TANGO BUENOS AIRES

Tango Buenos Aires has become one of Argentina’s great cultural exports, known throughout the Americas, Europe and the Far East as the most authentic and uncompromising representative of the Tango.

Tango Buenos Aires was created for the "Jazmines" festival at the famous Buenos Aires cabaret "Michelangelo" by renowned composer and tango director Osvaldo Requena. The company met with tremendous success and was immediately added to the season of the General San Martin Municipal Theatre.

In 1986, the company traveled to the United States in order to represent Argentina at the Latin-American Festival, which took place at the Delacorte Theatre in New York City's Central Park during the month of August. This event was followed by an extensive tour throughout the United States, along with trips to Mexico, Puerto Rico and El Salvador, followed by a return to the United States via Miami and San Francisco. In December 1986, the group appeared on NHK television in Tokyo, and it completed 62 performances throughout Japan, as well as a CD recording for Sony entitled Quejas de Bandoneón (Sony 32 DP 731).

In 1987, the company undertook a lengthy tour of the principal cities of Argentina, performing at the Spring Festival in Bariloche, the Galli Auditorium in Mendoza, the Municipal Theatre in Ciudad de Rosario, in Santa Rosa La Pampa, and in the city of Rio Negro. The company also appeared on television channels for the S.A.D.A.I.C. series and in the series sponsored by the Argentinean Ministry of Culture before ending the season at the Auditorio in Mar del Plata.

In March 1989, the company traveled to Berlin and Frankfurt, Germany, to Granada, Spain for the International Tango Festival, and to Madrid for performances at the Teatro de la Villa and at the National Auditorium. In October 1989 the company began a Latin American tour, appearing in Quito and Guayaquil in Ecuador, in Mexico, and ending in Los Angeles.

In March 1990, Tango Buenos Aires participated in the International Festival in Adelaide, Australia and in April, the company performed at the New Zealand Festival. In June 1991, the company traveled to Southeast Asia, giving performances in Singapore and Kuala Lupur, Malaysia, and Bangkok, Thailand. Under the patronage of the President of Argentina, the company introduced the Tango to Indonesia for the first time ever.
In 1992 Tango Buenos Aires performed in Santiago, Chile and on Chilean television, with further performances in Vina del Mar and a subsequent trip to Brazil, performing at the Memorial.

1993 was a year of extensive travel in Argentina, Spain (Granada, Madrid and Andalucia), Finland and Chile (Vitacura, Santiago, Vina del Mar and Valparaiso). Beginning in November, the company toured Malaysia, Japan and China. In Beijing, the company hosted a series of unprecedented master classes and residencies with Chinese dancers at the Dance University of Beijing, teaching the origin and evolution of the Tango and further international understanding and cooperation.

In 1994, Tango Buenos Aires traveled to Spain, performing for the third time at the sixth International Festival in Granada, and also performing at the University and National Auditorium in Madrid. In June, the company took part in performances and master classes at the Kuopio Festival in Finland, and also performed in Copenhagen, followed by another trip to Malaysia.

The company spent most of 1995 performing in Buenos Aires and touring throughout South America, culminating in a season at Buenos Aires's Museo Fernández Blanco, Teatro Gral San Martin and the Teatro Presidente Alvear. In 1996 Tango Buenos Aires toured Portugal, and in the Autumn the company will travel to Greece, and will end the year with a tour of Japan extending into January 1997. Tango Buenos Aires toured the United States for its first Coast-to-Coast tour during the 1998-99 season to great critical and popular acclaim, appearing in cities including Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Miami, Atlanta, Washington, DC, New York, Boston, Cleveland, Louisville, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Lincoln, Toronto, and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

In June 1999, the renowned pianist Cristian Zárate succeeded Mr. Requena as music director, and Pablo Mainetti, the world’s greatest bandoneon player, joined the orchestra. In 2005 Julian Vat, Argentina’s most prolific composer and leading musician assumed the title of music director. The company returned to North America in Winter 2003 for a two and half month tour of the United States. Due to the extraordinary success of this tour, the Company returned in the Fall of 2007 and Winter of 2011 for a two month Coast to Coast tour of the United States. The Company returned again in January through March of 2015, and undertook a two and half month Coast to Coast tour of the United States and Canada.
Due to the continued artistic and financial success of the previous tours, Tango Buenos Aires will undertake another Coast to Coast tour of the United States and Canada in the period September through December 2017 with a brand new program entitled “The Spirit of Argentina”.

THE TANGO

*Esa ráfaga, el tango, esa diablura*
*los atareados años desafía*
*hecho de polvo y tiempo el hombre dura*
*menos que la liviana melodia*
*que solo es tiempo*

*That devilry, the Tango, that wind gust*
*surely defies the overtoiled years;*
*made out of dust and time any man lasts*
*less than the nimble melody which is*
*time only.*

- *El Tango, by Jorge Luis Borges*

The Argentine tango has a mixture of African and Spanish antecedents, and also a strong influence from the Argentine *milonga* which is sung by Gauchos, the Argentine "cowboys." In its beginnings, the tango was an ill-famed dance, being very fashionable in dance halls and cabarets, and also because the choreography called for the couple to hold each other very close. Tango choreography allows for a lot of creativity, requiring breaks in the rhythm and perfect coordination between the dancers.

The tango's constant companion is the piano, although it has been accompanied by the violin, guitar and flute. Nowadays, the most typical instrument is the bandoneón, which is an accordion similar to the concertina.

The tango represented many almost infinite feelings and an expanded mental and moral evolution of itself and of the city that is depicted in it. It deserved and suffered many rejections despite the fact that it knew how to rise to the occasion to become the very symbol of the city of Buenos Aires. We should not forget that the tango has grown with that city and its literature. A lot has been written about the origins of the tango. There are so many questions! What is the etymology of the word *tango*? Where was it born? How did it take shape? Which influences did it receive?

Let us consider that many answers are lost in time, but many believe that the word "tango" derives from mispronunciations of the word "tambor," meaning drum.
With respect to its birth, there are so many versions with so little documentation, that we ought to be cautious with its presumed origins. During the decade of 1850, the Cuban *habanera* established in Bueños Aires was believed by many to be the successor of the old Spanish counterdance. The *habanera* spread throughout the "Ribera," the river shores of Bueños Aires, thanks to the sailors taking the commercial route between the Río de la Plata (Bueños Aires) and the Antillas. It quickly became established in Bueños Aires and was gradually transformed into the *milonga*.

At the beginning of the 1880's, the *milonga* occupied a relevant position in popular tastes. The *milonga* began to be danced by the *compadritos* of the city. The meeting places for the dancing were also referred to as "milongas," and this word is still used today to name the tango dancing places.

At this time, everything started to change: the architecture of the city, its language, habits, foods, dresses, image of the streets, carriages, etc. The first line of the "tranguay" (tramway) was established, communications became faster, and the well-to-do abandoned the south to settle in the north. Hallway (tenement) houses and indigents ("*conventillos"") multiply, and the tango begins to command attention.

Thus the tango evolved through the river settlements, halfway houses, brothels, and dancing pubs, in a rapid metamorphosis from the habanera to *milonga*, and finally the tango.

Later, with the contribution of Spanish and Italian migrations as well as the *criollos* (first descendants of the immigrants) and Africans, this social mixture of races and beliefs, this murmuring mass of the "*orillas*" (shores) of Bueños Aires, introduced the new rhythm in the popular meeting places. The primitive tangos were improvised, and its melody was attractive; it was transmitted among the interpreters through the exclusive use of their instruments. The accompanying dance was in a state of creation. First there were only male dancers, and later a couple of female dancers finally appealed to the feline grace of the woman. That day and not before, the true tango was born, that is, the complete and functional tango.