

10 Years 'Totally in Tango'

A growing double-role family that keeps moving on

by Ute Schiffer

"You are all good as you are" - that is Ludo's most important message at the start of every TiT. Even after ten years and 66 events, these words still resonate. Everyone is valued for their own experience and in every role. In mid-June, the anniversary was celebrated at Tango aux Frontières in Mouscron, Belgium - where it all began ten years ago.

Behind Totally in Tango are Ludo Decreus from Bruges and Julija Zaiceva, originally from Riga. They launched the double-role event in 2016 and organise every TiT with renewed enthusiasm: they invite international teaching couples and, depending on the country, are supported by local organisers -such as Ana Temblador in Cádiz, who had already taken part in a TiT in Granada.

The locations keep changing. What began as a single event has grown into an international series of up to ten events a year. The TiT family has already visited ten European countries; in 2027, Milan and Bern will add Italy and Switzerland. So far, 66 TiTs have taken place.

From a weekend to a full tango week

The formats vary: some TiTs last a weekend, others a full week. Usually there are classes in the morning and afternoon, with announced themes to choose from, and a milonga in the evening. Morning yoga and massage sessions can complement the programme.

Depending on the location, cultural activities are also part of the concept.



Anniversary celebration in Mouscron, Belgium, where 'Totally in Tango' began ten years ago
Photo: TiT Archive

In Liverpool, the Beatles Museum was on the programme; in Granada, a flamenco evening. Toulouse and Nice offered city tours; around Cádiz there are excursions to nearby towns, and in Sheffield the Kelham Island Museum is part of the programme. Depending on the format, 80 to 140 people come together. Hamburg and Berlin are often sold out on the very day registration opens. Many return again and again. Some were already there at the first TiT in 2016 and are now part of the community's core group. Others are joining for the first time and are welcomed just as naturally.

Learn, practise, dance -and listen

What unites the TiT family is the desire to dance both roles in tango. Looking back over the past ten years, Ludo sees a clear development: "We have all improved our level of dancing. Learning the second role in addition to the one we originally learned also means gaining a better understanding of our own role."



Julija Zaiceva & Ludo Decreus
Photo: TiT Archive

Julija started tango in 2009 and, three years later, began dancing the second role - a few months before she met Ludo. He has danced since 1998 and in both roles for 24 years. They met through dancing in 2012; a year later they became partners in life. Today they live for their concept, Totally in Tango. Ludo is also an enthusiastic cook, often creating dishes for his own tango events as well as for others.

Changing perspective makes tango feel different. Switching roles can create a more intense kind of listening - a respectful dialogue that challenges and inspires both sides. Quite often, a shared flow emerges in which afterwards nobody can really say: who was leading just then?



Double role in practice: here, dancers switch naturally between the two roles Photo: TiT Archive

The teachers change from one TiT to the next and bring new areas of focus. International guest teachers so far have included, for example, Ezgi Turmus, Maria Filali & Sigrid Van Tilbeurgh, Natalia Agüero & Agustín Venturio, Iwan & Isabella Harlan, Yanina Muzyka & Emmanuel Casal or Pepa Palazón and Matias Tripody. In future, the *Práctica* times are to be expanded further, because - as we all probably know - the gap between workshop and milonga is often a large one.

A family without competition

Ludo, Julija and the respective local supporters create an open, friendly atmosphere. Regardless of where people are in their own development, appreciation, warmth and goodwill shape the way everyone interacts. There is no competition and no judgement according to the motto 'more beautiful, younger, slimmer, better or better known'. Instead, the focus is on learning together and respectful social dancing.

This is now having an effect beyond the TiT community as well. Double-role dancers are increasingly accepted in the traditional tango world and are also welcome at originally purely traditional events and Encuentros. More and more organisers now provide dedicated double-role places in their registration systems.



Dancing, learning and celebrating together - the TiT family continues to grow

Double role - double fun

Ludo sums up his invitation to switch roles succinctly: 'Double role -double fun.' Dancing both roles, he says, means improving in both roles. At the same time, he cautions: 'Be respectful and careful towards your partner and the group.' Julija describes the experience in two words: 'It is liberating and energising.' And what are her best moments looking back? 'Seeing that it makes people happy.'

For their anniversary, the two received special proof of that. The participants had put together a commemorative book with photos from all the TiTs and contributions from those involved - a personal record of ten years of shared history and a book of appreciation. The TiT family is likely to keep growing - and its new members will probably be happy to become loyal 'repeat offenders'. Unfortunately, for this year only a few places remain available at the end of October in Sheffield (England) -Cádiz and Berlin are already fully booked.

More info:

www.totallyintango.com