

i. TANGO AUSTRALIS

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Timely Writers' Workshop with award-winning writer, Julie Maclean

Award-winning, oft-published poet, Julie Maclean, is conducting a WRITERS' WORKSHOP sponsored by Tango Friends Australia, on Sunday, August 5, 2018, from 2 – 5 pm, at a private venue in Geelong. Julie is a marvelous facilitator, an encouraging tutor, and quirky wordsmith. She is also a creative friend of tango.

Her workshops are fun and empowering. If you interested in writing, whether starting out as a new writer, or you are an occasional writer, or a professional, we invite you to attend this workshop, and spread the word to others.

Argentina has a large body of tango literature – stories, poetic lyrics, plays, and articles. Not so, in our country, or the English-speaking world. Tango Friends Australia wants to address this lack. Tango is not just dancing. It is an inspirational force that invites all kinds of creative responses. Tango's growth and progress across Australia is a relatively new cultural phenomena and it is worth recording.

Since its inception, as a registered not-for-profit arts support group, Tango Friends Australia Inc., has worked to support emerging tango culture in Australia, and bring original expressions of tango arts to public attention. Amongst its activities, Tango Friends Australia has sponsored performances, literary competitions (poetry and short story), a sculpture competition, commissioned new choreographic works, published many original written works about tango, arranged public readings, and organized workshops to support Australian writers and encourage them to address tango in their work.

This Writers' Workshop is an opportunity for anybody interested in the pleasure of reading and the craft of writing, to hone their skills. Cost for the workshop has been kept to an affordable \$15, through sponsorship provided by Tango Friends Australia. A delicious afternoon tea will be served. Register for the Writers' Workshop by email to patriciadaniel@dodo.com.au or phone or text to 0408 596 005. Venue details and other information will be provided to participants on registration.

Writing about tango is not a simple matter of describing how the dance or dancers appear, or of expressing feelings evoked by the tango. Observation, interest and passion are a good start, but solid writing skills are needed to pen quality material on any topic. Writers' workshops are designed to assist people develop the skills to write imaginatively, creatively, and well about tango, and other things.

Writers can earn money and develop new readerships through the Tango Friends Australia literary sponsorship program. Authors are invited to submit original writing for consideration for publication. A fee of \$50 is paid for each original new tango-inspired work published in *Tango Australis*, and generous prize money is offered in competitions. Please register early, as numbers for the workshop afternoon will be limited.

The difference between what we want and what we fear is the distance of an eyelash¹

¹ Quote from the movie, '*Second Best Marigold Hotel*'

Encouragement for new tango dancers

Learning to dance tango is confronting. Everyone who comes to tango, struggles. We learn, we gain experience, but the struggle continues. It's like climbing mountains. We scale one peak, only to realize that the next one is higher. The more we learn, the more we have to learn. We come with preconceptions and misconceptions about the nature of tango. We know we want to do it, but we don't know how.

Learning new ways of doing things is hard. We forget how it felt to roll over the first time, how to crawl, to stand unsupported on two little feet, to take our first uncertain steps, balance on one leg, control our body in motion. As adults, we think we know how to walk, maintain our posture, use our bodies, and relate to other people. Then we go to our first tango class, and realize we have to learn most things again from scratch.

Forget the old department advice. Don't stand straight and erect, like a soldier, with shoulders back, buttocks tight. A dancer develops an organic experiential understanding of different muscle groups, and learns how to employ them to have an aligned body, and create balanced, controlled movements. A dancer develops a strong core to support the body internally, so limbs can move freely, without tension. A tango dancer learns to walk, in a different way, and to create moves that flow through the body. Male and female tango dancers grow to understand concepts and different ways to create movements.

Developing a finely, controlled tango walk is easier said than done. It's hard to break the walking movement into component parts, to develop a physical understanding of the fine tuning required to master weight transference and axis stability. It sounds complicated. It is. Tango dancers learn to do this alone, and within different embraces without upsetting the balance of different partners. Women must walk backwards, forwards, sideways, in heels, and pivot smoothly on one foot, with the weight on the ball of that foot, without losing balance. A good teacher will create many different exercises to train your mind and body and help these processes. Mastering the skills takes time and lots of practice.

Tango music, because it is intrinsically different from other music forms, can be difficult to understand. New dancers have trouble identifying the pulse, the *compás*, the beat and rhythm. Just being asked to walk in time with a beat you can't determine is scary. A good teacher will play different music and inform students about the styles of orchestras of different eras. Start with one orchestra that you like, and listen to this. A lot. It will become familiar. You will soon be able to 'hear' this music as tango. Try to dance with partners who can feel the *compás* and let them take you into the music.

Being able to move harmoniously with another person, whilst in an embrace, requires a new form of non-verbal communication. Tango dancers learn to 'see with their skin'. It is communication based on touch, breathing, energy control and release, awareness of the other's body and torso alignment. No YouTube video can teach you these things. Not all teachers can. Seek out a teacher who understands tango from the inside out, and wants their students to master this dance. Be patient, trust them, and work with them. It takes time.

As the winter solstice approaches, long nights give time to reflect, to remember, and dream

Tango, when danced in pure form, is a discrete celebration of memory and hope. Reflections and remembrances of the past co-exist with dreams and nebulous hopes. In the meditative state, induced by tango, past, present and future stream together, carrying dancers on waves of sensation, separated from conscious thought. In letting go of our everyday selves and giving in to those moments, the dancer becomes fully alive and open.

It is comforting to curl up with a book in front of the fire on wintry days. Cold weather and long nights of darkness, can let us take time out from busy schedules for other things: contemplation, research, exploration of new ideas, and experimentation with ways to express latent creativity. If we take the trouble to exercise, and we should, because we know that physical activity is beneficial, we can also develop new skills and maintain fitness through the cold months ahead.

This is the week of the winter solstice. To celebrate, we could go to a local park, and see a performance by a group of belly dancers, dressed as witches. I've seen these women dance, and they are terrific. One of them is also a tango dancer.

Or, we could take a more challenging path. We could go to Hobart's *Dark Mofo* Festival. This year's *Dark Mofo* is Hobart's sixth annual celebration of darkness and the winter solstice. It is, again, creating controversy, exciting public interest, and getting lots of publicity. An Arts festival should be controversial and provocative. A degree of discomfort challenges us to reassess attitudes and prejudices. How much discomfort we can stomach is a personal thing.

This year, within a 24-hour period, Hobart's Odeon Theatre, hosted high art, pop music, a death wrestling tournament, a doom metal concert, and a semi-naked cabaret show. Christian leaders have been upset by the festival's signature sentinels, the glowing, scarlet, metal structures that rise from the waterfront. They are inverted crosses: upside-down crucifixes, seen by some as symbols of satanic practices and the Antichrist. Then, there was the 'performance' by 72-year-old artist Mike Parr, of *Underneath the Bitumen*, partly sponsored by a government grant. Parr spent three days (72 hours), without food, sketching, meditating and reading Robert Hughes' book, *The Fatal Shore*, interred under busy Macquarie Street. Nightmarish, for a claustrophobic, but a suitable environment for ploughing through that weighty tome.

To put such performances into context, we can look at historical cultural practices. In the southern hemisphere, we have a tangled relationship with pagan and religious traditions that originated in the northern hemisphere. We are 'down-under'. Our seasonal celebrations are inverted. Hades kidnapped Persephone and took her to the Underworld. Through the long winter months, her mother, Demeter, roamed the barren earth, grieving for her lost daughter. In the Julian calendar, the northern winter solstice, was on the 25th December. This was celebrated as the 'nativity of the sun', when the days begin to lengthen and the power of the sun increases. All over Europe, fires burned; lights were kindled. Ancient Egyptians represented the new-born sun with an image of an infant that they brought and exhibited to worshippers each year on his 'birthday', the winter solstice.

As we celebrate, or choose to ignore, the winter solstice, some people in the northern hemisphere celebrate the summer solstice, with Midsummer Eve and Midsummer Day festivities, lighting bonfires, circling them, dancing round them, leaping over them, throwing in floral wreaths, putting ash under pillows and dreaming of future partners. It suits the weather, here and now, to have bonfires feature in our winter solstice celebrations.

Fires feature in seasonal celebrations in other parts of the world. In Morocco and Algeria, people celebrated on the 24th June, lighting fires in courtyards, at crossroads, in the fields, and sometimes on threshing floors. Plants, like giant fennel, thyme, rue, chervil-seed, chamomile, geranium and penny-royal, were preferred as fuel, because, when burnt, they give out thick smoke and an aromatic smell. People exposed themselves and their children to the smoke, and drove the smoke towards their orchards and crops. Houses were fumigated with burning brands, and the sick were brought into contact with the smoke, as prayers were uttered for their recovery.²

Arts Festivals should be out-of-the-ordinary, and have an ‘edginess’ to them. It’s great when there is a seasonal component, and the senses are engaged.

We believe that Arts festivals should showcase local artist beside visiting artists, offer participants from different places the chance to get together, communicate, cross-fertilize ideas and methods, and enjoy a variety of learning experiences, and entertainment and social opportunities. Festivals are exciting events; they break down barriers and push boundaries, encouraging people to explore new territory, learn new things, and experience the Arts in new ways.

We, and many other dancers, have loved participating in tango festivals, organized and directed by Andrew and Adrienne Gill. The long-running *Buenos Aires at the Beach* was held annually, for 13 years, in Victoria’s Great Ocean Road region; *Buenos Aires in the Vales* took place in the McLaren Vale wine district. Each annual festival offered excitingly different entertainment and activities. They were trail-blazing events for tango, supported by people from all over Australia and overseas. Nobody else was doing anything like this.

We have heard rumours that the Gills are planning something beautiful for summer 2018, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of Southern Cross Tango.

Food and mood

The weather and the seasons influence our appetites and what we eat. And what we put in our mouths influences our moods. One difference between the tango scene in Argentina, and the one in Australia, is that here, you will often find the tango and culinary arts combined.

In Buenos Aires, the preferred local beverage at a milonga used to be Coca-Cola, with pizza on the way home, whereas, in Australia, dancers are more likely to enjoy a glass of good wine

² Information on historical practices is contained in *The Golden Bough, A Study in Magic and Religion*, by Sir James George Frazer, first published in 1922, and reprinted many times since. Publisher: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd, Aylesbury and Slough

with supper. To mark the end of Cecilia Gonzalez's recent visit to Adelaide, after the Tango by the Sea Milonga, two dancers prepared and served a fabulous multi-course gourmet dinner. The Geelong tango group makes a feature of dishing up varied and interesting food at their Gentle Tango sessions, Tango for Pleasure nights, and themed seasonal events. The Tango Bajo team in Melbourne put on a super supper for Ezequiel and Anabella's visit.

Discerning dancers exercise moderation and constraint with tango and wining and dining. It is a good way to live.

Felice Jacka, of Deakin University's Food & Mood Centre (in the medical faculty) and the International Society of Nutritional Psychiatry and Research, spoke recently on ABC radio about research and clinical findings into the relationship between food and mental health.

Women, who have a healthier diet are less likely to have a mental disorder. Diet affects many pathways: brain plasticity, immune system, stress response system, and how gene systems are turned on and off. Brain cells and gut cells are similar. The gut-brain axis is not a myth.

Too much sugar is not good. Raised blood glucose is the biggest risk factor for disease. Women who have raised blood glucose in and before pregnancy have a greater risk of having a baby who will suffer from autism and cognitive impairment. And men aren't let off the hook. Raised blood glucose affects fathers too; the epigenetic message that switches genes on and off is carried on sperm.

People, suffering from a particular type of dementia, experience increased cravings for sugar, so a range of nutritious offerings - sandwiches, fruit platters, savouries with acres of parsley and fresh herbs, blue cheese with walnuts and figs - are served with a few 'treats' and espresso coffees, at Gentle Tango morning teas in Geelong. The morning group exercises, dances tango, and then enjoys the healthy stuff and passionfruit sponge cake and 'melting moments', knowing that this is a weekly treat.

Scientists are still researching how it all works. We know that food interacts with the reward system in the brain. In one trial, people were shown pictures of food before bariatric surgery. Seeing the pictures activated the brain like a drug. However, after bariatric surgery, seeing the pictures had no effect on the same part of the brain.

Tango in Buenos Aires: then and now

We visited Buenos Aires, the birthplace of tango, recently to attend the 20th anniversary celebrations of CITA, the International Congress of Argentine Tango. We attended workshops with the Maestros, and congress events, and visited milongas to dance socially, as we do each time we visit. The mood in the streets was not as black as three years ago, but inflation was high and getting higher, with one \$US = 20 Argentine pesos then. It's worse now. People are gloomy about the future. This is a distinctive Argentine state of mind.

I realize, as I work assembling material, doing research for this article and thinking about the changes times has wrought, that our personal era of tango, coincides with tango's modern revitalization. So many venues, cafés and restaurants where the tango shows took place, and

the milongas, are places we went to. Milongas, where we danced regularly, have closed and not reopened. We could not be in Buenos Aires for the last milonga at *Club Almagro*, a regular Tuesday night destination, but friends were there and souvenired floorboards to take home and frame, as mementos of their endless tango nights treading those boards. To this day, the smell of swimming pool chlorine reminds me of that place.

Tango's fortunes fluctuate; popularity waxing and waning like the moon. At times tango has been moribund. After the slump that coincided with the rock 'n' roll era, the tango flame was rekindled in Paris in 1983 by the show, '*Tango Argentino*', starring dancers from traditional milongas, with great musicians and singers. The success of that show seeded the international revival of tango popularity. The project had been in the pipeline in Argentina since 1976, when Juan Carlos Copes shared an idea with Claudio Segovia for a tango show, with choreographies featuring a number of couples dancing simultaneously on stage.

Juan Carlos Copes, native of the *Mataderos barrio*, and a tango dancer at *Club Atlanto* at *Villa Crespo*, won a competition with his partner, Maria Nieves, at Luna Park in 1952. Fascinated by the choreographies of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, Copes went on to create *Tango Ballet*, which he presented in 1959 in the USA, in collaboration with Astor Piazzolla.

Segovia signed up singer, Roberto Goyeneche, and the band, *Sexteto Major*, to the *Tango Argentino* company. The show was accepted into the Autumn Festival at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris. Other artists signed up: Horacio Salgán, Ubaldo de Lío, Raúl Lavié, Maria Graña, Elba Berón, Alba Solís and Jorge Luz. Dancers, Los Rivarola (Carlos and Maria), Nélide and Nelson, Mónica and Luciano, Mayoral and Elsa María, and Virulazo and Elvira, were the original tango couples, and Cecilia Narova was the soloist.

The show's success surprised everybody; nobody had been interested in financially backing it. The Paris theatre seated 3,000. A 6-day season was expected, but 70,000 people saw the show. *Tango Argentino* went on to tour in 1984: Venice, Rome, Milan, back to Paris, and then to Texas in the USA, and Quebec and Montreal.

By the time the show made its debut at the Mark Hellinger Theatre on Broadway in New York in 1985, Cecilia Narova and Monica and Luciano Frías had retired. Naanim Timoyko and Los Dinzels joined the show; Gloria and Eduardo were also in the cast. *Tango Argentino* had nightly performances on Broadway for six and a half months, enchanting audiences with its celebration of 80 years of tango music and dance.

My life and dance partner, Richard, saw that show in New York in 1985, and came home raving about it. The format and style of *Tango Argentino* became a standard for the travelling tango shows, known as 'spectaculars'. Here are program details, showing the dancers and musicians who performed, with acknowledgement of the choreographers of the items. The music represents a journey through tango history.



TANGO ARGENTINO PROGRAM on BROADWAY

PART I

<i>COMPLAINTS OF THE BANDONEÓN (J. de Dios Filiberto)</i>	Orchestra
<i>THE ARGENTINE APACHE (Aróztegui-A.Mathón)</i>	Ballet
<i>EL ESQUINAZO (A. Villoldo) – pair of orilleros dance the milonga</i>	Ballet
<i>MILONGA OF THE HEROIC TIME (F. Canaro)</i>	Juan Carlos Copes & Maria Nieves
<i>LA PUÑALADA (P. Castellanos- E.C. Flores)</i>	Oswaldo Berlingeri and orchestra
<i>LA MOROCHA (Saborido- A. Villoldo)</i>	Gloria and Maria Rivarola <i>(two young girls dance tango ‘discreetly’)</i>
<i>EL CHOCLO (Villoldo-E.S. Discépolo)</i>	Elba Béron
<i>LA CUMPARSITA (GM Rodriguez) European ballroom dance</i>	Maria & Carlos Rivarola
<i>MY SAD NIGHT (Castriota-P.Contursi)</i>	Raúl Lavié
<i>(“For me there is no consolation and that’s why I fool myself, to forget your love”)</i>	
<i>CRIOLLA PRIDE (J.De Caro-P.Laurenz)</i>	Virulazo & Elvira. Chor: Virulazo
<i>FROM MY NEIGHBOURHOOD (R.Goyeneche)</i>	Jovita Luna
<i>BANDONEONES</i>	Jose Libertella, Luis Stazo, Lisandro Adrover, Oscar Ruben González
<i>MILONGUITA – the story of a neighbourhood girl who, seduced by a ruffian, follows the path to ruin</i> Naanim Timoyko (Milonguita), Juan Carlos Copes (the ruffian), Nelida (accomplice of the ruffian), Nelson (the boyfriend-bridge, Eduardo, Mayoral, Carlos Rivarola (cabaret Clients), Gloria, Elsa Maria, Glorio Dinzel, Maria Rivarola (prostitutes)	
<i>MILONGUITA (E.Delfino-S.Linning)</i>	
<i>DIVINA (J.Mora-J. de la Calle)</i>	
<i>MELENITA DE ORO (E. Delfino-S.Linning)</i>	
<i>RA-FA-SI (E.DELFINO)</i>	
<i>NOSTALGIAS (J.C.Cobián-E. Cadicamo)</i>	Sexteto Major
<i>CUESTA DOWN (Gardel-Le Pera)</i>	Raúl Lavié

(If I dragged through this world the shame of having been and the pain of no longer being)

EL ENTRERRIANO (R. Mendizábal) Los Dinzel. choreography Los Dinzel

CANARO IN PARIS (Scarpino-Caldarella) Osvaldo Berlingieri and orchestra

TARQUITO MILITAR (M.Mores) Juan Carlos Copes, Maria Nieves, Nélica
and Nelson, Gloria and Eduardo

Intermission

PART II

MILONGUEANDO IN THE 40 (Armando Pontier) Gloria & Eduardo. Chor: Eduardo

UNO (E.S. Discépolo-M. Mores) Alba Solis.

“One is so alone in his pain, one is so blind in his sorrow.”

THE LAST CURED (Troilo-C.Castillo) Alba Solis.

“Life is an absurd wound.”

LA YUMBA (O.Pugliese) Mayoral & Elsa María. Chor: Mayoral

NEVER HAD NO BOYFRIEND (E.Cadicamo-A.Bardi) Raúl Lavié, Osvaldo Berlingieri, orchestra

JALOUSIE (J.Gade) Nélica and Nelson. Chor: Nelson

DESENDUENTRO (A.Troilo-C.Castillo) Elba Berón.

“That’s why, in your total failure to live, not even the final shot will come out’

TANGUERA (M.Mores) Orchestra

SUMMER PORTENO (A.Piazzolla) Juan Carlos Copes and María Nieves

BALAD FOR MY DEATH (A.Piazzolla-H.Ferrer) Jovita Luna.

“I will put on my shoulders, coat, all the dawn, my penultimate whiskey will not drink, will come tangamente, my death in love, I’ll be dead on time, when it’s six, when it’s six, when the six.”

ADIOS NONINO (A.Piazzolla) Sexteto Major

DANZARIN (J.Plaza): COMPLAINTS OF BANDONEON (J.de Dios Filiberto)

The hall is filled with the sound of the orchestra and under the lights the puppets embrace.



During Tango Argentino's Broadway season, Paul Pellicori invited Juan Carlos Copes to teach tango classes at his DanceSport Studios. New Yorkers, including a merchant banker, Daniel Mahni, who would later introduce this era of tango to Sydney people, enrolled to learn. We met Paul, and heard from him this story of tango's NY origins. New York still buzzes with tango. We danced at an extraordinary dress-up Hallowe'en Milonga at Empire Dance Studios. If you are in New York, go to a milonga there.



Other tango spectacles followed *Tango Argentino: Forever Tango*, *Tango Pasion*, *Perfumes de Tango*. These were great shows. We saw them. Traditional dancers in the milongas in Buenos Aires referred to these shows as 'tango for export'. The modern era of tango was underway.

I took photographs of the stunning Nelida and Nelson dancing in a show that a *porteño* legal colleague took us to see at *El Viejo Almacan*. We got to know Gloria and Eduardo, and absorbed their lessons on how to dance old-style *milonga*. We got to know Carlos Rivarola, too, but did not meet his wife.

From Argentina, a new generation of dancers rose to international prominence: the fabulous Milena Plebs and Miguel Angel Zotto, who were like tango royalty when they were together, brother Osvaldo Zotto (now sadly deceased) and Guillermina Quiroga, Vanina Bilous and Roberto Herrera, Aurora Lubiz and Jorge Firpo, Diego and Natalia, Mora Godoy, Pablo Veron.

San Telmo was a magnet for the tango tourists who were coming to Buenos Aires in greater numbers. It was the place to be entertained by roguish tango buskers, see street tango, café concerts and dinner shows. *El Viejo Almacen* (the old grocery store) was on the corner of Balcarce and Independencia. *Michelangelo* and *La Ventana* on Balcarce between Belgrano and Venezuela, *El Querandi* on Perú and Moreno, *Tango Mío*, first near Constitución station and later at *La Boca*, and in 1996, on the corner of Vietes and Osvaldo Cruz in *Barracas*, the biggest show of all: *Senor Tango*.

One tango show was staged in part of the Alvear Palace Hotel, in a charming recreation of the famous *Armenonville Pavilion*, a reconstruction of the Buenos Aires historic pavilion that was a copy of the original one in Paris. We went to the show, and, in our tango naivety, we had the gall to ask the choreographer and lead dancer, Professor Sixte (Poche) Luna, an amazingly loose-limbed dancer and an Afro-Argentine, if he would teach a tango lesson for us the next day. Somewhat surprised, he graciously agreed. When we arrived for our first tango lesson in Buenos Aires, he introduced us to the show's producer, in the hope that we might be able to make useful connections overseas to get that show touring. In those days, sadly, we had no useful connections of this kind. After our lesson, Poche gave advice I have not forgotten. He said, I would, in time, become a good tango dancer, and that I would take lessons with many teachers along the way. Regardless of what other teachers said, I must not change the way I placed my feet on the floor, for I had 'soft' feet. This, he believed, was an essential quality for a good tango dancer. With my tango journey

underway, it didn't take long to develop the dancers ailment of 'sore' feet.

These were good times for tango. Astor Piazzolla, and his various collaborations with European and Argentine musicians, had ensured that 'Nuevo' tango music was popular in the concert halls of the world. Note how many Piazzolla items were on that *Tango Argentino* program. Young people, and older people, in other countries, were interested in tango music, and began to dance tango. They would become the mainstay of a surge in international tango tourism to Buenos Aires.

From the 1990s on, the tango scene in Buenos Aires was diverse, with different styles popular in neighbourhood milongas. The custodians of the tango, then, consisted of a small number of older dancers, who had learned their skills before the decline of tango in the mid 1950s. Tango classes and tango schools, catering to local people were not yet widely popular, but interest was building amongst younger dancers who wanted to connect with their culture and the tango's past glories, and saw career opportunities as performers in the prestigious tango dinner shows in Buenos Aires. Dancers lucky and good enough to be cast in shows, like *Tango Argentino*, *Tango Pasión*, and *Forever Tango*, did travel, and there was a flow-on effect from this in cities where the shows were staged. Mostly, if you wanted to develop your tango skills and be immersed in tango culture, you went to Buenos Aires, took classes with established teachers, and danced socially with local *porteños* at the milongas and *prácticas*.

We got to know dancers from the shows of the 1980s, 1990s and into the new millennium; some as friends, others as professionals who taught us. The boom period slowed down. International dancers, who once went regularly to Buenos Aires to take private tango classes with Maestros and the best dancers, rarely do private classes today, preferring to take more affordable group classes. Some teachers overcharged for private classes. Tango dancing tourists don't like to be seen as cash cows. The practice of Argentine dancers travelling the world, teaching on the tango circuit, has had the consequence of saturating local markets and standardizing tango dancing. Australia has become a desirable destination and has as many tango teachers visiting these days, as New York once did. If you can do classes at home, why go to the expense of travelling to Argentina? Experienced dancers are more worldly about tango, and recognize that other countries of the world offer good festivals in attractive locations, nice milongas, friendly tango experiences, and good training. Dancers are recognizing that Australia has excellent, highly trained, homegrown teachers.

Tango cafés and tango dinner shows still operate and employ dancers in Buenos Aires, but the wave has crested. There is an oversupply of very good young tango dancers, hoping to become professional; but not enough work for them. Mini buses still disgorge streams of tourists at *El Querandi*, but *El Viejo Almacén* looked to be boarded up. Some of the generation of older performers, who danced in the seminal tango shows, are dead, couples have split up. Many professional dancers have moved away from Argentina, to reside in more politically and economically stable countries, returning to Buenos Aires to satisfy visa requirements, or for employment at special events, like CITA.

What happened? Up to 2000, the Argentine currency was pegged to the US\$, making Buenos Aires an expensive city to visit. Entry to milongas, however, was cheap; dancing tango was predominantly a lower class pursuit. One day, the Buenos Aires banks closed their doors, and the government froze savings accounts, although not before people 'in the know' managed to transfer assets off-shore.

With a falling Argentine \$, Buenos Aires became a more affordable place, and a desirable destination for young back-packing, tango-dancing Europeans, North Americans, Asians and Australians. The loosening up of tango began, along with the acquisition of cheap real estate in Buenos Aires by cashed up dancers from overseas. The Argentine economy grows stronger and falls in depressing cycles. Once Argentina had a flourishing middle class. Not these days.

Seeing the success and flow-on effect of the touring 'tango spectaculars', government and City of Buenos Aires bureaucrats saw that money could be made from international interest in tango. They promoted 'festivals' and sponsored tango competitions, with strict rules for dancers to adhere to. My belief is, that this was an attempt to regain control, and a reaction to a new wave that was being driven by young athletic tango dancers overseas.

Local social dancers in Buenos Aires reinvented themselves as 'teachers', presenting cards to the visitors they identified easily and danced with at the milongas. An 'official' tango magazine was published, with a front page and layout that strongly resembled a respected magazine that had been a labour of love for its editor. Shoe shops proliferated. Where there were, once, only a few specialist tango shoe shops, suddenly, there were many. Tango ladies and men, and, it must be said, visiting tango teachers, departed for home with suitcases full of tango shoes, some for personal use, some for resale. Gradually, we noticed a drop in quality in the Argentine shoes we were buying. Heels fell off. Faulty buckles had to be replaced. Straps stretched. Leather softened, and shoes got out of shape too quickly. Dancers began searching for good quality shoes in other countries.

But Buenos Aires will always be the birthplace of tango. New venues opened with new tango shows. A building restoration housed the glamorous *Piazzolla Tango* show. *Esquina Homero Manzi*, on the corner of Boedo and San Juan, reopened in 2001. We were there. The place had opened as a bar and restaurant in 1927, becoming a symbol of urban culture during the 1940s. Its original name was *El Aeroplano*. In 1937 it was bought by Japanese partners and renamed *Nippon*. In 1948, new owners called it *Canadian*, and in 1981 it acquired its current name.

Esquina Carlos Gardel, is a 430-seat theatre located next to the *Mercado de Abasto* (once a market, now a shopping mall), near where we stayed for CITA. *Abasto* was the neighbourhood where the singer, Gardel, lived. The show is described as one of the fanciest tango shows in town, but we did not go to see it. We have wearied of the shows, and we are not alone. Once you start dancing tango seriously and dedicate years to the process of learning, one glitzy spectacular, with highly trained athletic young dancers performing dazzling balletic tango tricks, becomes just like another. You begin to feel that, when you've seen one, you've seen them all. Tourists and people who do not dance tango

enjoy these shows. Tango dancers now look for other manifestations of the tango spirit.

Has there been a consolidation and rationalization of the tango scene? We noted that a number of milongas, that once operated in different locations, now shared the same venues on different nights. Venues like *Club Almagro* and *Re Fa Si* are long gone. *Confiteria Ideal*, a place where many visiting dancers took their first nervous tango steps in the embrace of a generous local *milonguero/a*, closed three years ago, condemned as an unsafe building.

We could not find a tango publication with a listing of all milongas in the city. We got three tango ‘magazines’, each with a small milonga listing, but not one with an overall directory. Perhaps the listings reflect the publication’s paying advertisers. Milonga organizers in Buenos Aires, as elsewhere, probably cannot afford to pay for listings. Does the ‘tango map’ that the city of Buenos Aires once published, still exist? If so, where can one get a copy?

It was not until our last day in Buenos Aires, a Saturday, that we discovered that ‘*El Abrazo Tango Club*’, the milonga organized by Diego and Zoraida, formerly held at the *Confiteria Ideal*, was now running in its old time slot on Fridays, in a different venue, the home of ‘*El Beso*’, Riobamba 416. We’d taken time out from a CITA milonga, to go to ‘*El Beso*’, to see Demian Garcia perform, and I had photographed posters outside the venue, with details of milongas and classes. But there was no reference to the ‘*El Abrazo*’ milonga. So we missed it – and I’m really sad that we did. It would have been lovely to have had another dance with Diego, one of the men who had eased me into the tango world, and who had honoured me by choosing me to partner him in a demonstration performance at a Melbourne Tango Festival. Next time, Diego!



Photos: Buenos Aires cityscapes; Tango dancers at Salon Canning, March 2018

TANGO IN AUSTRALIA

Tango Links & information at www.southerncrosstango.com.au

DARWIN

northerntango@gmail.com <http://sites.google.com/site/northerntango>

QUEENSLAND

General listings of tango schools & milongas throughout Queensland
<http://www.tangonut.com/news.html>

CANBERRA

Tango Social Club of Canberra – includes a listing of tango teachers in Canberra
<http://www.tangocanberra.asn.au>

SYDNEY

General listings of tango schools & milongas throughout Sydney:

Tango Australia: <http://www.tangoaustralia.com.au/p/finding-tango-school.html> Sydney

Tango Calendar: <http://www.sydneytango.com.au/WebModules/Calendar/Calendar.aspx>

Port Macquarie: <http://www.argentinatangoportmacquarie.html>

Bowral: <http://www.tangoencanto.com> Newcastle <https://tangonewcastle.wordpress.com>

HOBART

Tango Milongeros: tangomtas@gmail.com www.tangomilonguerotasmania.com & Facebook

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

PERTH

Champagne Tango: www.champagnetangoperth.com info@champagnetangoperth.com

Port Macquarie Tango – tango.wendy@gmail.com Perth Tango Club - <http://perthtangoclub.com>

Mi Serenata: <http://miserenatatango.com>

MELBOURNE

Melbourne Practica Group Inc. www.melbournepractica.org

Melbourne Tango host milonga 2nd Sunday of month @ Czech House, Queensberry St, Nth Melbourne <http://www.melbournetango.com>

Project NFT (Neo Fusion Tango) (Hawthorn) Rod – rjh@keypoint.com.au

Robles Dance Academy – <http://roblesdance.com>

Sidewalk Tango – Dianne's TANGUERIA (Richmond) – tangodi@icloud.com.au 0418 331 638

Tango Bajo – Bill Jarman (South Yarra, Windsor, Gardenvale) – tangobajo@gmail.com - 0419 826 061- www.australiantango.com.au Facebook: www.facebook.com/TangoBajo

Tango Escencia – Rina & Nadim Sawaya (Richmond, Lower Templestowe)-
rina@tangotherapyaustralia.com.au - www.tangoescencia.com.au

Tango Melbourne – reneeefleck84@gmail.com tangomelbourne.com.au

Tango Tambien (Woodend, Gardenvale/Brighton, Clifton Hill) – Leigh Rogan –
info@tangotambien.com – www.tangotambien.com

Victoria Tango Australia –Leonel - www.victoriatango.com.au - leonelcolque@hotmail.com

Viva (Fitzroy) – Christian Drogo – www.vivadance.com.au info@vivadance.com.au

GEELONG

Community Tango in Geelong - richardandpam@mac.com www.facebook.com/CommunityTangoInGeelong
www.southerncrosstango.com.au

For a listing of international guest teachers touring Australia in the coming months, & Australian & NZ tango school links go to: **Gotanz Connect Australian & New Zealand Tango Directory** – Meg Thomson – gotanzconnect@gmail.com <https://www.gotanzconnect.com> Facebook: <http://fb.me/anzdirectory> Mob: 0419 826 061

Tango in Adelaide

TANGO ADELAIDE CLUB: Club Milonga (1st Saturday of the month) – AGM on Saturday 7 July, 7pm – 8pm, followed by the launch of Tango Adelaide’s Club Milonga from 8pm – 12 at new venue, the Spicer Church Hall, 44A Fourth Ave, St Peters. Free entry & glass of bubbly. www.tangoadelaide.org

TANGO SALON: Comme Il Faut Milonga – Sunday 15 July & Sunday 22 July, 4pm – 8pm at Mt Osmond Golf Club. \$10. www.tangosalonadelaide.blogspot.com

SIEMPRE TANGO: Weekly Practica - Thursdays 8-9.30pm at North Adelaide Community Centre, 176 Tynte St, Nth Adelaide. \$5. Practica Domingo – Sunday 8 July 4.30pm – 6.30pm at Eastwood Community Centre, 95 Glen Osmond Rd, Eastwood. \$5. Bi-Monthly Milonga: Friday 27 July, 8.30pm – 12 at Dom Polski Centre, 232 Angas St, Adelaide. \$10. www.siempretango.net.au

SOUTHERN CROSS TANGO: ‘Tango Practica’ hosted by Kylie & Tricia, Tuesday 10 & 17 July, 7pm-9.30pm at Roxy Centre, cnr South Rd & Anzac Hwy, Everard Park. From Tuesday 24 July onwards, Weekly Practica resumes every Tuesday from 8-9.30pm at Roxy Centre, Everard Park (\$10 or \$5 for beginner students). La Calesita Milonga – Saturday 28 July, 8-11pm at Thebarton Community Centre, South Rd, Torrensville. \$15. Tango by the Sea Milonga – Sunday 12 August, 4-8pm at Henley Sailing Club, 1 Seaview Rd, West Beach. \$15. www.southerncrosstango.com.au



Photos: Happy tango students after Cecilia’s Adelaide workshops; ‘Tango by the Sea Milonga’ with special guest Cecilia Gonzalez, June 2018.

Southern Cross Tango - South Australia

MONDAY @ UNLEY RSL

Monday 23 July 2018

FREE Come & Try Tango Workshop with Practica: Class 7-8pm, Practica 8-8.30pm

Open Level Themed Workshop 8.30pm – 9.30pm (\$20/15)

New 8 Week Tango Course: Monday 30 July – 17 September 2018

Beginner Class 7-8pm, followed by Practica 8-8.30pm; Open Level Class 8.30 – 9.30pm

@ Unley RSL, 29 Arthur St, Unley

TUESDAY @ ROXY CENTRE

TANGO PRACTICA: Tuesday 10 & 17 July 2018, 7pm – 9.30pm (\$10pp) with special guest hosts Kylie & Tricia.

New 8 Week Tango Course: Tuesday 24 July – 11 September 2018

Beginner/Open level Class 7pm - 8pm followed by Weekly PRACTICA with Andrew Gill 8pm – 9.30pm

@ Roxy Centre, 1-80 Anzac Hwy (close to corner of South Rd & Anzac Hwy), Everard Park.

WEDNESDAY @ THEBARTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

New 8 Week Tango Course: Wednesday 25 July – 12 September 2018

Open level class 7pm – 8pm; Advanced level class 8pm – 9pm

@ Thebarton Community Centre, cnr South Rd & Ashwin Pde, Torrensville.

PRIVATE TUITION @ Southern Cross Tango Studio Private Lessons with Andrew & Adrienne Gill (by appointment only)

Tango Technique Training for Women: 4 Week Course: **Saturday 4-25 August**, 9-10am

@ Southern Cross Tango Studio, 50 Kauri Parade, Seacliff. Bookings essential: Ph 0419 309 439.

COMMUNITY TANGO IN GEELONG (Victoria)

Venue: Christ Church hall, corner of Moorabool & McKillop Streets, Geelong. First Monday of the month: Tango for Pleasure, supper & social dancing, 7.30 – 9.30pm Other Mondays: Open level group classes, 7.30 – 9.00pm Thursday mornings: Body conditioning & dance training for women Group tango lessons, private lessons, seasonal salon events. Vic

teachers: Pamela & Richard Jarvis – 0417 531 619. E richardandpam@mac.com

<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityTangoInGeelong>

SOUTHERN CROSS TANGO: Andrew & Adrienne Gill

Ph: 0419 309 439 E: sctango@bigpond.com <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCrossTango>

www.southerncrosstango.com.au