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Medellin's International Tango Festival Honors Carlos Gardel

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MEDELLIN, Colombia – Thousands of tango lovers are gathering at Olaya Herrera Airport in Medellin, where tango legend Carlos Gardel died 81 years ago, as part of the northwestern Colombian city's annual International Tango Festival.

For this 10th edition, the June 17-26 event will pay tribute to Argentine pianist and composer Horacio Salgan, who turned 100 on June 15.

Festival director Julio Sierra said Salgan's influence on tango resembled Astor Piazzolla's mastery of the bandoneon, an Argentine version of the accordion.

Salgan will perform on Saturday and his son, Cesar Salgan, and the Quinteto Real will play a tribute to him a day later.

Gardel continues to be a key element in making the festival an attractive event.

The tango singer died in a plane crash in Medellin on June 24, 1935, while taking off from Las Playas Airport, now known as Olaya Herrera Airport.

Since the accident, the airport has become a pilgrimage site for tango lovers and a memorial to Gardel was created in the area.

The memorial is at Plaza de Gardel, where a statue shows him holding a guitar and accompanied by two tango dancers.

"With this festival, we want to highlight the memory, for people to know why things happen, and that we have a very broad tango history," Medellin Citizens Culture Secretary Amalia Londoño told EFE.

On Friday, a series of events will be held to mark the 81st anniversary of Gardel's death.

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