

The Art of a DJ

By Peter Truran

Cardiff, Wales would not seem to be a likely place to learn how to dance tango. However, it was there that I had the good fortune to encounter my first teacher Mike Lavocah, who taught an authentic Buenos Aires salon style. Mike has an astonishingly encyclopedic knowledge of all aspects of tango music: the music, the lyrics, the orchestras, the individual recordings and the lives of the musicians. He is also an excellent DJ, and I had the privilege of learning from him how to choose a program of music that will energize and delight the dancers.

There is a huge repertoire of tango music recorded in the heyday of tango in Buenos Aires—the Golden Age—that lasted from the late twenties until the early fifties. Listening intensively to this wonderful music at milongas, at home and in the car, I learned to distinguish the various orchestras and the principal singers. It was clear that some of these recordings were intended primarily for dancing. These were the instrumentals, and those in which the singer performs only for part of the track, seeming to provide the role of another instrument.

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Photo by Juan García

Florencia and Paulino perform the chacarera at the Landmark Center's Urban Expedition to Argentina

Tango, gauchos, alpacas and empanadas —oh boy!

TSOM joins The Landmark Center for an "expedition" to Argentina

By Don Rowe

On a very chilly Sunday afternoon in January, in downtown St. Paul, more than 100 people gathered for an Urban Expedition to Argentina, which kicked off the ninth season of the Landmark Center's "Sundays at Landmark" cultural series.

Each Urban Expedition event explores a foreign country through the culture, food and a few fun activities. The event on this particular Sunday focused on Argentina. Everyone knows that Argentina is the home of tango. If we are going to visit Argentina,

we simply have to visit the tango. But how was the Landmark Center going to find tango dancers?

During a serendipitous encounter at the Landmark Center last summer between board member Gail Wagner and a Landmark Center program director, the two immediately struck a deal to collaborate to feature Argentina and Argentine tango during the next season of Urban Expeditions. Knowing she would need help pulling off an event of this

Expedition, cont. on page 5

From the president

A special thanks to Jennifer Sellers and her creative talents in creating another memorable Tango Moments. She has pulled together several members of our community to share their love of music in this issue. I look forward to learning from each of them.

Before I go further, I need to confess that I am musically impaired. After so many years, I still cannot connect a particular orchestra or creator with a piece of music. I have been told I have a hard time staying on the beat, and worst of all that I sometimes get more focused on the combination than the music. I admit that my dancing is very much a work in progress.

Even with those handicaps, I love the music. Each time I dance to a particular piece my partner, our connection, our history together shape what I hear and how I respond. The music can lift my spirit or remind me of a previously broken heart. With luck it can help create a magical tango moment. As a partner once shared it's not about the steps, it's about the connection. Music allows that connection between our head, our heart, and our partner.

Join me in reading and exploring tango music in this issue of Tango Moments.

— *Bill Boyt*
Bill_Boyt@cargill.com

Letter from the Editor

Music is like a siren's call. As the first few notes of a tango begin to play, energy infuses the room, beckoning and tugging at our feet. Dancers glance around, seeking to lock eyes with another in cabaceo. Men stride across the room expectantly. Ladies end conversations abruptly to take the hand of their next partner. The dance floor fills as the music swells. And soon we are lost in listening to our partners, listening to the music and becoming ourselves an instrument as we tap out the beat. Music, and to dance, is our *raison d'être*.

In this issue, we explore the music of Argentine tango. Don Rowe recounts the exciting winter afternoon at the Landmark Center where Argentina's music, language, culture, animals, food and, of course, Argentine tango were presented to the public during the first Urban Expedition event of the year. Don and Gail Wagner pulled off this delightful event with the help of many in the tango community.

We also see tango through the eyes of a few of Minnesota's talented DJs and musicians who provide music for us each night. Peter Truan shares some of the intricacies of putting together a cohesive and harmonious playlist for a milonga. Paul Lohman demystifies the DJ's role and how tandas and set arranged. Eric Li reveals the essential components of musicality. Bob Barnes recounts how he founded Mandrágora and how learning to dance altered the way he played tango. Mandrágora has recently ended their Sunday evening gig at the Loring Pasta Bar as Bob and Scott Mateo Davies are each focusing on other tango projects. These new projects, and the other tango bands in Minnesota are enriching the community with their variety and fresh look at the music we all love.

So get out on the dance floor and enjoy the music that our talented DJs and musicians bring for you at each milonga. I'll see you there.

Happy dancing,
Jennifer Sellers

TSoM Announces New Grant Policy

Exciting news! The Tango Society of Minnesota is thrilled to announce that we have set aside a small portion of our annual budget specifically to support events for Argentine tango in Minnesota. Qualifying events include tango festivals, tango workshop weekends, tango music concerts and bringing in tango musicians. These funds will be disbursed to applicants according to our new small grants policy.

The small grants policy and the grant application will be available on the TSoM website in late March 2013. Watch for more details and learn how to apply in TSoM Announce and on the TSoM website, mntango.org.

DJ Art, cont. from page 1

Others, where the artist sings through the whole piece, were to be listened to (tango canción). Nevertheless, tango can be danced to many kinds of music, including tango nuevo (especiallly Piazzola), contemporary tango (Gotan Project, Narcotango and others) and danceable non-tango music. While I have learned to include all these genres in my selections, it is the Golden Age music that moves me the most. There is a rhythmic and lyrical complexity in much of the classical tango repertoire that provides perennial challenges for the dancer. This is the music that was composed for tango, and its inventiveness matches the improvisational qualities of the dance.

It is my opinion that the most important skill of the DJ lies in responding to the dancers by exploiting the varieties of texture, rhythm, energy, and orchestral sound that are found in tango music. The injection of excitement and interest can be done by assembling tandas of tracks having different tempos and formats, often building up to a climax at the end of the tanda. This must be done with some subtlety. Generally speaking, most DJs do not include tracks from more than one orchestra or recordings from very different periods of a bandleader's career in the same tanda. For example, early Fresedo (sparse and rhythmic) does not mix well with the lush music he conducted in the 50s. Similarly, Pugliese from the 40s should not be included in a tanda with his grander music from the 50s and later.

On the other hand, it is a good idea to juxtapose tandas with very contrasting mood, complexity and rhythm. The sophisticated sound of D'Agostino's orchestra from the heyday of tango in the 40s can be followed by the more raw, almost primitive, timbres of Orchestra Tipica Victor. The jagged, playful music of Biagi can be effectively contrasted with the richness of Gobbi or Pugliese.

It is my opinion that the DJ should play close attention to the dancers on the floor. He should get on the floor himself to gauge how the music sounds as the density of dancers changes. We are very much the custodians of this glorious, unique music. We are charged with presenting it in the best way possible, so that the dancers can learn to love it and understand how a good program of dance music can shape and inspire our dancing.



*Peter prepares to DJ a milonga at his computer.
Photo courtesy of Peter Truran*

My mentor Mike Lavocah provided a solid basis for my understanding of tango music. In my travels since then I have continued to listen and learn. Here in Minneapolis, my knowledge has been enriched by engaging with local DJs who provide an energy and expertise that matches that of this vibrant tango community. ■



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Photo by Juan García

Left: Paulino leads the crowd in chacarera dance steps

Below: Bob Barnes plays the bandoneon as Florencia performs solo.



Photo by Juan García



Photo by Juan García

Left: Dancers demonstrate a “night of tango”
Below: Performers celebrate a successful event



Photo by Juan García

Expedition, cont. from page 1

importance, Gail brought in TSoM's Events Coordinator.

We got to work right away. We outlined our plans then secured TSoM Board backing and approval. Gail and I, along with Kirstin Smith at the Landmark Center and her staff, programmed the entire event.

The day arrives and the expedition to Argentina begins. Of course, we met with some surprises right off. The stage was an elevated assembly of modular platforms with a carpeted (!) surface. It proved to be a challenging surface. But Paulino Brenner was undaunted. People were still trickling into the Landmark Center's atrium hall when he jumped up on that un-danceable floor and greeted the audience directly. Paulino then introduced Florencia Taccetti and together they kicked the event into high gear with a single-partner chacarera dance. Paulino looked very much the gaucho wearing bloused, slate-colored trousers secured with a red and black sash. His cotton jacket was adorned with pleated front panels and red buttons. Under the jacket he sported a royal-blue shirt. Florencia was dressed in an orange and fuchsia dress. Her hair was pulled back over her ears, giving her an energetic, youthful look. Ever the consummate professional, she let go of exigent concerns and danced freely with her partner. She beamed as she lifted her dress and strutted toward her partner in this coquettish folk dance.

A chacarera lesson was planned for the non-dancing attendees. It was important, we believed, to engage the audience directly and make it fun for everyone. But who knows: I feared no one would be brave

enough to get up off their seats to join with others they didn't know in an unfamiliar dance they couldn't imagine doing. No problem: barely fifteen minutes into the show, Paulino had 40 or more people out of their seats and on their feet doing the chacarera! It was fabulous! I was so relieved.

Paulino wrapped up the folk-dance set with another lesson, showing us all the basic steps of the malambo. We fumbled through it, trying our best to follow along. But, just so we all knew what it really looked like, Paulino performed a solo, kick-stomping malambo. It's a percussive dance, not unlike clogging. He's a Latin "River Dance" I heard someone whisper. The crowd gave its unabashed approval.

Typical of these "Expedition" events, the Landmark brings in some craft demonstrations, informational posters, food, animals, and other entertainment. It's a slam-dunk cultural lesson in two hours. I took a moment, after finishing my "producer" duties, to check out the menagerie at the north end of the hall. Sure enough, there were two alpacas present and a viscacha—mammals native to South America. All were very well behaved. The animals came by way of a keeper in Wisconsin, someone who is called upon frequently for such events. Empanadas were served up hot to the human attendees, and crepe paper, flower blooms were crafted as head adornments for señoras y señoritas. Before the second entertainment set, a representative of Concordia Language Village led the expedition through a language and picture "speed-tour" of Argentina.

The second half of Sunday's event featured the Argentine tango;

tango as we know it, tango as it is danced in social halls all over the world—including here in the Twin Cities. Lois Donnay, who has presented Argentine tango demonstrations many times, was perfect for the job. With a little history lesson to set up the audience, and a few props to evoke a typical social scene, we set the stage for the audience to witness a "night of tango." Introduced with tango anecdotes by Lois, ten to twelve of your tango friends enacted the scene. Twelve tango dancers showed off their vivacity and dancing facility to an appreciative crowd. The dancers did not disappoint. Dressed for the occasion, they danced on the stage and on the floor amid the audience, showing the intimate nature of tango with personal flair.

The finale was a creative dance interpretation of tango performed by Florencia, accompanied by Bob Barnes on bandóneon. It was three minutes of grace and passion. It brought down the house.

With that, Gail and I closed the event with open tango dancing for all who wanted to kick up their heels on their own. Lois kept the music rolling until, one by one, we all slipped back out to a chilly January in downtown St. Paul. The Expedition to Argentina was over. But we all went home with a very warm feeling—and a crepe paper flower in our hair. ■

The Fusion of Music, Technique and Connection in Tango

By Eric Li

Tango is seductive. The more we learn about it, the more we want to know. And the more we never want to stop dancing. But what makes tango so enchanting? There are three key components to dancing tango well, and these are elements that dancers are constantly seeking to improve. We learn steps and technique. We learn to listen to our partner. We learn to listen to the music. When we are able to fuse our understanding of each of these, we have musicality.

Basic techniques in tango help us improve our connections and movements, and these techniques apply to all movements in tango. It is not easy to reach the point where we can execute these movements comfortably.

Therefore, we spend a lot of time focused on the technical and mechanical side of the dance. However, tango is not only about executing moves, and it is very easy to lose sight of what tango is if we focus on that too much. In order to understand and appreciate tango fully, we will need to put the moves aside and be present as we dance. Once we're present in the moment, we can be fully connected to our partner and the music.

Other than learning basic techniques and movements, we also need to connect with our partner in order to actually dance to the music. Connecting with our partner in tango is very similar to the way we connect to others in conversations. We use words, body gestures and facial expression to

communicate in conversations. In tango, we replace words with movements. We do not force movements out of our partner just as we do not force words out of others in conversation. Both parties are free to express themselves and listen to the others. How well the conversation or the dance goes will depend on how well each can express themselves and their listening skills. In tango, the men express and listen to the women's response, and the women respond to show that they're listening. Therefore, both parties are responsible to keep the dance going. Once we can communicate properly, we then begin to learn how express ourselves musically.

Music is the key driving force of our movements when we dance, and different music moves us in different ways. We tend to hop around to swing music, move our hips to salsa music and bob our heads to rock music. However, the quality of movement is not only associated to technique, but also in making a connection between our movements and emotions when we listen to music.

Fusion, cont. on page 7

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*Eric dancing at a festival.
Photo by Lena Manaa-Hoppenworth*

Fusion, cont. from page 6

It is very easy to make this connection when we dance our hearts out to the music we're very familiar with without worrying about how we look. Therefore, putting moves and technique aside can help us discover these emotions, and a connection with our partners, easier.

Similar to classical music, there are many layers to every traditional tango song, especially in Golden Age tango music. When we first learn how to dance tango, we could only dance to the beat because our understanding of connection with our partner and body movement was limited. Therefore, music that has constant and heavy beats, such as nuevo and many alternative tango songs are very beginner friendly. The beginning dancer often feels indifferent to traditional tango music at this point, because they struggle with interpreting the layers with their steps. They need

that strong beat in order to know when to step. As we begin to improve as tango dancers, we learn how to pause comfortably as we dance, which is a major milestone in tango. Pausing is to stretch a step to match an extended note in a song. Once we've learned to pause, we can better express the notes that are legato and extended. Thus, the layers in traditional tango music begin to surface. The dancer can now "hear" them more clearly. This is when technique and feeling connected to the music merges.

The dancers often begin to truly appreciate Golden Age tango music at this point.

Good technique and understanding of steps enables us to know how to move. The ability to connect with our partners enables us to know how to move with another person, smoothly. An ability to listen to the music enables us to interpret the songs and enjoy dancing to tango music. When we have all of these, we have musicality. ■

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Tango, Tango, Vals; Tango, Tango, Milonga

by Paul Lohman (aka: DJ Pablo)

Have you ever wondered how the DJ goes about planning and playing his or her music for a milonga? When I'm dancing at a milonga and I know the DJ, I often know what type of tanda will be played next, and I've surprised more than one person when I ask if they would like to dance the next tanda of "milongas."

How do I know? Well, first you have to know the style of the DJ who is working, and then a bit understanding of the "ritual" of playing tango music helps. The classic formula for playing tango music is, of course, in tandas – which are groups of songs. Generally tandas are arranged so that all of the songs in a tanda are by the same orchestra and from a similar time period. That's not always the case, but the DJ is trying to find a group of songs that are similar in character so that the tanda is consistent and "flows."

For example, a simple song from

the 1920s is not followed by some dramatic Pugliese from the 1950s. That combination would be just a bit too chaotic. The DJ is working to have both a good flow within each tanda, and a good flow from one tanda to the next.

There is also a formula for playing tandas. The classic approach (one that you will find at nearly every festival throughout the country) is tandas in the pattern: tango, tango, vals; tango, tango, milonga. (Then "rinse and repeat" as Homer Ladas likes to say.) Tandas of tangos have four songs, while tandas of vals and milonga generally have three songs.

Does every DJ do it this way? No, they don't, and that's fine. Rules are made to be broken, but most often you will find that the DJ is consistent in the order of his or her tandas and in the number of songs in each. Thus, once you get to know the DJ you can probably figure out what is coming next. Some play three songs in every tanda; some like to play tandas with four vales;



photo courtesy of Paul Lohman

DJ Pablo spins some tunes

and some change the up the tango, tango, vals; tango, tango, milonga order.

It's all good, but whatever "formula" the DJ uses, the goal is to have a fun evening dancing where not only the dancers flow, but so does the music. So, if you pay a bit of attention at your next milonga you may be able to predict what the next tanda will be; ... perhaps vales, and you'll be ready with your cabaceo. ■

My Musical Journey with the Indigenous Tango Bands of Minnesota

by Bob Barnes, Bandleader of Mandrágora Tango and the Hiawatha Tango Orchestra

I grew up playing music. I studied piano and composition in college and have spent small stretches of my life as a full-time musician. When I was 19, I bought an accordion so I could jam outdoors. Within a few years, it was my main instrument. While in college, I bought a cassette of Astor Piazzolla's album "Buenos Aires Hora Cero" and it changed my life forever. I knew that tango was the music I wanted to play! I learned a lot of Piazzolla tunes for my own enjoyment, as I didn't know anyone else who wanted to play or hear them. This was before the 90s tango revival, so I was more-or-less correct in assuming that tango was a dead art form. Most tango musicians I've met since then describe a similar "Piazzolla Moment." Piazzolla is the gateway drug to Pugliese, Troilo and Canaro.

I moved to Minneapolis in 1994 and co-founded "The Deadly Nightshade Family Singers," a folk-rock group that mixed 1930s crooner ballads, old country music and our own originals. I wrote us a tango called "Mandrágora," which is the botanical (and Spanish!) name of the mandrake plant, a somewhat deadly member of the nightshade family. When the Nightshades broke up in 2001, I decided that I would start a tango band and play my favorite music whether or not anyone wanted to listen to it. I had no idea that anyone danced tango in the Twin Cities. TSoM was only a few years old at the time. I named my new band after my old tango.

In Mandrágora's first year we had

two strokes of good luck. The first was to meet Rebecca Abas who invited us to play for milongas at her Four Seasons dance studio starting in December 2001. Our other big break came in March 2002 when the Loring Pasta Bar asked me to put together a tango night. I never thought I would spend quarter of my life playing that gig!

I started Mandrágora as an accordionist. Sometime in 2006, our guitarist, Scott Mateo Davies, told me that for us to get to the next level, I'd have to learn to play bandoneon, speak Spanish, and dance Argentine tango. I bought a bandoneon and spent countless hours learning to play. (Other than the bellows, it has nothing in common with the accordion.) In 2007, I traveled to Buenos Aires to study at the Conservatorio Nacional de Tango, which was a life-changing experience. I saw and heard the depth and breadth of tango firsthand. I immersed myself in tango culture and resolved to learn as much as I could. In 2008 or so, I started to dance tango. My musicality has definitely helped, but it is my passion for tango that has kept me going way past the point that a saner person would have given up. Knowing about the dance totally changed the way I play. When I learned how to dance milonga, every milonga I played got 10 percent slower!

The more I learn about the dance, the more I want to play traditional tango.

Musical Journey, cont. on page 10

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Musical Journey, cont. from page 9

To this end, I'm starting a new tango sextet called the Hiawatha Tango Orchestra. It has two violins and piano instead of guitar. I hope to convince bandoneon-playing friends to come to town and join us from time to time. I hope to pull this group together a few times a year and make each milonga a bigger deal.

Last fall, Mandrágora called it quits at the Loring Pasta Bar after 10-and-a-half years. It got to be too much work and I needed a break. Mandrágora will continue to play from time to time, but it will probably be as a duo or trio. In 2012, Mandrágora recorded a nuevo/electro/alternative tango CD with hip-hop producer "Bionik." Guitarist Scott Mateo Davies, Bionik and I will be touring in the Spring to promote the new album.

Mateo started his band "Rogue Tango" to take over Tango Sundays at the Loring Pasta Bar. Rogue Tango features Mateo's dazzling guitar playing and Rachael "La Mala" Miloy's smoke-and-honey

vocals. Rogue Tango splits the gig with Trish Hurd-Paszowski's band La Abandonada. As you may know, Trish is a fabulous dancer and pianist. She blends her passion for the music and her knowledge of the dance to create a fabulous traditional tango sound.

The oddball tango band in town is Sara Pajunen's Tango Pohjan Tähden. Most non-Finns have never heard of Finnish Tango or think it's some kind of joke. When Argentine tango was first popular in Europe in the 1910s, it took root especially deep in Finland. The shared themes of love, loss, homesickness and alcoholic despair spoke to both countries. My favorite quote about Finnish Tango: "...a sad shuffle in a minor key where the lyrics confirm each couple's innate sense of hopelessness." Finnish Tango developed independently from Argentina for the last 80 years. The tangos are faster and the vals are slower. Violins and vocals carry the melodies while accordion (not bandoneon!) and bass hold down the beat. Sara started TPT with chanteuse Elina Ruppert, a native



Photo courtesy of Bob Barnes

Finn with a gorgeous alto voice. TPT mostly plays out-of-town folk festivals for the Finnish diaspora. We just released our first album with pianist Timo Alakotila, who is kind of a big deal in the Helsinki folk and jazz scene. You can preview and buy it at FinnTango.com.

In the past five years, the number of tango bands has skyrocketed. There is getting to be a critical mass of musicians dedicated to learning traditional tango styles. When Mandrágora started touring in 2006, we were one of the few bands in the states. Now every tango community in the states has at least one band. Minnesota is unique in that we have five (even though a cynic might say it's just different combinations of a dozen people) There is a world-wide renaissance of live tango music for dance, and the Twin Cities can be proud to have so many bands that are a part of it! I hope that someday I can put together an evening or a weekend that features all of Minnesota's great bands. ■

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A Special Thanks to our 2012 TSoM Board from Bill Boyt

This past year has been challenging as the Board has worked to stabilize our finances, find a new venue, and provide support for the development of Argentine tango in our community.

The Board has a strong commitment to being responsible with your money as well as open and transparent about all our decisions. Since 2008 we were running a deficit on most milongas. That was turned around this year as the Board made several difficult decisions. We started the search for a new venue, we reduced what we pay DJs and instructors, we asked for a volunteer to manage our gate, we cut back the amount earmarked to stock our food table, and Board members stopped accepting free admission to the milongas. We are especially indebted to our DJs and instructors for continuing to support us.

I want to call attention to several Board members for their special contributions to these initiatives. Connie Stack and Gail Wagner for the way they were able to respond to the reduction in financial support for our food table. They used their own kitchens and called on many friends for additional contributions. Creating some milongas that seemed like a dinner and a dance. Who will ever forget the midnight pizza provided by Kate Shannon? Liliana Imwinkelried and Juan Garcia for their work with the Argentine Independence Day milonga and other special themes. When they got excited about the theme the attendance went up by 50 percent because everyone knew the fun and energy would go up by 100 percent. Scott Chase pretty much gave up dancing, volunteering his time to be our fulltime gatekeeper (A special thanks to Marcie for being so understanding). Through it all Marge Gierok Jerdee kept our finances straight. Not as easy as you might think. Our secretary, Kate Shannon, brought organization to our agendas and details to our minutes. Rueben Hansen may seem like a quiet guy, but inside is a thoughtful negotiator who worked to get the venues you wanted at a price we could afford. Our Vice President Julia Robinson, is one busy lady who somehow carves out time to support us. She is always ready to ask the tough questions to challenge the Board. And, where would we be without Jennifer Sellers and her connections with our younger dancers?

A special thanks for jobs well done by Paul Stachour, Don Rowe and Sandra Uri. We are very fortunate that Paul gives considerable time to making sure we are organized. Once you watch Paul, you realize just how many details have to be handled on a regular basis for TSoM to function. I will save you from the long list of what he handles, but we are grateful that he is so willing to help. Don stepped up to volunteer to be our tango demonstration coordinator. He helped us create a policy that opened the possibility of participating in a demonstration to all of us. He has brought a rationale and structure to what had previously been ad hoc. The recent Landmark Center demonstration is a credit to both Don and Gail Wagner. Sandra Uri shares her considerable creative talents as the advertising coordinator for Tango Moments. Her work both helps to defray newsletter expenses as well as helping the community find shoes, clothing, insurance and instructors.

Many, many thanks to the three Board members who are retiring:

Kate Shannon – Kate responded to our plea for a Secretary. During her year on the Board, she opened our eyes to how nice it was to have minutes taken by someone who could focus on what was most important to any discussion. She also brought a passion about exploring the possibilities of 501(c)3 status as a not-for-profit along with her passion for tango. We are going to miss her smile and insights as much as we will miss her determination to keep our minutes accurate.

Chris Briscoe – During his year on the Board, Chris brought his energy and willingness to volunteer for any committee that needed him. He has a genuine interest in what others have to contribute and used that talent to chair several of our Board meetings. We are going to miss the hours Chris gave so eagerly to all things tango and the connections he has throughout the community.

Gail Wagner – Gail came back for a second term to help us wrestle with several difficult issues. I had the pleasure of being Co-MC with Gail and I know from experience that she makes everything she does fun. Don't be fooled by her petite size, Gail is a woman with tremendous energy who has probably never met a challenge that was too big. We are going to miss Gail and her determination to be sure that the Board was always fair and open to everyone. ■

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Introducing the new TSoM Board members



Aimee Cardwell

Music and dance have always been an important part of my life. I remember waking up on Saturday mornings as my father's Wagner or Tchaikovsky records would blare on the stereo to wake my brother and I for breakfast. The same records were my "performance pieces" as I danced around the living room for the cat, dog and my dad.

I was drawn to tango because I loved the music and the potential to connect with others through dance. I have been dancing tango for the last four and a half years.

I was interested in joining the board to become more involved in the tango community. I want to help spread the word about tango and how rich and rewarding an experience it can be.



Michael Scham

I first became interested in tango during a fly-fishing trip to Patagonia with my dad. We had a few days in Buenos Aires, and we sought out cafés where ordinary people dance (we were wary of going to a "show"). Sitting at our table with a glass (or bottle) of wine, we were both taken with how these otherwise very normal-looking people, once they mysteriously communicated something to each other from across the room, took on a dignity and grace as they started to dance. About a year after my return from Argentina, I finally took the initiative to find tango instruction, and I've been at it for about four years.

As a board member I'd like to gain an understanding of how the tango scene in the Twin Cities works, and then figure out how to contribute!