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## 

Argentine Tango Salon Program

Internal CDTA BC Document

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**PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS**

The Argentine Tango (AT) **Salon Program** is the first stage of the CDTA’s AT syllabus project, and was developed for the following purposes:

* To help students achieve **proficiency** in social dance by setting specific **goals**, measuring **progress**, and preparing for a **CDTA** social dance **examination**.
* To **aid** **teachers** in developing and **assessing** students/students’ skills, in determining when a student is ready to be assessed, in conducting assessments, issuing feedback reports, certificates and pins.
* To recognize a student’s proficiency in assessed elements and concepts by providing constructive **feedback** and further goals.
* *To preserve the dance’s* ***authenticity*** *and cultural* ***heritage****.*
* *Identify fundamental* ***elements*** *and* ***concepts*** *necessary to dance traditional AT around the world.*
* *To contribute content for the Argentine tango Syllabus Project of the Canadian Dance Teachers Association BC Branch (CDTABC).*

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

This student guide for AT was written as part of our attempt to answer a CDTABC request to produce a syllabus for AT. The CDTABC Ballroom Division has reached out to include several social dances which exist independently, outside the conventional Ballroom scope, and are differ in structure (i.e. etiquette, learning, teaching, social setting, etc.). A sub-category, named Specialty Dances has been created to allow these dances to be considered and described on their own terms. So far, the Specialty Dances category includes Argentine tango, salsa and West Coast swing.

Just like an individual’s tango journey, this documentation will likely never reach a form of finality. Even at the time of the roll-out in January 2019, there’s still have a list of revisions to do when time allows, and another peer review is already lined up. Tango has been evolving over the decades, just as any living culture. This edition of the program documentation is based on the teaching approach of Patricia and Bobbi Lusic, as presented in their “Argentine Tango User Guide”. There are many ways to approach and to understand tango, many ways to teach it, and many ways to dance it. Beware of the teacher who tells you that theirs is the only way. There isn’t one correct way to teach, learn or dance tango. The scope of tango surpasses the individual teacher and student, and at the same time, an individual’s tango is a unique entity in itself. It is a timeless experience of connection, music, emotion, embrace, moment, artistic expression, and so much more. Tango is the reflection of the dancer’s life and emotional being. Peer reviews are welcome and will enrich this document.

The principles, concepts and elements laid out herein should be helpful later in the syllabus project when the time comes to answer questions like, What is required to obtain a CDTA tango teacher-accreditation? or, What does the CDTA expect a teacher to teach?

The CDTA’s Argentine tango syllabus project will, hopefully, evolve at some point to include a variety of Argentine tango styles. While the syllabus project seems daunting in scope at times, there’s an ongoing focus on reduction to simplicity in writing this documentation.

This Argentine tango Salon Program addresses essential concepts and elements of tango social dance. The essential, or fundamental, concepts and elements in consideration are those that comprise a social dance we could think of as Tango Liso.

The first question that guided the writing of this documentation is, What elements and concepts does a dancer need to be able to dance tango socially? To stay true to the nature of Argentine tango, there is a overarching focus on connections and improvisation. Consequently, dance step sequences are inconsequential. Instead, dance proficiency is improvisation based on essential elements and principles of the dance, while maintaining the four connections. Therefore, any dependence on, and use of sequences is discouraged, and should not interfere with any of the connections.

Depending on a student’s talents and transferrable skills, a basic level of social dance proficiency may take several months to one or two years of lesson and practice time. At that point, their understanding of the dance would be rudimentary compared to their understanding in the following years of their, possibly lifelong, tango journey. This student guide focuses on the skills and knowledge needed to get started in dancing socially.

Prior to the program roll-out, in January 2019, a pilot run was conducted with volunteering students Wanda Young and Howard Young, and with attending collaborators Patricia Nikleva, Patricia Lusic, Donn Picard and Bobbi Lusic. The pilot run was successful and yielded additional adjustments to the program format and documentation.

**What’s next?**

The next steps in the AT Syllabus Project are:

* Peer reviews of the Argentine tango Salon Program documented herein;
* CDTA-BC Tango Salon Examination;
* Professional examinations and teacher accreditation.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The program is divided into three parts:

Part 1 – Linear Motion: Walking & the follower’s cross (Caminada & Cruce)

Part 2 – Changing Direction: Rock steps & pivots (Rebote, Ocho Cortado, Ocho)

Part 3 – Circular Motion: Turns (Molinete, Giro)

A student enrolls in one part at a time. One part needs to be completed before progressing to the next part, unless instructor permission is obtained to skip to the second or third part, with adequate student experience.

Each part begins with an orientation class where a student is facilitated to do a self-assessment before enrolling in the program. Each part ends with an assessment session where a student demonstrates their skill, and specific written feedback is provided for the student’s future reference. A student can learn and progress at their own pace, without deadlines.

With instructor permission, a student with adequate experience may enroll to challenge the program and skip forward to the Part 3 Assessment.

Upon **enrollment**, the student is given the program **outline** and a 30-minute **coaching** session with the instructor. The coaching session may be 1-on-1 or group format. Once the instructor determines that the student is ready, an **assessment** session is scheduled and conducted. In an assessment session, the student dances demonstrations to **two songs**. If they pass the assessment, the student obtains an assessment **report**, a progression plan, and a **CDTA pin**.

**Fees**

$20 Social Dance **Workshop**

$60 **Enrollment**. Includes: Study Guide

15-minute coaching

Social Dance Skill Assessment Session

Assessment Report

Assessment Video, optional

CDTA Program Pin

Certificate of completion at the completion of Part 3

$90 **Program Challenge**: allows advanced and high intermediate dancers to skip forward to the Part 3 Assessment.

Incidental assessment fees

$35 Repeat Assessment plus incidental fees.

The fees are payable to the teacher in advance. Incidental fees may apply for additional costs (i.e. studio rental, floor fee, travel, logistics, etc.). All fees are non-refundable. The teacher pays the CDTA $15 ($10 dues and $5 pin), from each enrollment fee collected. An interval of one month should pass before another assessment for the same pin is taken. Deviation from any guidelines must be teacher-approved, ahead of the assessment session.

**Assessment structure**

**Session Format**

The student should arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled assessment time to prepare (i.e. put on shoes, warm up and stretch). The teacher should receive the student with kindness and help the student be relaxed and comfortable. The teacher brings the music to play for the two demonstrations. The video will be deleted once analysis is completed or within a week’s time, and it may be shared with the student before deletion. The teacher should position themselves to have unobstructed view of the dancers during the dance demonstration (i.e. pillars, sitting behind a table, etc.). It is beneficial to schedule multiple assessments in a block of time to reduce costs.

The duration of an assessment is approximately 15-20 minutes, and may be like this:

* 1-4 minutes - introductions
* 3 minutes – first dance demonstration
* 3 minutes - writing assessment notes
* 1 minute - brief break between assessments
* 3 minutes – second dance demonstration
* 3 minutes - writing assessment notes
* 1 minute - brief break between assessments

**The music**

The student chooses one song for the first dance demonstration from the list of CDTA-approved songs. The teacher chooses the music for the second dance demonstration from the same list of approved songs. To preserve the dance’s authenticity, the approved songs are from the Golden Age of tango.

**Dance demonstration**

* A student is expected to bring a dance partner to the assessment session, and demonstrate required elements and concepts in two partnered dance demonstrations.
* Regardless of gender, a student may choose to be assessed as a leader or as a follower.
* Only one student in the partnership is assessed in one assessment session. Teacher may allow both partners to be assessed at the same time, with video recording.
* The demonstrations are done for the entire duration of each song.
* The student may be asked to partner with the teacher or their delegate for assessment purposes.

**Form and etiquette guidelines**

* In keeping with the nature of the social dance, the demonstration is to be improvised, not choreographed. More improvised variety and less use of repetitive patterns will result in higher scores.
* Only fundamental elements of tango should be used. Minimal adornos are permitted. The student is discouraged from using elements like gancho, boleo, enganche, volcada, colgada, sacada, soltada, etc.
* Follower’s right forward step into the leader’s position is discouraged.
* Partners should wait for the music to start before embracing. Open embrace, v-embrace and close embrace are permitted as well as transitions between the embraces. In an open embrace, partners should maintain close proximity (4-5 inches apart or less).
* The demonstrations are done in a ronda, moving in a lane without drifting.
* During a demonstration, the dancers should not interrupt the dance by breaking the embrace, talking or discontinuing dancing.
* The demonstration should conclude in a final position that is held for a moment after the last note of the song.
* A leader is expected to wear long pants, not shorts.
* The four connections (SPMR) are observed in all pin assessments.

1. Self: posture, balance, coordination, grounding, dance continuity.

2. Partner: frame, dialogue, connectedness in motion, synchronization, contra-body motion.

3. Music: rhythmic interpretation, melodic interpretation, continuity, suspension, syncopation.  
4. Ronda: Navigation, step size, motion control, safety, courtesy.

**Part 1 – Linear motion: Walking & the cross (Caminada & Cruce) – Pearl Pin  
The student is expected to demonstrate the following tango elements and concepts, integrated into a social dance demonstration.**

****Caminada elements: steady walk; pauses; weight shifts; parallel system; cornering.

All elements of the 8-step basic must be demonstrated: forward, side, back step; cruzada (position 4-5-6); forward across step (position 2-3), weight-shift (position 7-8). The 8-step basic sequence should not be used in its entirety.

Bonus: partial steps, suspensions, corrida; cross-system, good contra-body motion (CBM) and style.

**Part 2 - Changing Direction: Rock steps & pivots (Rebote & Ocho) – Ruby Pin  
In addition to Part 1 elements and concepts, the student is expected to demonstrate the Rebote and Ocho elements and concepts, integrated into a social dance demonstration.**Rebote elements: rock step to collect; rock step into step; parallel system; repeat rock steps. All elements of the ocho cortado should be demonstrated: rock steps leader left forward/back; side rock step to the follower’s cross. Bonus: cross system, varied rebote timing, CBM, style.  
Ocho elements and concepts: cross-system; directional lead/follow; floor craft; disassociation; pivots; step technique; axis and motion control.

**Part 3 – Circular Motion: Turns (Molinete/Giro) – Emerald Pin****In addition to Part 1 and Part 2 elements and concepts, the student is expected to demonstrate ocho and giro elements and concepts, integrated into a social dance demonstration.**Giro elements and concepts: molinete principles; disassociation; floor craft & navigation; step technique; clockwise and counter clockwise turns.

**SONG LIST**The following is a list of traditional Argentine tango music approved for dance demonstrations in the AT Salon Program. All recordings are from the Golden Age of tango, 1930s to the 1950s.

Title Orchestra / Vocalist Year Length

1. A la gran muñeca Carlos Di Sarli Any Golden Age version
2. Al compás del corazón Miguel Caló con Raúl Berón 1942 2:41-2:51
3. Amurado Pedro Laurenz / Juan Carlos Casas Any Golden Age version
4. Arrabalero Osvaldo Fresedo 1939 2:31-2:36
5. Bahia Blanca Carlos Di Sarli 1957 2:50-2:55
6. Caricias Ángel D'Agostino / Ángel Vargas 1945 2:43-2:48
7. Carnaval de mi barrio Edgardo Donato / Horacio Lagos y Lita Morales 1939 2:23-2:31
8. Cicatrices Rodolfo Biagi con Andrés Falgás 1940 2:20-2:21
9. Comme il faut Carlos Di Sarli Any Golden Age version
10. Cómo se muere de amor Alfredo De Angelis / F. Ruiz y N. Rodi 1943 2:46
11. El arranque Osvaldo Pugliese 1944 3:04-3:13
12. El chamuyo Francisco Canaro 1933 3:08-3:12
13. El pollo Ricardo Quinteto Pirincho dir. Francisco Canaro Any Golden Age version
14. Esta noche Francisco Canaro / Ernesto Famá 1940 2:19-2:25
15. Florida Enrique Rodríguez 1941 2:48-2:54
16. Inspiración Aníbal Troilo Any Golden Age version
17. Joaquina Juan D'Arienzo Any Golden Age version
18. Junto a tu corazón Carlos Di Sarli / Alberto Podestá Any Golden Age version
19. La Maleva Rodolfo Biagi 1939 2:32-2:38
20. La Yumba Osvaldo Pugliese 1952 2:45-2:4
21. Llorar por una mujer Enrique Rodríguez con Armando Moreno 1941 2:43-2:50
22. Mala Junta Pedro Laurenz 1947 2:27-3:06
23. Malena Demare, Lucio con Carlos Miranda 1942 2:52-2:59
24. Marioneta Alfredo De Angelis / Floreal Ruiz 1943 2:43-2:45
25. Milongueando en el '40 Aníbal Troilo Any Golden Age version
26. Mi serenata Edgardo Donato / Romeo Gavio y Lita Morales 1940 3:00-3:06
27. Noches de Colón Ricardo Tanturi con Alberto Castillo Any Golden Age version
28. No me extraña Pedro Laurenz con Juan Carlos Casas 1940 2:42-2:47
29. Pensalo bien Juan D'Arienzo 1938 2:17-2:27
30. Quejas de bandoneón Aníbal Troilo 1945/1953. 2:37/2:36
31. Que Solo Estoy Carlos Di Sarli / Alberto Podestá 1944 3:10
32. Una emoción Demare, Lucio / Raúl Berón 1943 2:41-2:48
33. Que Te Importa Que Te Llore Miguel Caló / Raúl Berón 1942 2:35-2:43
34. Recuerdo Osvaldo Pugliese 1944 2:35-2:51
35. Retintín Juan D'Arienzo 1936 2:22-2:30
36. Rosicler Alfredo De Angelis / Julio Martel 1946 3:07-3:12
37. Solamente Ella Demare, Lucio con Horacio Quintana 1944 3:14-3:17
38. Son cosas del bandoneón Rodolfo Biagi con Andrés Falgás Any Golden Age version
39. Te aconsejo que me olvides Aníbal Troilo con Francisco Fiorentino Any Golden Age version
40. Tierrita Juan D'Arienzo con Héctor Mauré Any Golden Age version
41. Tigre viejo Osvaldo Fresedo 1934 3:02-3:06
42. Trasnochando Ángel D'Agostino / Ángel Vargas 1942 3:01-3:05
43. Tres esquinas Ángel D'Agostino / Ángel Vargas 1941 3:04-3:09
44. Una noche de garufa Ricardo Tanturi Any Golden Age version
45. Vida mía Osvaldo Fresedo / Roberto Ray 1933 3:23-3:27

**DEFINITIONS**

**teacher** – A CDTA accredited instructor conducting a pin assessment; usually the student’s teacher.

**adorno** – An embellishment, flourish done without being led.

**boleo** – The whip; a tango move.

**caminada** – The walk.

**student** – A person being assessed in the pin program; usually the teacher’s student.

**CBM** - Contra-body motion.

**colgada** - A spinning, shared-axis move in which both dancers lean out away from each other and spin until the one or both step out of the shared position.

**cornering** – Changing direction at the end of the dance floor to continue in the line of dance.

**corrida** – The run. A short sequence of quick walking steps.

**cruzada** – The cross. A cruzada occurs any time a foot is crossed in front of or in back of the other. Position 5 in the 8 count basic; the follower’s step 5.

**dance demonstration** – A presentation in which the student demonstrates certain dance skills for the purpose of being assessed by the teacher. One dance demonstration is usually done for the duration of one song.

**enganche** - Hooking; coupling. Occurs when a partner wraps a leg around the other’s leg, or uses a foot to catch and hold the other’s foot or ankle.

**follower/leader** – Designations for the two dancers comprising a dance couple. The leader communicates choices to the follower and directs the follower by means of subtle bodily motions. The follower responds with complementary motions, thereby creating a dialogue. Although, traditionally the male partner is the leader and the female partner is the follower, the gender roles are interchangeable.

**fundamentals** – The essential elements and concepts needed for dancing tango liso.

**gancho** – The hook.

**giro** – The turn.

**Golden Age** - The "Golden Age" of tango music and dance is generally agreed to have been the period from about 1930s to 1950s.

**marking system**: 3 – Distinction, 2 –Proficient, 1 – Needs Improvement

**ocho** - Eight; a tango move where the follower draws a figure eight on the floor with her feet.

**ocho cortado** - Cut ocho; a classic tango move that combines elements of ocho, rebote and the cross.

**rebote** - Rock step, rebound.

**sacada** – A tango move. A displacement of the partner’s position. A displacement of a leg or foot by the partner’s leg or foot.

**solo demonstration** - A presentation in which the student demonstrates certain dance skills without a partner. A solo demonstration may be shorter than the duration of one song.

**soltada** – A tango move in which the partners break the embrace to execute a turn.

**tango** – Argentine tango for the purpose of this syllabus.

**tango liso** - Smooth tango. A way of dancing tango characterized by the use of only fundamental elements and concepts of tango: caminada, cruzada, rebote, ocho, giro.

**volcada** - A falling step: The leader causes the follower to tilt or lean off her axis while stepping, producing a beautiful leg drop.  The move is usually done in close or v-embrace.

**8-step basic** – A step sequence that includes elements which are used throughout the dance, linear motion in all direction. The complete figure itself is not used for dancing socially.  Numerous variations of the sequence exist.   
The steps of a conventional 8-step basic are as follows:  
1. The leader settles his weight on his left foot, leading the follower’s weight to her right foot, and holds.  The leader steps right foot back, the follower steps left foot forward into the leader.    
2. The leader steps side left, leading the follower side right.   
3. The leader steps forward right in outside right position keeping his upper body turned toward the follower in contra-body position; the follower steps back left paralleling the leader, also in contra-body.    
4. The leader steps forward left, the follower back right stretching slightly more and seeking the leader’s center.  
5. The leader closes his right foot to his left, shifts weight and rotates his upper body to face forward, leading the follower to cross her left foot in front of her right ([cruzada](https://www.tejastango.com/terminology.html" \l "cruzada)) with a weight shift as she finishes moving back in front of the man. Many variations for the follower begin from this position.  
6. The leader steps forward left (to her center), the follower back right.  
7. The leader steps side right, the follower side left.  
8. The leader closes his left foot to his right with a weight shift, the follower her right foot to her left with a weight shift.  
Steps 1 through 3 are known as the [salida](https://www.tejastango.com/terminology.html#salida).  Steps 3 through 5 are known as "walking to the cross."  Steps 6 through 8 are known as [resolución](https://www.tejastango.com/terminology.html#resolucion)