



The Tokyo Tango Journal

Issue 6, Summer 2007

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HIRAI KOJI & NAOKO (ANA),
NAMIKI MASA & TSUCHIYA YUKA,
YAMAO HIROSHI & KYOKO.

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MONG-LAN.

REVIEW: DANIEL MACHADO
TANGO PHOTO EXHIBITION

Earlier this year in February, Joe and I were in Buenos Aires for about two and a half weeks. While there, we were greatly pleased to see a number of our Tokyo Tango friends, several of whom are presently living in Buenos Aires. One evening, we invited Hiroshi & Kyoko, Masa & Yuka, and Koji & Naoko, along with some Argentine, including Leonel, who was in Buenos Aires as well, and American friends, all of whom have connections to Japan, to a group dinner. We called the evening "Tokyo in Buenos Aires." We were all very glad to see one another and it was a fun evening filled with great Italian food, marvelous Argentine wines and enjoyable conversation. Upon returning to Tokyo, I came upon the idea of interview those Japanese tango dancers who are living in Buenos Aires for an extended time. And, not coincidentally, just last month on 26 May at *Club Glorias Argentinas* in Buenos Aires, there was an evening of dancing demonstrations entitled "*Homenaje a Japon*" — Homage to Japan. Among those who danced included Masa & Yuka, Hiroshi & Kyoko, Ana (Naoko) & Koji. These interviews were conducted by email in English, back and forth. I hope you enjoy this issue!--Mong-Lan

Our first 5 issues of *TTJ* featured interviews with Carlos Rivarola, Eduardo Arquimbau, Loredana de Brasil, Jorge Torres, Juan Guida, Hugo Paez, José María Luna & Laura Mangione.
Tango drawings & photographs by Mong-Lan.

Did you miss these issues?
Visit: http://www.monglan.com/tokyo_tango_journal.htm



Tango Drawing by Mong-Lan

INTERVIEW WITH HIRAI KOJI & NAOKO (ANA)

by Mong-Lan



Naoko & Koji, montage photo by Mong-Lan

Hirai Koji & Naoko chased their dreams of living in Buenos Aires and studying tango there. They brought their baby with them, and set up a bed & breakfast called "Casa de Ana." In Tokyo, Koji was a computer engineer, and Naoko taught social dance from time to time. "K" represents "Koji" and "N" represents "Naoko."

ML: When did you arrive in Buenos Aires? Why did you decide to come to Argentina? Will you definitely return to Tokyo at some point? If so, when? To leave Japan was obviously a big decision. How long had you been considering to move? What have you given up in Tokyo in order to be in Argentina?

K: We arrived here on 28 June 2006. My teacher Daniel Lapadula invited us here as his assistants. Now I have no idea when we will return to Japan. I thought about moving for two months and then did it. I gave up my job as a computer engineer.

ML: What do you want to accomplish in Buenos Aires? What is your Life like on a day-to-day basis?

K: To be a teacher of tango dance. As I mentioned earlier, I'm Daniel Lapadula's assistant.

N: My life is working in our guest house, Casa de Ana. For example cleaning rooms, washing clothes, making beds, communicating with our visitors, taking care of our baby, and practicing tango. I've given up bringing up my baby in Japan and showing him to my parents. Argentina affects us the difference of medication. For example the difference of my baby's immunization program and so on.

ML: Are you studying tango now? With whom are you studying tango? Why did you choose these teachers?

K: Of course I'm studying tango now. Daniel Lapadula teaches me his "Centro Style Tango." I love his style of tango that is for the crowded milonga.

ML: What about the future? Particularly, what are your plans when you are again in Japan?

My dream is to be six months in Japan and six months in Buenos Aires. In Japan I will introduce the "Centro Style Tango." In Buenos Aires, I will be a window for Japanese tango fans.

ML: For Koji san, since being in Buenos Aires, has your view of the man's role in the tango changed? What do you regard as the essence of the man's role? In the dance, is the Argentine's view of masculinity and the man's role different than from that of the Japanese?

K: When I was in Japan, my idea is man is leader and woman is follower of the tango. But here in Buenos Aires, the idea that the man and the woman are dancing equally 50% is passed through dancers step by step.

ML: For Naoko san, since being in Buenos Aires, has your view of the woman's role in the tango changed? What do you regard as the essence of the woman's role? In the dance, is the Argentine's view of femininity and the woman's role different than from that of the Japanese?

N: In Japan, I think the woman's role is to completely follow the man's lead. But here in Buenos Aires, the woman should insist on her tango. So many women have their own way of dancing tango here.

ML: Are you pleased with your decision to move to Buenos Aires? Would you make the same decision again? What would you like to say to Japanese dancers in Tokyo now?

K: Yes, I am pleased. I would make the same decision if I needed to. Now I have a few things to say to Japanese dancers in Tokyo: Please come here and feel for yourself the real tango and the real Argentina. Then you will find something different, especially for Japanese men.

ML: What advice might you have for Japanese dancers who are thinking of coming to Argentina?

K: There are many styles of tango here in Buenos Aires. I think it's difficult to select what style might be suitable for you. But I think it's not good for everybody to study many styles of tango shallowly. Please study tango deeply.

"Casa de Ana"-- Hirai Koji & Naoko (Ana)

Email: kohirai@kg8.so-net.ne.jp

Phone number: 54-11-4924-7378 (Buenos Aires)



INTERVIEW WITH NAMIKI MASA & TSUCHIYA YUKA

by Mong-Lan



Masa & Yuka, photo montage by Mong-Lan

Well known Tokyo tango teachers & dancers, Namiki Masa & Tsuchiya Yuka left for Buenos Aires in February earlier this year. Both have extensive dance experience. In Yuka's case, she had performed on the stage as part of the Takarazuka Revue Company for over 10 years in the male role. Masa started to dance tango in his early 20's and, for example, won first prize in the salon category in the Asia Tango Championships in 2005. Together, they have been featured in a commercial and also produced and danced in the show "Nocturna" in Tokyo shortly before departing for Argentina.

ML: Why did you decide to come to Argentina? Will you definitely return to Tokyo at some point? To leave Japan was obviously a big decision. How long had you been considering to move? What have you given up in Tokyo in order to be in Argentina?

M: For me, I wanted to study for my master's at a university here in Buenos Aires and also I wanted to become more involved with the tango. I do not know when I will return to Tokyo. This would depend on the job that I find. We have been considering moving for a long time since we, individually, went back from Buenos Aires to Japan last time but something concrete came up in the spring of 2006. In order to be now in Argentina---for my academic study at the university and to be with the tango---I had to give up the tango as a professional activity in Tokyo. And, for Yuka, being here in Buenos Aires has meant being away from her family in Japan.

ML: What do you want to accomplish in Buenos Aires? What is your life like on a day-to-day basis?

M: I would like to successfully complete my studies and also improve our tango. I hope that we can find a better way for our own tango. On a day-go-day basis, I spend



Tango Drawing by Mong-Lan

most of my time doing my university work and also studying to improve my Spanish.

Y: I'm enjoying having a good time hanging out with Argentine friends, and practicing tango together with Masa, barely taking lessons

ML: Are you studying tango now? With whom are you studying tango? Why did you choose this teacher/teachers?

Yes. We spend as much time with the tango as possible. At this point, we cannot "name" our main teachers as yet. Instead, we are trying to practice 'our tango' so that we can develop ourselves as dancers.

ML: What about the future? Particularly, what are your plans when you are again in Japan?

M: I am not considering becoming a "professional tango teacher" so...

Y: I would like to dance on the stage wherever and whenever there are any chances. But, I do not yet have definite plans for the future in Japan.

ML: For men, since being in Buenos Aires, has your view of the man's role in the tango changed? What do you regard as the essence of the man's role? In the dance, is the Argentine's view of masculinity and the man's role different than from that of the Japanese?

M: No, my view of the man's role has not changed. The essence of the man's role is to construct a foundation upon which the woman will create a beautiful piece of art. It is difficult to say about the Japanese and Argentine's view point. In terms of masculinity, including that of tango, yes. How? Hard to say. For the man's role, it depends on the level. I feel that at the beginner or intermediate level, no, there is no difference. But at the advanced level, yes. How? It may be more masculine at the same time more sensitive and above everything it may be more artistic in Argentina. I would like to note that this is *just a feeling*.

ML: For women, since being in Buenos Aires, has your view of the woman's role in the tango changed? What do you regard as the essence of the woman's role? In the dance, is the Argentine's view of femininity and the woman's role different than from that of the Japanese?

Y: No, it has not changed. In my opinion, the woman's role is to embrace man. I think certainly the difference exists between the Japanese and Argentine's view of femininity and the woman's role, but I cannot pin-point specifically what or where.

ML: Are you pleased with your decision to move to Buenos Aires? Would you make the same decision again? What would you like to say to Japanese dancers in Tokyo now?

M: No doubt we are pleased with our decision. We love it here, and we would make the same decision in a heart beat. To Japanese dancers in Tokyo, I would say, don't become too worked up---rather, relax, and enjoy dancing.

ML: What advice might you have for Japanese dancers who are thinking of coming to Argentina?

M: Come sooner than later. And, if you come, try to learn the Spanish language. It appears to us that to learn tango is to try to be a part of the culture and to accomplish that when you cannot understand it mentally makes it really difficult. This is just my opinion.

INTERVIEW WITH YAMAO HIROSHI & KYOKO

by Mong-Lan



Kyoko & Hiroshi, photo by Mong-Lan

Popular teachers and milonga organizers in Tokyo, Yamao Hiroshi and Kyoko placed second in Salon category in the 2006 3rd Tango Dance Championship in Asia. They decided to come to Argentina around May 2005, and a year later arrived in BsAs on June 8, 2006. They will come back to Tokyo this autumn. Hiroshi and Kyoko maintain a blog written in Japanese of their stay in Buenos Aires: <http://blog.hiroshikyoko.com>. "HK" represents both of their responses, and "H" for Hiroshi only, and "K" for Kyoko only.

ML: To leave Japan was obviously a big decision. What have you given up in Tokyo in order to be in Argentina?

HK: Living in Argentina, we are separated from our friends and our families. Also, we had to close the milonga that we organized in Tokyo.

ML: What do you want to accomplish in Buenos Aires?

HK: To discover a style of tango that we like and to feel good and enjoy dancing

ML: What is your life like on a day-to-day basis?

HK: We spend the day as usual. We enjoy dancing tango and enjoy our lives. We are living naturally and try not to overachieve.

ML: For instance, what is your daily schedule? What time do you generally wake up, go to sleep? Do you take lessons everyday?

HK: Generally, we wake up at noon and generally we go to sleep at 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. We take lessons but not everyday.

ML: With whom are you studying tango?

HK: We have a number of excellent teachers.

ML: What are your teachers' names? There are many tango teachers in BsAs: Why did you choose your teachers?

H: I am looking for teachers not by the reputation or for their names but am looking for someone with whom whose dance I can sympathize.

ML: What about the future?

HK: We will be satisfied if we can pursue the tango that fulfills us.

ML: What are your plans when you are again in Japan?

HK: We don't have them, yet.

ML: But, surely you plan on teaching and continuing to dance and perhaps organize milongas?

HK: We hope to teach, dance and organize milongas.

ML: For you, Hiroshi-san, since being in Buenos Aires, has your view of the man's role in the tango changed? What do you regard as the essence of the man's role?

H: Yes, it has changed. I think the essence is to lead to the full extent and to take care of the woman to the full extent

ML: In the dance, is the Argentine's view of masculinity and the man's role different than from that of the Japanese?

H: Maybe so.

ML: What do you mean by "maybe so"? Please explain a little more.

H: I guess it comes from the cultural background. However, the physical movement would not vary depending on the race or nationality.

ML: For Kyoko-san, since being in Buenos Aires, has your



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view of the woman's role in the tango changed?
What do you regard as the essence of the woman's role?

K: No, my view of the woman's role has not changed. It is to be with her partner at every moment.

ML: In the dance, is the Argentine's view of femininity and the woman's role different than from that of the Japanese?

K: Japanese women tend to exaggerate the femininity but Argentine women dance naturally and can by nature express their femininity.

ML: Are you pleased with your decision to move to Buenos Aires?

HK: YES!!!!

ML: Would you make the same decision again?

HK: OH YEAH!!!!

ML: What would you like to say to Japanese dancers in Tokyo now?

HK: Not much because I believe that all of us can pursue his/her own tango.

ML: What advice might you have for Japanese dancers who are thinking of coming to Argentina?

HK: Nothing in particular. Come if you want. You can pursue your own tango wherever you are.

TANGO IN SEOUL, KOREA

by Mong-Lan

Ladies get ready! Prepare for a weekend of soulful tango dancing in Seoul. While in Tokyo, we ladies sit around and wait forever for a dance, in Seoul you can indulge and dance literally nonstop with the earthy Korean men.

There are three main milongas there now in Seoul. Tango O Nada opens every night for milongas except for Monday, and cost about 7,000 W (about 1,000 yen). Then, there is Tango in Seoul, a newer milonga with a large dance space right in Itaewon. Tangeria del Buen Ayre—we didn't go there, but heard of it. There are a few more, but these are the main ones.

Joe and I have been going to Tango O Nada (called "O Nada" for short) for about five years now, about once every year. (Joe has gone more than I.) And every time, I've enjoyed dancing cheek to cheek, embraced in the arms of the raw and earthy Korean men. They know how to hold you, know how to embrace, deeply, know as if by a natural instinct. Perhaps it is in their culture to do this. (It certainly is not in the Vietnamese, nor in the Japanese!) Was it my imagination or are there really more men dancing tango in Seoul? On most nights at O Nada, there are more men than women, except for Saturday nights, when there is more of a balance. The Koreans are friendly and smiling. They will readily talk and most speak some English and a few Japanese.

So, come to Seoul, enjoy the spicy hot Korean food, and enjoy the steamy hot tango dancing there too!



Milongueros in Seoul, with Mong-Lan, at Tango in Seoul.



Tokyo Milongueras in Seoul enjoying the night: Kudo Kyoko, Mong-Lan, Tomita Kaori



Guillermina Quiroga, Leonel, Claudio Villagra, Namiki Masa, Mong-Lan in Buenos Aires, February, 2007. Photo montage by Mong-Lan. Congratulations to Leonel & Yuki on the opening of their new studio in Tokyo!



Confiteria Ideal, photo by Daniel Machado

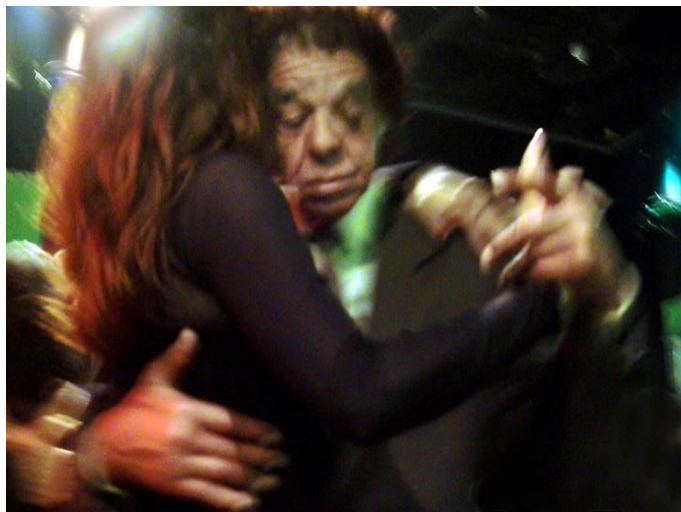


Photo by Daniel Machado

TANGO PHOTOGRAPHER DANIEL MACHADO

Daniel Machado, born in Montevideo, Uruguay, came to Tokyo in 2006. Presently and until the end of July, an exhibition of his photographs is on display at Luna de Tango. These photos are of the milonga scene in Buenos Aires and are most beautifully expressive. Daniel's photos have appeared widely internationally and, for example, are included in private collections in Brazil, Spain, United States, France, Japan, Holland, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Uruguay. His photos bring to the fore the feeling of being in a milonga in Buenos Aires, the heat, the smarmy nature of the milongueros who go the milongas each and every night, the rhythm and beat of the dance, the waiting by the women, the prowling by the men. Over twenty photos make up this show. Daniel and his photos introduce the view to the milongas of Buenos Aires...in all their passion and earthiness. Browse: www.danielmachado.com.uy

List of Weekly Milongas and Practicas in Tokyo

Monday:

Tango (Japan) Night in Tsukiji-shijo, @ Cuban Café, 18:30-23:00, price: 1000 Y w/ 1 drink.

Tuesday:

Zero Hour Practica, 22:00-23:30. price: 1000 Y

Wednesday:

Neo Tango, 19:00-23:00, price: 2500 yen with 1 drink

Zero Hour Practica, 22:00-23:30, price: 1000 yen.

Thursday:

Tango Love, A-Life, 19:30-23:30, price: 3000 Y w/1 drink

Zero Hour Practica, 22:00-23:30, price: 1000 Y

Friday:

El Abrazo, 20:30-24:00, 3000 Y w/ 1 drink

Luna de Tango, 20:00-23:30, price: 2500 Y w/ 1 drink

Milonga "Club Tanguisimo," 20:00-22:30, 3000 Y unlimited drink & snacks.

Puro Tango, 20:30-23:30, 3000 Y w/ 1 drink

Sin Rumbo, 18:30-23:00, 1000 Y w/ 1 drink

Zero hour, 20:20-24:30, 1500 Y w/1 drink

Saturday:

El Abrazo, 20:30-24:00, 3000 Y w/ 1 drink

Sin Rumbo, 18:30-23:00, 1000 Y w/ 1 drink

Tango Rex, 20:00 - 24:00, 2000 Y 1 drink

Zero Hour Milonga, 20:30-00:30, 2500 Y w/ 1 drink

Sunday:

Luna de Tango, 18:00-20:30, 2000 Y w/ 1 drink

Puro Tango, 20:30-23:30, 3000 Y w/ 1 drink

Zero hour Milonga, 19:00-00:30, 2500 Y w/ 1 drink

Monthly Milongas in Tokyo

1. Barrio Tango, 13:00 - 16:00, 2500 Y with unlimited drinks and snacks.
2. Ginza Afternoon Milonga (Tango Japan), 12:30 -16:30; Tel : 03-5524-6166, 3000 yen w/ 1 drink
3. Tango Night, Dash-G, 19:30-23:30, once a month, 4000 yen with 1 drink, www.tangonight.com/,
4. Milonga Estela, 2nd and 4th sunday, 19:00 -22:30, Studio 60, Harajuku, 2000 yen with 1 drink
5. La Milonga Latina, Myogadani Dance Plaza Tomoyo, 1st and 3rd Saturday, 12:30- 15:30, price: 1500 yen. Visit: www.lalologargano.com
6. Tango Love night, Mado Lounge, Roppongi Hill, 19:00-23:30, 1/ a month, 4000 yen w/ drink

Other Listings:

Yumi Itoh, Tokyo, Tango Clothes & Shoes, Tel: 070-6633-9232, www.diferente.biz, email: info@diferente.biz

Jorge Torres, New York: www.nytangomathon.com

Chino Hara, New York, Shoes: www.felinashoes.com

Congratulations to all the participants and particularly "the winners" in the recent Asia Tango Championship! Good luck to you in Buenos Aires in August!



Note from the publisher/writer/creator of the TTJ:

Thanks for reading this issue of the TTJ! It may be our last—at least for a while—as Joe and I will be spending most of the rest of 2007 in Southeast Asia and then we will be going to Buenos Aires in early 2008.

We have loved being here in Tokyo and greatly appreciate how welcome you, the Tokyo Tango Community, have made us feel. Thanks so very much!!! We do hope to come and go occasionally, however.

I'm still available to teach tango and milonga until I am gone from Tokyo. My interest in the tango began in 1995, and for the last seven years, have studied it deeply, with masters such as Carlos and Maria Rivarola, Gabriel Misse, Dany Garcia, Guillermina Quiroga, Claudio Villagra, etc. I have taught tango in the United States and Japan --Mong-Lan

Contact: monglan11@yahoo.com
Mobile: 080-3382-0643
website: www.monglan.com

About Mong-Lan:

Mong-Lan's books include *Song of the Cicadas*, *Why is the Edge Always Windy?*, *Love Poem to Tofu & Other Poems*, and the forthcoming, *Tango Book of Drawings & Poetry*. Her artwork, paintings and photographs, has been exhibited in galleries, museums, and in public exhibitions in the United States, Japan, Indonesia, and Korea.



Tango Drawings by Mong-Lan



Tango Links in Tokyo

1. Arg. Tango Dance Assoc, Ginza, Milonga "Club Tanguisimo, www.tangodance.co.jp/english/index.htm
Tel: 03-3544-5600
2. Arg. Tango Suiyokai: www.tango-suiyokai.com ,
Tel: 090-5569-5937
3. Barrio Tango, Akiyoshi & Noriko Tanada:
<http://www31.ocn.ne.jp/~tango/>
4. Diego & Carla, www.diegoycarla.com/
Tel : 090-6471-0992
5. Edgardo Lalo Gargano: www.lalogargano.com
6. El Abrazo, Leonel & Yuki, www.elabrazo.jp,
tel: 080-5654-3675 (Leonel); 090-3720-3730 (Yuki)
7. Eugene & Alisa, Yokohama, Shibuya: www.geocities.jp/ea_tan5/. Tel: 090-3876-9677
8. Kenji & Liliana: www.yy.ale.co.jp/kenji_liliana/japanese/j_frame.html, Tel :090-9841-3068
9. Lucia Barrios & Alvaro Salas, <http://luciayalvaro.com>
10. Luna de Tango, Jose & Laura, Shibuya: www.homepage3.nifty.com/lunadetango/la_milonga.htm, Tel: 03-5466-0701
11. Neo Tango: www.tangostyle.jp/neo/, Tel: 03-3841-7536
12. Puro Tango, Hugo Paez, Shinjuku: <http://homepage3.nifty.com/purotango/> Tel: 03-5287-3307
13. Sin Rumbo, Tel :03-3353-1756 Visit: <http://www.sinrumbo.jp>
14. Tango NPO: <http://www.tango-npo.org/calender/index.html>
15. Tango Japan—Lam & Gyu, Tsukiji-shijo, www.tango-japan.com/gyu/segundo_jp.htm Tel: 03-5148-5001
16. Tango Love: www.tangolove.net/, Tel: 03-5785-2531
17. Tango Night, Joe Tango: www.tangonight.com/,
Tel: 03-3436-6330
18. Tango Rex, Ricardo Cerqueiro, Shinagawa-ku:
<http://tangorex.com> , Tel: 03-3786-3430
19. Tokyo Tango Academy, Mikage & Arisa,
www.tangotokyo.com/, Tel: 03-3985-3079
20. Zero Hour—Juan Guida, Roppongi,
www.tango21.jp/top.html, Tel: 03-3585-1514