

Letter from Artistic Director

Despite living in a world made much smaller by instant electronic communication and jet travel, humanity finds itself struggling with themes of separation and lack of purpose. We search for a remedy. For many, the value of building community through personal contact and artistic expression is being rediscovered through the experience of social dance. My particular interest is in Argentine Tango. Despite the designation “Argentine,” in almost every major city around the world, there is a community of non-Argentine tango dancers. Enthusiasts from Montreal, San Francisco, Zurich, Seattle, Amsterdam and Tokyo embrace the vision of tango culture from Buenos Aires and form communities of their own. They emulate not only the dance, but also the customs, dress, code of behavior and language of Buenos Aires.

My purpose in presenting “Tango, A Romantic Ritual” is to tantalize the curious, those who are seeking a community of people who value human connection, artistic expression through dance, and/or relationship. My hope is that some will be touched in a way that causes them to take the next step, to learn the silent language of tango.

“Dance should be studied because it is important to the people involved,” in the opinion of Joann W. Keali’inohomoku, anthropologist and pioneering dance researcher. I am convinced that this is true based on my 13 years’ experience as a member of the San Francisco Bay Area tango community. Much of the material used in this presentation was developed during Masters Degree thesis research for my Degree in Dance Education. I find the members of these communities are often obsessed with the tango. They represent a subculture that shares a common passion for this dance.

Dance cannot be heard, held onto and often not even repeated. To research and study dance because it is important to the participants validates this human expression. This is an important concept for me personally. I have always felt the need to dance. To me, it feels as necessary as breathing does. I want to share this with others, to encourage the growth and health of the social dance culture most beloved to me personally.

The dancers in the cast are professional tango teachers from the San Francisco Bay Area, and the narrator, Terry Clark, is a scholar and writer well studied in the literature relating to Argentine Tango. Our musicians Seth Asarnow on bandoneón and Marcelo Puig on guitar focus their creative energies solely on Argentine Tango. Tango has touched each of their hearts and transformed their lives. Through “Tango: A Romantic Ritual” I, along with the dedicated cast, intend to share with our audience the enriching experience tango plays in forming community, heartfelt connections and artistic expression. This is a tango performance conceived to take you beyond entertainment, to in fact inspire you to dance.

Debbie Goodwin
Artistic Director
Tango: A Romantic Ritual