

HISTORY OF THE SAPITOS

Towards the end of the 1970's **S.A.P.A.** decided to start providing dance classes to children with the aim of creating a hotbed of future dancers. Quite spontaneously the name emerged and would soon become a trademark: "**the Sapitos**".

The **Sapitos** was Willie MacKenzie's and Deborah Hortis' whim. They were both members of **S.A.P.A.**, without any doubt those type of members that you would never want them to leave as their impetus, impulse and passion for our Association was indescribable. Willie & Deborah founded the Sapitos in 1978, and their debut was that same year at the Buenos Aires British Hospital's fete held in the hospital's gardens.

Since its inception, **S.A.P.A.** has always stood out for being a happy and relaxed group, and this emerging group of children quickly absorbed the band's sense of camaraderie and friendship. After suffering several moves of our band practice venues, the location was finally established in Lomas de Zamora. There, Ann Walker led the **Sapitos** and soon the number of members began to grow exponentially. With his usual "insistent attitude" Willie persuaded many of his nephews, and their friends, and their friends' brothers to join the **Sapitos**. The group was filled with children and teenagers. Like that, whole families like the Macnies, Nicolussi, Wray, Acuña, Santana McKinlay, López Walker, Vallés, and of course, the Mac Kenzies entered **S.A.P.A.**'s ranks. Willie kicked off a youth movement that multiplied the number of bandmembers exponentially and led us to become the biggest band of Argentina and South America.



Year after year new cohorts of children stemmed and learnt to dance, had fun, and without realising it they became friends. Cousins, nephews, and friends were drawn to some sort of magical convening. Every new group continued to shape the '**Sapitos**' identity.

After a few years, those children grew up and joined the adults group. Many kept on dancing, some chose to play the bagpipes, others the drums, but they all remained united by a unique fellowship feeling. With the impudence that characterises the children, they spread an atmosphere of joy and bustle to the entire band.



For more than three decades the **Sapitos** were uninterruptedly on stage, reaping the rewards and compliments, honor and sympathy. Since the 2000's, and for about a decade, the Sapitos took a sabbatical and did not participate in band activities, but they were always alive in the hearts of the entire **S.A.P.A.** family.

In 2016 we started to work quietly in trying to resume the **Sapitos** activities. Their re-debut was at our 2016 Ceilidh and was really the icing on the cake, really a blast. Today we have them again. The new generation. It is no coincidence that all its instructors are former **Sapitos**. And its magic remains untouched. Within weeks of starting the practices, the group grew so much that a larger venue had to be found! And they come back with new surprises: the **Sapitos Band**, a seed of which we hope will develop into a youth band in a few years.



We are sure that all these children will dance and play better than we do. But what matters most to us is that they have fun, making friends and absorbing S.A.P.A.'s spirit. To keep the legend alive ...