

SUMMER 2017

MARIA

de Buenos Aires

María de Buenos Aires in Minneapolis!

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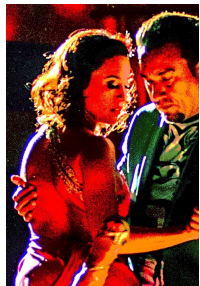


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MARÍA DE BUENOS AIRES IN MINNEAPOLIS!

By Tessa Wagner



Did you know that Astor Piazzolla wrote an operetta? *María de Buenos Aires* beautifully merges the elements of dance, vocals, narration and instruments into a story that unfolds in a glorious underworld of love and passion.

A surreal blend of tango and opera, this tale of passion, seduction, death and dreams is an example of the *nouveau tango* that Piazzolla helped pioneer. Premiered in Buenos Aires in 1968, this tango operita has been performed around the world, and comes to Minneapolis in July.

LESSONS AND MILONGAS

Except for opening night (when the program will be different), we at the TSoM are glad to contribute by providing teachers for a 45-minute lesson before each performance, as well as DJs for a 90-minute milonga following each performance.

KEY FACTS:

- Opening night is Friday July 14. Additional performances on July 16, 18, 19 and 20.
- Venue: The Machine Shop, 300 2nd St SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414
- Tickets and more info: www.millcitysummeropera.org

A NOTA FROM THE PRESIDENTE

By Paul Lohman

Did you know that the Tango Society of Minnesota is now 18 years old? Formed in 1999 to help cultivate tango here in the Twin Cities, we still have active members from those early days including original board members Lois Donnay and Jim Dunn. If you see them at a milonga, thank them for their efforts in jump starting tango in the Twin Cities, ... way back when.



Summer is upon us and the TSoM Board is pleased to be organizing some exciting events that will take place in the coming months - one in particular.

MARIA DE BUENOS AIRES BY ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

The Mill City Opera Company is staging performances in July of Astor Piazzolla's fantasy opera, "Maria de Buenos Aires." TSoM has been partnering with the folks at Mill City to present lessons and provide DJs for the milongas that will happen in conjunction with each performance.

COMPLIMENTARY OPERA TICKETS

We have also worked out a deal for TSoM members to get complimentary tickets. Dancers who get tickets will be able to see the show and also take part in the lesson before the performance and the milonga afterward. ([Click here for this TSoM member deal.](#))

Your support, as a member of TSoM, helps us to coordinate these exciting events, making TSoM the vibrant and public face of tango in the Twin Cities – Thank you members!

TANGO OUTREACH

The TSoM Board is always looking for ways to spread the news about tango in the Twin Cities. Our Outreach Committee (board member Barb Haselbeck and Michael Kane) have already staged a "tango bomb" at the fantastical Can Can Wonderland. If you have an idea for a place or time where we can present a public performance of tango, let us know.

TANGO VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Check out the new page on our website "[TSoM Video of the Month.](#)" Watch for fun videos that span the whole of Tango: Masters in performance, Social Dancing, Tango History, Videos from other tango clubs, and much more. There is also a place on the page to make comments. <https://www.mntango.org/video-of-the-month/>

See you on the dance floor,

Paul



VIDEO OF THE MONTH: www.mntango.org/video-of-the-month

A NOTA FROM THE EDITORA

By Tessa (Gail) Wagner

As excited as we are about having María de Buenos Aires in Minnesota, we reflect on the blessings of enjoying the inspiration-filled visit of Tango superstars to our northern land.

We started the year with a bang with Sexteto Milonguero and our Tango Marathon. Not a community to rest on our laurels, we had Chicho and Juana in Rochester, Jessica and Oscar in Minneapolis, and a growing schedule of lessons, practicas and milongas right here in our Minnesota community.

For this we're grateful, and for this we at Tango Moments feel the responsibility to cover all the good being done by local tangueros.

The invitation remains open for you to contribute your content here in Tango Moments. See the note at the end of this issue about contributions, and email us your comments, suggestions, critiques (and of course high praise) anytime to tango-moments@mntango.org.

Here's to a Summer of Tango!

Tessa



TANGO NOIR — PART 2

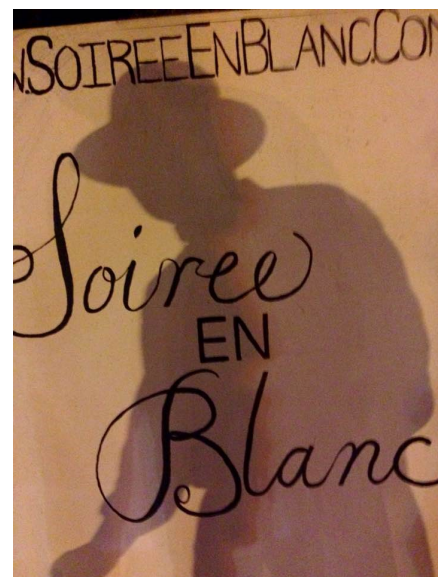
By Jim Dunn

“So there you are, James. I was hoping you'd be here today. You haven't been avoiding me, have you?”

“Avoiding you, Carmen? Can I avoid food, air, water, the New York Times crossword puzzle?” I said, rising from my chair and kissing her on the cheek, then retreating only to drown in the emerald fountains that were her eyes. “Please sit down. I just ordered. Would you like something?”

“No James, devouring you on the dance floor will satisfy me. And later, something sweet perhaps? *Muy dulce?*”

I gulped and looked around for a door that wasn't there.



I'd met Carmen at the Confiteria a couple months back. She stood alone at the bar so I walked over and asked if she was there to meet someone. "Maybe," she said.

"Well, I'm someone."

"Maybe," she repeated, sweeping me like an airport scanner.

"To some people I'm someone, to others I'm a little less than that, I suppose. I've been in BA for three weeks reporting for the English language Chronicle and the wire services. Friends told me I could learn tango here at the Confiteria."

"Well, it's as good a place as any, for a beginner," she said, with only a tiny dose of disdain.

"Your English..."

"Yeah, my father's American. I went to high school in California."

"Well, I've been taking some private tango lessons. You might find me adequate."

"O.K., my dance partner's not here yet. Just remember, I walk on my feet, you don't."

"Sí, claro," I said.

I suppose I've had more dramatic experiences than that first tango with Carmen. I just can't remember any. *El abrazo*, the embrace, was like pressing a mold of myself in warm jello, except you could breathe. And you weren't all sticky afterwards. The clumsiness I'd felt with other dancers disappeared with the first *salida*. She seemed to anticipate my moves, leading me as I lead her. The *tanda* ended too soon. We held our embrace for a few seconds after the music died.

"O.K., Casanova, you can let me go now. My practice partner is here."

Striding toward us was the powerfully built Mr. Clean.

TANGO SUPERSTARS VISIT ROCHESTER

By Don "Donaldo" Rowe

We in the Great Midwest have lured to our flat, featureless land some pretty big names in the tango world, clinging to some hopeful expectation that they will refine our tango obsession. But even in this esteemed troupe, there are only a handful that stand taller than their peers ... so tall that we in the flatland are too humble to even think of inviting them here.



But not April Dahl! Oh no! She set her line out for the Big One. And got 'em.

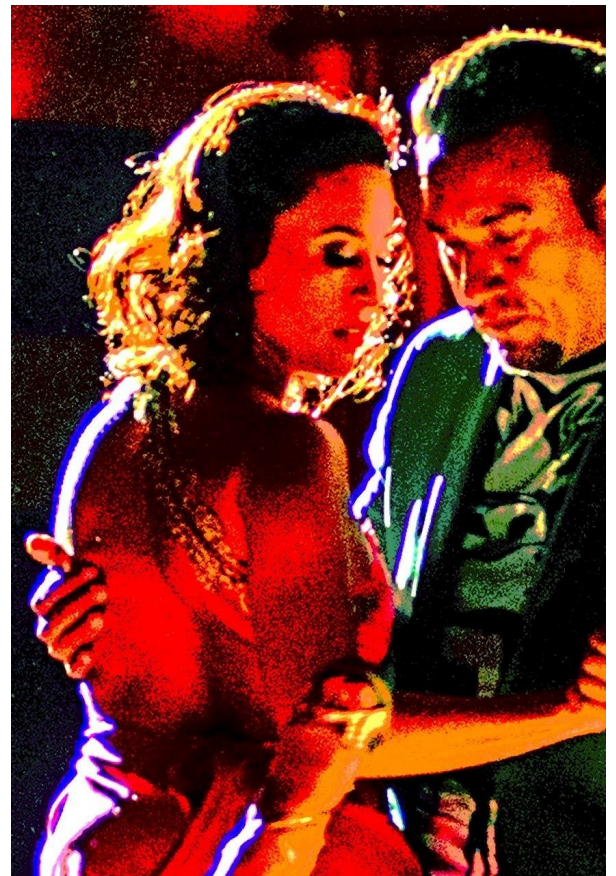
Of course, I'm speaking of the weekend workshops in Rochester in early April lead by the great **Mariano 'Chicho' Frúmboli** and his graceful partner in dance and teaching, **Juana Sepúlveda**.

But then, I think the path to land stellar talent in Rochester was blazed a few years ago when Fred Gommels first snagged Fabián Salas and Lola Diaz (who have, of course, returned every year since). I suppose that, in the land of The Mayo, it's hard to be intimidated by large egos. The Twin Cities is duly humbled.

A handful of Minnesota tango dancers have had the privilege of studying tango with Chicho and Juana in recent years. I for one hitched my star to their universe in 2014 when they were teaching at the Boulder Tango Festival. That event is hosted by Gustavo Naveira and Giselle Anne. Chicho is himself a humble student of Gustavo's, joining the tango training group Gustavo and Fabian Salas had formed in the mid-90s in Buenos Aires. (Chicho even got a spot as an extra in Sally Potter's "The Tango Lesson.")

Why Do We Do It That Way?

By the time I was Chicho's humble student in Boulder, Chicho was a superstar. But, I surmised: just because I admired him for his distinctive musicality and creativity (and Juana for her grace and artful movement), it didn't mean that it would necessarily carry over to the creative skill-set required to teach someone else to dance (a serviceable form of skepticism, I might add).



Well, I laid that to rest in Boulder almost immediately. I think all who attended the Rochester workshops will agree. Chicho and Juana ('C&J') have a well-formed schema for teaching others to dance. They go beyond teaching figures for dancers to mimic. Rather, we find ourselves studying



movement and being challenged to find our own artistic voice. It's one reason why there isn't a wrap-up summary at the end of a class (and a video opportunity for the student). I think they're saying: "Don't go home and watch a video to copy us. Go home and find more answers to the questions raised in class." Ask yourself: "Why do we do it

that way?" And when you begin to answer that, then ask: "Maybe we should try it *this* way."

Gretchen Larson agrees, saying "I leave with better questions and new tools to discover the answers."

(Cont. on page 9)

HONESTY IN TEACHING A SOCIAL DANCE. IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

By Sabine Ibes www.tangoandi.com

For professional dancers, brutal honesty is the only way to learn to feel and look good. Most professional dancers prefer to be told to work on a skill that they lack. In return they practice, hours upon hours, year after year to get it right. That can result in a beautiful flawless stage performance which is video taped and promptly appears on Youtube or Facebook. That same video is what students will bring to a class, or practica or private lesson, saying, "This is what I want to do."

As social dancers, many give it their best shot, while having fun and trying not to be discouraged when the outcome is slightly different.

Dancing is hard work. Best results are achieved when you start at the very beginning, you stay humble about the learning process. There are no shortcuts – NONE.

When you really want to dance the way the professionals did in that video, you have to



be able to handle some harsh truths about yourself, and realize that one or two hours of practice per week will not give you the desired outcome. Weave those group classes into your life, join the technique class and come to practica. That is about 4 hours of learning movement a week.

At home you can work on your dance while you sit and binge watch your Netflix show. (I can recommend some good ones.) Seriously: You can give your feet a workout, you can mind your posture, you can learn to relax your shoulder muscles and much more. All of which, by the way, is taught during a tango technique class!

Keep watching those videos, they are inspiring. Set attainable goals for yourself, join class (again). When you receive feedback from your teacher, it is meant for you to learn. Your teacher needs to be honest with you. They do not assign guilt and are not judgmental.

Understand the value of their feedback, and practice practice practice. You will love dancing even more when you put your mind to it and devote the time to it!

Get inspired by your own learning! At **Tango & I** you will find the opportunity to grow with some tough love and discipline, which is what we all need from time to time.



HE SANG “MI BUENOS AIRES QUERIDO”

by Tessa Wagner

On my second trip to Buenos Aires in 2009 I stayed in Almagro, a neighborhood right next to Abasto. Being so close to the house where Carlos Gardel lived with his mother, I visited the place, then a very complete museum about his life (currently closed for renovation). I had heard of Gardel as a composer and performer of tangos, but I really didn't know much more about him. This changed after spending a fair amount of time in his house. After a while there, I could almost feel his presence and that of his mother in that space. She was a laundress and a single mother, very devoted to him.



I understood that his mother had French heritage, but I never doubted that he was a true Argentine. Then last year, when in Montevideo, Uruguay, while walking down the main street, I see a statue of Gardel and the claim that he was born in Uruguay. Could this be true?

Of course, our beloved tango crooner composed and sang the iconic “*Mi Buenos Aires querido*” (My Dear Buenos Aires, with lyrics by Alfredo Le Pera) ... but he wasn't a porteño, an Argentine? Not really. Well, yes and no. By his own admission, he was Uruguayan. Also by his own admission, sometimes reluctantly, he was French. He did nationalize as an Argentine citizen, and called Buenos Aires his own.

Historians debate whether he was born in Tacuarembó, Uruguay in 1887 or in Toulouse, France in 1890. The latter is the most widely accepted version: Berthe Gardes, a young French woman, is rejected by her family for having given birth out of wedlock, and goes to Buenos Aires to start a life there with her baby.

The Uruguay version says that he was the out-of-wedlock son of a political/military strongman and his much-younger sister-in-law. After the birth, the child was given to a French woman (Berthe Gardes) who worked for the family, along with a sum of money, and asked to take the baby “as far as possible.” Berthe goes to her native France, registers the baby as born in Toulouse, then goes back to South America to settle in Buenos Aires.



What we do know for certain is that Carlos Gardel (his stage name) grew up in Buenos Aires, spending a lot of time in the Abasto neighborhood, where as a kid and youth he was known by the nickname “francesito” (Frenchie).

Why did he say he was Uruguayan? When WWI starts in 1914, as a 24-year-old French national living in Buenos Aires, he was supposed to register at the French consulate and most likely go fight in the Great War. Instead, he goes to the Uruguayan



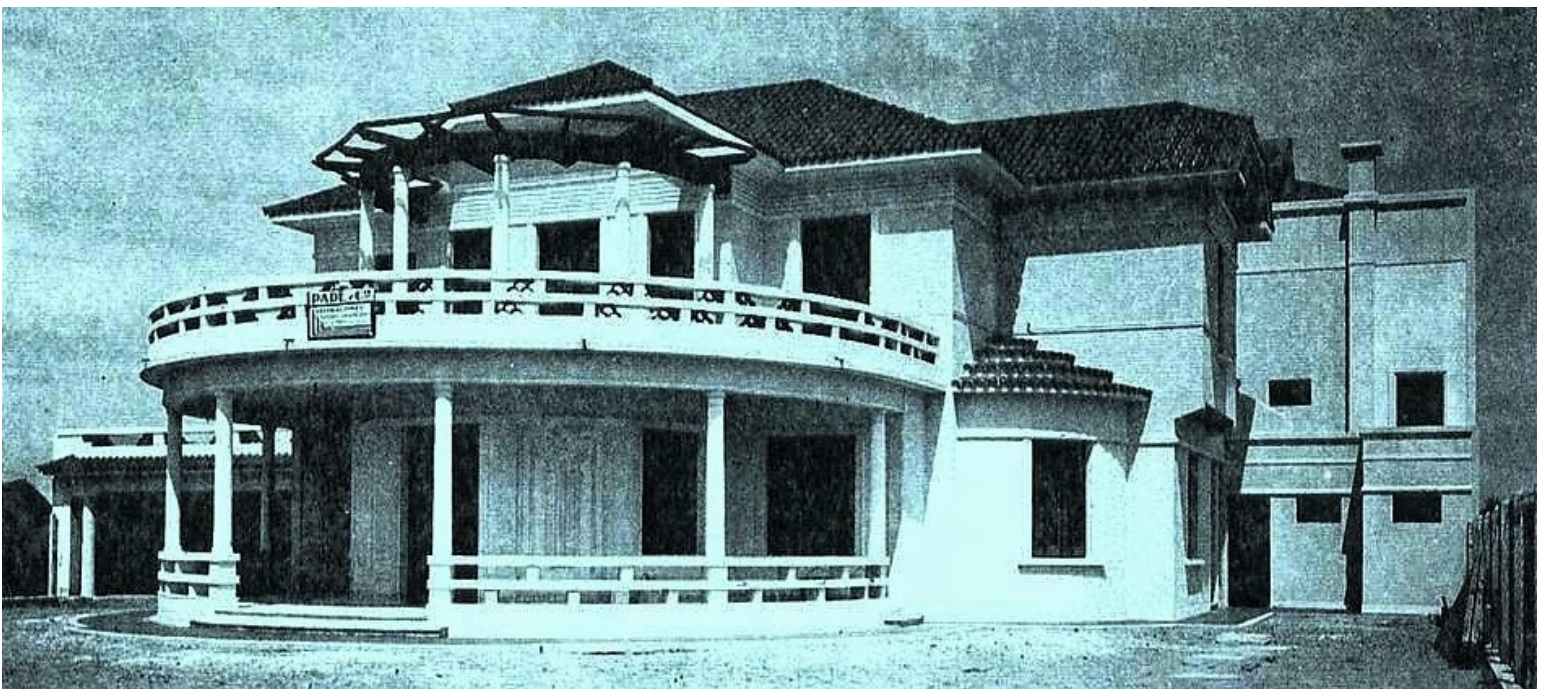
consulate and registers as Uruguayan by birth, taking advantage of Uruguayan legislation encouraging Uruguayans to get proper documentation. He does this using his stage name, Carlos Gardel, and in 1920 acquires Argentine documentation as a Uruguayan living in Buenos Aires. He achieves full Argentine citizenship in 1923.

Because a public acknowledgment that he was French could get him in trouble with France, he would give evasive responses when asked about his birthplace. He also avoided bringing up the circumstances around his birth to a single mother.

His ties to Uruguay include the purchase of land in Montevideo's Playa Pocitos area — a transaction which he completed using his Uruguayan citizenship papers. He then built a house there (pictured below).



During my conversation with Carlos Gardel, downtown Montevideo, Uruguay, he was quite elusive.



The myths about Gardel go much further than this – some say that it was his double whose charred body was found wearing his ring in the fateful airplane crash in 1935 in Medellín, Colombia, and that he went on living, badly burned and deformed, in Buenos Aires, anonymously.

And the legend lives on. That Carlitos “sings better every day.” One of Carlos Gardel’s many nicknames was “El Mago” (the magician or wizard). This proved very appropriate, as he did magic in life, and also in death.

The Argentine Elvis. The French Elvis. And the Uruguayan Elvis.



NEW TO TANGO?
Check out our **Learn Tango** page:
www.mntango.org/learn-tango

TANGO
TANGO SOCIETY
OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL EVENTS: SUMMER 2017

Oscar Casas

June 8-14, 2017

Sponsored by Dance with Lois Donnay,
Minneapolis, MN

Details & registration: [mndance.com/
Workshops.html](http://mndance.com/Workshops.html)

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/
mndance](http://www.facebook.com/mndance)

Oscar Casas is back in Minneapolis with his clear, fun and relevant style of teaching. Recognized for his connection, musicality and improvisation, Oscar embodies the joy of tango. Workshops & private classes available.



Fabián Salas & Lola Díaz

July 5-10, 2017

Sponsored by Blue Moon Ballroom,
Rochester, MN. Details & registration:

[bluemoonballroom.com/fabian--lola-
tango](http://bluemoonballroom.com/fabian--lola-tango)

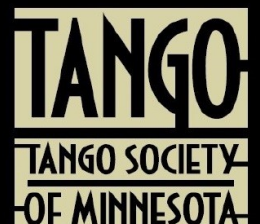
Both Fabián and Lola are Argentine Tango Masters, and bring to Minnesota a rich program of workshop and private classes for all levels. Early registration discounts up to June 19th.



Where's a tango class or party tonight?

Tomorrow morning? This weekend?

Check out the **TANGO CALENDAR**: www.mntango.org/calendar



LOOKING AHEAD

The Autumn 2017 edition of **Tango Moments** will include details on September, October and November events, including the **Tomas Howlin** workshops (September 1-4) sponsored by Pauline Oo, and the **Maxi Guzman** workshops (October 21-22 in Mpls and 28-29 in Rochester) sponsored by Kyra Anastasiadou and Augusto Morrone.

TANGO SUPERSTARS VISIT ROCHESTER

(cont. from page 5)

Everyone Is a Beginner

True, they are not ones to pamper you; they are there to challenge your ability, no matter where that lies.

“Material given by these master dancers, Chicho and Juana, during class is so versatile,” reported Sabine Ibes. “While beginner dancers learn to dance the Tango, more experienced dancers learn how the Tango moves them to dance,” she added. In this leveling of the playing field, we are essentially all beginners.



The workshops follow the intensive format. It suits their teaching style. C&J refuse to fuss over rotation, insisting that everyone come with a designated partner. I really like it because it allows you to concentrate on working through the *problem at hand*, rather than

starting all over with a new face in front of you every few minutes.



And if you work hard, C&J will work hard with you. April reported that they were impressed with the Minnesota dancers in attendance because of their enthusiasm and dedication to learning. If C&J are not ones to suffer fools

(and they aren't), they apparently didn't find any in Minnesota. All were students and all leaned in to do the work.

The report I got from my casual interviews of those in attendance at the Saturday night milonga were fairly consistent: All high praise. And this from dancers of all abilities and experience, students and teachers alike.



A Superstar Performance

Of course, we were treated with a performance at the milonga by one of modern tango's most creative dancing artists. And it wasn't on YouTube! It was live, in flesh and blood, right before us.



It was characteristic Chicho Frumboli: in complete control of the dance and his own body, moving in response to the phrasing, with syncopation, or a wide arcing turn, in fluid motion, confident in his interpretation of the music. He could make anyone look good, of course. But quite frankly, I think it's Juana that makes Chicho look like the superstar

he is. Her movement is more like a ballet dancer, conscious of form and line, gracefully engaged with her partner, exacting in the execution of every movement. She is in every way, a match for the master.

Encore! (they'll be back next year)

April had been following C&J for the past four years or so attending workshops in Baltimore, New York and Montreal, among other cities. A teacher herself, it was easy to strike up a personal relationship. She learned that C&J had never visited the Midwest (at least for a teaching assignment). They apparently seemed eager to fill that empty space in their tango territory. And we in the flatland are so much richer for the experience.



Tango Moments is a publication of The Tango Society of Minnesota ([TSoM](http://www.mntango.org)), a non-profit corporation established in 1999 as a 501(c)(7) (non-profit social) organization. TSoM exists to promote Argentine Tango in Minnesota and to support other organizations that do the same.

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A pro bono contribution of **malena.ink**

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We welcome submissions from the TSoM community. To comment, suggest content or contribute stories, please email tango-moments@mntango.org.

The editorial team will contact you if it feels that your story may be improved in any way, and will work with you on any edits that this may involve -- your story will be published only with your final approval.

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