

Tango: It's all about contact and heart

From B1

When moving to Shanghai in late 2006, she found the tango scene here was quite small and not well organized. To expand the community and provide a home for tango lovers, she created TangoBang, which offers lessons from beginners' to advanced dancers, and organizes many activities.

Over the past four years, around 1,000 students have taken lessons and some of them stay on. It has attracted many expat dancers as well.

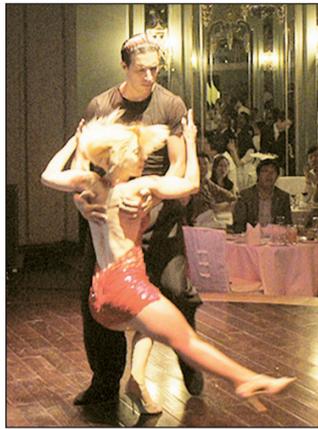
Most TangoBangers are professionals and managers.

Yeh says the appeal of tango has impelled many Chinese to visit Argentina to experience authentic tango and learn about it.

"Tango is about connecting with another person through an embrace. We go to milonga (tango clubs or parties) alone and may encounter someone who is a total stranger but gives you very lovely feedback in dance," Yeh says. "The music and lyrics talk about life, love, hatred and sadness that touch the heart."

Yeh's current partner is Jonatan Aguero from Córdoba, Argentina. Yeh met him in Buenos Aires in February through an audition. She invited him to Shanghai to promote tango in China.

Aguero fell in love with tango when



More than 300 tango fans in the city attended the Shanghai International Tango Festival last week. And the upcoming event will be "tango marathon" in November.

he was 7 years old and has learned from international masters, winning a number of titles in the past 10 years and going on to teach as well as dance. His students range from primary school students to senior citizens.

"People like tango because it is very romantic. This dance helps arouse great femininity and sensuality in women and helps men become gentlemen and have a good image and bearing," Aguero says.

Both Yeh and Aguero say Shanghai has great potential to become a tango city. "Since Shanghai natives have a background of singing and dancing that dates back to the 1930s and

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1940s, they are natural," Yeh says.

"Tango is perfect for social life. I think it's easy for people to enjoy tango and watch, but to convert them to dance is not so easy," she says.

In autumn, TangoGo, a Shanghai dance school, will organize four nights of tango marathon. Every evening a tango master will perform. Participants will include dancers from around 15 countries, including Argentina, China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Turkey and Russia.

"With guests from 15 countries, Shanghai will become a hot spot for tango lovers from all around Asia and the world," Yu Ping, a founder of TangoGo, says. Tango orchestras from Europe will also perform.

Yu and TangoGo cofounder Sergiy Podbolotnyy from Ukraine are dedicated to promoting tango through teaching and staging dance parties and demonstrations.

"Tango is a social dance and for

many people its allure lies in the amazing chance to change their everyday social circle," Yu says. "Many people say that tango is a different world. Attending tango classes and parties is a very good opportunity to meet new friends, relax after a day's work and have emotional contact with another person."

There is a saying in the tango community, "No music, no tango."

Argentine tango, probably the most famous style, has diverse styles that represent different eras from the 1890s to the 1960s, regions, venues and social classes. It was and still is very personal, improvisational and individualistic. It became part of mass culture and everyone seemed to be dancing.

It was restricted during years of military rule but blossomed later and changed with influences from around the world.

"Tango music is very important. Carlos Gavito (an old master) once said that tango is a shared moment, and I think to have this kind of feeling, partners should be connected to each other through the music," Yu says.

For Aguero, one of the founders of TangoBang, there are many different styles and different bands so it's difficult to name a favorite — each has its own beauty.

"Some orchestras are very happy and fast in variations, while some are very passionate and very soft. This is where the dancer must know how to interpret the nuances," Aguero says.

"The most important thing for me is to feel my partner's connection with me. In a word, you dance the tango and think with the heart," he adds.

TangoGo

TangoGo holds classes, practice sessions and parties.

- Regular classes (Bldg 5, 666 Xinhua Rd)
 - Practice. Dancers can come and practice what they learn and get tips from a teacher.
 - Milongas every Saturday, Rm A236, 492 Anhua Rd
- Website: www.tangogo.org

TangoBang

TangoBang, launched in 2008, is a tango school and promoter working closely with the Consulate General of Argentina in Shanghai. The aim is to introduce tango culture to the city. There are regular Argentine tango lessons and milonga (tango parties). More information can be found on the blog (<http://blog.sina.com.cn/tangobang>) or weibo (<http://weibo.com/tangobang>).

cn/tangobang) or weibo (<http://weibo.com/tangobang>).
E-mail: Tangobang@yahoo.cn
Website: www.tangobang.cn

Tangoshanghai

The Shanghai tango community, Tangoshanghai, is young and enthusiastic. It was founded by several experienced tango lovers. Most members have tried other dances but find the Argentine tango most alluring. People dance tango Argentino, milonga and vals cruzado. E-mail: Official_tangoshanghai@yahoo.com.cn
Website: www.tangoshanghai.com.cn



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