

TANGO AUSTRALIS

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Is it love, tango attraction, or a micro-moment of positivity resonance?



Tango is known as the dance of love (and death). For millennia, artists and poets have addressed the mystery of love. In every society the concept of love exists – but what was it, in particular, about the society of Buenos Aires that distilled nostalgia and regret with the essence of sexual attraction into the hormonal brew that became tango?

What is love? It's a good question, like the big one – 'Does God exist?' The atheism debate has not proved to me that God does not exist. Equally, I cannot prove that God – or love – does exist. Proof, either way, may be discovered, but in the meantime I move forward with faith, guided by a belief system, molded by life experiences.

Professor Helen Fisher, a biological anthropologist at Rutgers University, surveyed 13 million people and defined four distinct personality types: The Explorer (curious, creative & spontaneous); The Builder (calm, social & good at managing people); The Director (analytical, focused & decisive); and The Negotiator (imaginative, intuitive, empathetic & emotionally expressive). Explorers attract Explorers, and Builders attract Builders, but testosterone-driven Directors tend to fall for 'high oestrogen' Negotiators, and vice versa. (*If the bug bites*, Sarah Berry in Wellbeing, The Age, Monday 3 June 2013).

Scientists tell us that love is a drive that happens in three 'parts'.

1. Lust – stimulated by sex hormones testosterone & oestrogen
2. Romantic love – driven by dopamine and serotonin (the happy hormone)
3. Attachment - cultivated by oxytocin (the cuddle hormone) and vasopressin (the chemical for commitment, ... If only that one could be sold.)

These three 'parts' and related hormones are also at work in a tango relationship. But tango trains us to fall in and out of love quickly, so that the tango love affair begins, climaxes, and ends within a *tanda*, or sometimes just one *tango*.

Here's an overview. A *tanguera* looks around the salon, and sees an attractive man, a potential partner, dancing with another woman (1 – Lust, also tinged with jealousy). The *tanguera* uses secret womanly powers to attract the attention of the man, who then thinks that he's been the initiator of the invitation. They meet on the dance floor. He takes her in his manly embrace; they breathe in harmony, find a connection, and glide into the flow of the dance (2 – the dopamine and serotonin start to kick in, and soon, when the two dancers attain tango unity, they will soar on to romance). One tango of the *tanda* ends, and, in the few seconds before the next one begins, the man and woman exchange a few words, waiting for the music to draw them together again. By the time the last tango of the *tanda* ends, they're in stage 3 and oxytocin is at work.

And this is where the tango relationship differs from a standard love affair. Dancers fall in love in a good tango, but it is expected that the end of the dance will bring the dancers' relationship to a conclusion (that's the 'marriage' of 3 minutes). Man and woman return to their respective tables to prepare for another relationship with their next partner. The tango code is that dancers go their separate ways after a *tanda* and after a milonga. Such tango 'rules' and codes may be why the tango has survived, as it has. A man and a woman have been going to an afternoon milonga in Buenos Aires, to dance with one another each week, for many years. But they dance with other people too.

It makes you wonder if production of the 'commitment' chemical, vasopressin, is affected by tango. Is a chemical the key to why a tango affair differs from a love affair? Tango people get addicted to tango, but not committed exclusively to one partner.

In the same newspaper, in an article called *How to beat addiction*, Michael Short asked Professor Jon Currie what signs indicate that use, or behavior, is becoming a problem of addiction, calling for intervention. He replied '*... the drug or behavior, particularly gambling for instance, becomes more and more and more consuming, more central to your lifestyle. Your ability to not do it becomes increasingly diminished, so you more and more feel you are compelled to do it. Early attempts to quit don't work.*' We could, if we wanted, substitute the words 'tango dancing' for 'gambling'.

On a serious note, Professor Currie advocates using medical treatment alongside traditional methods to treat the brain disorder of addiction, noting that as many as 7 in 10 addicts can remain abstinent. [Professor Currie is founder of the National Centre for the Neurobiological Treatment of Addiction – you can read the full transcript of the interview at theage.com.au/opinion/the-zone.]

Apology to a poet

Last month we printed the First & Second Prize-winning poems of the Australian Tango Poetry Competition in 'New Australian Tango writing': '*Tango Villanelle*' and '*Recipe for Milonga dressing*' by Avril Bradley. A couple of mistakes slipped through the proof reading. We apologize. We have reprinted the poems so they can be fully appreciated.

New Australian Tango Writing
Sponsored by Tango Friends Australia Inc
A not-for-profit association supporting Tango Arts

AVRIL BRADLEY

Tango Villanelle

In the dark two dancers converse,
enter into light, a sharp, dark suit, a flowing dress.
Two sides of a coin, he the head she obverse.

Arms stretch out a moment, retract, reverse,
move together in tender caress.
In the dark two other dancers now converse.

Piazzolla music plays soulful, terse.
The dancers feel the rhythm, note the stress,
spin, two sides of a coin, he the head, she obverse.

They glide as one across the floor, immersed
together in the light, then seemingly nonchalant, flawless
two more dancers from the dark emerge.

Legs and heels the floor traverse.
Lipstick smiles and sinuous limbs press
close two sides of a coin, he the head, she obverse.

Music, lights, dancers, wondrously diverse.
A crowd of couples so close their colours infloresce.
In the dark two dancers converse.
Two sides of a coin, he the head she obverse.

MICHELLE SWEENEY

On the Death of a Partner

Leached soil on bleached bones
Heavy heart of concrete stones
Tango tirade, danced alone

Shitake mushroom dried and veined
Shrivelled round the edges stained
Desperate thirst, no chance of rain

Listless dishcloth odour stale
pungent whiff of day old kale
Too tired now to rant and wail

Never dance again she thinks
Leans upon the kitchen sink
Pours a whiskey, then she drinks.

'On the Death of a Partner' was awarded Third Prize in the 2012 – 2013 Australian Tango Poetry Competition.

Michelle Sweeney has dabbled a little in poetry since school days, and finds that she is most likely to put pen to paper at times of intense sorrow or joy. She has been a member of the Melbourne tango community since moving from Perth in 2004. It was at that time that she decided to swap her career as a physiotherapist for one as a librarian, which allows her to indulge her love of literature. She currently works as a school librarian at Scotch College, where she endeavours to entice the boys away from their computer games and introduce them to the mind-broadening and enriching world of books. As a girl Michelle learnt classical ballet, and as a young woman she experimented with contemporary dance, African Jazz, Flamenco and Jive, but the dance that has inspired, frustrated and obsessed her more than any other, is tango. Like great literature, it is complex, beautiful and endlessly challenging. Recently Michelle has taken up cycling, mountain climbing and canoeing in the wilderness of Tasmania.

New Australian Tango Writing, June 2013

DAVID OLDS

David moved straight from high school into computer programming, leading to a 35-year career in Information Technology. In the latter stages David worked as an independent IT and business consultant, honing his fiction-writing skills on IT and business strategy reports for large corporate and government enterprises.

Having got his life back-to-front, David commenced tertiary education in 2007, engaging as an undergraduate in Digital Communications degree. This metamorphosed into straight English Literature, with David completing an Honours Degree in English Literature in 2010, with a thesis about post-modernism and the response of satire to the Global Financial Crisis.

David is currently engaged in writing a PhD thesis about the *Nation Review* newspaper and its role in Australian society.

David's hobbies include trying to stop the house and car from falling completely apart, 'grandson-wrangling' and, in a modest way, trying to learn to tango. All this is happening with massive support from his partner Kaye.

David won the Staff Prize for English 2008, First and Second Prize, Imprints Prize for Fiction 2009, and the Richard Conyers Prize for highest-scoring Humanities thesis 2010.

David's story 'Cabaret Tabaris' was awarded Second Prize in the *Australian Tango Short Story Competition, 2012 -2013*.



Cabaret Tabaris, on Avenida Corrientes 829-831, was one of the cabarets of Buenos Aires popular in the 1930-1960 era, where the wealthy dined and danced to jazz and tango orchestras. The cabarets opened around midnight and closed at 4am. Most of the patrons were men. The *coperas* who worked at the cabarets were women who made their living selling drinks to the patrons, and conversing and dancing with them.

The Cabaret Tabaris was originally called Royal Pigall. Leopoldo Federico, a famous bandoneonist, played for the first time at the Tabaris when he was 17 years old, in 1944. The cabaret operates today as Teatro Tabaris.

David Olds chose Canaro tangos to set the scene and introduce key characters in 'Cabaret Tabaris'. *Sentimiento Gaucho* is a tango that Canaro composed in 1924, and Carlos Gardel recorded that year.

Why don't you turn on your music system, listen to Canaro music, and let David's story transport you to Buenos Aires?

CABARET TABARIS

By David Olds

The tanda was made up from Canaro's tangos. *Sentimiento Gaucho* was playing, one of Victor's favourites, but tonight he couldn't enjoy it – too much was at stake. General Maschio sat at the usual table, his soldiers lounging insolently, tunics half-unbuttoned, guns conspicuous and ugly. The *Revolución Libertadora*, three months on, was holding, and these men were growing daily more arrogant. The girl was there, flirting with some haughty young aristocrat.

Here at the Cabaret Tabaris, they danced *Salon* style; there was more space, more sophistication than in the cafés Victor was used to. In tango, connection is vital, but tonight, Victor was distracted, pushing his partner woodenly around the floor, looking over her shoulder at the General and the girl, glancing anxiously at the exit. His partner, at first pliant, leaning close to him, was becoming stiff, and moving back from his embrace, her smile gone. His lack of attention was palpable, insulting. Everything was wrong.

The tune ended. Victor would not have blamed the woman if she had left him standing on the floor, a public and justifiable insult. Victor was a dancer, not a guerilla. He leaned in towards the woman, whispered an apology.

* * *

Victor was a simple man. His work at the Justicialista plant was undemanding. He would sometimes dream of driving one of these sleek cars, his arm around the beautiful girl beside him. An assembly worker was not well-paid, but in Perón's Argentina anyone could dream. Victor knew nothing of the political and social tensions, intensifying as Perón pushed at the wealthy establishment. Conditions for the poor were better than they'd ever been. The trouble over Perón's excommunication had died away, and Victor didn't care about political squabbles. His sister, Agustina, going through an adolescent religious phase, had been angry about it, but Victor had never bothered to understand her vocal passion, or even whose side she was on.

To Victor, even the Generals' *Revolución* held no interest. He could afford milongas at the better cafés, long Sunday afternoons laughing with his friends. He wasn't home very much, so Agustina's disappearance seemed at first not very serious. He was sure she'd had some sort of argument with their father; she seemed so volatile lately. He imagined her at her friend's place, fuming over the blind stupidity of old people. When her body was returned two days later, mutilated almost beyond recognition, Victor could not absorb the reality of it. He wandered numbly about the house, avoiding his weeping mother, his silent stone-faced father. His beautiful sister was too spirited, too alive, to be taken like this.

Victor's friends and fellow workers were keeping their distance. Victor didn't care; he was too baffled and numbed by grief. Then one day Luis, his shift supervisor, handed a batch of process forms to Victor. Six pages in was a note: 'Reject Bin, 4:00. Alone.'

He went, less out of curiosity than a kind of somnambulant lassitude. Gabriel Aguilar was there, waiting for him. Victor knew Aguilar as some kind of labour organizer, a loud, always angry man. Aguilar's gentle greeting surprised him. Aguilar said, 'We know what happened to your sister. Meet us tonight at the café – the Dorrego.' Gabriel strode off, not looking back.

It was at the Dorrego that Victor was recruited. Aguilar explained:

'Your sister joined a group of students organized by one of her teachers. They were putting out Perónist pamphlets – anti-Church. She was delivering a batch when a bunch of General Maschio's men stopped her. Our guy saw it. They were just pushing her around, asking for kisses, calling her 'pretty little girl'. She got angry, shouted at them, and things turned nasty. They hit her, and she dropped her bag. One of them ripped it open and found the pamphlets. A Cabo hit her with his rifle, and she went down. They kicked her and then dragged her off. They threw her into their truck, and drove away, towards the old Caseros prison. We have people outside the prison, but nobody saw the truck arrive. We think they took her down to Puerto Madero, killed her and dumped her there.'

Blind rage erupted over Victor. He surged up, but somebody

grabbed him, pulled him down.

‘You need to stay calm. You can’t get to these people; they are protected by the Generals. It’s dangerous, but the only way to hit them is through organized resistance.’ Victor listened to stories of injustice, accounts of crimes against the poor and the powerless, corruption at the highest levels. Aguilar talked about the rage Perón’s egalitarian policies fomented among the wealthy.

‘The *Revolución Libertadora* was not a revolution. It was a way for the rich to steal back their wealth. But we will have a real revolution soon, and then the poor will have their revenge.’

Victor was appalled to realize that Agustina knew about these things, while he had been ignorant, disengaged, uncaring. His grief was turning to shame, as he thought about Agustina’s courage, her spirit. He needed to make amends, to stand up and be a man.

Victor began to notice things. His beloved tango was under attack. Tango was not just a dance, a style of music: tango was a culture, entwined with what it meant to be a citizen of Argentina, a worker in Buenos Aires. Tango performers and musicians were being imprisoned. Everywhere the tango clubs and cafés were closing, as the new curfew took hold. The rich didn’t like the idea of impoverished young men meeting, perhaps discussing politics. Venues were switching to rock-and-roll, to avoid trouble. If the rich had their way, tango would disappear forever.

One evening it all came together. Aguilar’s informants mentioned Maschio’s regular visits to Cabaret Tabaris. Maybe Maschio was vulnerable there, but it would be hard to get at him. Too many soldiers, too many guns. Then someone mentioned Maschio’s daughter – she was often there too, and the General sometimes let her dance. It was Aguilar who hit on the idea of grabbing the daughter. ‘Then we’ll make the General pay!’ Suddenly, Victor found himself at the centre of a desperately crazy plan.

* * *

Victor danced. When his partner closed her eyes, Victor knew he had won her back; she trusted him. Victor led her into some simple, elegant figures, hoping the General and his daughter would notice. Victor thanked the woman and again apologized, knowing she had forgiven him.

Later, he approached the General. He felt calmer, but one of the soldiers reached for his rifle. Victor froze. Perhaps they somehow knew. But now was the moment. He addressed the General:

‘General Maschio, may I have the pleasure of dancing with your daughter?’

Victor stepped back, tense. The General began to reply, but his daughter leaned towards him, whispering urgently. He paused, looked more closely at Victor.

‘You danced with Signora Nieves.’

Victor nodded, assuming that was his earlier partner.

‘Very well.’ Maschio nodded curtly to his daughter. She sprang to her feet and stood in front of Victor, then pulled him towards her in a close embrace, her smile mischievous. There was a long terrifying wait until the music began, and Victor was able to start the *salida*. He was relieved to find that she moved gracefully, following him easily and without effort. It would have been much more difficult if the spoiled bitch couldn’t dance.

Victor needed to keep the girl happy until the capture; she may not bother with the usual polite conventions. If she didn’t like dancing with him, she might walk off the floor, mid-tune. Jesus, she could have him shot. The thought made him angry, and, since in tango, the emotions hover near the surface, his anger found an outlet in curt, aggressive moves. The girl just smiled and stayed with him. He found a small space and used it to turn her and lead a stopped forward *ocho*. This is a peculiar moment in tango. The leader hands control over to his follower, not knowing what she will do. He needs to be ready in an instant to take back control. When these moments work, the magic of tango erupts, in a courageous merging of will, and trust. Victor and the girl existed only for each other and for the music, an almost spiritual connection.

When the tune ended, they were some distance from Maschio.

'I'm Maria.'

'Victor.'

'I know.'

Victor froze. If she knew his name, maybe she got it from her father. Maybe Maschio knew who he was, who his sister was. Was he being set up?

'My friend Esperanza told me – she danced with you at Akarense. She fell in love with you.'

'Of course – all the girls do.'

Maria thumped him on the chest, open-palmed, smiling, 'I haven't fallen in love with you.'

'That's because you're too young – and besides we've only danced one tune.'

Unfazed, she said, 'I'll be eighteen soon, and anyway, I'm going to fall in love a dozen times before I fall in love with you.'

This brought Victor back to the reality. As the music began again, he wondered whether this girl would reach eighteen, let alone fall in love. She was the daughter of a shallow opportunistic political animal – what did Victor care about her? Agustina was dead at the hands of this girl's monster of a father. Better finish this family off now, before they spread their poison into the future. But she was just a girl, full of life like Agustina had been. These power-hungry men had no right to destroy innocent young girls. But then, what was he himself doing?

Victor was a son of the tango tradition. It was in his bones – the leader is responsible for the safety of the follower. There is no excuse. And now, here he was, on the tango floor, actively seeking to harm his follower, a girl of seventeen.

He'd been dancing mechanically, and a minute had gone by. He had to get near the exit, turn some steps in place, waiting for the moment. But that didn't seem right, when the music called to him, when the girl danced so lightly, following him like a shadow. The plan was burned into his being. He had to get the girl near the exit, then bundle her off the floor and into the hands of his compatriots. They would make her disappear, out of the country, a hostage to their demands for justice, for a voice, for an end to the cruelty of this new, evil regime.

But this was tango. The girl trusted him totally. Their dance was not spectacular – he was distracted, and she was too young and inexperienced to feel the deeper resonances. Victor wished she would have the chance to refine her natural affinity, to season her dance with the heartbreaks of lost love, with the arrogance of conquest, with a deeper insight into the complexity of the music.

Victor led Maria into an *entrada* so intimate that the general would have shot him. Maria moved slowly, perfectly into the next moment, and Victor was lost. It was unforgivable to betray this girl. This was a betrayal of tango. The leader does not expose the follower to danger.

Victor moved fast into a space, Maria like a wraith in front of him, smiling at the sudden forcefulness, flowing without effort as he powered forward. He worked his way aggressively around the floor, back towards the General. He pushed the girl away from him, seeing her pleasure switch to confusion as she fell.

'She's in danger – get her out of here' he shouted, turning and running along the edge of the dance floor. He had a vague sense of soldiers struggling to their feet, wrestling rifles into place.

The shot could have come from anywhere. Soldiers drunk and trigger-happy would see no reason to hold back in a crowded room. Aguilar would know that the integrity of the resistance was at risk. Victor fell dead on the tango floor.

More tango reading for long nights, from the USA (via cyberspace)

The volume of material relating to tango, generated and emailed around the world, leaves no doubt that tango is widely popular again today, and that the tango social phenomenon is universal. Occasionally, something on the screen stands out and commands attention.

A few paragraphs were posted on the New York Tango site – as an untitled listing, with a sender's address.

I liked the immediacy of the first sentence, and it wasn't in the present tense, a device employed by some writers that I find annoying. With no mucking around it was straight into an introduction to a narrator who drove around in his car, playing tango recordings. Like David Olds, the author of these paragraphs chose to start out with Canaro, suggesting that there's something about this orchestra that appeals to the literary mind.

This writing seemed to be tango-knowledgeable, from the very beginning. What tango addict does not indulge in playing tango music in the personal space of his car? Tango music is probably why the occupants of vehicles stuck in traffic jams, on grid-locked Buenos Aires street, don't rage as they do here, and jump out and thump one another? Smug tango travellers know that Buenos Aires taxi drivers play tango music in their cars (and some sing too). It is comforting to think that kindred tango spirits in other parts of the world do the same.

That first sentence ended with the narrator noticing he was running on empty. A North American readership might assume that the car was running on empty - but I've come home from enough disappointing tango nights, feeling desolate, when not even the music of my favourite tango orchestra could fill the emptiness – so the possibility of either a *tanguero*, or the car, 'running on empty' sparked a bit more interest. I read on.

I liked what I read. The story interested me, and I understand the process of juxtaposing the real world with an imagined or remembered tango world. So I contacted the author of the paragraphs, Adam Smolka, and asked for permission to reprint what turned out to be an extract of his self-published novella, '*The Hotel Fakir*', available on Amazon.com.

He responded graciously, and that's how I came to be curled up in an armchair in my library on a wintry afternoon, reading the whole novella. *The Hotel Fakir* is an entertaining tango 'read' that takes you from Charleston in the USA, to Lebanon, surprisingly, and other places. There is a murky Argentine connection. There's enough mystery, gradually uncovered as the story progresses to keep you reading, and enough 'hooks' to send you back to reread earlier segments. The text is seeded with insights that will appeal to *aficionados*, such as, the key to tango is '*to embrace your partner with care, confidence and love, and let the music pick the lock*', and '*Narcissus was never a tanguero*'.

It is good, when something read triggers further enquiry. One reference, to a singer named Fairouz, and a 1951 recording session with Eduardo Bianco's band, was slipped into a description of being in Beirut for a tango festival. Having recently researched the

relationship between Bianco, ghetto tango and the *Lagerkapellen* during the Holocaust, the reference made me curious. Thanks to the marvel of Google, I now know that Fairouz is a very famous Lebanese singer, and her recording of the tango *La Boheme* is seen as the beginning of the dance-song in Arab music.

My 'Googling' also led me to a nice little video dance clip (with references to the French 'Apache'), from a show at the Karlin Theatre in Prague. Look for 'La Boheme – Tango – Musetta & Marcello'.

A few things were disconcerting. The 'I' of the narrator suddenly shifted to become the character, Dolores. This confused me, so I went back to the start to work out whether the narrator was male, as I had assumed, or female. I also had a problem with tango music being '*derived from innocuous Romany folk songs*', notwithstanding the *La Boheme* and Romania references. The notion of '*repetitive interplay of violin, piano and bandoneon*' snaking '*effortlessly into neural circuits entrusted with oversight of human emotions*' amused me. Michael Leunig could take inspiration from that for a Mr Curly cartoon.

I found it a nice tango story, however. Get a taste from the following excerpt, and then get it in its entirety from Amazon.com, and let us know how you enjoy it.

The author, Adam Smolka, was born and educated in Scotland, and pursued a science research career at the national Aeronautics and Space Administration, University of California. Currently he works at the Medical University of South Carolina. He has published extensively on zero-gravity electrophoresis and gastric physiology. These interests led to investigations of chess and Tango.

EXTRACT from 'THE HOTEL FAKIR' By Adam Smolka

I was listening the other night to Francisco Canaro and his Tango orchestra when I noticed I was running on empty. I pulled into a gas station on Meeting Street, not far from the Charleston waterfront. The sun had set hours before, the sky was deep lavender, and bullfrogs were calling from the marsh. I leaned against the car, holding the gas nozzle, and closed my eyes. I moved imperceptibly in time with the music. And then I heard, faintly, a different tango song wafting softly on the humid evening air. I walked across the street, following the song, and turned into an alley just beyond Prioleau Street. I passed through a wrought-iron gate and a cobblestone patio, and came to a black lacquered door with polished brasses. An etched glass transom showed a poised cobra and the words "Hotel Fakir". The music was louder now, and silhouetted shadows of dancers moved across the glass.

I knocked once, tentatively; the door was unlatched and swung silently open. I crossed the threshold into a candle-lit room. Foxed mirrors and

century-old Cunard Line posters adorned the walls. A handful of men and women conversed quietly at bistro tables set to one side. The ladies' heels and slit silk skirts accentuated their elegantly crossed legs. A lone couple was dancing to Pugliese's seductively sublime vals "Desde de Alma". At the back of the room, a Tiffany lampshade cast a soft glow over the bar. I eased onto a barstool. Beside me, a bouquet of gladioli, clematis and orchids breathed intoxicating scents into the air.

I asked the bartender for a glass of Tiza Malbec and said, "I never heard of this place. What is this?" He smiled. "Welcome to Hotel Fakir. We've always been here. Those who love the tango, the true aficionados, they need to dance everyday. We try to feed that need, from late afternoon until early morning. Now that you've found us, you'll always be back". "Thank you", I said, and turned to watch the dancing couple as they swept by. Their upper bodies moved as one, and their feet flew in a syncopated rhythm of fast intertwining steps. His hand on her back traced subtle patterns of touch and go. Her eyes were closed, and the expression on her face was dreamy and peaceful.

A lady in gilded stilettos sitting nearby caught my eye. She held my gaze, smiled, and took my offered hand. We embraced and swayed hypnotically for a moment, seeking the next musical phrase. The tango poised within us came to life, and we moved fluently from a walk into an ocho cortado, a molinete, and a flamboyant sentada... Suddenly, from nowhere, cold gasoline splashed over my hands and feet as my car overflowed, and the Hotel Fakir, the hypnotized cobra and my ardent partner all evaporated into the night... On the radio, Canaro and his orchestra were signing off with "La Cumparsita", singing the melancholy words: "Tell me, Senora, what have you done to my poor heart?"

Tango bargains in New York

An invitation to a milonga in New York arrived, suggesting that the tango scene in the 'Big Apple' might be even more competitive than here – and that economic woes are biting just as deeply. The milonga offerings included visiting guest artists, Singapore chicken for dinner + free wine, live music (violin, piano & bandoneon), DJ & dancing – all for \$15. If you are going to New York and want to get in touch with organizers Thomas & Hana to see what other bargain tango nights they might be doing, email tango.thomasandhana@gmail.com or www.thomasreale.com

Can you help with a History of Australian Social Dance Project?

To some people history is a dry subject; others revel in it, and get wildly excited when they discover new things, or locate missing pieces to the jigsaw puzzle of our past. When it comes to researching social history and the story of dance through the ages, there's a wealth of fascinating material, tucked away in boxes, that illuminates life in past eras, and helps us understand better how – and why - things are as they are today.

Pam Jarvis, Editor of *Tango Australis*, has been researching and writing about the history of tango in Argentina and the world, for over a decade. Occasionally, she lectures, and, with her partner, presents seminars, some illustrated with demonstrations of dance styles of past eras, historic photographs and archival film footage. A recent seminar was '*A Century of Tango*', an overview of the internationalization of the Argentine tango. It was presented at the Buenos Aires in the Vales® Tango Arts Festival in South Australia.

Now she is coordinating a team of enthusiasts, and working to put together a historic, archival display celebrating 100 years of social dancing (of all kinds) in Victoria. 1913 was a significant year for the Arts, and there will be many events held all round the world in 2013. In 1913, Melbourne's new Palais de Danse in St Kilda opened for the first time, with the controversial and shocking dance of the 'Tango' on the program.

Milonga 100 at the lovely old Fitzroy Town Hall will elegantly celebrate 100 years since tango was first danced in Melbourne, on the 17 August 2013, 8pm till 1 am. There will be a display of material relating to the History of Social Dance Project in the foyer of the Town Hall. The band TANGALO will be coming from Canberra to play for the milonga. Tickets: \$30 (Members of Melbourne Milongueros Club), \$35 non-members - Information: apptango@gmail.com

Pam is preparing a time-line tracing the development of social dancing in Victoria. She is collecting memorabilia, photographs, dance clothing, & other items, and is conducting interviews with older people, about their memories of their young dancing days. She says it is a lovely project, and is delighted by how her gentle questions are encouraging people to dig into their past and recover memories of happy times.

Readers can help. Ask old friends and family members to recall their social dancing experiences (all kinds of dance), and write down their responses, or record them – Cast your mind back to your own dance experiences too, of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s & 1970s (places you danced, how often you went out dancing, special occasions, what you wore, favourite bands, etc). Send written material or scanned photos to richardandpam@mac.com (with a header 'History of Social dance Project') - or post to P. Jarvis, PO Box 3024 Bareena, Newtown, Vic, 3220 (this is a secure post office box).

Phone or text Pam on 041 753 1619 if you have suitable material or would like to discuss it. Original photos, documents, clothing, shoes, and other items lent for this project will be catalogued and treated with great care, and returned after August 17.

Why do we do what we do for tango?

Why do people go to the trouble of arranging tango events, and taking on tango-related projects? This is a question that longtime tango professional teachers and organizers are increasingly asking themselves, not just here in Australia, but in Buenos Aires, and in other cities of the world where the tango scene has attracted new operators at a faster rate than it has attracted new students and dancers.

The attrition rate in Buenos Aires tango has always been high. Each time we visited over the years we noted that milongas had closed, or changed venues, or changed names or organizers. It's not surprising when you think about it. There's very little – or no – money to be made from running a milonga. Setting up is hard work, and packing up at the end of a night of dancing is even harder. It's great if you have a team of willing helpers to share the burden. Alas, some tango people think more about what they can get out of an event than what they can put into it.

A tango scene can be like managing mushrooms – one day there's nothing to see, the next day a nice circle has erupted from the forest floor, and a day or so after this, the mushrooms have disintegrated into a pulpy mess. Of course the spores hang around, and in time, new mushrooms may pop up, but don't count on it.

A recent tango function had a long organizational lead in, and was well advertised, but the numbers of attendees were disappointing, considering the effort that a number of people put into the event. It is a common enough tale.

Yet, feedback received from people who did attend reflected on the success of the event. The reasons people do things like this is not for personal benefit, but to establish a sense of community. The people who are learning tango and the members of groups should be able to have lovely tango experiences - to feel comfortable and welcome at events - to feel that they can get up and dance and it doesn't matter if they make mistakes, that nobody will look down on them - that they can be supported in developing new skills in areas they have never attempted before - that they can socialize in a safe, non-threatening, and uncritical environment - that they can be handsome and beautiful and attractive no matter what age, or what physical build they are. Most importantly, they can learn through tango that true beauty lies within, and that every human being has value and worth, and can love and be loved.



TANGO FOR A GOOD CAUSE IN GEELONG IN JUNE

This year marks the 170th anniversary of laying the foundation stone of Christ Church Geelong – which predates the establishment of the Diocese of Melbourne. This Anglican church has a National Trust 'A' Classification & is on the Register of the National Estate,

but the building is in need of major restoration work and constant maintenance, placing considerable strain on a dwindling and aging congregation. Christ Church is Community Tango in Geelong's home. It is no coincidence that the church is also home to Geelong's long-running, free Community Meals Program. People care at Christ Church. This month the Christ Church community embraces tango joyfully, with visits of interstate and Melbourne guest tango artists. It will be an afternoon of lovely entertainment for all ages to share, together. Everybody is welcome to come and enjoy the beauty and the fun.



Adrienne & Andrew Gill are travelling from S.A. to Geelong to perform at a fundraising **Elegant Afternoon Tango Tea Dance** at Christ Church, on **Sunday 23 June, 2pm.**

Adrienne & Andrew's visit follows their Adelaide Cabaret Festival season, in My Latin Heart, with Argentine singer José Carbó & guitar virtuosos Slava & Leonard Grigoryan.

Adrienne & Andrew will teach **2 Tango Workshops on Saturday 22 June: 1.30 – 2.30pm, Adrienne's 'Impeccable Technique for Women'**, followed by an exciting session, **2.30 – 4.00pm, 'Simple Cross System, new possibilities for your dancing' for Leaders & Followers** - \$20 pp for both workshops, \$15 for one.

W/S bookings - 041 753 1619. Email richardandpam@mac.com



David Backler & Dianne Heywood Smith of Sidewalk Tango are renowned tango teachers, dancers, & cabaret performers, and have also worked in corporate entertainment together for 7 years. They have performed in theatres, clubs, & festivals around Australia, & overseas, including Korea, Singapore, Spain, France, UK, Argentina, China & NZ. They are supporting the Christ Church fund-raiser too, by performing at the Tea Dance.



The Elegant Afternoon Tango Tea Dance with guest artists, dancers Adrienne & Andrew and David & Dianne, Geelong soprano Yvonne Williams accompanied by John Bumford, social dancing & sumptuous afternoon tea, is on Sunday 23 June from 2pm, at Christ Church, on the corner of Moorabool & McKillop Streets, Geelong.

The ticket price of \$15 + all proceeds of a raffle, with a prize of an artist-signed, framed Stephen Mead Wildlife Portrait, donated by Tango Friends Australia, are being donated to Christ Church. Children are welcome to come free of charge.

ELEGANT AFTERNOON TANGO TEA DANCE, Sunday 23 June, 2pm at Christ Church on the corner of Moorabool & McKillop Streets, Geelong. \$15 donation.
Reservations - Phone 0409 176409 or 0425 785694 or email larchrn@iinet.net.au

Really good tango events to attend

Adelaide Cabaret Festival – My Latin Heart 14-16 June

Internationally-acclaimed baritone José Carbó is joined by celebrated classical guitarists Slava & Leonard Grigoryan for an evening of highly passionate tango, with dancers Andrew & Adrienne Gill. Dunstan Playhouse, Adelaide Festival Centre.

www.adelaidecabaret.com

New Zealand Tango Festival, Wellington, June 18 -25.

www.nztangofestival.co.nz

Geelong Workshops with Adrienne & Andrew Gill, Saturday 22 June.

1.30 – 2.30 pm - ‘Adrienne’s Impeccable Technique for Women’.

2.30- 4 pm – ‘Simple Cross System – new possibilities for your dancing’ for Leaders & Followers. Bookings & info: richardandpam@mac.com or phone 041 753 1619

Elegant Afternoon Tango Tea Dance, Sunday 23 June, 2pm,

a fundraiser for Christ Church, Geelong. Performances from Adrienne & Andrew, David & Dianne, singing recital from Yvonne Williams, social dancing & yummy afternoon tea prepared by the church ladies (they’re good cooks!!)

Milonga para los niños Charity Milonga in Adelaide, Sunday **30 June**, at Mt Osmond Golf Club. www.tangosalonadelaide.blogspot.com

Milonga 100 at the Fitzroy Town Hall, celebrating a century of tango & organized by teachers of the Melbourne studios working together, **17 August**, \$35/30
apptango@gmail.com



Maria de Buenos Aires at Melbourne Recital Centre, 21 – 24

August - Astor Piazzolla’s surreal little operetta, critically acclaimed, stunning production from Victorian Opera & Leigh Warren & Dancers, with the extraordinary Cherie Boogaart starring as the tragic Maria, & Andrew Gill as the Tango Man. www.victorianopera.com.au/what-s-on/maria

Festival City Tango in Adelaide, **6 – 8 September** – The program has no classes, just social dancing, and a chance to experience tango in Australia’s foremost festival city with like-minded dancers. The event includes, one Practica, Asado, & three Milongas with different organizers and DJs, in different parts of the city. Some billeted accommodation is available. Bookings are open. www.festivalcitytango.org

TangoConca Dance Tour, 29 Aug – 8 Sept. www.tangoconca.com

Tango in Shepparton, 14 – 15 September, proposed event

Tango Encuentro in Hobart, October 25-27 www.tangoencuentro.com.au or phone 0438 300 753. This is a celebratory weekend of workshops, milongas & performances. All events are around the historic waterfront area, with the main milonga in the exquisite old Hobart Town Hall, the perfect night to really dress for the occasion. Mantra Apartments (next door to one venue) offer tango people a 10% discount on accommodation www.mantra.com.au

Tango around Australia:

HOBART TANGO

Jenny & Vince Merlo (0438 300 753 & 0427 479 217) **Tango Milongueros**. Classes, milongas & practicas, performances & events. Email: tangomtas@gmail.com. www.tangomilonguerotasmania.com or Facebook

Tasmanian Club de Tango: tasmaniantangoclub@hotmail.com & www.tastangoclub.wordpress.com

DARWIN TANGO

Northern Tango: Kelly (0448 664 593), Belinda (0402 244 483) or Carol (0435 531 995) northerntango@gmail.com or <http://sites.google.com/site/northerntango>

MELBOURNE TANGO

Sidewalk Tango, David Backler @ 327 Swan Street, Richmond. **Tango Noir Milonga: First Friday of month, 9pm – 1am, \$15. Classes: Monday (3 levels) & Wednesday (basic & inter) then practica 9 – midnight.** david@sidewalktango.com.au or www.sidewalktango.com.au/melbourne-tango-events

Solo Tango. Alberto & Natalia's milonga, last Saturday of month, 154 Liardet St, Port Melbourne. For class details albertocortez@bigpond.com Ph: 0411 665 454

Tango Bajo. Bill 0416 015 327. La Mision Milonga every Saturday: Class, 8.30pm, dancing 9pm till late (usual price \$15) Wed classes, Beginners; Inter & Advanced @ 73- 75 Union St, Armadale. General enquiries 0419 826 061

Tango Tambien. Thu, @ St Catherine's Church, 406 Kooyong Rd, Caulfield South. Sunday workshops 9,16 & 23 June, 3.3-5pm (\$60) & Siempre Asi Milonga last Sunday of month 3-6pm, \$15, Dance be In It Studios, 73 -75 Union St, Armadale. \$15. New 8-week course Clifton Hill, Friday 7 June-25 July, 8-9pm, or Saturday 8 June – 26 July, 3-4pm, Community Church of St Mark, 100 Hodgkinson St, Clifton Hill Leigh 0410 257 855 www.tangotambien.com Email leighis@fastmail.fm

Chris Corby – Ph: 0423 388 799. Mondays, 7-8pm, Essendon Danse Academy, 305 Buckley St, \$15. Chris_corby@hotmail.com

Tango Butterfly. Dana Parker 0403 192 867 –info@tangobutterfly.com.au. Classes, practicas & Monday La Milonga de las Mariposas, 1543 High St, Glen Iris. www.tangobutterfly.com.au Contact dana@tangobutterfly.com.au

Viva. Christian Drogo's **Tango Bar Milonga** on last Fri of month. 1/241 Smith St, Fitzroy. Doors open 7.30, open class from 8pm, then social dancing till late. Private Lessons, Group Classes & practice on different nights

Melbourne Tango hosts milongas @ Czech House, 497 Queensberry St, North Melbourne on the second Sun of each month – class @ 6.30, milonga from 7.30 pm.

Project NFT (Neo Fusion Tango). rjh@keypoint.com.au 1st & 3rd Sunday of month, from 7pm. 1st floor, Palace Hotel, Camberwell, 893 Burke Road, opposite railway station and on tram route 72, stop 64

TangoMelbourne – reneefleck84@gmail.com or info@tangomelbourne.com.au

Classes, practicas, pop-up milongas

Melbourne Practica Group Inc is a non-aligned community organization running open & structured Sunday practicas, 3-6pm, and other events to promote social tango at Centrestage Performing Arts School, 15 Albert Street, Brunswick East www.melbournepractica.org

Well-researched tango site www.verytango.com Go to website to advertise a coming event.

COMMUNITY TANGO IN GEELONG: Elegant tango for social dancing. No previous dance experience or partner needed. First Monday of month 7.30 pm Group Class, 8.30 -10.30pm **Milonga del Sur + supper. \$5.** Third Wednesday of month, 8 – 9.30pm, Group Class + practice \$3 @ Christ Church hall, corner Moorabool & McKillop Streets. Private lessons too. Contact: richardandpam@mac.com Phone 041 753 1619.

Go to www.southerncrosstango.com.au for links with other Australian & overseas tango groups.

ADELAIDE TANGO

TANGO ADELAIDE CLUB – Milongas & Practicas

Club Milonga (1st Saturday of the month) - Saturday 1 June, 8pm – late at Druid Hall, 2 Cassie St, Collingswood. \$10/7. *Café Tango* – Sunday 23 June, 4-7pm at St Matthews Community Hall, 67 Bridge St, Kensington. \$10

www.tangoadelaide.org

TANGO SALON – Classes & Milongas

Comme il Faut Milonga (3rd Sunday each month) – Sunday 16 June, 4pm – 8pm at Mt Osmond Golf Club. \$10. *Para los ninos Charity Milonga* – Sunday 30 June, 4-8pm at Mt Osmond Golf Club, 60 Mt Osmond Rd, Mt Osmond. \$10. www.tangosalonadelaide.blogspot.com

SIEMPRE TANGO – Classes, Practicas & Milongas

Dom Polski Milonga (2nd Saturday each month) - Saturday 8 June, 8pm – 12, 232 Angas St, Adelaide. \$10. www.siempretango.net.au

SOUTHERN CROSS TANGO – Classes, Practicas & Milongas

Tango By the Sea Milonga (2nd Sunday of the month) – Sunday 9 June, 4-8pm at Henley Sailing Club, 1 Esplanade, West Beach. \$12/10. *Tango Luz Milonga* (last Saturday each month) – Saturday 29 June, 8-11pm at Restless Dance Theatre, 234a Sturt St, Adelaide (enter via Arthur St). \$12 www.southerncrosstango.com.au

SOUTHERN CROSS TANGO

MONDAYS

8 Wk Course: Monday 3 June - 22 July 2013

Beginner 7pm; Intermediate/Open 8pm @ The Hungarian Club, 82 Osmond Tce, **NORWOOD**

TUESDAYS

6 Wk Course: Tuesday 4 June - 23 July 2013

Beginner II 7.30pm @ The Aldgate Memorial Hall, Kingsland Rd, **ALDGATE**

WEDNESDAYS

8 Wk Course: Wednesday 12 June - 31 July 2013

Beg 7pm; Inter 8pm; Adv 9pm

@ Thebarton Community Centre, cnr South Rd & Ashwin Pde, **TORRENSVILLE**

THURSDAY - PRACTICA

Weekly Thursday Practicas, 7-9pm @ Thebarton Community Centre, South Rd, TORRENSVILLE

SATURDAYS - Technique Training, Special Courses & Private Tuition

Tango Technique Training for Women with Adrienne Gill

Saturday 1, 8, 15 & 29 June 2013, 9am - 10am (*no class 22 June)

MONDAY - SATURDAYS - Private Tuition

Various times available @ Southern Cross Tango Studio, **SEACLIFF**

COMMUNITY TANGO IN GEELONG (Victoria)

First Monday of the month: Tango Group Class 7.30pm, Milonga del Sur 8.30-10.30pm

Third Wednesday of the month: Group class & supervised Practica, 8.00-9.30pm

Vic Teachers: Pamela & Richard Jarvis - Ph: 0417 531 619 richardandpam@mac.com

Saturday 22 June: Impeccable Tango Technique for Women with Adrienne Gill, 1.30-2.30pm;

Simple Cross System Open level Workshop with Adrienne & Andrew Gill, 2.30pm - 4pm

@ Christ Church Hall, cnr Moorabool & McKillop St, **GEELONG**

Southern Cross Tango - Andrew & Adrienne Gill -

Ph: 0419 309 439 sctango@bigpond.com

www.southerncrosstango.com.au

