It is Saturday, an early evening in November in Buenos Aires, and the sun has just begun to whisper its intent to set. We have decided to pursue a new adventure tonight: the outdoor milonga—something that I have never before experienced. Already today, we've been to two different milongas, but we came prepared with a change of clothes, shoes and money for food so that we wouldn't have to waste precious time by going home in between. We pay the café tab for our té con leche, meats and pastries and head straight to La Glorietta. This place will continue to call us back long after we've left it... but we don't know that yet.

La Glorietta is close to our restaurant, so we walk. The earth is still warm and both the air and the anticipation are beginning to close in. From a distance, this venue looks like a carousel in the middle of a big, spacious park surrounded on each side by the rest of the city. Blue and yellow ripples of hard-top canopy cover this round, open structure, but instead of a merry-go-round filled with horses, the space is open and empty... save for the people arriving now to tango. As we get closer, we see that the space is enclosed with wrought iron railings.

La Glorietta, cont. on page 5



Pictured: Don Rowe, Parvin Dorostkar, Steve Peters, Sandra Uri, Gary Blauer and Jan Alswager

Wild about Tango

By Don Rowe

TSoM was approached in July by the Como Friends, a supporting organization of the Como Park Zoo, to present Argentine tango to their "Sunset Affair" fundraising event. The theme for this year's reception and dinner at the Visitor's Center and Zoo was South American Soiree. The director of the event sought to represent South American culture in the event's food, music and dance.

I hadn't been TSoM's newly-created events coordinator long enough to even determine what its official title should be (dance coordinator? Demo coordinator? Events coordinator?) when this request came in.

Although my job really should be focused on "coordinating" events or facilitating requests

from the community to TSoM, this event came on us so fast that I was left with little choice, but to produce it as well. With little time, I put out an invitation to several individuals, both social dancers and our professional tier of teachers. Sandra Uri, Steve Peters, Jan Alswager and Gary Blauer accepted enthusiastically. They joined Parvin Dorostkar and me to present three dances on the zoo plaza. We danced next to the flamingo pond on a picture-perfect evening. Lingering among the crowd after our performance, we received several compliments. Caroline Mehlhop, the Como Friends events director, was equally pleased with our efforts and the partnership she received from TSoM and TSoM's new events coordinator. ■

From the board

As the board of the Tango Society of Minnesota, we want to extend a sincere thank you to Dan Griggs, our now former president of the TSoM board, who is moving on to a new position out of state. Dan was a dedicated leader; an inspiring dancer; and a tireless promoter of Argentine tango. We appreciate all of his efforts within the community and as president, and wish him the best of luck in his new position.

The TSoM board has chosen to take on the various duties of the president until a new president is elected at the next elections. We request your patience during this time of transition and welcome feedback regarding how we can best fulfill our mission to promote Argentine tango in Minnesota. We also welcome any volunteers who are interested in getting more involved in the tango community and supporting the Tango Society of Minnesota.

As we foster and support Argentine tango in MN, we were excited to celebrate the anniversary of Argentina's independence on July 9th. The TSoM July milonga was decorated in blue and white, all Argentinians were given free entry and the national anthem was played. And, of course, there was tango!

—The board of the Tango Society of Minnesota

Letter from the Editor

Dear TsoM members,

In Minnesota, we cherish our summer months, filling them with all our favorite outdoor activities. With only three months of summer, there is always so much to do! Dancing, especially outside or in open air locations, tops my list.

Each of us has our favorite studios and venues. I particularly love tango in the summer. It is wonderful not to need to wrap up warmly for the evening, to be able to dance outside and to just enjoy the lovely weather. This issue highlights a few of the exciting upcoming options for tango, including a very special workshop at the Four Seasons and an incredible event at a local winery. We also have a fun look at summer dancing in Buenos Aires.

TSoM is also delighted to announce that Don Rowe has joined us as the new events coordinator. Within minutes of accepting the position, Don was already tasked with coordinating an event! TSoM partnered with the Como Friends to provide tango dancing at their 2011 Sunset Affair.

Happy dancing,
Jennifer Sellers

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Let's Dance Outside!

by Lois Donnay

Tango was invented outside....

Imagine the early days of Buenos Aires, a city full of immigrants and promise. People from Italy, Spain, Germany and Africa spilling off of the boats, living in conventillos—the colorful, tin-roofed buildings you see in the postcards of Buenos Aires.

It gets hot in Buenos Aires in the summer, especially in a tin-covered box. So the people spilled out onto the dirt-covered streets. Someone had a guitar, someone a fiddle, maybe even a squeezebox. The songs they played, shared, improvised and added to developed into tango.

Everyone was outside and there is music, so of course people danced. Imagine how he sweeps her foot through the dirt on the street, leaving a perfect circle. Imagine the curlicues of her adornments, made for people to admire. Imagine all the lines, arcs, circles, spaces and dots that the dancers created—what an art form!



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Ever since I started in tango 15 years ago I (and some fellow organizers) have been working to arrange the outdoor dances as I so enjoy in Buenos Aires. It started when I was president of TSoM 12 years ago. We had summer milongas in Mears Park. We've danced at the Stone Arch Bridge, Nicollet Mall, Lake Harriet pavilion, Minnehaha Park, Astor Cafe and quite a few more places.

On July 29, 2011, we have a chance to do it again! The Woodland Hills Winery in Delano, MN, called one of the most beautiful in Minnesota, has created an evening full of food, wine, and dancing. There will also be a dance lesson. The setting is picturesque with pretty buildings surrounded by pine and oak trees and well-tended flower gardens; the wines are top-notch (winning eight medals at the 2010 International Cold Climate Wine Competition); and we will get to enjoy the beautiful Minnesota summer while dancing in the arms of our favorite partners and listening to our favorite music. Come and join us! Summer in MN is so short. As my mother said, "It's so nice outside; you kids get outside!"

For more details, contact Lois Donnay

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Black Magic

By Sandra Uri

[Last July, the Heartland Tango Fashion Show wowwed a large audience with sassy and sultry fashions. In honor of the show's anniversary, enjoy this fun and informative article, written for the Rochester's Tango publication by our local tango fashionista, Sandra Uri.]

The little black dress, the black skirt, the black pants, the black tunic top or halter top....These are all key pieces that help build a creative foundation for a fun and fashionable tango wardrobe! But, how does one know what style of dress, skirt, pants or top will be right for them and how does one create a complete and attractive 'look' that feels good and feels right??

One way to begin training one's eye to develop good shopping judgement and creative stylizing is by seeking out a tango fashion consultant. The other way, is to

become a keen observer of other well-put-together dancers, along with trial-&-error. When you are out and about, try to remember to always keep an eye out for black tops and bottoms. Push yourself to try things on repeatedly so you get a clear idea which styles and 'cuts' work for your body type. Be daring! Try styles on that you think you might never wear and be ready for the occasional pleasant surprise!

Look for unique details that provide that extra dramatic flare or cuts in the design that offer extra freedom of motion and flirtatiousness. Properly placed skirt slits, pant slits and sleeve slits... can provide a fun flare to your dance movements and overall attractiveness. Uniquely designed backs, peek-a-boo laced fronts, uneven and flowing hemlines provide much intrigue,

conversation and compliments... and we never tire of that!!!

If you can build a solid basic black collection, you will always have that necessary creative springboard to develop different looks from. From this foundation comes the next creative opportunity. Add on contrasting colored separates and play with accessories. Scarves, jewelry, headbands, fingerless gloves, dramatic makeup....Don't be afraid to be bold; don't be afraid to be subtle...stay true to yourself, work on your tango connections and be ready for an increase in tango moments!

If you are looking for further details and direction in the area of tango fashion and styling...don't hesitate to send me an email at sandrajoyuri@gmail.com ■



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Pictured: Rebecca and Bruce Abas
Owners of Four Season Dance Studio

We climb the few steps to join the gathering crowd.

We inch in and off to the left and stare at people's feet so as not to give away too readily that we are novices when it comes to dancing in a park. At first, we must watch with curiosity and a bit of caution, for how are dances to be found in a space where there are no tables, no apparent systems, and no one directing us where to go? Where even should we stand? In the watching, however, we find patterns: women stand anywhere and everywhere along the circular railing inside, and men walk counter-clockwise, seeking out a partner by engaging her eyes.

The sun is setting, the lights beneath the canopy begin to glow, and we are getting evermore brave with each new couple who moves into the music. The crowd continues to multiply. We continue to watch as the best dancers assume the outermost positions on the floor, and—as though with a protective instinct—they somehow collectively maneuver the novices and the dangerously high kickers into a neat, little bundle toward the center. Men without partners circle round and round while we half-stare at the fluid legs of turning dancers... and half-wait for the right connection to move us onto the floor.

At every milonga in Buenos Aires, it happens: I find a favorite—or perhaps, rather, we find one another. I manage to sink into someone who possesses the kind of powerful connectivity that I have come to seek in tango. Of my varying favorite, I can say that his tango is rarely flashy, but his

Florencia Taccetti Tango from Buenos Aires to Minneapolis...

Tango is about life experience, and life isn't always a picnic.

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clear direction and unmistakable presence make our wordless conversation infinitely memorable, sometimes breathtaking. Here, tonight, dancing in the breeze and the emerging darkness, his name is Jorge.

He is wearing a bright, blue polo, which makes him discernable amongst the crowd, and he looks the combination of fierce, wise, tender and wholly in control. He is definitely Porteño. Silver-haired and broad-shouldered, he is perhaps in his early 70s, which makes me love tango all the more. I've been watching him. His partners all look so relaxed and lovely in his arms.

Of course, he doesn't speak a word of English, which is matched fully by my complete inability to speak Spanish. Luckily, my sister is nearby to translate in between tandas. He dances with each of us—me,

my sister, our friends. He introduces us to all of his amigos. They gather near us and ask us questions about America, our week in BsAs, and my sister's tattoos. They are all so welcoming, but it's the strength and softness of Jorge's embrace that has me captivated. His tango isn't complicated, but it's so fluid and yet direct, which makes it so easy to let go and soak up the splendor of these moments.

At the end of the night, in two broken languages, we manage to exchange information about the following afternoon—that he will be back for a lesson at 4pm and that I should join, so before I head to the airport on my last night in Buenos Aires, I take a cab and my new red shoes to La Glorietta to dance in the sun and the breeze with Jorge one last time. ■

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Second Saturdays

TSoM monthly milonga

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TSoM in Hopkins

Dear Tango Society of MN members,

In an effort to be good stewards of TSoM, we have decided to publish *Tango Moments* electronically for the remainder of the 2011 year. This will enable us to save the printing and mailing costs as we determine the new roles the board and Society will play in the tango community. We thank you for your patience. *Tango Moments* will be emailed to all members for whom we have email addresses and will be posted on the mntango.com website.



Upcoming Workshop at the Four Seasons



It has been a difficult few years for many people. Throughout the troubles with the economy, the wars and the recent Minnesota government shutdown, tango has been a saving grace. After a hard day's work, or long day of searching for work, we came to the floor ready to lose ourselves in the music and in connection with one another.

Finally, things are looking up. The shutdown is over, the economy is improving and it is now truly summer. The warm weather alone is cause for celebration. Even better, there is a whirlwind of upcoming tango events and activities. Discover a bit of Argentina in Minnesota at one very special workshop at the Four Seasons, where the Argentinian couple Carolina del Rivero and Donato Juarez will be teaching their masterful technique on November 18–20, 2011. The musicality, elegance, and precision of these two individuals come together to bring strong originality to the tango as well as a passion and sensibility for the education of the dance.

Contact Rebecca Abas for registration details.