

TANGO AUSTRALIS

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Memories of *Suipacha* and blokes' shoes

Last month it was ladies' shoes, this month it's men's. The new short story that we're publishing is Craig Cormick's *Memories of the Buenos Aires Missing Left Shoe Incident*. What memories of visits to that frustrating, extraordinary city this story brought flooding back!

Of course Craig Cormick has been to Buenos Aires. You can tell from his story. Buenos Aires has numerous tango shoe shops today, but it wasn't so long ago that there were just a few. One well-known shop was *Flabella* in *Suipacha*, not far from *Confiteria La Idéal*, the popular afternoon milonga some Aussie ladies describe (in a nice way) as their 'playpen'.

At *Flabella* we purchased our first proper tango shoes. We admired designs in the window display, but the shoes we were given to try on were basic editions – standard black, cross-over ankle strap for the lady, and plain styles for the man. We asked to try on shoes from the window, and our request was eventually, but reluctantly, agreed to. One lady's pair fitted and was purchased on the spot – but no pair was the correct size for our tango bloke, who is taller and has bigger feet than the average tango dancing *porteño* of the city.

The proprietor offered to have a pair specially made and promised that they would be ready before our scheduled departure. A pick-up date was arranged. We dutifully returned to collect the lovely two-toned shoes, not on one occasion but on many, each time being told that they would be ready that afternoon, or the next morning, or afternoon, or later...

In spite of numerous taxi trips across the city, a disappointed Aussie guy left Argentina without the shoes on this occasion. To be fair, I must explain that the first time I wore my new shoes to my first milonga in Buenos Aires, the famous *Club Almagro* (it no longer exists), my foot was skewered when a tango woman's spiked heel cut a neat hole through the top of my lovely new shoe and into my foot. Ouch! With one foot painfully pinned to the floor I couldn't move.

The morning after, bruised and embarrassed, I took my almost brand, new punctured shoe back to *Flabella* to see if it could be repaired. There was no problem, the proprietor reassured me - and generously gave me a new pair.

We visited Buenos Aires often in those days, and each time we returned we learned more about how things work. We were told that the stylish shoes displayed in the window were made for Buenos Aires' professional dancers to their specifications. To the frustration of these dancers, their ordered shoes were sometimes sold to cashed-up foreign visitors. On subsequent visits we continued to buy our shoes there and drank coffee with the proprietor at the conclusion of each sale. Today, this neighbourhood is home to many other tango shoe shops, and *Flabella* is still there.

In time, we came to understand, (but not always excuse), why perplexing things happen in this bustling 'city that never sleeps'. Those who know Buenos Aires and its people well, generally have a love-hate-love relationship with it all. Buenos Aires gets under your skin. Argentina is a complex country with a difficult history. Listen to tango music and dig beneath the surface. You might be surprised at what you find, what you learn to expect and grow to accept. Enjoy reading Craig Cormick's story, later in this edition.

Expressive tango

Plastic fantastic... Want to look ten years younger? Brides under the knife... Do TV programs reflect reality or create it? Where have these nightmare programs come from?

Tango dancers, attuned to inner beauty, may not be aware of this wave of shock cable and reality TV. However there must be lots of other people, unhappy with their lives and looks, being sucked into a vortex of burning chemicals, skin dyes, plastic surgery, liposuction, implants, cosmetic dentistry, group Botox parties, lasers, and 'therapeutic' treatments.

Pity the girl, exposed to bridal hype 'expos' and peer group, who feels pressure to reinvent herself for her big day with blinding new 'choppers' (what happened to pearlies whites?), spray tan, lash & hair extensions, and body transforming diet and exercise regime to sculpt her body into a new (usually not to be sustained) shape for the 'dress' and 'day'. As if that's not enough, now a TV show is dedicated to brides altering their appearance with plastic surgery.

Buenos Aires is the world's capital of insecurity and plastic surgery, as well as Tango. Visitors might be tempted by a budget priced nip-and-tuck, rhinoplasty, breast augmentation, bottom-lift or whatever, whilst on holiday.

But is it a good idea to pursue the delusion that one can grow older without looking older? Faces etched with experience tell stories of our lives. Surfaces illuminate deeper truths. The ability to express genuine emotions is part of a tango dancer's repertoire. When we retreat into a parallel, blissful universe, it shows on our faces. When we concentrate deeply on the music and our partner, it shows on our faces and in our dancing. When the energy on the floor at a milonga is especially good, it shows on all the dancers' faces and those watching.

Freelance writer Lisa Nicol's addressed the issue in [Paralysing our faces destroys our best communication tool](#) [Age, March 4 2009]. Martin Scorsese claimed that no-one in Hollywood over 35 can do anger, and Baz Luhrman lamented that Botox users 'can't move their faces properly.' Nicol refers to Charles Darwin's *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). Darwin believed that our ability to express happiness or grief was a product of evolution. Facial expressions, the 'language of emotion', are a way humans communicated before words. By expressing an emotion we intensify the emotion itself, and facial expressions help us understand and share the emotions of others.

Is this what happens as we learn to dance Tango? Modern brain-scanning technology has proved Darwin was right. We recognise a face when we see it, and fleetingly mimic its expression. Mimicking is a deep human instinct – watch a young baby copy his parents. When we mimic we don't just copy the movement or expression of others, but actually experience their emotion in an ancient line of communication. It makes you aware of the responsibility that teachers bear, and the effect of the attitudes they take with them in to their classes.

Who, in their right mind, would want to limit facial mobility? Sufferers of Parkinson's disease have no choice in the matter. They say it is like being trapped behind a mask. Clinically depressed patients suffer reduced facial muscle activity over the brow and cheek – Cause or effect? What happens when facial muscles are paralysed with Botox? The ability to make an angry face is lost – and corresponding brain scans show reduced activity in the area that triggers the feelings that go with the emotions. The French refer to the brow as the 'grief muscle'. This area, most commonly injected with Botox, is where we express sadness or anger and a huge range of other feelings and emotions.

Watch tango dancer Adrienne Gill's naturally animated face, particularly in performance with her husband Andrew or during a tango lesson, to experience the full expressive power and range of emotion of a raised eyebrow and twinkling eye.

Raising your glass to tango

When having a drink with friends in Buenos Aires, you touch glasses, look into the eyes of the one whose glass you are clinking, and say '*salud!*' (It means 'good health!') You do this with everyone in your group. Your arm must never cross another's arm. In France, you might say '*santé*'. Here, we say '*cheers*'. In Germany, if you don't look directly into the eyes, you are condemned to seven years of bad luck in love.

Where do these customs come from? According to Julian Burnside, Melbourne's high profile, human rights QC, clinking glasses dates from 15th century England, when there was good practical reason to engage in what today seems a mere social formality. In those days, poisoning was an effective way to get rid of enemies. When clinking drinking vessels together, the aim was to slop some of your contents into the other person's glass, whilst closely watching his eyes. A flicker of anxiety, as some of your liquid slopped into his glass, was evidence enough that the drink was poisoned.

In the early days of the rapidly expanding port city of Buenos Aires, when Argentina was on its way to becoming the world's second richest nation, a knife concealed under a long neck scarf, was the preferred method of dispatching an enemy. Then Tango developed, and men began to recognise that dominance and place in the pecking order could be determined and demonstrated through skilful dancing. Eye contact remains part of tango ritual to this day.

Is the tide turning?

The prestigious Four Seasons Hotel has published in the Arts & Culture section of their magazine, '*10 Reasons to Visit Buenos Aires*'. And guess what? Tango is not among them.

Drinking *mate* after a folkloric show at *La Peña del Colorado* is, and also the political hub of the *Plaza de Mayo*, and Maradona's *Boca Juniors* soccer team (*La Bombonera*) and *Museo de la Pasión Boquense*. Also listed are the popular *Feria de Mataderos* for a Sunday morning 'gaucho-fest, the Jesuit Academy and library at the *Manzana de las Luces* and *el Zanjón*, the 1830s house in *San Telmo*, beneath which archaeologists have discovered dwellings, cisterns, creeks and courtyards that trace a timeline of 400 years of urban living.

Recommended too are *Jardin Botánico Carlos Thays*, Evita's Museum, and the eccentric fusion architecture of *Palacio Barolo*, (a concrete and steel representation of Dantés journey from *The Divine Comedy*, ranging in style from Art Nouveau to neo-Gothic and Indian revival). Other activities to make the list are visiting the historic cemetery of the Recoleta, and taking a train trip to fascinating *Tigre* on the River Delta, the conjunction of *Paraña* and *Uruguay* rivers.



Photos: Tigre, on the River Delta

Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina, is Tango's birthplace, but tango was and is not the city's *raison d'être*. On early trips to BsAs, we seemed to be the only visitors there to explore the roots of tango and dance at milongas in unfashionable working class suburbs. There were certainly other tourists, staying in beautiful hotels, being photographed by *paparazzi*, buying designer clothing, leather and hand-made goods, visiting museums and art galleries and historic precincts, exploring book shops, attending theatres, marvelling at the 'city of the dead', travelling into the provinces, staying at *estancias*, climbing mountains, enjoying the polo season and 'sport of kings', dining out, and, going to a tango dinner spectacular, to experience one element of the culture. This was when we realised that Argentines love tango music and recognize its importance to their history, but most do not dance tango themselves. *Cumbia* and *Salsa* were popular in the hot nightspots.

How things change. Tango tour groups now arrive in waves, for the big tango festivals, but all year too. International tango tourists, dancers themselves, come eager to experience the real thing, hoping to dance with respected *milongueros* and study with famous teachers. Visitors fly in with high expectations and leave with suitcases full of tango shoes.

When anything becomes widely popular and 'fashionable', its days are probably numbered. Some in Buenos Aires fear that the recent phenomenal success of the city in promoting tango tourism and capitalising on this industry might have a downside and prove to be counter-productive. Indeed, it might mark a turning point in tango's fortunes, or sound the death knell of tango as it was. Whoever is making money from the tango industry, it would seem not to be the organisers of neighbourhood milongas.

For many young Argentines the prospect of becoming a successful tango performer offers a career path in times of economic uncertainty, opportunity to travel, and fame and fortune. The success of the relative few spawned a pool of more hopefuls than the local market can bear. The solution? Travel, increasingly overseas – for some it is an almost constant journey of economic survival, giving new meaning to 'tango for export'. When performance opportunities dry up, some teach, yet dancing and teaching are different professions. Form on the dance floor or stage does not, necessarily, translate into good or dedicated teaching. And when students, anywhere, have bad experiences with teachers, they get disheartened.

The next new dance craze – like 'zumba' - comes along and the masses move on, drawn like moths to a brighter flame, leaving a core group struggling to keep the old candle flickering. It has happened before with tango. Rock 'n roll and the Beatles era created a generation in Buenos Aires who knew tango as something their grandparents danced, but did not do it themselves. Thank goodness the grandparents kept dancing in their modest neighbourhood milongas. Were they waiting for the tide to turn, or just doing what they loved, not caring what was happening out there in the wider social world of the 20th century?

Their well-tended legacy has born fruit in tango's revival in Argentina and around the world. Tango is taught in primary schools in Buenos Aires. Undoubtedly, tango steps can be taught to children, like Australian bush and folk dances once were – but is the mature role-playing of tango appropriate for those still growing up?

The US television program, '*Live to dance*' has just awarded half a million dollars, first prize to 'America's best dancer(s). The winners were a young couple, versatile and talented ballroom dancers. They are eleven and twelve years old. On the penultimate night of the series, they danced a brilliant, complex, well-executed tango (good enough to make a grown-up tango dancer weep) – but something was amiss. It wasn't a 'toddlers and tiara' moment, for these kids are great dancers, but it just wasn't quite right either.

The magnificent Maria Nieves came to fame as the partner of Juan Carlos Copes. They took tango to the world's stages and onto Broadway and into New York studios again in the 1980s – but the tango they danced in that landmark show was the tango they had learned, over long years in the milongas, the girls supervised by family chaperones. Maria has stated publicly

that the tango she knew and loved is dying, a casualty of its economic success and the accompanying standardisation.

Standardisation of 'the Tango' is not new. Vernon and Irene Castles, pioneers of the ballroom dancing studio in the USA, seeded what became known as (North) American Tango. This couple had been in Paris for tango's first international flowering, around 1913. There they saw tango being danced by visiting Argentines, and went home to pursue a well-recorded career of performing, teaching and writing about dance. The Tango, they determined, was far too complicated, with too many different steps and variations. It needed to be simplified – and this they did, developing and teaching this standardised version, as a consistent product that could be successfully marketed and sold. Further standardisation, closer to home, can be seen in what has happened to tango in the competitive ballroom dancing arena.

The tango tourist flood from other parts of the world has diluted the old tango streams of Bs As. Yet new streams are rising in surprising places. Tango is still evolving and developing local characteristics as an expressive art of ordinary people, in places as far from Buenos Aires as Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Could it be that our suburban milongas, with their discernable differences and colourful characters might be akin to the neighbourhood milongas of yesteryear in Buenos Aires? Tend the flame and feed the fire, dancers of Australia!

Ruth Roshan & Tango Noir

Mandolin player, singer and composer, Ruth Roshan and her band *Tango Noir*, who played at the *Tango in Wonderland Milonga* at the 2011 *Buenos Aires at the Beach Tango Festival*, are performing in Federation Square as part of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. See and hear them on March 11 on the main stage, 5.30 – 6.00pm, performing between a celebrity cooking competition and a screening of the film *Julie and Julia*. The band is also on the Cultural Quarter Stage for Moomba on March 13, 7.30 – 8.30pm.

Delicious Autumn Tango

And speaking of food and wine and altogether yummy things, Adelaide's seasonal autumn tango event is coming up, with barely a pumpkin or seasonal vegetable in sight.



LUSCIOUS TANGO is on Thursday 21 April, 7 – 11pm at Deaf Cando Hall, 262 South Terrace, just before the Easter break. It promises a delicious night with gorgeous social dancing. An elegant floorshow performance from Adrienne & Andrew Gill will be icing on the cake (chocolate themed, or will the white bunny make another appearance?) Tickets are \$15.

BYO drinks, and bring your favourite sweet treat or delicious dessert to add to the table for the shared Luscious Supper.

We suggest you take a gold-leafed chocolate wafer, cream-filled coffee éclair, or Dutch chocolate apple cake crumb of inspiration from my grandmother and her friends. Before their famous family supper parties and afternoon teas of lovingly handmade culinary delights, they refrained from eating during the day to leave room to indulge in all the goodies.

Isobel Munoz – creator of beautiful tango images

Readers may know Spanish photographer Isobel Munoz for the collaboration with writer Evelyne Pieiller that resulted in the erotically charged and beautiful coffee table book called simply *'Tango'*. In it dancers dressed in vintage clothing are posed in authentic locations. Their images capture the moment of surrender and Tango's restrained desire.

Isobel Munoz was commissioned by UNICEF to mark the 20th anniversary of the UN's convention on the Rights of the Child. Her exhibition, *Infancia*, staged at Madrid's CaixaForum, examined versions of childhood around the world and featured photos of children leading diverse lives on four different continents.

Australian Tango Writers

This month's short story

Memories of the Buenos Aires Missing Left Shoe Incident By Craig Cormick

It was the music that had lured us in, of course. We'd walked past the Borges Tango Hall three times that week without even realising it was a Tango Hall. It looked like an old cinema or restaurant. But then we heard that distant sad yet passionate sound, as if calling to us. We stepped into the dim interior, looking around at the faded old marble and brass fittings in the foyer. There was an old cage elevator and a curved staircase, luring us up to where the music was playing.

We ascended. At the top of the stairs was a young woman with her dark hair pulled back into a tight ponytail. She mumbled something in Spanish and I asked her: "Do you teach tango lessons?"

She smiled. "Si," like it was common for foreigners to find their way into the hall, despite the lack of any signage. She took some pesos from us and pointed us in through the wide stained glass doors. One step inside and I had to grab Sharon's arm for support. It felt as if we had just stepped back 50 years or more through time, and had to adjust to the giddiness of it.

The hall was large with a low ceiling, held aloft with yellowed pillars. The same faded old marble lined the floor, and set around the room were small café tables with chairs. There were perhaps twenty or thirty people seated around the hall, all very elderly, but dressed well. And the music floated around the hall like smoke, winding its way round the pillars and tables and chairs, gathering us in and pulling us towards the far end of the room.

There was a bar there, with a silent tall thin man behind it, and Julio stood there with his arms out. "Bienvenidos!" he said, as if expecting us. Then he looked down at my shoes.

Sharon had found a pair of shoes the first day. Real Argentinean Tango shoes, made of soft suede, with strong high heels. She had put them on in the hotel and danced around on the bathroom tiles as if they had possessed her to become a Latino dancer. They were expensive, but she insisted they were worth every peso. "How can you put money on a life's dream?" she asked me.

She was right, of course. We'd been planning this trip for two years. Adding it to our list of things we wanted to do in life. Ride the reunification express train along the length of Vietnam. Make love on an airplane flying over the equator. Walk the Great Wall of China. Take Tango lessons in Argentina.

Once or twice a year we'd make sure our busy work schedule allowed time for us to take leave together. She'd fly up to Sydney from Melbourne to join me, and we'd fly off together like an actual couple for a week or so.

Finding a pair of shoes for me proved a little more elusive though. We walked up and down the small shoe shops of the Tango quarter, a few blocks from the damp and dirty Plaza del Mayo and tried on shoe after shoe with no success. Too small. Too large. And, most infuriatingly, the one shop we finally found that had the perfect shoes for me could only find the right shoe.

'Come back tomorrow,' the elderly man told me, 'We find it then.'

Julio moved like his bones were made of liquid. A strongly intoxicating liquid. And he moved as if the music were a part of him. He held out one hand and the most beautiful woman I had seen so far in Buenos Aires stepped up from a table to take it. She had her hair tied up in a bun, wore a low tight top that showed off her curves, and a wide skirt that she grasped in one hand as she walked. He pulled her in tight to his body and they paused for a moment and then stepped into the music. Sharon and I watched as they suddenly melted into one being. It was transfixing. The passion in their steps was palpable, and I felt my heart beating faster just watching them. We were in the presence of wondrous beauty. The elderly people in the hall turned their heads to watch. I was hooked.

Sharon held my hand and squeezed it. She felt it too. His was like the rush I'd had preparing to jump out of the skydiving plane near Cairns.

To tell the truth, Buenos Aires had seen better days. The pavements were cracked and dirty. The autumn sky seemed to turn everything to grey. The presidential palace was sealed off from the Plaza by high wire fences that scowled outwards. The people on the street pulled their collars up high to ward off the chill and gloom.

But it had no effect on us. We were close to fulfilling another dream. And it would be the last one for a long time. I had suggested we go trekking in Nepal before all the glaciers there melted, but Sharon said, 'No. We're going to learn to Tango in Argentina!' So here we were.

We had practiced dancing in the hotel room the first night we arrived. Switched on the TV and found a channel playing something like Tango music and then stood there in the centre of the room, eyes closed, letting the rhythm of the music fill us. Then we started moving. Awkward steps that bumped against each other, until we fell onto the couch laughing. I took Sharon's hands in mine and held her close to me.

Then I stood two fingers on her stomach and said, 'May I have this dance señorita?' She placed her own hand against mine, also standing it on two fingers. And we danced. Our hands pressed against each other, moving in close unison. Backwards and forwards across the soft rise and fall of her stomach.

Then her dancing fingers disengaged and wrapped around my neck. I will never become inured to the physical sensation of her being close to me, I thought. We danced on through the night, with no thought of the past nor the future, thinking only of the moment.

The old man in the shop is very apologetic when we go back to ask about the missing left shoe. He tells us in a mix of broken English and Spanish that he is certain that his wife knows where it is but she won't be back until tomorrow, but he will ring her and ask her where it is. He tells us that he has looked all through his storeroom and has not been able to find it anywhere. It is a great mystery, he says. Sharon tells him that life consists of great mysteries. We can see he dearly wants to sell us a pair of shoes and he can see I dearly want them.

He tries to convince me that a few other pairs of shoes would fit me just as well, but his heart isn't really in the sales pitch. He knows I know that it has to be those shoes.

Julio tries to demonstrate the basic steps to us. He shows us how to stand. How to hold each other. But it is like my attempts at speaking Spanish. I know the sounds I should be making, but they never seem to come out right. And I can't seem to stand and move the way Julio is showing me. And when I do move I forget the steps quickly. Was it a right step to the side of a left step?

Julio says, steer her with your hand. He says, never use the same foot twice. He says, Tango is about the movement of the whole body. He says, place your foot and move your weight slowly. He says you must feel the music in your heart before your body can hear it.

Sharon glides so easily in his arms when he demonstrates with her. But I just can't seem to get the twists and turns of it, until finally Julio looks down at my feet again and says to me with a shake of his head, 'It is more difficult to dance the Tango without the right shoes.'

So we go back to the shoe shop again and ask if the old man has found the missing left shoe. I hope he has. Putting the soft black shoe on was like slipping my fingers into a well-fitted glove. It felt like I couldn't not dance well with those shoes on.

But not having them was like planning to sky dive without a parachute. Wanting to bungee jump without a bungee cord. Planning a future without a partner.

'You're like Cinderella,' Sharon tells me.

'Our dream is dependent on these shoes,' I tell her, for we fly home tomorrow. But when we reach the shop there is a sign on the shop window. 'What does it say?' she asks. 'Uh, I think it says back in ten minutes.'

'But that's a South American ten minutes, right?' she says.

'Of course it is. They might mean ten hours.' I can't see the single right shoe in the window, where we had first seen it.

Sharon takes my hand and forms the standing dancing fingers with our fingers. 'You don't need magic shoes to dance with me,' she says.

'He'll be back in ten minutes,' I say, trying my best to sound confident.

And so we return to the Borges Tango Hall, on our last evening in Buenos Aires. We've crossed the threshold into the magic of the past once again. The old men and women are moving round the hall gracefully, as if they were 40 years younger in the embrace of the music.

I have my arm around Sharon's waist and I move my hand to touch her stomach. There is only the slightest bulge of the life growing within her. I lift my arms and hold her in that Tango stance, and I feel the racing of my heart again. The music is both sad and lovely. I feel her body leaning into mine and I realize that it's not just a physical sensation that is stirring within me. I think that many years from now, when I'm an old man, I might have forgotten the buzz of riding a train the length of Vietnam, or the thrill of standing on the Great Wall of China, but there's something about this moment, standing right here with her, that I'll never forget. That will carry us together through all the twists and turns of the future.

And then Julio steps up with a smile. He looks at me and nods, as I he can see that I finally understand what it is all about. 'Now let us dance,' he says. And he never once looks down at my shoes.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Craig Cormick is an award-winning Canberra author and science journalist. He has travelled to seven continents including Antarctica for work, and uses his travels for inspiration for his stories. He has published 12 books, including eight collections of short stories. In 2007 he travelled to South America and lists dancing the Tango in Buenos Aires as the achievement of one of his life's dreams.

Tango Literature Prizes & Programs

Each new poem and short story published in *Tango Australis* earns a \$50 fee for the writer, a modest reward for endeavour. The Jarvis family sponsored publication of *Memories of the Buenos Aires Missing Left Shoe Incident*.

With more support, more original works can be published, more writers brought to public attention – and more readers can enjoy passionate, heartfelt, entertaining writing about tango. Donations (any amount, it all adds up) to be applied to writers' fees can be forwarded to the President, *Friends of Buenos Aires at the Beach Inc.*, PO Box 3024, Bareena, Newtown, Victoria, 3220. Official receipts will be sent and donations can be publicly acknowledged with the published work, or be anonymous if preferred.

It is a practical way for those who enjoy reading about Tango, to support those who create original tango literature.

The Australian Tango Poetry Competition, with \$500 first prize, will be held again in 2011. Entry closing date is October 30, and conditions of entry forms can be obtained by telephoning 041 753 1619 or emailing richardandpam@mac.com Put 'Tango Poetry Comp' in the email header. The Australian Tango Short Story Prize will be held again in 2012 (so authors, keep writing tango short stories).

Sponsors of this month's poem

Jane & Thomas Griffiths sponsored the publication of *Piazzolla's gift to a poet*. This poem earned a Judges' Commendation in the 2010 Australian Tango Poetry Competition.

Piazzolla's gift to a poet

By Tamara Tallent

*Like her last poem torn into pieces,
Tiny leaves dance high on laughter,
Jumping up and down off heated asphalt.*

*Victorian houses stand astutely,
Eucalyptus trees stroke gently their walls,
From a window, she peers the outside world.*

*Ink stays stubborn, refusing to flow through
As though waiting to trace clear blue visions
Rather than invent from the scene ahead.*

*Pregnant woman, mother with smiling child,
Confused, the poet sees not her future,
But time walking forward to nowhere.*

*Looking upon the day fine, so much light,
Sudden fierce twisting skies seem darkly surreal,
They take with them meaning, leaving sound still.*

*But then, through rustling spring, sweet deep voice
of Goyeneche singing loud, a ballad
for a crazy guy, making this poet
Smile at life's riddles on a sunny day*

About the poet

This poet's name might be familiar. Tamara Tallent's 'Hermaphrodites' won Equal First Prize in the Australian Tango Poetry Competition. Multi-talented Tamara is a contemporary artist, working in media as diverse as oil painting, works on paper, photography, objects, poetry and new media. When struck with the rare bone infection, osteomyelitis, she replaced her passion for ballet with an obsession for drawing dancers and writing.

Tamara has a Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design (RMIT) and is undertaking studies in 20th Century Latin American literature & art history. Fascinated by Surrealism, Expressionism and Latin America writing's Magic Realism, her poetry shows influences of Borges, Garcia Marquéz, Fuentes, Cortázar, Neruda, Esquivel and Allende. Their poetic descriptions of life in South America, have brought Tamara back to the melting pot of cultures and one of the most important centres of surrealist influence: Buenos Aires.

Working in collaboration with Argentine musicians Tamara is producing poems that are being translated into Spanish lyrics. Her poems draw on memory and emotions whilst searching for what lies between the beauty and tragedy of the human condition.

Café Schéhérazade onstage in Melbourne

In the aftermath of World War 2, a beacon of European culture and intellectual life burned in a St Kilda café. For traumatised refugees, many of whom had lost all but their lives and memories, this was a warm, safe meeting place – somewhere to share lively conversation, recipes for chicken soup and black forest cake. This generation danced tango, too.

Arnold Zable's novel, *Café Schéhérazade*, tells poignant, often humorous stories of the patrons. Now the play, adapted from the novel, has a season at fortyfivedownstairs.com in Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 8 March – 3 April. Bookings 03 9662 9966. Young Melbourne composer and musician, Elissa Goodrich, whose grandparents and parents came to Australia as part of the post-war migration from Eastern Europe, is Musical Director. Not a musical as such, this is a show in which music – traditional klezmer music – and one moving dance scene set in Paris, play their own part. It is a celebration of survival and courage.

Bookings are heavy – but do your best to get a ticket.

Blokes, significant others, and Tango in Geelong

Help promote tango as a healthy activity at the 2011 Blokes Day Out, Sunday 3rd April in Johnstone Park. Community Tango has an information table & is sponsoring a performance and chacarera workshop with Albert & Natalia Cortez and Eddy (Solo Tango). Bill Featherston & Jill Hough will dance too. Lots of activities and displays for kids and adults –some involving important health issues for guys. The Blokes Day Out Week of Activities put on by nearly 50 community groups will be launched with a BBQ breakfast at Christ Church on Friday 25 March. All welcome – a gold coin donation will support the community meals program. Peterkelly@barwonhealth.org.au for the full program.

On Monday 4 April, the doors @ Christ Church, cnr Moorabool & McKillop Streets, are opened wide for a '**Bloke Friendly Tango Social Night**', 7.30 – 9.30pm. The local group will appreciate the support of regular & visiting dancers (blokes & ladies). Come along, wave the flag for tango, and draw people in to the warm circle.

Melbourne Tango

Sidewalk Tango. David Backler has classes, Wednesday practicas & fortnightly 1st & 3rd Friday Tango Noir Milonga at 327 Swan Street, Richmond. The Tiki Bar is open on Friday, Saturday & Sunday nights – a very cool place for a drink. Check **Melbourne Tango Club** at www.sidewalktango.com.au/melbourne-tango-events Organisers can email event details to david@sidewalktango.com.au La Practica (hosted by Francesco (Frank & Carolin) is held at **Sidewalktango** on the 2nd & 4th Sundays. 3 – 6pm. \$5

Solo Tango. Alberto & Natalia host a milonga on the last Saturday of each month at 154 Liardet St, Port Melbourne. For class details albertocortez@bigpond.com Ph: 0411 665 454

Tango Bajo. (Bill Jarman – 0416 015 327 & Leigh Rogan – 0410 257 855) have events, milongas every Saturday (except the last of the month), practicas & classes @ St Albans Church, corner of Orrong & Wynnstay Rds, Prahran. Chris Corby & Alessio teaching too. Email leighis@fastmail.fm or get on the Monthly Calendar mailing list (or send event details) by emailing jerry@highgatebeauty.com

Viva. Christian Drogo and Melbourne's original Tango Bar now at Hit the Floor, Level 1, 245 Glenferrie Rd, Malvern (enter from Stanhope) last Sunday of month. Doors open 7pm, class 8pm. \$15. info@vivadance.com.au www.melbournetangohotspot.wordpress.com 03 9415 8166.

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

Project NFT (Neo Fusion Tango) – Practilonga, 7pm Ideas, 7.30 – 10.30pm Dancing @ The Palace Hotel, 1st floor, up stairs & across main bar, 893 Burke Rd, Camberwell opp train station and tram stop 72. \$10. Rod & Belinda rjh@keypoint.com.au

Another Melbourne tango calendar/events & unique information site is www.verytango.com To advertise a coming event go to the contact page on the website.

Community Tango in Geelong - No experience or partner needed. All welcome, always @ Christ Church hall, corner of Moorabool & McKillop Streets in Geelong. Good wooden floor. Tango class & social night: 1st Monday of each month, 7.30 - 9.30pm; Supervised Practica 3rd Wednesday, 8 – 9.30pm (\$3 with Pam & Richard). Bloke-friendly Tango Night on Monday 4 April. Exciting open level workshop night with Adrienne & Andrew Gill on Monday 2 May. Information: richardandpam@mac.com or telephone 041 753 1619

ADELAIDE TANGO:

Tango Salon – Classes & Milongas. **Comme il Faut Milonga – Sunday 20 March 4pm – 8pm** at Mt Osmond Golf Club. www.tangosalonadelaide.blogspot.com

Tango Adelaide Club – Milongas & Practicas. **Club Milonga – Saturday 5 March, 8pm – late** at the Dom Pyatt Hall (Norwood Concert Hall). \$7/\$10. BYO Drinks & nibbles. **Tango in the Winery – Sunday 29 March, 4pm – 7pm** at Uleybury Wines near One Tree Hill. \$7. Members free. www.tangoadelaide.org

Siempre Tango – Classes, Practicas & Milongas. **Dom Polski Milonga – Friday 22 April, 8pm – 12** at Dom Polski Centre, 232 Angas St, Adelaide. \$10/8. Coming up: Pedro & Sophia Alvarez (Patio de Tango, Sydney) workshops in Adelaide, 9-10 April. www.siempretango.net.au

Tango Tierra – Classes & Practicas. Coming up: Anibal Montenegro (Bs As) workshops in Adelaide May 13-19. www.websa.com.au/imogen/main.htm

Southern Cross Tango – Classes, Practicas & Milongas.

Tango by the Sea Milonga – Sunday 13 March, 4-8pm at the Henley Sailing Club, 1 Esplanade, West Beach. \$12/10. All welcome. You can bring a plate of afternoon tea or supper to share, drinks available from the bar. www.southerncrosstango.com.au

Southern Cross Tango Events coming up:

MT BARKER MILONGA - Friday 1 April, (Beg Class 7-8pm) Social dancing 8pm – 10pm at Mt Barker Town Hall, 34 Gawler St Mt Barker. Enjoy an evening of tango grooves with our Mt Barker tango crew & friends. Cost: \$5pp (free for Mt Barker students). All welcome. BYO Drinks/Nibbles.



FLASH TANGO WORKSHOP with Andrew & Adrienne Gill - Saturday 16 April, 10am – 12 at Deaf Cando Hall, 262 South Tce, Adelaide. *Discover your inner extrovert in this fun & flashy tango workshop!* Inter/Adv Level. Cost: \$25pp or \$45 per couple. Bookings 0419 309 439 sctango@bigpond.com

LUSCIOUS TANGO on Thursday 21 April, 7pm – 11pm at Deaf Cando Hall, 262 South Tce, Adelaide. Join us for an evening of gorgeous social dancing, with an elegant floorshow performance by Andrew & Adrienne Gill. Tickets: \$15pp. BYO Drinks. Bring along your favourite dessert to share for the Luscious Supper. All welcome. Bookings 04109 309 439 sctango@bigpond.com



PRACTICA Y for leaders – Andrew Gill's innovative Practica Y program is returning! Dates & Time tba. Bookings: sctango@bigpond.com

Tango Choreography Course: 7 May - 25 June 2011: Learn an original group choreography created by Andrew & Adrienne Gill. Explore performance tango skills & fun new challenges! Inter/Adv. 4-5 Couples only. Bookings essential! sctango@bigpond.com

SOUTHERN CROSS TANGO - Class Schedule

TUESDAYS

Current 8 Wk Tango Course until 22 March 2011.

Next 4 Wk Tango Course: Tuesday 29 March – 19 April 2011

Beginners 7-8pm; Intermediate 8-9pm @ Kensington Centre, Hill St, **KENSINGTON**

WEDNESDAYS

Current 6 Wk Tango Course until 23 March 2011.

Next 4 Wk Tango Course: Wednesday 30 March – 20 April 2011

Beg 7-8pm; Inter 8-9pm; Adv 9-10pm @ Deaf Cando Hall, 262 South Tce, **ADELAIDE**

THURSDAYS – WEEKLY PRACTICAS

(Instead of normal practica on Thurs 21 April there will be the Luscious Milonga from 7-11pm.)

Supervised Practica from 7-9pm @ Deaf Cando Hall, 262 South Tce, **ADELAIDE**.

FRIDAYS

Current 7 Wk Tango Course until 1 April 2011 (*no class Fri 18 March, instead Practica 16 March)

Friday 8 April, 7-8pm - Open Level Workshop

Next 6 Wk Tango Course: Friday 22 April – 29 April 7-8pm, then please note the change of night & time: Thursday 5 – 26 May, 7.30-8.30pm

@ Mt Barker Town Hall, 34 Gawler St, **MT BARKER**

SATURDAYS

Current 4 Wk Course: Saturday 5 – 26 March 2011

Tango Training for Women: 10am -11am. Open Level. Bookings essential.

Small Group Private: *COLGADAS & VOLEOS* (Inter/Adv) (FULL)

8 Wk Choreography Course: Saturday 7 May – 25 June 2011: 11am -12.30pm. Inter/Adv.

Private Tuition (Saturdays & Weekdays)

@ Seacliff Studio, 50 Kauri Pde, **SEACLIFF**

Bookings & Information: *Southern Cross Tango*

ph: 0419 309 439 or E: sctango@bigpond.com

Web: www.southerncrosstango.com.au