



## Alberto Castillo

(December 7, 1914 - July 23, 2002)

Alberto Castillo was a prominent Argentine tango singer, composer and actor. He was born Alberto Salvador De Luca in the Mataderos district of Buenos Aires, the son of Italian immigrants Salvatore De Luca and Lucia De Paola.

### A talented singer with a unique voice and style

Castillo made his professional debut in the 1930's and in order to hide his performances singing tango at local radio stations from his father, adopted two nicknames: Alberto Dual and also Carlos Duval.

He continued singing with the orchestras of Julio De Caro, Augusto Pedro Berto and Mariano Rodas until he decided to leave music and study as a physician in 1938. But tango still had the sting in him, and one year before graduating, he joined Tanturi's legendary orchestra tipica. His first record with Tanturi's orchestra was released in January 8, 1941, which is when he adopted his last and everlasting nickname: Alberto Castillo. His first hit was the vals "Recuerdo" from Alfredo Pelaia.

In the early 40's, Tanturi added to his repertoire, songs that not only talked about tango as a dance but also focused on the dancers, all of them sung by Castillo - "Al compás de un tango" , "El tango es el tango", "Cuatro compases", "Canción de tango" and the very successful "Así se baila el tango".



Definitively, Castillo was a "voice that does not sound like any other's voice", as the unforgettable Julián Centeya wisely said. His style too was unlike anyone else's; Castillo himself said that his peculiar phrasing was what dancers needed: "people danced following the nuances of my voice" and he never deviated from that way of singing.

### A truly multifaceted career!

In 1942, Castillo graduated as gynaecologist, and opened a consulting room at his parents' house.

So, every evening, the Doctor Alberto Salvador De Lucca would rush from his "ladies consulting room" to the radio to make his live broadcasts as the singer Alberto Castillo. The situation got entangled when his waiting room began to be flooded with women, mostly young: the singer's numerous fans were quick to discover that the physician De Lucca and the singer Castillo were the same person!

Castillo himself remembered a funny situation, as he was attending a young lady in his consulting room, and waiting for her to undress for the consultation. "Madam, are you ready?" he asked the lady who was behind a curtain. "Yes, doctor, I already am. Are you ready, too?" she answered with total nerve.

"Those insinuations did not please much", he confessed, and he finally gave up the medical profession to fully devote himself to tango.

### His career as a soloist

After splitting with Tanturi in 1943, Castillo adopted a new style as a soloist.

His movements on stage, his way of handling the microphone, the exaggerated handkerchief in his upper pocket as an ornament, the unbuttoned neck of his shirt, his loose tie and his right hand close to his mouth -in the manner street vendors shouted out their goods- made him an unusual character.

He was a different singer and his followers started to crowd the places where he appeared.



As a soloist, Castillo added candombe to his repertoire, and started to perform with black dancers. The first candombe was "Charol" (by Osvaldo Sosa Cordero), which was a hit, followed by the famous "Siga el baile" (by Carlos Warren and Edgardo Donato), "Baile de los morenos", "El cachivachero" and, among others, "Candonga", written by him.

The last hit of Castillo was in 1993, when he recorded "Siga el baile" with the Argentine rock group "Los Auténticos Decadentes" and managed to capture the heart of the young people of the end of the XXth century, in the same way as he had done in the 40's.

### A composer...

Castillo was also a tango lyrics writer: "Yo soy de la vieja ola", "Muchachos, escuchen", "Cucusita", "Así canta Buenos Aires", "Un regalo del cielo", "A Chirilota", "Dónde me quieren llevar!", "Castañuelas" y "Cada día canta más"; and the marches "La perinola" and "Año nuevo".

### And an actor too...

Castillo appeared in a number of Argentine films, including "Adiós pampa mía" in 1946, in 1948 "El tango vuelve a París" (joined by Aníbal Troilo), "Un tropezón cualquiera da en la vida", "Buenos Aires, mi tierra querida" (1951), "Por cuatro días locos" (1953), "Luces de candilejas" (1955, 1956 and 1958) and "Nubes de humo" (1959).



### A popular idol

Alberto Castillo never hid his condition of street corner boy, which helped him build such a close relation with his public.

In 1944, Castillo forced the police to cut the traffic in front of the Teatro Alvear where he was performing. According to José Gobello: "he was the last tango singer followed by crowds and his fans were called hinchada (like in soccer)".

He is remembered as an authentic singer, who sang for people to dance, and as a kind and humble man who liked to start his shows by saying "I belong to the people, from the people I receive all what I am, and to the people I give all what I can."

### Sources:

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