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TangoCity Brings a Taste of Argentina to Russia

By Simone Peek

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A dancing couple throwing themselves into a close pose, typical of tango.

Despite the weather forecasts, Moscow's weekend temperatures will rise to a subtropical level, as ladies dust off their open pumps and scan their closets for their most jaunty skirt.

Argentine Tango Festival "TangoCity" invites both the city's "Tangueros" (a slang word for people who love dancing, or even just watching, the tango) and newbie to come out and dance together.

TangoCity takes place from May 30 to June 9 and was born out of cooperation between TangoCity dance school, the 35MM movie theater and the Argentinian Embassy.

The festival takes a broad approach to tango, offering live music and dance performances, movie screenings, photo exhibitions, lectures and interactive tango classes.

Moscow is

heating up
through
the power
of dance, no
matter how long
it takes
for summer
to arrive

Inessa Dekhtyareva is the festival's chairman and co-founder of TangoCity dance school. Although Russian-born, Dekhtyareva started dancing the tango in 2001. She visits Argentina every year and describes the country with great fondness.

"Argentina has almost become my second homeland, where I take tango classes, and dance till I drop at the milongas, trying to catch 'the elusive beauty' ... I look, talk and dance with the experienced tangueros," Dehtyareva said.

Tango-like choreography has been the basis of dance in Buenos Aires for over hundred years, but did not gain popularity in Europe and the U.S. until around the 1980s. It arrived in Moscow's streets about ten years ago.

Tango Festivals in various forms have been held across Russia for these ten years. However, TangoCity is the first festival that offers concerts of bands from both Argentinean genres, classical and electronic, while also having free dance-lessons at various locations.

The export of Argentine Tango to Moscow may not seem to be an immediately obvious combination. But when listening to Dekhtyareva, it seems as if Russians were made for the dance.

"Russians proved long ago that they can experience vibrant passion and express their emotions in a fiery dance. In fact, tango was born through people who were lost in the cold city — the feelings, not the climate," Dehtyareva said.



Belgian Frederic Fonteyne's sultry 'Tango Libre,' showing at Kino 35mm. (Artemis Production / Samsa Films)

"Tango awakens feelings and sensuality," she continued. "It gives endless creative possibilities of movement under the beautiful music of the tango. The proximity of men and women."

This is especially necessary in a more detached, anonymous place like Moscow. "In a big city, in the eternal whirl, tango will give you the pleasure of your own body, the joy of creative self-realization and sensual intimacy with a man," Dehtyareva said.

From May 30 — June 2 there are daily master classes for "Tangueros," taking 1,5 hours per lesson. To participate it is required to register online. For beginners, the tango lessons are free.

If "creative self-realization" feels like one bridge to far, you might consider confining your festival attendance to a visit to the movie theatre.

Amongst other films, there will be a screening of "Tango Libre," a 2012 Belgian/French movie in which a lonely prison guard gets caught in a love triangle with a woman from his tango class. At the same time, the prisoners receive a new outlook on life through dancing.

The official opening is May 31 at Moscow's international "Dom Muziki" (House of Music) with a show of the Argentinian "star-duo" Alejandra MantiЦan and Leandro Palou, supported by music of Sexteto Milonguero, also from Argentina.

For more information, tickets and reservations visit: tangocitymoscow.com *and* kino35mm.ru

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