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, at the Galli Auditorium in Mendoza, at the Municipal Theatre in Ciudad de Rosario, in Santa Rosa La Pampa, and in the city of Rio Negro, in addition to various appearances 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 Lumpur, 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. The company returned to North America in Winter 2003, and played to rave reviews and full houses.
Cristian Zárate was born in 1975, and is leading the elite group of young musicians that are transporting the Tango into the 21st Century. He is a virtuoso pianist and bandoneón player.

In addition to being the leader of his own Orquesta Color Tango and his own Quintet and Sextet, Mr. Zárate has performed as soloist with the Walter Rios Quintet and Orchestra, the Orchestra of Yoshinari Yoneyama, the Orquesta Juan D’Arienzo under the direction of Carlos Lazzari, the Julian Plaza Sextet, the Rodolfo Mederos Quintet, and the Carlos Buono Quintet.

In 1997 he became Music Director of “El Viejo Almacén” and “Nights of Tango in Alvear”, a together with the Walter Rios Quintet with Guillermo Fernández and Maria Bolonte. He was orchestra director for the film “Tango” directed by Carlos Saura, with music of Lalo Schifrin, and also in 1997 replaced Norberto Ramos as music director of the house orchestra at Michelángelo, the most famous and important club for Tango in Buenos Aires. This same year he went to Japan to head the “Nissan Buenos Aires Tango” for Fuji Television, featuring 20 dancers and orchestra for 69 concerts in Tokyo.

In 1998 Mr. Zárate formed his own Sextet made up of the leading young musicians of Argentina: Pablo Agri (violin), Marcelo Nisinman (bandoneon), Roberto Tormo (contrabass) and Gustavo Mule (violin). His Sextet premiered the production “Señor Tango” and the film “Diario para un cuento” with the participation of the Rodolfo Mederos Quintet featuring Antonio Agri. He also produced “Tango the Dance of Fire” at the Teatro Avenida together with Guillermo Fernández, Viviana Vigil and Noma and Luis Pereyra. He again toured Japan in 1998.

In 1999 he produced “From Vinicius to Piazzolla” with Maria Creuza, Amelita Baltar and the guitarist Sebasiao Tapajos. In June 1999, Cristian Zárate succeeded Osvaldo Requena as Music Director of Tango Buenos Aires. He has toured with Tango Buenos Aires in Japan (“The Greats of the Argentine Tango and the First Couples of Tango: Juan Carlos Copes and Maria Nieves, Nelida and Nelson, Mayoral and Elsa Maria and Maria and Carlos Rivarola,” as well as Holland, Belgium and Brazil.

Mr. Zárate has made several records as leader of his group Orquesta Color Tango. In 1992 he recorded “Tango that Was and Will Be, a record made with Edmundo Rivero, Susana Rinaldi, Beba Bidar and Ricardo “Chiqui” Pereyra for EMI Odeon. In 1994 he made “A Toda Orquesta” with Horacio Salgan and Julian Plaza, a disc that was nominated for the Premios ACE de la Musica Nacional. In 1996 he recorded “Timeless Tango” for Forever Music in Miami, and in 1998 recorded on his own label “Con estilo…”, a dance record.
As a soloist, Mr. Zárate recorded in 1995 with the Orchestra of Yoshinari Yoneyama, and as the leader of the Cristian Zárate Quintet “Tango…esa diablura” with the voices of Gabriel Reynal and Carlos Vareia. In 1997 he performed “Nissan Buenos Aires Tango” with the Walter Rios Orchestra for Fuji Television in Japan, and in 1998 he recorded two discs with Juan D’Ariernzo’s group, and with the Walter Rios Quintet, Julian Plaza and Guillermo Galve and Diego Solis, made “El Viejo Almacen” for ESPA Music.
LIDIA SEGNI
Choreographer

Lidia Segni is a true representative of the most rigorous tradition in Argentine Classic Ballet. She was born in Corboba City, Argentina, where she began her Classical Ballet career at the age of 5 with Genoveva Sagues as her principal teacher to later join the Ballet Oficial of Cordoba. At an early age she was admitted to the exclusive Instituto Superior de Arte of the Teatro Colon, where she further developed her dance technique with Michel Borowsky. Simultaneously, she started dancing at the Teatro Argentino, where Esmeralda Agoglia, Director of the ballet of that theater, fully introduced her to the wide spectrum of traditional classical dance. She became prima ballerina at the prestigious Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1977. Her experience increased considerably collaborating with well-known choreographers such as G. Skibine, A. Lozano, A. Plissetsky, P. Lacotte, O. Araiz, J. Carter, and Z. Previl. Each of them selected her for the leading roles in their most outstanding works. These experiences gave her versatile knowledge and prestige, as well as exposing her to a wide repertoire. Having enriched her expertise when joining the Colon's company, she went on to perform the most varied number of roles a dancer of her genre and caliber could wish.

George Skibini chose her for the main roles in Cinderella and Blue Bird. She danced in the world premiere of Ravel-Losano's Deapheis Et Chloe. Alexander Plissetsky invited her to perform in his productions of Walpurgis Night and Raymonda. She danced in the premiere of La Cotte's La Hija del Danubio and Araiz's Summer Night's Dream. Among other works she has taken part in Massine's Usher and also in Carmen, The Witch Boy and Don Juan de Zarissa. Despite her intense activity at the Teatro Colon, she formed her own company in 1977 to tour Argentina and several Latin American countries. At the time, she also danced with great success in Japan, as well as in Dallas, USA, especially invited as visiting artist of the Dallas Civic Ballet. In 1980 Jack Carter invited her to perform Odile in his version of Swan Lake, and Prebil to perform The Queen of Driad in his version of Don Quixote. She was also chosen to dance the leading roles in Apollon and Les Sylphides with Rudolf Nureyev in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Rio do Janeiro, Brazil.

She appeared in Gala performances in Ottawa, Canada with Ghislaine Thesmar, Liliana Belfiore and Michael Johnson, and at the special invitation of Alicia Alonso she participated in the 8th International Ballet Festival held in La Habana, Cuba. She toured Latin America with Les Etoiles of the Paris Opera. She has performed with Valeri Kovtun (Maia Plissetskaya's partner) and has taken part in the Teatro Colon's staging of Giselle with Eva Evnokimova and Alexander Godunov.
She toured Argentina with Nadiezhdta Pavlova and Viacheslav Gordeiev and has danced Don Quixote with Ekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vassilev. She also performed Giselle with Natalia Besmertnova and Alexander Bogatirov at the Teatro Colon. In 1983 Godunov chose her to perform Carmen during a tour through the Americas, and in 1984 they staged Don Quixote and Carmen in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and abroad. She was also responsible for the creation of a special edition program on classical ballet for National Argentine Television.

In 1985, while continuing her own performing career at the Teatro Colon and in other countries, she developed a strong personal interest to teach young dancers and started holding classes. She was especially invited to perform with her company in Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Cochabamba in Bolivia. She has also been invited to give Master classes to dancers participating in the Latin American Ballet contest held in Buenos Aires.

In 1989 she began coaching Eleonora Cassano and Julio Bocca. With them she has traveled to Moscow, Italy and several of the most important summer festivals in Europe. That same year she was appointed General/Artistic Director of the Julio Bocca Ballet Argentino. With this company, she went on extensive tours of the U.S. and Europe. In 1995 the company made its debut at the City Center of New York. The following year the company reached Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Detroit, Chicago, Kalamazoo, West Palm Beach, Sarasota and Miami. Since the beginnings of the company, she was fully responsible for the yearly staging of the company's Luna Park performances in Buenos Aires. In 1996 she visited, together with the Julio Bocca Ballet Argentino, five continents on a tour called "Around the World." Performance sites included Venezuela, Mexico DF, Sidney, Hong Kong, and St. Petersburg, among others. In St. Petersburg, the company performed at the Marinsky Theater (ex Kirov) and at the Theater of the Hermitage Palace. That same year they also held performances in Italy, Spain, Egypt, Israel, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Guatemala, and Santo Domingo. She also accompanied Julio Bocca on a tour with the American Ballet Theater to Turkey and Greece.

In 1997 she went on another world tour with the Ballet Argentino. That same year she trained and accompanied Herman Cornejo to Moscow where he won the gold medal in the 8th International Ballet Competition.

In 1998 she decided to leave Julio Bocca's company to fully dedicate herself to teaching full time at her own Ballet Studio in order to train new generations of ballet dancers. Despite her intense activity as instructor, she continued to travel extensively throughout Argentina to give ballet
seminars outside Buenos Aires. The Argentine Board of Ballet awarded her vast work and contributions to the field of teaching. That same year she was appointed to stage performances in Argentina for both the Official Ballet of the Province of Cordoba, and the Ballet of the University of Mendoza.

In 1999 she created the Ballet Juvenil Metropolitano and worked with Julio Bocca once again to stage a performance for his company. She also organized trips to New York City for dancers and teachers, as part of their tuition, to visit well-known institutions in the teaching and staging of classical dance.

In 2000 she was appointed Director of the Ballet of the Teatro Argentino in Buenos Aires and was an integral part of the planning of their seasons' dancing repertoire.

In 2001 she returned to the Teatro Argentino to stage Giselle. She was also awarded an important grant by the Argentine Ministry of Culture, which she utilized to take her own group of students, the Ballet Juvenil Metropolitano, to participate in the Young Performers Festival, an international competition in Aberdeen, Scotland.

In 2002 she was invited to re-stage a variety of performances for both, the Teatro Argentino, and Julio Bocca's company. She was also invited as a panelist for a ballet competition in Rio do Janeiro, Brazil.

In 2003 she was assigned as ballet teacher of the Contemporary Ballet of the Teatro General San Martin of Buenos Aires. Julio Bocca once again also requested her guidance in the creation of his latest piece, The Enchanted Lake, for which she created the choreography. Inaki Urlezaga (principal dancer of the London Royal Ballet) entrusted her with the repertoire of the ballets for his performance at the Teatro Colon, which debuted in October of this year. In November of this year she collaborated with Inaki Urlezaga and his company once again for his performance at the Teatro Argentino. The season concluded with the performance of Inaki Urlezaga and Julio Bocca.

In 2004 she was hired by the General San Martin Theater of Buenos Aires, Argentina as the dance teacher of the company of the Ballet Contemporaneo. She was also invited to the United States to teach a Ballet Master class at University of Michigan's Dance Department. She was hired by the SODRE in Montevideo, Uruguay to choreograph Giselle.

In late 2004 she is invited by the Ballet del Sur (Bahia Blanca, Argentina) to mount "Giselle" for Inaki Urlezaga, which will open on December 23.
She continues to be a prestigious choreographer and to teach ballet to new generations of dancers at her Dance Studio in Buenos Aires, as well as continuing to travel the world and to collaborate with internationally renowned artists.
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 Buenos Aires was believed by many to be the successor of the old Spanish counterdance. The habanera spread throughout the "Ribera," the river shores of Buenos Aires, thanks to the sailors taking the commercial route between the Río de la Plata (Buenos Aires) and the Antillas. It quickly became established in Buenos 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 Buenos 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.