

Interview about tango

What were your first experiences in dancing?

Ina: As a child from 6 years on I was dancing classical ballet. Later on I danced jazz and show ballet and became a semi-professional ballet dancer in a performance group during many years. I have been and still am a dance beast my whole life.

Peter: my first serious experience was in tango 12 years ago. Before that I danced in discos like most people.

What stimulated you to start dancing Tango?

Ina: I was already inspired by the music of Astor Piazzolla, on which we danced in the ballet company. Later on I saw a demonstration of Argentine tango and I was completely thrilled about it.

I took classes with the choreographer of the ballet school. He was my first dancing partner.

Peter was inspired by a performance in the street and thought that this was the ultimate challenge for him to become a good tango dancer.

What do you associate with Tango? If possible, create a slogan.

It is said many times before, but for us Tango is a way of living; it's a lifestyle.

In what way would you describe tango as a lifestyle?

It influences your life completely, as soon as you become addicted to tango (which can happen even before you notice!). For example:

Your way of dressing will change, your group of friends also (you will hardly find time to spent with your "not tango friends"). How to eat (no garlic for instance and beware of your intestines), your schedule of sleeping will change; how to spend your time, money and not to forget even how to spend holidays by going to places where there are milongas(salons), festivals or even Buenos Aires.

Are you dancing different styles of tango? If yes, please explain.

We are dancing the traditional style of "Tango de salon" combined with the so called "Estilo milonguero" this is the style that we also teach to all of the students, it is the social way of dancing in close embrace for dancing in the salon, which is the target of most students.

We give special courses "Tango Nuevo" based on the method of "Tango Discovery". In these lessons we try to explain and let people experience with the structure of tango and the open style. We have been teaching several years in this style in Rotterdam in tango school Cuartito Azul.

In our performances we use all three styles and we make choreographies as well.

What separates your danceschool from others? What is special about your style?

We put our students on the chair of the architect, and not on the chair of the carpenter, this means: We teach comprehensiveness and understanding in the structure of tango. This makes dancers more aware of what they are doing (also with their partner) and being creative and gives them the opportunity to understand the steps and figures in a more simple way. But besides that, we think that a good technique and didactics are essential to become a good dancer, and not to forget the cultural roots must be thought. (We travel to Buenos Aires once a year to get inspired).

So in our classes we pay a lot of attention to the embrace, technique and musicality.

To reach the highest level of emotion which makes tango so special, we need knowledge (about structure, culture, music) and senses in movements towards our partner.

We are so called “tango-omnivores” which means in the higher levels we make combinations of the influence of the three styles, mentioned before, a style which is characteristic for our dancing (see on You Tube: Peter en Ina tango)

How do you promote your danceschool? What do you think stimulates people to start dancing tango?

We advertise and spread lots of full color flyers and posters made by a professional designer. We use facebook and lists of email-addresses. We keep our website up to date and we dance in public during festivals such as “Noorderzon”. We organize many free “try out classes”. We put a lot of our films on You tube.

Stimulating aspects can also be: Watching other people dancing tango; experiencing tango. Enthusiastic friends can sometimes help people to step into the tango world.

Who is your main target group?

First of all: the age is not important: from 16 up to 70 years old people are dancing and learning tango. The group is a reflection of the society. But the main target group is to be found in groups of students, artists, self-employed people, people who like to dance or have been dancing other styles before, and retired people not to forget. We would love to have more young students!!! they are the guarantee for the continuing of the existence of the tango.

We noticed that mainly older people (between 40 and 60 years) join tango lessons. What do you think are the reasons for missing young students in such lessons?

We think that young people, here in Holland are more attracted to other types of dancing such as for instance salsa and Zumba . Tango could be too serious for young people.

Besides that, there are not enough examples of young couples dancing tango. They want to identify themselves with others from their own age. We have young students in our classes and we are very glad about it. What we need is a larger group of enthusiastic young students that stimulate each other to dance tango. So that it becomes a subculture.

In Buenos Aires (but also in South Europe) there is a booming culture of a younger tango generation. The old “maestros are the examples and source of inspiration for them and they are highly respected by the younger students.

Here in Holland the younger generation has less respect for the older people. This is a problem we also have to deal with. And Tango is not a cultural inheritance here. But luckily of course there are exceptions! We have a group of young Dutch and foreign students.

We try to make the courses more attractive by maintaining a special price with reduction for students of the university and hanzehogeschool.

What makes your clients keep coming back?

They keep coming back, because they find out that they make really good progress and become more popular in the salon. They experience that their dancing becomes more comfortable and less complex and they feel more secure about their achievements.

We demand a lot and are very serious trying to upgrade the level. They are always complimenting us for the clear method and didactic construction of our lessons.

Besides that they experience the friendly and open atmosphere in our school, and we give them the feeling that everybody is equally important; we take all of our students serious, talented or not, old or young, and pay them a lot of attention. And in our classes we dance a lot with all our students; this is the best way to style and educate them.

What should a location provide to fit Tango?

The most important thing is the floor, smooth wooden preferably. Of course enough space, but also light (enough to teach properly) and preferably a mirror wall. It depends if you are talking about the classes or the milonga(salon) of course. The atmosphere should be friendly.

What activities that are related to Tango do you join? (e.g. workshops, festivals, contests, events)

We teach courses, and organize monthly milongas(salons where you can dance). We give workshops in tango schools, business companies and private parties in Holland and abroad (we have been teaching in Germany, Belgium, France and Greece), tango holidays; events (for instance recently “Tango aan de Sluis”); lots of performances also with live tango orchestras; tango in theatre for instance for USVA Dansspektakel. See our site for the whole list: <http://www.peterenina.nl/portfolio.html>

How varied is your offer? (courses, workshops, parties, etc.)

We can offer all combinations you can think of; courses; workshops for beginners on parties; performances with or without live music. Workshops for tango schools; complete events with live music, more dance couples, etc. Tango as a metaphor.

Have you organized an activity/event related to tango? If yes, what made it successful?

We have organized during the last 10 years many milongas (a milonga is a dance but also the salon where people go to dance)and tango weekends and holidays. Recently we organized tango summer holiday weeks in Drenthe, Greece and France). Important elements to make these events successful are amongst others:

Good location, good DJ (very important!!), everything well organized with good advertising, full color flyers, promotion in newspapers and internet, networks, etc.

If you had the chance to make a statement to all tango dancers and all potential tango dancers, what would your statement be?

“Dance and enjoy tango as much as you like, but never lose out of sight that it is the **Tradition** that Argentine tango makes the **Tango**”.