



Through a partnership with Bataclan Tango, the Alejandro Ziegler Tango Quartet played at the TSoM 2nd Saturday milonga in November 2013

Tango Heats Up the Nights

2013 has been a great year for tango! We have had some incredible milongas. Tango ambassadors have ventured out into the larger community to showcase tango at a variety of fundraisers and special events. Here are a few of the most recent events.

November TSoM 2nd Saturday milonga

Nov. 9, 2013

The cool air was blowing on that early November evening, but it was warm inside Sokol. Bataclan Tango had arranged to bring the Alejandro Ziegler Tango Quartet to Minnesota, and it just so happened that they would be here the weekend of the monthly TSoM

milonga. Bataclan approached TSoM with the request to partner on TSoM's usual milonga. With a lot of quick rearranging and planning, the two groups secured a new venue and prepared for the night. And what a night it was! Liliana and many others in the Argentine community banded together to prepare delectable Argentine treats, Connie put together an amazing food table and Marge brought the refreshing beverages that are so vital to a night of dancing.

Everyone listened as the Quartet started off the music with a performance to give everyone a sense of their music, and then the dance floor quickly swelled, never

to quiet again until the last notes died away. The floor was perfect and the room was filled with smiles.

Alejandro Ziegler Tango Quartet Concert

Nov. 10, 2013

On Sunday, Nov. 10, the Alejandro Ziegler Tango Quartet played a concert. Some of the music was the same, but the experience was entirely different. Attendees were able to be immersed in the music, to watch the musicians interact with one another, and to focus on the beauty of each step of the dancers' performance. Florencia Taccetti put together an incredible

Tango, cont. on page 3

From the president

Once again Jennifer has pulled together a “must read” Tango Moments. Shoes remind us of tango’s ability to make the ordinary spectacular. Yes, even guys think about shoes. I remember my first tango shoe purchase. I was in Buenos Aires on a business trip.

I still remember walking down Suipacha into Flabella’s shop. I was the only customer and the owner greeted me at the door with, “Sit down, I have just the shoes for you.” I have never seen so many shoes stacked floor to ceiling, boxes upon boxes. And that was only the tip of the iceberg as the basement was stacked with thousands more. In no time, there were open boxes all over as we narrowed in on the right ones. Once I was settled on two pairs, he smiled and told me to wait a moment. He disappeared into the basement returning with shoes covered in black rhinestones. They fit perfectly. For a moment I could imagine myself as Gavito, the center of attention, people watching my every step. My heart wanted them while my mind said “no, too much attention.” I left that pair of shoes behind. They still call to me.

This is my last note as the president of TSoM. I am very proud of what the Board has accomplished in these past few years. I encourage you to give a special thanks to your Board members: Julia Robinson, Marge Jerdee, Aimee Cardwell, Michael Scham, Connie Stack, Jennifer Sellers, Scott Chase, Juan Garcia, Lilliana Imwinkelreid, and Rueben Hansen with special support from Paul Stachour, Don Rowe, and Sandra Uri. Each of them has given so much to the community.

After working through some tough times, this year the Board was able to take some financial risks that opened us up to new venues. Places like the 27 Event Center in July and Sokol in November would have been well beyond our reach in previous years. Do you remember this year’s Valentine’s Day milonga at Four Seasons when even at 1 a.m. no one wanted to go home? There were great pictures of our ladies with their roses. Of course you remember the July “Argentine Independence Day” milonga with 165 guests. It was quite possibly the largest milonga in our history. We have been fortunate to have great tango teachers perform demonstrations at our milongas. Certainly you remember Fabian Salas and Lola Diaz’s wonderful demonstration at our July milonga. Marina Kenny and Guillermo Cerneaz performed at our September milonga. And “La Vuature” Manuel García, Cecilia García Gaul and Luis Castillo were at our October milonga. We have a very simple formula: the more we get through memberships and milonga attendance, the more we can give back to the community.

In December, the Hiawatha Tango Orchestra will play at the TSoM milonga, completing the fourth in a series of live music at our milongas. This would not have been possible without support from everyone in the tango community. Instructors encouraging their students to attend our milongas; local musicians playing at our venues; local promoters finding new venues, bringing in instructors and supporting live music; and the dozens of people sharing their talents to make each experience even better than we dared to hope.

I am sometimes asked why there is a TSoM and why should someone become a member or serve on the board. I think this past year is an excellent example of why TSoM exists, how it makes a difference, and why it is definitely worth your support.

As I step into the background, I know that TSoM is in good hands. I have found good friends, and wonderfully committed people during my four years on the Board. I already miss you. I have tried to give something back as partial payment for the joy, drama, excitement and mystery that TSoM has given me for so many years.

May you all be blessed with many tango moments,

Bill Boyt

Letter from the Editor

Shoes. They are the objects of obsession for women across the globe. But tango shoes bring this level of desire to a whole new level. After all, tango shoes are not mere shoes. They are works of art, necessary tools for our dance, accoutrements of style. They complete. They elevate. When I was a new dancer, I remember the feeling wearing real tango shoes gave me — a bit how I imagine Pinocchio felt when the Blue Fairy granted his wish to become a real boy. We become real dancers — we feel like real dancers — when we put on tango shoes.

My first pair of tango shoes was a gift. Lisa Erickson, the aunt of a dear childhood friend of mine, heard that my sister and I were learning Argentine tango. I was in my senior year of college then, and although I was working four part-time jobs, I had barely any spending money left after paying tuition. I certainly didn't have enough money to buy real tango shoes. I ran into Lisa at the Loring Pasta Bar. Lisa offered Jessica and I a pair of black Tara tango shoes that she no longer wore. We were stunned by her kindness and gratefully accepted. I was amazed at how different they felt to dance in. The balance was better for tango and the strength of the arch made such a difference.

Since that day, I've purchased a couple other pair of tango shoes. And that pair of Taras have stayed in heavy rotation.

Once again, thank you, Lisa! Your gift has given me hours of magical tango moments.

In this issue, dancers share what their shoes mean to them, and their favorite moments and memories. As you tie or buckle on your shoes at the next milonga, remember, the shoes aren't just adding style. They transform your every step into art.

Happy dancing,

Jennifer Sellers



Photo provided by Sandra Uri

Michael Matthew Farrell, the director and choreographer for the event, asked Sandra Uri to be the tango consultant on incorporating tango into the program. Sabine and John Ibes, Janeen Rae and Paul Lohman, Sandra Uri and Steve Peters, Rebecca and Bruce Abas and Lois Donnay and Joey Ray were the dancers for the event.

Dancers for the Alejandro Ziegler Tango Quartet concert Nov. 10 2013

Tango, cont. from page 1

team of dancers to enhance the performance. Sandra Uri and Steve Peters, Gretchen Larsen and Dave Rost, and Mayu Nelson and Joey Ray created a living portrait as they wove through the musicians. Later that night, Mayu and Joey performed a solo piece with brilliance.

The Children's Theatre Curtain Call Ball Gala "Head Over Glass Heels" Sept. 7, 2013



Photo provided by Sandra Uri

Dancers for the Head Over Heels Gala on Sept. 7, 2013

"Design Roars" a fundraiser for the Goldstein Museum of Art Sept. 6, 2013
For this Roaring Twenties themed soiree, Julia Robinson coordinated a group of tango dancers to provide a surprise performance. Guests and dancers

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Tango, cont. from page 3

alike dressed in Gatsbyesque costumes. Sandra Uri, Steve Peters, Lynne Schulz, Lowell Franz, Vessela and Kalin Kounevea, Barb Richied, Don Rowe, Brad Hokanson, Betsy Henderson, Didier Tellier and Julia Robinson performed in the twilight to the delight of the guests. The event was held at an antique-filled house with beautiful grounds overlooking Sunfish Lake which allowed attendees to wander through the woods to the lake shore pavilion. Dressed in style for the 1920s, dancers enjoyed hors d'oeuvres al fresco under the tent and the stars and danced to the



Photo provided by Sandra Uri

Dancers for the Blaine World Fest event on Sept. 21 2013

music of the Parisota Hot Club. About 20 free passes to TSoM milongas were given to people interested in tango at the event.

Blaine World Fest Sept. 21, 2013

Lois Donnay organized this performance to showcase Argentine tango at the Blaine World Fest, an annual event to celebrate local diversity. Lois Donnay, David Gardner, Sandra Uri, Steve Peters, Sarah Sommers and Don Rowe performed.

Uptown Art Fair Aug. 4, 2013

Bob Barnes played his bandoneon and Lois Donnay served as the MC to bring tango to a hip crowd of art lovers. Nicky Bowman, Steve Lee, Lois Donnay, Dave Gardner, Jennifer Wang, Charlie Brown, Florencia Taccetti, Diana Devi, Sabine Ibes performed an hour-long demonstration of Argentine tango to a small, appreciative crowd. ■



Photo provided by Sandra Uri

A few of the dancers for the Design Roars Goldstein Museum fundraiser Sept. 6, 2013

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They Call me the Shoe Guy

By Charlie Brown

Those who say that I have more shoes than any guy in town have been rebuked by those who claim that it's obvious that my shoe collection is greater in number than the shoes closeted by most of the gals who grace the floors of the local milongas.

I have genetically inferior feet that have a history of both abuse and surgery, so hunting for comfortable shoes was never just a seasonal sport. Dancing was not the type of activity the surgeons prescribed for soles that had all the flexibility of a fossil. But, since I don't have a good sense of direction, stumbling away from their guidance was easy.

I fell into tango while removing nondescript black ballroom dance

shoes, which had just finished their maiden voyage in my very first dance class, ballroom dancing. It was the first of four lessons that I had signed up for in my attempt to step outside my comfort zone. While changing into my street shoes after class the dance floor became flooded with couples warming up for an intermediate tango class. I watched for five minutes. That's the minimum amount of time that it takes me to go through the ritual of changing shoes. For the next three weeks this ritual stretched in time until by the fourth week it took 30 minutes to change shoes. The Argentine tango class going through their exotic movements had laid the bait for another potential addict as the

leap from ballroom to tango took place. At first the beginning tango classes were not out of my comfort zone. What was the big deal? So you learn a few steps. Tango wasn't that tough, but other guys dropped out week after week and the ratio of followers to leaders became more unbalanced. This gave me more followers to practice with, but the only shoes that I noticed were the ones on my aching feet.

When enough courage was mustered up to enter the doorway of a milonga the gates to existential angst were opened. What appeared as a crowded noisy milonga brought about an instantaneous transport of my

Shoe Guy, cont. on page 6



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entire being into the discomfort zone. Fire and brimstone scorched the soles of both of my shoes as the rising toxic vapors exploded into the skull cavity poisoning any positive thoughts that mortals might learn to tango. Sitting was the only relief that could be found as the pain was excruciating and paralysis pinched off the movement of time. My psyche had plunged into the turbulent ice waters it was searching for and the water was rising as the murky depths held another captive. The next couple of milongas were the same. The truth was that I knew nothing about tango and that attempting to tango with strangers was something that I was not cut out to do. Longing for my comfort zone, it was obvious another weakling whose confidence was built on ignorance had been exposed. Not being psychologically healthy enough to untangle myself from the tango web helped in bringing about a revelation. At a milonga, while struggling to escape and battling mental exhaustion, the moment arrived when the shoes took center stage. My eyes moved to different shaped heels with a variety of heights, straps and colors that gave life to the floor. Tango gave the shoes a walk where they possessed a soul of their own. The walks highlighted by the shoes had an elegance of a legendary epic as they moved to the music. The music ... music at the milonga, wow, what else was happening here that had totally escaped my attention? The embrace, freeing the spirit from within, being vulnerable and sharing the pain and joys of life with another through the movement of tango as the songs carry us through a new adventure

with each tanda as the music transcends time and space. Time once again moved and more tango revelations have been revealed as more cracks have appeared in my once blissful fortress of ignorance.

My shoe collection may have initially grown while looking for physical comfort, but over time it expanded to something beyond comfort or fashion. It became another step in my attempt to not hide my many faults on the tango floor and to weaken the defense mechanism that shields my vulnerable side. The theory being that if I can wear red, copper, pewter and, or pink shoes in public I have a better chance of opening my weaknesses of the heart and spirit to tango. The buried vulnerable scars, or emotions of any shape or size that we allow to surface may add another dimension to our dance. This is one of the glues that keeps me stuck on tango as uncomfortable and frustrating as it is at times. A struggling beginner I may eternally be, even as the shoes age, but it keeps the fruit of the dance fresh. The shoes have opened new doors at times. The opportunity to dance with some premier tango followers developed due to my encounters with them at shoe stands at festivals. They were thrilled to see a man wading through the women's tango shoe displays searching for the perfect gift for his wife while wearing his own colorful shoes. Some have asked for my opinion on a pair of shoes and would end the conversation with, "... we must dance ..." and later they would see me and pull the coward that I am onto the dance floor while telling me that they liked my shoes. This helped me realize that a step or sequence was merely a

small part of the tools needed to stir the ingredients that make up tango. The best of dancers have shared the experience that our disparity of dance levels did not have to be an obstacle in enjoying tango. A star follower said, "I would much rather dance with a quality beginner who gives his all to his partner than a premier lead who cannot smell the stink of his own shoes." So, shoes we have in all sorts of colors and designs. Dressing for the occasion helps this Charlie in his attempt to allow the Carlito's part of his character to become more dominant and is my humble attempt to show respect to the tradition of the milonga. A world class tango lead said he dances with women who are dressed nicely, so if followers wish to use similar standards my only wish is to be available. Of course, learning to tango takes time and work. A million excuses could easily be found to stay within my comfort zone and to never wear the shoes, but as a follower told me, "It's better to wear the stinky shoes than not to smell at all." Our closets tell the story that if the shoes fit, we are wearing them. ■



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A Quest for Shoes

By Mary Garvin

I've seen a few jaws drop when people hear that I came back from Argentina with 19 pairs of tango shoes. But it made perfect sense to me.

Long before I knew when I would go to Argentina, I started setting aside \$10 a week to be spent only on tango shoes in Buenos Aires. I didn't know when I would go, but I knew I would eventually. I also didn't know when I would get a chance to go a second time, so I wanted to be able to take full advantage of the colors and styles and the availability of my size — not to mention the lower prices compared to what the same shoes would cost in the U.S.

About two and a half years later I headed to B.A. with \$1300 to spend just on shoes. After I spent that, I figured I could buy the shoes I would have bought if I didn't have my "special fund." Even with this special fund, I wasn't able to get all the colors or styles I was hoping for. Either the store didn't have that style or color or, even more frustrating, they had the shoes, but not in my size.

My trip ended before I could make it to every tango shoe store in B.A., but I tried. It was a good quest to have. On the last day, a couple of hours before getting on the plane for home, I managed to get to one more store and get one more pair of shoes. Who knows how many pairs I would have returned with had I been able to stay longer! ■

How Many Pairs?

By Paul Stachour

How many pairs of dance shoes does a dancer need? That is a question often addressed to a lady (follow) when looking at her pile of dance-shoes. For a guy (lead), the answer most often heard is: "1 pair, black, that's enough." For the follow, the answer is usually "lots," as she needs shoes of different colors, styles, heel-height, and sole-type. However, most leads (including me) who have been dancing for a while have more than one pair of dance shoes. Hmm, let's see. How many pairs do I have?

No. 0 is the pair of street shoes that became my first pair of dancing shoes. It was just a plain black street shoe, cleaned off somewhat, and worn only to dance classes and to dances. Thinking back, I'm sure it left a lot of marks on the floor that others, with good dances shoes, complained about. No. 1 was my

first pair of real dance shoes. They were black, clean, had suede soles, and looked nice. I still have pair No. 1, but it has become stretched over the years, and doesn't fit too well anymore. Pair No. 2 was purchased because No. 1 was not grippy enough for dancing the progressive dances like waltz, foxtrot, and

How Many, cont. on page 6



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tango. One needs to move fast down the floor, stop in the corner, and keep the follow from falling when she goes off-balance. When I got into the latin/rhythm dances, I needed something more slippy, so that I could turn and pivot better. Along came pair No. 3, with 1" stocky heels. When I started going to the Loring for Argentine tango on Sunday nights, none of those I had were OK. I didn't want to wreck my good dance-shoes on the café floor, and pair No. 0 was kind-of junky. So, I took a pair of street shoes, cleaned them up well; they became pair No. 4. Good. We are almost done. Outdoor dances like the hanger dances mimicking WWII swing era, and the West Coast Swing picnic on the cement at Phalen Park, meant cement floors that destroyed the soles of even of street-shoes like pair No. 4. That means that a sturdy pair of outdoor-quality shoes became dance shoe pair No. 5.

So, how many pairs of dance shoes does a dancer need? For me, it looks like five pairs, or even more, depending upon how one counts. Oops. I forgot dance shoe pair No. 6. If you are a really good friend of mine, ask me sometime about pair No. 6. ■

All That Glitters

by Marge Gerok-Jerde

When I first started Argentine tango, I wore sure-footed shoes with a solid heel. They were nothing special. I felt more secure, and besides, the closed toes were good insurance. As I danced, I adored the beautiful shoes around me, longingly.

As my experience (and balance) grew, I learned I could indeed dance! Could I stand on such spindly heels? Was the cost worth the investment? I purchased the first pair in town, cautiously. And yes! I could stay upright on them. As I danced, I still longed for a pair directly from the motherland, as it seemed that's where all the most beautiful shoes came from. Alas, my life would not allow for such a trip! I had teenagers to guide.

Eventually, Lois offered to get me a



Photo provided by Marge Gerok-Jerde

pair on her next trip, and soon I had two pairs of real tango shoes to my name!

A year or so later, I remarked to my boyfriend (now my husband), that having just two pairs, one black and one white just wouldn't do. I longed for a sliver glittery pair to add to my wardrobe. He, of course, did not understand why I had to have more shoes (of any kind) let alone dance shoes that are so expensive.

A friend of mine was making a trip that summer to Buenos Aires.

Unbeknownst to me, my boyfriend conspired with her to bring back a pair of custom-made shoes. On my birthday that year he surprised me on the way to a dance with a beautiful black-and-silver glittery pair of tango shoes! They are one of my favorites, and a great memory of his spot-on gift, and many happy tango moments! ■

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Tango Noir

by Jim Dunn

She danced a muscular tango; not unpleasant really, just very vigorous, with a lot of body. The kind of body that would've made an archbishop sing, "Baby, I'm yours." She was tall with very red hair — a red not generally found in nature. She also had a dragon tattoo in a very private place, but I didn't find out about that until later.

I met her during the Friday afternoon milonga at the Confiteria Ideal. I went there often after just making deadline for the wire services. Some Spanish and a willingness to work for peanuts qualified me to go to Buenos Aires. There were reasons I had to leave Minneapolis. Nothing criminal. Just some entanglements I couldn't untangle.

This Friday I was hungry, so I took a table on the first floor below the second floor ballroom. You could take the elevator, if the elevator ever worked. A tourist visiting the city in those days might have thought the words *no funciona* meant elevator in Spanish.

I glanced around for rats. A couple of weeks earlier, while sitting at the same table, a good-sized rat had sauntered in through the open door. I don't mean the kind of Argentine rat that hangs out at milongas trolling for visiting tangueras. I mean the furry, four-legged kind. As he sniffed his way over to another table, I wondered if I should warn the occupants, but being uncertain of local mores, I kept mum. I don't think the screams and overturned tables that

followed were entirely my fault.

My regular mozo came over after the required twenty minutes or so and I ordered dos empanadas and a *cerveza chica*. He left, and there she was in a mirror, talking to a milongero I called Mr. Clean because he was powerfully built with a shaved bullet head. I waved the mozo back and ordered a quick whiskey, neat. I couldn't see her in the mirror anymore. The little voice we all have told me to make that whiskey a double.

TO BE CONTINUED ... ■

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"I don't know who invented high heels, but all women owe him a lot."

—Marilyn Monroe

"No woman needs more than one pair of shoes. But when it comes to shoes and women, the word 'need' doesn't make any sense."

—Alicia Muñoz (shoe collector, designer, and founder of Comme il Faut)

"Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world."

—Marilyn Monroe

**Fifth Saturday
TSoM milonga in
St. Paul on Nov. 30**

Check www.mntango.org
for dates, location and details.

"The music goes in my eyes, is filtered through my heart, and comes out through my feet."

— El Flaco Dany Garcia