

A Publication of the Tango Society of Minnesota ([TSOM](#))

FALL 2017



MARÍA WAS HERE!  
PAGE 2



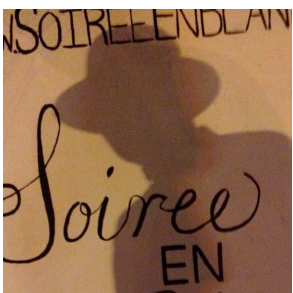
FROM THE  
PRESIDENTE  
PAGE 4



FROM THE  
EDITORIA  
PAGE 5

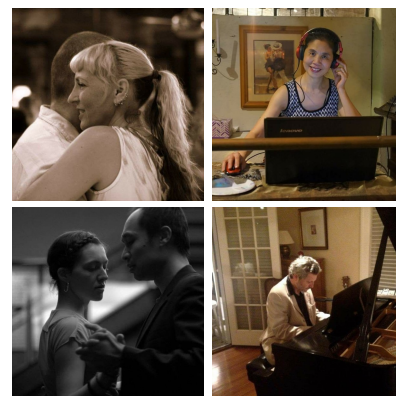


TANGO  
MOMENTS  
PAGE 6



TANGO  
NOIR  
PAGE 7

THANK YOUR  
MILONGA DJ  
PAGE 8



UPCOMING  
EVENTS  
PAGE 13

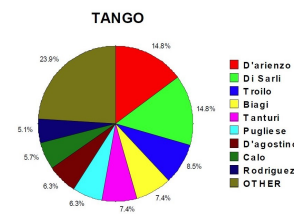


ASTOR PIAZZOLLA  
PAGE 14



SURVEY OF  
BA MILONGAS  
PAGE 15

TSOM PICNIC MILONGA: Photos throughout this issue!



# MARIA

*de Buenos Aires*

ta Maria de Buenos Aires, a story of love, life, death and passion.

In exchange for providing DJs and Teachers, TSoM received a number of standing room tickets, thought by some to be the best “seats” in the house, looking down on the whole performance.

The opening night after-party included complimentary food and drinks and went nearly two hours. There was a milonga indoors, and outdoors tango videos were projected on the silos to the live guitar music of Scott Mateo.

Kudos to the local tangueros who joined the cast for the Minneapolis shows: Bruce Abas, Rebecca Abas, Tamara Demarco, Juan Garcia, Liliana Imwinkelried, and Mark Jefferis (pictured below with choreographer Fernanda Ghi).



## MARIA WAS HERE!

In the heat of mid-July nights, the Mill City Summer Opera pleased audiences in six sold-out performances of Astor Piazzolla's operetta Maria de Buenos Aires, a story of love, life, death and passion.



★ **StarTribune**

MUSIC

## Mill City Summer Opera stages a sultry version of 'Maria de Buenos Aires'

REVIEW: Mill City Summer Opera stages a sultry version of Piazzolla's "Maria of Buenos Aires."

By Michael Anthony Special to the Star Tribune | JULY 18, 2017 — 11:53AM



DAN NORMAN

From Mill City Summer Opera's "Maria de Buenos Aires."



“Some say that *Maria de Buenos Aires* represents the history of tango: its birth, infancy, adolescence in the suburbs and brothels, its adulthood and glow in the night clubs and cabarets of the city, then its humiliation, decay and death; finally its glory and rebirth into immortality.”

**-Bataclan Tango**

**([www.bataclantango.org](http://www.bataclantango.org))**

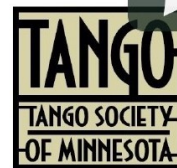


**Maria de Buenos Aires:  
Minneapolis 2017 Performances**



## VIDEO

**MARIA**  
*de Buenos Aires*



On the local involvement by the Tango Society of Minnesota:

“It’s been great having them as part of our opera, really great. They’ve been the soul of this opera.”

**-Soprano Catalina Cuervo, Lead Performer**

## A NOTA FROM THE PRESIDENTE

*By Paul Lohman*

**TSoM HISTORY:** Can you name all of the TSoM Presidents?  
I'll help you out:

- Lois Donnay
- Tonya Smith
- John MacFarlane
- Diana Devi
- Dan Griggs
- Bill Boyt
- Reuben Hansen



Most of these folks are still in Minnesota. So, when you see them (and other board members) thank them for making tango great in the Twin Cities. Many others in our tango community have served on the board over the years; perhaps you would like to add your name when elections come around in January. Think about it.

## MILL CITY SUMMER OPERA – MARIA DE BUENOS AIRES

A big and hearty thanks to the teachers who helped out at the Mill City Opera: **Diana Devi, Lois Donnay, Andrea DuCane, and Sabine Ibes**; and to the DJs: **Paul Lohman, Rahul Ughade and Jennifer Wang**. It was a great success with more than 100 people taking the tango lesson before the show.

## SUMMER PICNIC

We had a great TSoM picnic at Wirth Park Pavilion. Photos of the event are throughout this issue.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mark your calendar now for the TSoM Holiday Milonga – on December 9. This year it will be at the Columbia Manor on Central Avenue NE with live music and holiday gifts.

## WORKSHOPS

Check the [TSoM Calendar](#) for information about upcoming workshops with **Tomas Howlin** (September 1-4), **Maxi Gluzman** (October 14-15 and 21-22) and **Luciana Valle** (December 1-3).

See you on the dance floor,

*Paul*





## A NOTA FROM THE EDITORA

By Tessa (Gail) Wagner

We at Tango Moments feel the responsibility to cover all the good being done by local tangueros. In this issue we highlight the many contributions to *Maria de Buenos Aires* by members of our community.

We also honor the hard work and great talent of our milonga DJs: What would we do without them building the tandas that create such lovely milongas? This DJ topic will continue in the following issues, as an ongoing conversation about the ins and outs of being a DJ. Deep appreciation to the DJs who contributed such great insights for this issue: **Jean Mueller, Jennifer Wang, Rebecca Orrison, and Peter Truran.**



As you peruse this issue of Tango Moments, you'll see an article titled *Tango Moments*: it's a throwback to the early days of our organization, written by our founding president, **Lois Donnay**. We hope that you enjoy what's become a regular column in the new Tango Moments newsletter: the instructor's perspective.

Finally, I encourage you to view the two documentaries on **Astor Piazzolla** featured on page 14: I've enjoyed them immensely. They provide insightful and inspirational views into the life of a genius.

*Tessa*



## TANGO MOMENTS

*By Lois Donnay*

This article was originally published in 1999 in [www.mndance.com](http://www.mndance.com), when the TSoM was young and Lois served as our first president.

I've been thinking lately of how lucky people are who know how to dance. So often, when I'm out dancing in a setting with non-dancers, I hear people say, "Wow, that's great - how did you learn to do that?" They're fascinated, but when I tell them that they can learn, they don't believe me.

Learning to dance isn't easy, but it's not as hard as most people think. And of course, the rewards are enormous. It's great exercise, and where else do you get to hold a relative stranger that close, if only for 3 minutes? If it's true that you need six hugs a day for spiritual growth, my spirit is enormous!

One of the saddest things I see is people who take a series of lessons, maybe go to a dance or two, and then let their learning slip away. Right before they get over the awkwardness, while they're still in a bit of frustration, they stop. If only they would keep at it for another month, or maybe two, the skill would be there for a lifetime - almost like that famed bicycle riding ability.

### Dance with Lois Donnay

Argentine Tango

[lois@mndance.com](mailto:lois@mndance.com)  
[www.mndance.com](http://www.mndance.com)



The elusive dance we love is probably harder to learn than most (although the hug factor is greater!). Connection is more crucial than in other dances, and connection is always hard to master. But when you do, when you get it, there it is: A Tango Moment. Then you're hooked.

That doesn't mean that there won't be many other times of frustration. Times when you try and try to learn a new step and it doesn't work. Times when you can't get comfortable with any of your partners all night. Times when you see the masters and think you're not even dancing the same dance. But in the years I've been working at this dance, I've come to treasure those moments. I know that the deeper my frustration, the more my skill is growing.

When I am in Buenos Aires, I have so many Tango Moments that my head is swimming. But I also have some frustration. Some there are so good! The result is extreme growth, and a much, much better understanding of this dance. How sad if I would have given up that

day a long time ago when I saw a tango demo and realized that what I was doing at the time could hardly even be called tango. I almost gave up, but I gave it one more shot.

I'm so encouraged right now that I might even start taking those guitar lessons again - why did I give those up?

---

## TANGO NOIR — PART 3

*By Jim Dunn*

So I'm in the back seat of a Ford Falcon on my way to a duel. I'm to be a duelist, or *duelista* in Spanish. Mr. Clean is driving. His real name is Antonio and he's now my second in this duel, quite a nice fellow after all, and a distant relative of Carmen.

The afternoon milonga at the Confiteria ended badly. We were sitting at one of the tiny tables beside the dance floor when a tipsy young man approached, belched loudly, then asked Carmen to dance. She looked away and didn't respond. The fellow was obviously unaware of the *mirada/cabeceo*, which avoids such awkward scenes.

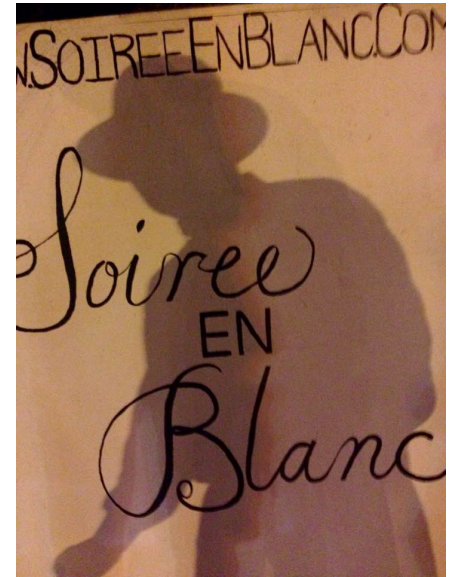
Offended, he grabbed Carmen off her perch and began stumbling around with her. Antonio leapt up, separated the two, swatted the fellow with the back of his hand and the drunk fell into me on my chair, spilling us both onto the floor, where we wrestled around until Antonio pulled me to my feet.

Peering at the muscular Antonio and myself, the drunk, now on all fours, screamed, in French accented English, "I will keel you," directing this at me. Then, wobbling to his feet, he exclaimed, "I demand a duel, you and I, this very night." A couple of other young men, apparently his *amigos*, helped him rise and took him to the other side of the room.

We settled again at our table, trying to make sense of the whole mess. Shortly, one of the young men motioned to Antonio, who rose and met him halfway. They chatted for a while, then separated.

"It's set. There will be a duel. We get to choose weapons, and as the challenged party I chose pistols. I have a set at home and will bring them. Five AM tomorrow. There's a semi abandoned amusement park called *Parque de la Ciudad*. Should be quiet there."

I gulped a little wine and yelped.





“Pistols? Duel? Wait a minute! How about snowballs at thirty paces? That’s the last duel I had in sixth grade in Bloomington, Minnesota. Who is this guy who wants a duel?”

“His name is Jean Paul. He’s the son of the French ambassador here. His second says he has a strong sense of honor.”

“Well I don’t. In fact, I have a strong sense of survival. So why aren’t you fighting a duel? You grabbed him and threw him on me.”

“No se, guess they don’t see me as the dueling type. Anyway, the guy will still be drunk by the time the duel happens so he probably won’t be able to hit anything.”

“So, if I hit him, I’m a murderer. This can’t be legal under Argentine law.”

“Don’t know, I’m a plumber, not un abogado.”

**(To be continued in the next issue)**

---

## THANK YOUR MILONGA DJ

We Minnesota tangueros are blessed to have an impressive list of great milonga DJs, so here’s a column to honor their work and to thank them for their service. After all, it takes a lot more than to have a lot of tango music and to show up to “just play some tangos” for us to dance. As background, if you’re curious, check out [this article](#) on the art and science of DJing milongas.

In this issue we have great thoughts and insights from four of our DJs. We’ll feature some of our other DJs in the next few issues of Tango Moments.

## HOW/WHY DID YOU START DJING MILONGAS?

### DJ JEAN MUELLER

I came to tango after becoming a country two-step dancer. WHAT?! Yeah, it’s true, I didn’t own high heels or fancy dresses, just a bunch of cowboy boots. I can see you all right now shaking your heads and saying, “Oh that explains it.” Really, is it any wonder I ended up being an alternative DJ when I was a bit wild to begin with?





Sweet, sweet tango—for a rhythmic dancer like myself—to move on the fly in any given direction not knowing what will happen next, I'm telling you, this is heaven to me. Every step an unknown possibility in the making. For this very reason I am a DJ, because the things I love about tango could not be contained to the realm of only traditional music or a set of specific movements.

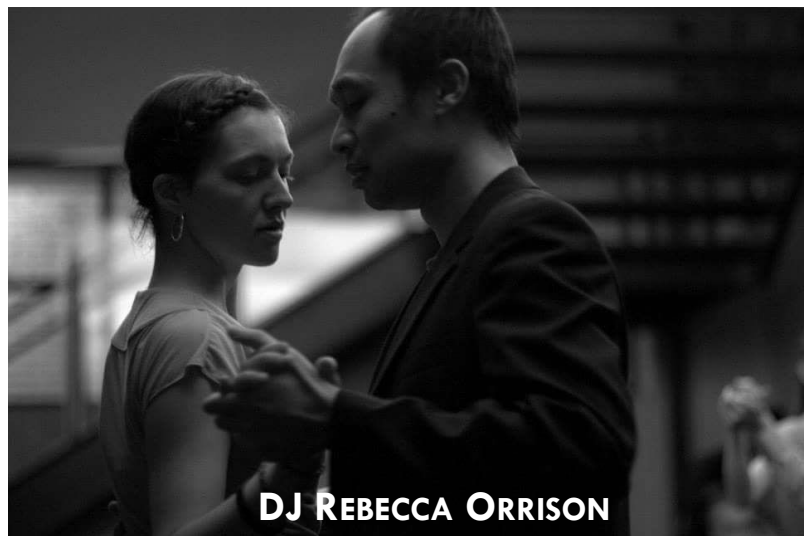
Getting funky with tango became an obsession for me. Being that there was no alternative DJ at the time, if I wanted to dance this way I had to do it myself. Eight years ago I started playing music monthly for folks. Today I DJ every other month.

### **DJ REBECCA ORRISON**

I started DJing for a reason that I think a lot of DJs start: I feel in love with the music, but I wasn't hearing the music that I loved at milongas. I think we have a pretty good DJ community here in Minneapolis, and it is really consistent - which can be both a good and bad thing. I wanted something different, and felt I could add to the mixture.

There is so much quality music that was recorded, and I think it is possible to go outside of what is commonly played and still be playing excellent music. More specifically, I like really fast milonga and vals songs, which add a whole lot of energy to the night - but I didn't hear much of that being played.

Also, I'm currently listening to Anibal Troilo, and I think his orchestra recorded some of the most beautiful and complex tangos which are also really accessible - I always think it could be played more at milongas.



### **DJ PETER TRURAN**

My first teacher of tango was Mike Lavocah, a remarkable man of French, Anglo-Indian descent, who spoke Spanish like a porteño and who had an encyclopedic knowledge of tango music. He knew the composers and singers, the

orchestras, when each recording was made and who were the personnel. In those days we DJed using CDs, and he really did know every track completely before he put it in the player. He was a kind of a genius. He taught me all I know about tango music and about how to put together a good program of tandas.

### **DJ JENNIFER WANG**

I started studying DJing in 2012 about 3 years before I decided to DJ, because I wanted to have a better understanding of tango music in order to be a better tango dancer. At festivals/marathons I took DJ seminars/lectures, have talked with the best DJs across North America whenever the opportunity presented itself. Also, I exchanged opinions about the



**DJ JENNIFER WANG**

feel of the music being played with my fellow dancers. In 2015 I was encouraged by a tango friend who has been DJing at various festivals/marathons, when I expressed my tango learning challenges to him. Although I was hesitant, I started to make notes, and started building a music library. After a local DJ asked me to fill in for him and DJ for his well-attended milonga, I thought it was time to jump in and work hard in an attempt to fill his shoes. It took me 8 months to tag the music to the point of being comfortable enough to tackle my first DJing gig in March of 2016.

### **ABOUT THE TTVTTM FORMAT (2 TANGO TANDAS, 1 VALS TANDA, 2 TANGO TANDAS, 1 MILONGA TANDA, AND REPEAT)**

### **DJ REBECCA ORRISON**

I've stuck to this format, and I think it works well. Towards the end of the night, I think playing three tango tandas in a row and not playing milonga is okay, especially if the energy doesn't stay high enough to make the milonga tanda "work" - and by that I mean it won't make folks want to go home!

### **DJ JEAN MUELLER**

In alternative music there are fewer defined songs that are strictly tangos, many many songs fall into the category of milonga and the rare find is a true vals. So the juggling act begins as an ALT DJ with this imbalance from the beginning. The regular milonga format does not work.



I was told that you had to be a leader, not a follow, to be successful, and that was the formula for ALT milongas. No set categories, just make sure it is danceable for tango. Imagine throwing all your tango music in one folder and mixing up all the songs, then clicking on each one and asking yourself, “How do I lead this?” to put tandas together. This is how I started, and I did not lead at the time!

### **DJ PETER TRURAN**

In Buenos Aires it is usual for tango tandas to consist of four songs (three for vals and milonga tandas). I generally use tandas of three tangos. I feel this is appropriate for local milongas, which are of shorter duration than most milongas in Buenos Aires. In the bigger dance halls a substantial portion of the first song of a four-song tanda may be taken up with the cabeceo and with jockeying onto the floor; and the Argentines tend to talk and socialize much more at the start of each number. I use shorter cortinas (20 to 25 seconds) than are common in Buenos Aires; again, this is because the milongas are shorter.

---

TSoM Picnic Milonga—Summer 2017





## DJ JENNIFER WANG

I follow the TTVTTM framework that has been used in all the festivals and marathons that I have attended. It is well defined and people are familiar with it which makes it predictable, and this helps maintain consistency. I typically play 4-song tango tandas from the same orchestra with similar flavors. This gives dancers a chance to dive into a certain musical style, and gives them a sense of security. Then they can expect that the type of music will be consistent throughout the tanda, and this gives them a better chance of establishing a connection and enjoying their dance partner.

The 4-song tanda structure usually goes like this: First, recognizable music with the power to attract dancers and to get them out of their seats. Second, a relatively unknown track or challenging track, but something very similar to the first track so the dancers will not be too surprised. Third, select the track that encourages the dancers to feel confident — it must have the continuity from the first track in case the dancers get "lost" in the second track. Fourth, finish on a high note with a feel-good track, or one with more "punch," so that the dancers appreciate the whole tanda.





## DJ REBECCA ORRISON ON TANGO CLASSIFICATION

Besides the common tags of orchestra, singer, year, and genre, I like to note if there is any arrastre, or drag, sound in the song. A strong example of this can be found in the Pugliese song "La yumba." It makes the song have a lot of energy, but in a heavy way. It is important for a DJ to be aware of this, because it will impact the energy of the dancers. I also like to note a few composers, for example, I find I love just about everything composed by Enrique Santos Discépolo, so I try to note that in my collection.

**THANK YOUR MILONGA DJ** *continues on page 16*

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Tomas Howlin**

September 1-4, 2017

Sponsored by Pauline Oo



Tomás Howlin

### **Maxi Gluzman**



October 14-15, 2017 – Rochester

October 21-22, 2017 – Minneapolis

Sponsored by Kyra Anastasiadou  
and Augusto Morrone

### **Luciana Valle**

December 1-3, 2017 – Minneapolis

Sponsored by Michael Kane



Luciana Valle

## **SAVE THE DATE**

DECEMBER 9TH: TSOM 2017 HOLIDAY MILONGA

## ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

After the wonderful summer experience of *Maria de Buenos Aires* here in Minneapolis, you may be inspired to learn more about Astor Piazzolla. Voilà, a BBC documentary on the work and life of the master: [Astor Piazzolla In Portrait - Tango Maestro \[2005\]](#). The show begins with Piazzolla humbly stating, "The old traditional tango is very boring, there had-n't been any changes in that music for at least 40 or 50 years! Until I come in."

The show includes comments on *Maria de Buenos Aires* by Amelita Baltar, rare historical footage of Piazzolla's life and work, the master himself speaking in English, Spanish and French, his catching the attention of Diego Rivera and Carlos Gardel in New York while still a kid, and numerous interviews with family and musicians who worked with and admired the composer. He died on the 4th of July, 1992.

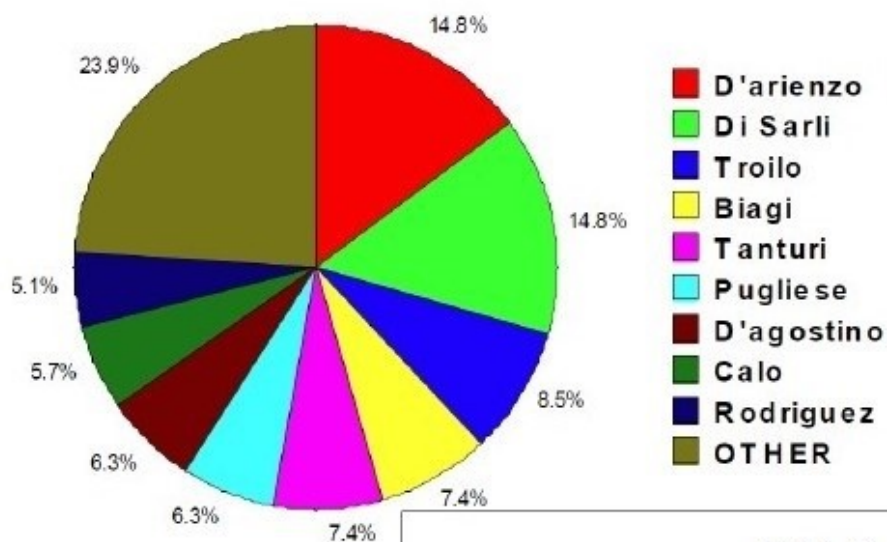


## HOMAGE TO THE GREAT TANGO REVOLUTIONARY



Another documentary: [Homage to Astor Piazzolla - The Man Who Revolutionized the Tango](#), tells the story of Astor Piazzolla as "the man who dared to change the tango and who, with his bandoneon, brought the tango into modern music. In a time of musical uncertainty, he had that most precious of gifts: an unmistakable musical voice which touches the heart and which grows in the mind like an addiction. But his greatest gift brought him also his greatest sorrows."

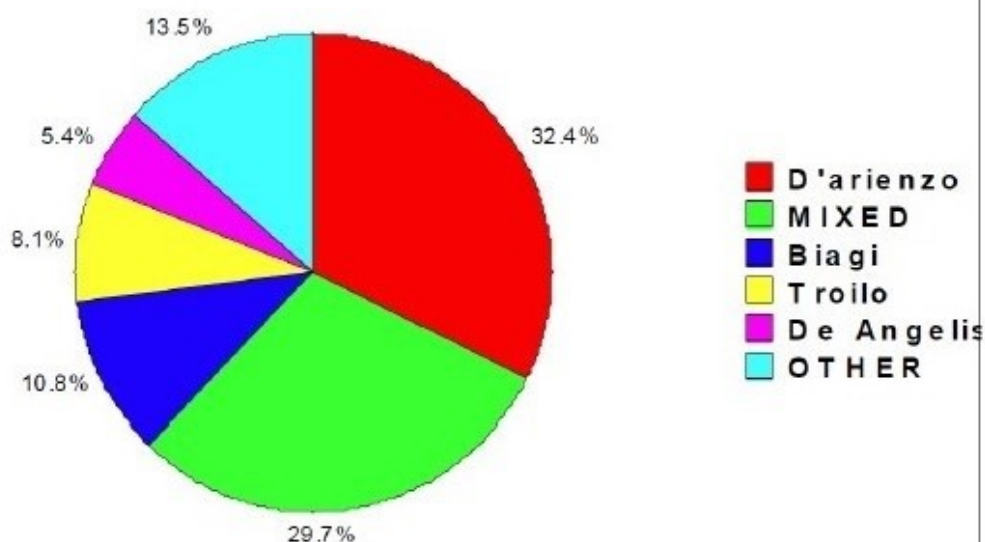
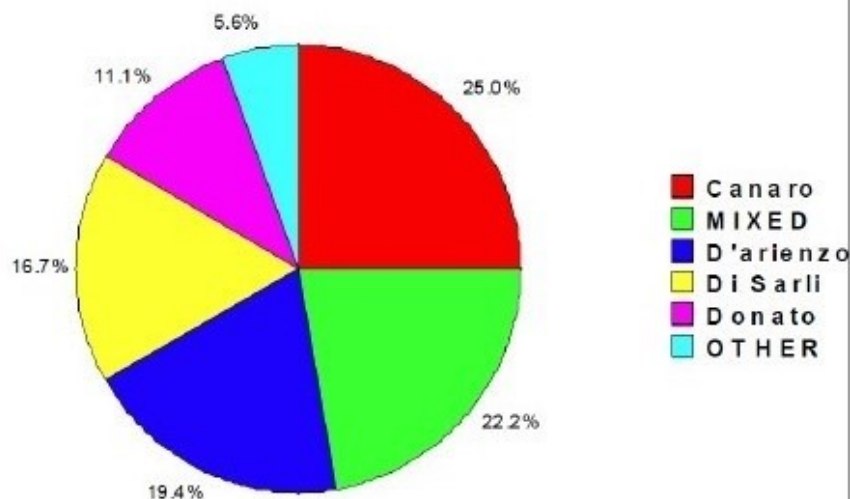


**TANGO**

## SURVEY OF MUSIC PLAYED AT MILONGAS IN BUENOS AIRES

2008, by Ron Weigel,  
[Tango Society of  
Central Illinois,](#)  
Urbana, IL

See [Detailed PDF](#)

**VALS****MILONGA**

From a total of 14 milongas at

- El Beso
- Club Grisel
- Centro Leonesa
- Lo de Celia
- El Arranque
- Plaza Bohemia

## THANK YOUR MILONGA DJ

(continued from page 13)

### DJ PETER TRURAN ON TEXTURE AND MOODS

The key understanding I derived from Mike (my tango mentor) was a feeling for the unique rhythmic qualities of the music of the Golden Age (1935-1955), the variations of mood associated with the different orchestras, and the ways in which the music shapes the dance. An understanding of these elements allows for the construction of a program that provides shifting dynamic and textural interest. So I will follow the suave, smoothness of Di Sarli with the angularity of Biagi or D'Arienzo; the urbanity and sophistication of Agostino/Vargas with the more visceral music of Orchestra Tipica Victor or wonderful early Fresedo (the later stuff is too overworked for my taste). Mike always said that "you can never have too much Canaro," and I tend to agree with him! In my view the evening should build in the complexity and challenge of the music. Typically I will build up to a tanda of Pugliese (romantic, but intimidating for less experienced dancers) or late Troilo. Choice of this type of music needs to be careful because so much of it is unsuitable for social dancing.

### DJ JENNIFER WANG ON READING THE DANCERS

As my Tango Mentor said, DJs "can respect all the principles of good playing music and still spoil the mood of the dancers if you cannot read them." There are different styles of DJing. I put a lot of planning into making my playlists before the milonga, but adapt them to the needs of the moment during the milongas.

### MY CATEGORIES TODAY, BY DJ JEAN MUELLER (ALT DJ)

1. Angry, Angst or Brooding
2. Beat Driving
3. Brass instruments
4. Bubbly & Playful
5. Classics with a Twist
6. Dark, Moody Subjects
7. Grounding Down Beat
8. Romantic & Sweet
9. Silly
10. Stretchy, Floaty, & Dropped Beats



TSOM Jr. Milonga



## **DJ JENNIFER WANG ON THE ENERGY OF A MILONGA**

A good DJ would construct and control the energy in waves throughout the entire milonga by adjusting the intensity of the tandas. It is an art to compile a good flow within the tanda which pulls the people onto the floor, but that is only half the battle. The greater challenge is to link all of the individual tandas together to create that "feel good" factor, so dancers want to dance all night.

## **DJ REBECCA ORRISON ON CORTINAS**

I love really high-energy cortinas, and I play music I love. I think it is important to contrast the cortinas with the tandas, and bring people back to the "real world," so to speak. A cortina should be long enough to get everyone off the floor and have one breath - too much space and people stand around staring at the DJ, but too little space between tandas makes the night feel really rushed.

## **DJ JENNIFER WANG ON CORTINAS**

I consider cortinas as important as the rest of the music being played. I normally select a theme, such as oldies, or jazz or Chinese or any other genre for any given night. The purpose of the cortina is to get people to clear the dance floor without dancing to the cortina. I cut the song used for cortinas into three sections and then use them for each set of the TTV/TTM. At times I will fade the cortina if the floor has cleared and the cortina is still running.

## **DJ JEAN MUELLER ON SPECIAL REQUESTS**

I have discovered the kiss of death for me is listening to the lone requester. "Can you play more (fill in the blank)?" If I satisfy that one request I may see the whole room's mood



TSoM Picnic Milonga—Summer 2017

change and a near empty dance floor with that one dancer desperately looking for a partner and not even dancing themselves. People giving me dirty looks or coming to complain—oh I cannot tell the countless times I've been chastised for being talked into playing stuff or not playing stuff. In the end I am alone, by myself, at the helm. Everyone sees me tank and I must suck it up and keep going. It is painful. It does not matter the hours I've put into a particular playlist. It does not matter you wanted to make someone happy. When you tank, you tank.

### **DJ PETER TRURAN ON TANGO LYRICS**

Even if we do not fully understand the lyrics of a tango, it really helps to understand what any particular song is about. I love the tango "Toda mi vida" played by Anibal Troilo, with a beautiful estribillo sung by Franciso Fiorentino. Without understanding the lyrics one might think that this is a chirpy, upbeat tango. Once you realize the wrenching sadness of Contursi's lyrics it will affect the context in which this tango is played and, of course, the way it is danced.

### **A FINAL WORD BY DJ REBECCA ORRISON**

I think the more DJs we have, the stronger our community will be, and the more we can have discussions about what the ingredients should be for a night of great and danceable music.

### **A FINAL WORD BY DJ JEAN MUELLER**

When dancers come to Tango5400 and joyfully clap at the end of the evening, it is for all the unsung heroes that put on that gig. Those who set the table, those who hoisted the big speakers onto their stands, those who moved heavy benches... It is for everyone in the room that showed up to dance. Believe me, I know this when you are clapping, thank you. "Tango On" my good friends!







**Tango Moments** is a publication of The Tango Society of Minnesota ([TSoM](http://www.mntango.org)), a non-profit corporation established in 1999 as a 501(c)(7) (non-profit social) organization. TSoM exists to promote Argentine Tango in Minnesota and to support other organizations that do the same.

**Publisher:** TSoM Board of Directors

- Paul Lohman, President
- Ray Shudy, Vice President
- Terry Holten, Secretary
- Jennifer Wang, Treasurer
- Gregory Bringman
- Scott Chase
- Terri Cox Davis
- Suzanne Doyle
- Natalie Aiello
- Barbara Haselbeck
- Linda McFadden
- Corinne O'Neil



**Editorial Team**

Editorial Director:	Tessa (Gail) Wagner
Editor-in-Chief:	Paul Malena
Sr. Writer & Copy Editor:	Donald Rowe
Contributors:	Lois Donnay, Jim Dunn, Rebecca Orrison, Jennifer Wang, Jean Mueller, Peter Truran

A pro bono contribution of **malena.ink**

**Contributors:**

We welcome submissions from the TSoM community. To comment, suggest content or contribute stories, please email [tango-moments@mntango.org](mailto:tango-moments@mntango.org).

The editorial team will contact you if it feels that your story may be improved in any way, and will work with you on any edits that this may involve -- your story will be published with your approval.

You retain intellectual property of your content, granting TSoM the right to publish it. See the [editorial guidelines](http://www.mntango.org) on the TSoM website: [www.mntango.org](http://www.mntango.org).