

TANGO PASSION

**Tango Society of
Rochester**

Your best and only source of Argentine tango in Rochester, Minnesota

Volume 1 Issue VI

Newsletter Date: Summer 2009

From the President's Desk *Yuko Taniguchi*

"Are you in love with your dance partner?"; a long time ago at a dance competition, a stranger asked this to my dance partner. This stranger said that my partner and I looked good on the dance floor, so he thought we were in love. Even longer ago, I asked the same question to Pedro whose arms wrapped all the way around a beautiful woman's waist, his cheek against hers, holding her close as if she was the most loving being. I was eighteen and watching the dance of Argentine Tango for the first time at the corner of the Argentinean café in London. They danced so beautifully. They must be in love, I thought.

In turned out, for both cases, no one was in love with each other. Pedro hardly knew the woman he was dancing with. I felt let down by his answer as I wanted my romantic perception to be confirmed as reality. To my disappointment, Pedro smiled and said, "You thought we were in love? Fantastic. That means our dancing was good."

I often see great dancing at milongas, but from time to time, I encounter some couples whose dancing is "Pedro" good, appearing as if they are in love. I know these couples are not in love. Still, on the dance floor, their dancing portrays a sense of romance and deep connection. So what makes a dancing "Pedro" good? Was it because of his techniques, background, and his sense of musicality? Was it because the woman was experienced and beautiful? In the end, I think the special ingredient for "Pedro good" is simple: having fun and wishing his partner to also enjoy this dance.

"Having fun" is like tango, simple, but difficult. We all know how quickly the joy of dancing can turn into frustration, stress, disagreements, arguments, and worst of all, hurt and insecurity. Having fun is actually like dance steps; we have to

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A Tango experience... By Rebekah Knauer

Recently I traveled to South America to visit a friend living in Brazil. Being south of the equator, I could not resist the chance to visit Buenos Aires. My stay was very short (2 days), and my goal was to see tango, hear tango, and tango, tango, tango...

My friend and I arrived late into the city, extremely travel sick and tired. Our driver pulled up in front of a considerably large pile of trash and announced we had arrived at the Don Telmo Hotel -our hotel. We dragged our luggage up a long narrow flight of marble stairs to the front desk and after a near eternity of chit chat with the doorman, we were shown into our room. It had tall ceilings, creaky wood floors, and narrow barred windows. I carefully checked for bed bugs, and I fell into my lump of a mattress to sleep my first night in Argentina.

The following morning (afternoon) we stepped out of our hotel, walked pass the massive pile of trash, and on to the Sunday street market. Endless blocks of merchants selling everything from leather belts to maté cups (maté is a very popular tea that is drunk out of a gourd). As we tripped along the bumpy cobbled streets we came across our first sign of tango. An Asian woman with shiny black hair danced with an Argentinean in a fedora to a milonga played from a boom box, farther along another band of boys played tango with a mix of rock, then there was an older man who sat working a large accordion with his long sinewy arms, and further still a parade of young and old people waving flags and playing on horns and drums... a loud din of samba-like music. Our walk took us to a café where we ate veal and riblets, and our waiter shocked us by snatching my friends dirty knife wiping it on his apron and handing it to the customer at the next table (apparently he needed it more). Later we also stopped at a bakery to buy layered cake and cookies. A sweet, white-haired, sparkly-eyed man at the counter gave us a bag of fresh rolls and told us it was for the road. The Argentinean people were friendly, and the merchants not overbearing as at so many of the markets we had visited in Ecuador and Brazil. After walking along the port, visiting the colorful streets of the La Boca neighborhood, and watching tango at the many street cafés we headed for home. My feet were sore, but I was craving the sound of the bandoneón still! Our hotel clerk quickly found and made reservations at a tango show for us. 10 minutes later we were picked up at our hotel and driven to the theatre. The government requires the shows to pick you up and drop you off because

From the President's Desk...

practice it until we do it naturally. So how do we practice having fun? What is fun for you? One TSoR members once told me a story about dancing with different leaders at a TC milonga. She said she had the great time because while she could not follow everything, she was able to recover and continue the dance. She was so proud that she didn't let her mistake stop her and was also grateful for the leaders who worked with her without restarting the dance. She has fun by facing and overcoming challenging situations during dancing. Her commitment is not to become a perfect follower who follows perfectly, but rather, a flexible follower who faces each obstacle calmly and works with the leader to make a decision that allows them to continue dancing.

So what is your commitment on the dance floor in order to have fun? For me, I am committed to 4 things: 1. Be confident about what I know; 2. Accept that what I know is enough; 3. Expect some stressful moments and let them pass; 4. Do everything I can to make this dance enjoyable for me and for my partner. I actually practice thinking these 4 elements because I want to have fun dancing with everyone. And I mean, *really* having fun by feeling good. I have learned that we cannot "fake" having fun. We are quite transparent beings, and our partners can sense how we really feel. If you are thinking "this is so boring," the chances are, he or she can hear you!

In this issue of the newsletter, we visit the issue of interaction on the dance floor. As TSoR continues to bring various learning opportunities to Rochester, we hope one of your commitments on the dance floor is for you and your partner to enjoy dancing and that your dance is "Pedro" good.



*The close embrace of Tango—
A Pedro moment!*



Cinco de Mayo Dancers in the plaza at Mayo Clinic—dancing through lunch!



Tango Experience continued...

tango is so much a part of the history of the country. In a big theatre full of white tables and candlelight we watched tango with a mass of other tourists sipping wine and eating cake. Late that night we left the sounds of tango behind and our driver took us home with "Hey Jude" blaring from his radio.

The last day arrived! And I was anxious to tango myself. We had dinner at a sidewalk café. I ate pancakes. They came with a shot of something strong, which I drank. It wasn't until my food arrived that I realized the shot was for my pancakes, not me. The waiter laughed and lighted the alcohol on fire. Our hotel gave us a list of milongas nearby and we set out in tango shoes for

our first milonga in Argentina. We tried the closest place, which was now only a hostel. No tango there. It was dark and nearly 10 pm. We crossed Avenida 9 de Julio, the widest avenue in the world, and wound our way down many side streets and parkways. It was eerily quiet out, people do not walk the streets at night unless they are garbage pickers (I wanted to tell them I knew where a gold mine was). Our only other company was the occasional cockroach scurrying about in front of us. At last we arrived at an old building, with the sound of tango about it. Entering we saw a long dance floor with men and women sitting on opposite sides of the room. We nervously sat and watched to see what would happen. My friend, unfamiliar with tango, immedi-

ately found herself in eye contact with a dancer who asked her out onto the floor; she declined the dance and gave me the opportunity to step into a tango with him. My partner, Ricardo, was very enthusiastic and forgiving of any nervousness I had, and we danced several sets that night...although he did not speak English he managed to communicate a little...our first set being a thumbs down, the next a 7 out of 10, and the final dance of the night scoring a whopping 9 out of 10! He told me this, shaking his head so enthusiastically, that locks of his slicked back hair would bounce down into his eyes. To my disappointment the milonga did not last into the pre-dawn

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Tango Experience continued...

hours, but dwindled not long after midnight. We slowly moved back to the street and our long walk home. We were elated by our tango experience.... we had danced tango in Argentina...we had found a milonga and really danced tango...only now we were unsure of where our hotel was. Ah! but there it was, our un-disguisable mountain of trash showing us the way....

I did not experience Buenos Aires exactly as I had imagined it, but the mystery and the beauty of tango was inescapably there, and I hope one day to dance in that place again...I give it a 10 out of 10.



Paul Botes Workshop at Dahl Dance

TSOR Paul Botes Workshop
By Luis Fong

Paul Botes workshop on Tango waltz was both fun and educational. Paul's friendly sarcasm provided an environment very encouraging for learning, since it made us realize that there are no "mistakes" during dancing, but a continuous learning process. With humor and laughs, he showed us that deciding to dance (any style including tango) it does not just happen. Everybody needs to go through the painful learning process; going from getting comfortable on the floor, learning some of the figures, listening to the music, feeling the music, making your body respond to the music and all of the above combined, but always with the thought in mind of enjoying the moment. He emphasized the importance of practice, practice, practice and more practice, and also that a great dance does not mean fancy figures, both rather a moment where both the leader and the follower share a great time.

May Milonga Moments ... with Dj Christopher Everett

*All about connection, moving with
your partner and lots of fun!*



Jeremy helps get the conga line started!



Rita and a visiting dancer from New York

Paul's workshop started with the basic partner connection. He put a lot of emphasis on the basics; since they defined the foundation where we can build all the other more sophisticated elements. Paul showed us the elements of a correct and comfortable posture. He mentioned how a correct posture helps on both the leader to lead and the follower to follow, which ultimately leads to a good dance and a great time. He talked about how close versus open embrace is just a matter of comfort, but if he also said that fancy figures are more suitable for open embrace. Moving in and out of close and open probably is the best option, he pointed out.

The focus of the second session was in getting the right timing. We started with the one-one-one-one and little by little transition to one-two-three, one-two-three. Paul mentioned that it is up to us to choose the timing of the music we decide to follow, but encourages us to actually follow the music. He explained how the basic tango concepts do not

change on the tango waltz, but the way we move around the floor following the waltz rhythm with a tango spice is what makes the dance so special and particularly enjoyable. The break between the second and third session was complemented with a delicious sweet feast, celebrating the birthday of our beloved teacher, April. One the last part of the workshop, Paul showed us how to incorporate the elements of the first two sessions in a couple of nice and challenging figures.

Paul was very patient with everyone, answering all of our questions; addressing them both individually and as a group. He had the ability of making things that are complicated for some of us into something that we can understand and follow. I personally enjoy the whole workshop and I am looking forward for Paul's next visit to Rochester.

Tango Passion staff

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The editor reserves the right to alter any contribution to reflect considerations of content, style, or space.

E-mail: dahldance@msn.com to comment or contribute

2009 TSoR Board:

Yuko Taniguchi, President
April Dahl, Vice President,
James Geroux, Treasurer
Nathan Gibbs, Webmaster
Brian Bernard, Secretary
Jeremy Anderson, Secretary



2009 Future Events:

- **TSoR June Milonga** Saturday, June 13th, 2009 8:30 PM—9:30 pm (lesson), 9:30 PM to 12 AM dancing Location: **Sonte's**, 4-3rd St SW, Rochester. Cost: \$10 (non-members), \$7 (TSoR members)
- **TSoR June Study Group & Practica** Sunday June 28th
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all**
Location: TBA Cost: \$3 (non-members), Free (TSoR members)
- **TSoR July Study Group & Practica** Sunday July 26th
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all**
Location: TBA Cost: \$3 (non-members), Free (TSoR members)
- **TSoR August Milonga.** Saturday ,August 1st, 8:30 PM—9:30 pm (lesson), 9:30 PM to 12 AM dancing Location: **Sonte's**, 4-3rd St SW, Rochester. Cost: \$10 (non-members), \$7 (TSoR members)
- **TSoR August Study Group & Practica** Sunday August 30th
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all**
Location: TBA Cost: \$3 (non-members), Free (TSoR members)



James Geroux
A Rochester Tango Alumni

Our Members

Name: James Geroux
TSOR Treasurer

Profession:
Claims Manager for American Family Insurance.

Started Dancing Because?

Karrie and I had talked about it off an on but never pursued it until a couple of friends were opening a studio and gave us the needed encouragement. That was about 2 1/2 years ago and as they say "The rest is history."

What makes Tango a

favorite? The music. It can vary so much in tone, tempo and style. I also really enjoy the flexibility to play within the music with various timing and steps

Most challenging aspect of dancing?

Initially...Relaxing. You can ask a few people early on and they will tell you that I danced with my shoulders by my ears (and I still have my moments). Now... being able to lead and combine it with the musicality of the song.

Favorite Tango Music & Dance Venue?

I really love the music which may be part of the reason that I took to Tango right from the beginning. I haven't found any Tango Music I haven't liked.

What would your advice be to the new Tango guy?

How about for the new girl? Patience.. Guys be patient with yourselves as you learn. You may struggle but there will be the "aha" moments. Ladies be patient with the man with two left feet—he will be the tanguero of tomorrow!

Favorite Tango moment so far?

Favorite, dancing and having the "Tango Moment" with Karrie. Funniest was early on when I was dancing in the TC and unbeknownst to me I led a lean or volcada and the lady's weight was completely on me. Fortunately we recovered and didn't need any paramedics though I think the lady could feel my heart beat from open embrace (I also must have looked like the proverbial "Deer in the Headlights.")

