
Finding the reasons for what makes
Tango a unique genre through its
historical and musical elements.

What makes Tangó, Tangó?

ONLINE SEMINAR

presented by

Prof. Leandro Benmergui

Prof. Emiliano Messiez

Have you ever wondered...

What makes Tango, Tango?

This series of three lectures explore the uniqueness of tango from a musical and historical perspective. In order to understand Tango's singularity, we go back to the history of the society and culture that produced it first, problematizing when and why Tango, a music and dance born at the "encounter" of different cultural flows in the Rio de la Plata, became the "authentic" music of Argentina.

THE CLASSES

We contextualize and analyze tango music in dialogue with other musical genres. What makes it distinctive and different? What Stravinsky, Kurt Weill, Frank Sinatra or Lady Gaga have to do with Carlos Gardel, Polaco Goyeneche, Julio de Caro or Juan D'Arienzo? What was the role of the cultural industry, the era of mass culture, and the competition with Jazz and Folklore music, in making Tango the "national" music of Argentina? How can we understand Tango at the encounter of local and transnational forces? How was it influenced by global historical processes and musical trends, how it traveled abroad, and how those dialogues constantly remade Tango?

Combining our expertises as professional musicians and historians from Argentina, the lectures combine a dynamic format that includes live music performances and examples, videos, pictures, music scores and original historical research. This program is for dancers, musicians or simply Tango lovers who are interested in knowing all the secrets about this style. It offers different topics that look at Tango from an original perspective that brings to the audience a serious approach to tango. Rather than taking it for granted, we seek to uncover Tango's history and originality.



Leandro Benmergui

Historian (University of Buenos Aires; PhD University of Maryland, College Park). Assistant Professor of History at Purchase College, State University of New York. Chair of the Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies. Director of Casa Purchase, an Outreach Center. His work combines a history of Latin American cities and societies in the twentieth century from a transnational and socio-cultural perspective. He has published extensively in different academic journals and is currently working on his manuscript, a history of housing, modernization, and developmentalism in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro (1950s-1970s) in the cold-war context.



Emiliano Messiez

Pianist and composer (University of the Arts and The School of Popular Music in Buenos Aires, Argentina). Assistant Professor of Counterpoint, Harmony and Music History at the University of the Arts in Buenos Aires. Emiliano has performed around the world in the most prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center and The Metropolitan Museum in New York, among many others. As teacher he has been giving lectures and work shops for many years. He has been awarded by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO for his album "Silencio" recorded with the José Luis Infantino Group.



Class #1

Culture

By Prof. Leandro Benmergui

We will explore key changes in the history of Buenos Aires society and culture in central decades of the modernization of Argentine Society.

Sociability, gender relations, fashion, and the cultural industry. The lecture will focus on local changes informed by transnational processes, connecting Buenos Aires with the rest of the world and all the historical factors that will end making the Tango unique. Q&A's will be held by the end.



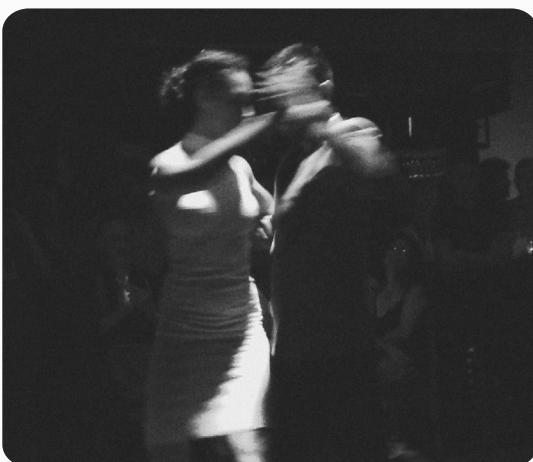
Class #2

Music

By Prof. Emiliano Messiez

Professor Messiez will share his musical knowledge in this second class through live examples played by him.

All the different types of accompaniments in Tango music, as well as different types of phrasings “fraseos” that only happen in Tango music in comparison to other music styles such as Jazz, Rock, etc. In this class we will talk also about orchestrations and instrumentations in Tango and how other styles interpret Tango music. This is an interactive class with videos, audios, live examples and a Q&A by the end for the audience to participate.



Class #3

Connection

By Prof. Benmergui & Messiez

In this class, both professors will join together and mix their first two classes reviewing some of the topics and bringing new elements.

We will be interacting with the audience and clarifying all the concepts seen in the previous sessions with the help of live and recorded examples. This is an interactive class with the two professors, who will request the audience to prepare questions and doubts in advance so we all can have a conversation about what makes tango, tango?

SO, ARE YOU READY TO FIND OUT WHY IS TANGO SO UNIQUE?