



ArtSmarts

2006-2007 Wells Fargo School Matinee Series

ESTAMPAS PORTEÑAS

September 29, 2006

11:00am

Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center

Dear Teacher:

We hope you find this CueSheet helpful in preparing your students for the Estampas Porteñas school matinee. This guide, which is intended to complement the Ethnic Dance Curriculum Guide, provides information about the company and their performance, historical background on Tango, and a brief country profile of Argentina. Also included in the guide is a review of audience etiquette.

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ESTAMPAS PORTEÑAS

Translation: “Local Artists”



Estampas Porteñas, considered the hottest tango company from Buenos Aires, takes the audience on a journey through the history of tango from its origins in the red light districts of Buenos Aires to the contemporary ballroom.

The company was founded in 1996 in Buenos Aires by the distinguished Argentine ballerina and choreographer, Carolina Soler. She began her career in classical ballet and later became well-known for her dazzling portrayal of the traditional classical ballet roles. In Estampas Porteñas, she returns to the dance form that is the heart and soul of Argentina. In its first year, Estampas Porteñas toured China performing over 60 successful shows. On its return to Argentina, the company performed at the Cultural Centre General San Martín, enjoying popular and critical acclaim being described as “... dazzling the audience with talent, seduction and beauty.” In the same year the company created and performed *Musica en Buenos Aires* commissioned by the Government as a gift to the city. Estampas Porteñas has performed at festivals around the world including the Caribbean Festival, the Havana Festival of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, Recoleta Viva Festival in Buenos Aires and the Beloruss Festival. The company toured Australia and New Zealand in 2003 and again in 2005, which included sold out performances at the Sydney Opera House.

The ten dancers (five couples) of Estampas Porteñas are Nelson Celis and Yanina Fajar; Pablo Sosa and Mariela Maldonado; Ezequiel Hudyma and Paola Rodolfo; Luciano Capparelli and Rocío de los Santos; and Mauricio Celis and Ines Cuesta.

These dancers are accompanied by the live music of singer, Diego Fama, and the band La Quartada Tango. The musicians of La Quartada Tango are Gabriel Clenar, *Piano and Direction*; Hugo Satorre, *Bandoneon*; Gerardo Scaglione, *Double Bass*; and Lucas Furno, *Violin*.

TANGO

The origins of the art of tango – the dance, the music and the word itself – are lost in unrecorded history. The word “tango” may be African, meaning “closed place” or “reserved ground” or it may derive from a Portuguese word meaning “to touch” and was picked up by Africans on the slave ships. By the mid-1800’s, African slaves brought to Argentina began to influence the local culture and the word “tango” acquired the meaning of a place where Africans gathered to dance. It was in Buenos Aires that the African rhythms and the Argentine milonga music (a fast-paced polka) were combined and new steps were invented.

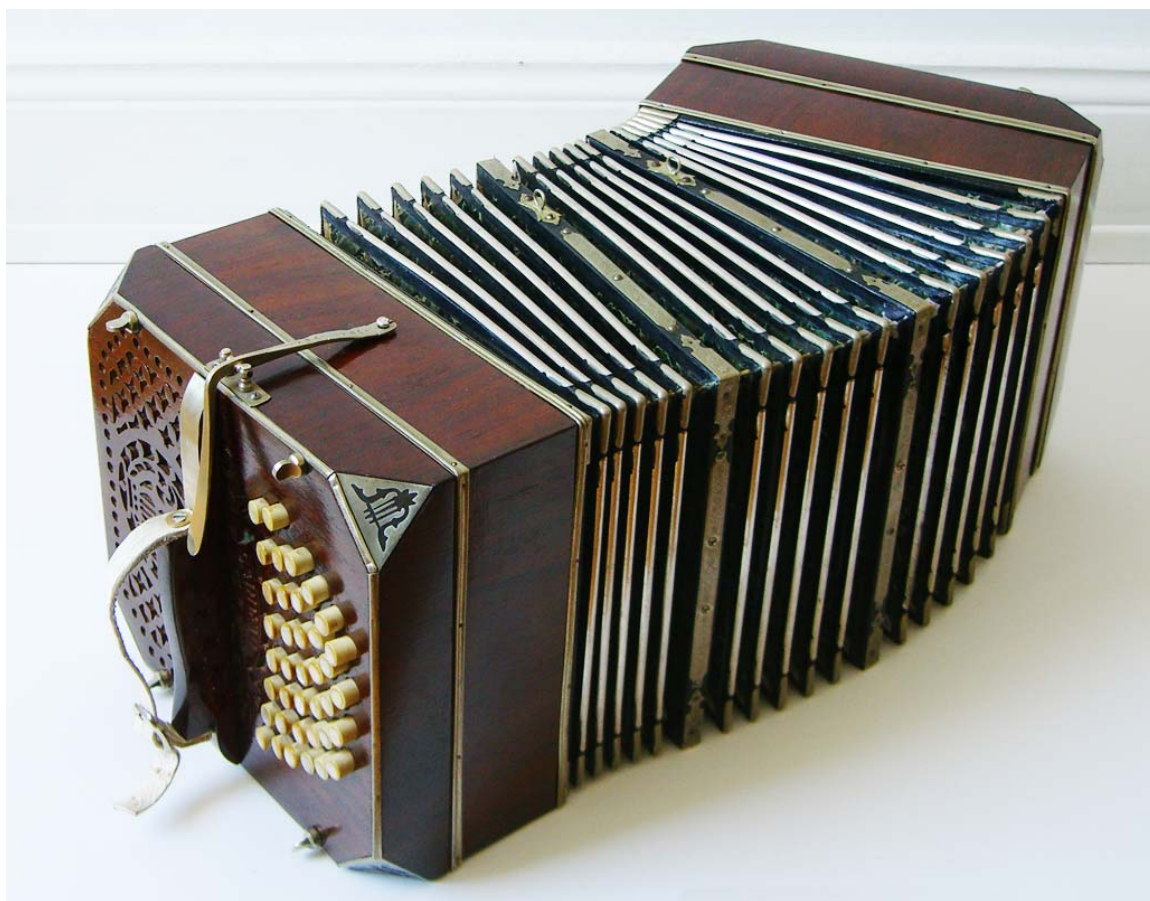
Soon the tango – both the dance and the music – had a firm foothold in Buenos Aires. The tango began its worldwide spread in the early 1900’s when young men from Argentina went to Paris and introduced the art form. By 1913, the tango had become a popular dance craze in London, Berlin, and New York, as well as Paris.

The two main divisions of tango are “Argentine tango” and “ballroom tango”, with the latter further divided into English and American styles. Today the many tango dance styles include not only Argentine and ballroom, but also Finnish tango, Chinese tango, and vintage tangos.

The steps in ballroom tango are very different from Argentine tango. Ballroom tango uses staccato steps rather than gliding steps. This is an attempt to match the staccato accents that always appear in ballroom tango music. Ballroom tango is also characterized by “head snaps,” which are foreign to Argentine tango. In ballroom tango, the feet move before the whole body weight is moved. In Argentine tango, the body center starts to move and is then supported by the movement of the feet. Also, the ball of the foot may be placed first or the dancer may move the entire foot in a cat-like manner. Dancing appropriately to the emotion and speed of the tango music is also an extremely important element of Argentine tango. The dancers generally keep their feet close to the floor, the ankles and knees brushing as one leg passes the other.

THE MUSIC OF TANGO

Most of the instruments used for playing tango music are commonly known to us: piano, violin, double bass (acoustic "stand-up" bass), and guitar. The one instrument unique to tango music in general is called the *bandoneon*. This instrument came to Argentina originally from Germany, where it was called a "concertina." This instrument is similar to a small accordion and was developed in various sizes and systems of playing. The *bandoneon* was very quickly adopted in Buenos Aires and became the symbol of tango music, and represents its signature, identifying sound.



BANDONEON (image from www.wikipedia.org)

ARGENTINA



Full Name: República Argentina

Capital City: Buenos Aires

Area: 2,776,890 square kilometers or 1,072,157 square miles

Population: 37,812,817

Languages: Spanish (official); Quechua (other); Guarani (other); Araucanian (other)

Religion: 93% Roman Catholic, 2.5% Protestant, 2% Jewish, 1.5% Ukranian Catholic, 1% Armenian Orthodox

Currency: Argentinian Nuevo Peso (Arg\$)

-map and fast facts from www.LonelyPlanet.com.

ATTENDING THE THEATER

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- * Enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately;
- * Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times;
- * Demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times;
- * Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements;
- * Please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- * Please turn off cell phones and pagers;
- * Flash photography is strictly prohibited;
- * Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best possible work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, such as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.