



# Blackpool 2008

## *A New Dimension*

**Dance Beat World**

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**From the Editor.....**

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Dance Beat World – a weekly news magazine for the world of dancesport. Dance Beat World is new, but the editorial and production team has much experience in the dance news business as we have been producing Dance Beat newspaper in the USA for more than 18 years.

With Dance Beat World we hope to bring the same depth of unbiased coverage to the world of dancesport that we have to the USA with Dance Beat. What that means is that if you are searching for results only, we're probably not going to be the magazine for you, but if you want to know why Michael & Joanna beat Riccardo & Yulia at the 2008 Open British Championships this year, then we are. In this edition Dance Beat World Features Editor, Didio Barrera, explores Blackpool 2008 and answers some of the questions you have and maybe some you haven't even thought of.

We also ask leading luminaries of the dance world to give their opinions. Just for Blackpool our list of contributors reads like a who's who of dancing: Luca & Loren Barrichi, Allan Tornsberg, Lindsey Hillier Tate, Phillip Nicholas, Stephen Hannah and Nadia Eftedal are just some who will be sharing their views.

We'll continue with our insightful interviews. Already lined up are Doreen Freeman and World 10-Dance Champions, Gherman Mustuc & Iveta Lukosuite. In this edition we ask the question of Paul Killick – "Why are you returning to the competition floor?"

We are of course based in the USA, but this will not be a US biased publication. We are currently building a network of reporters throughout the world and we are very interested to hear from all competition organizers so that we can arrange coverage for as many events as possible.

All this comes at a price – but not a large one! You can receive Dance Beat World in a downloadable format for as little as \$1.00 per week! That's not much to pay for some of the most respected names in the dance world!

I hope you will all enjoy Dance Beat World and if you do not agree with something in its pages we welcome your letters and criticisms – as long as they are signed!

Beat wishes to all dancers,

**Keith Todd**  
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**Coming in the next few weeks on Dance Beat World:**

Open British Pro Latin - **Allan Tornsberg**  
Open British Amateur Standard - **Lindsey Hillier Tate**  
Open British Amateur Latin - **Phillip Nicholas**  
**+ more**

**Report from the WDC Annual General Meeting**

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# Is This a New Dimension for Latin Dancing?

**Dance Beat World's Features Editor, Didio Barrera, takes a personal look at Blackpool 2008**

Report by: **Didio Barrera**

Photos by **Andrew Miller** [www.dancefotoman.co.uk](http://www.dancefotoman.co.uk)



This year's Latin American Dancing at Blackpool entered a whole new dimension. For me it is no longer about breaking the door down with a huge amount of impact and precision, it is about beauty, artistry and soul. The Amateur Latin in particular was the perfect example of this new era of Latin

DanceSport and Matej Kracjer & Iwona Golczak from Slovenia, winners of this Amateur Open British Championship were the perfect vehicles to bring this new form of Latin across. In the Rumba this couple managed to move me as no one has done since Shirley Ballas. The rumba was absolutely exquisite, their subtlety and artistry of movement could only be described as a "moving Symphony." I sat in my chair swaying to their every move.

Stefano Di Filippo & Anna Melnikova from Italy who placed second were formidable opponents to Matej & Iwona but it was subtlety verses strength. Yes, Stefano & Anna could have taken a few dances, the jive in particular, but from the judges point of view and my own this was



Stefano Di Filippo & Anna Melnikova

the night for subtlety and for change and evolution in Latin DanceSport. I spoke to Doreen Freeman, a Ballroom icon, immediately following this competition and she told me that this type of performance is what keeps her coming back to Blackpool. "All the difficulties getting there year after year and you see something like this couple and it makes you want to come back."

It was very disappointing for me when I spoke to Matej the next day and he told me that they are no longer going to dance. What a loss this will be to the DanceSport arena. I hope the seed of change has already sprung a few branches because I would hate it all to go back to the "break down the doors" approach. The full report on this event will be coming up soon here in Dance Beat World, so buckle up this report is by none other than **Phillip Nicholas** a former Open British Finalist.

To prove my earlier point, in the Professional Latin we had almost the same scenario. Two brilliant couples, one with quality, impact,

precision and a total command of the floor, Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko from the USA and another with a different approach, perhaps a little more abstract, subtle and softer, Michael Malitowski & Joanna Leunis (Poland). Both very capable, both ready to assume the role "World's Number 1." Once again the judges opted for subtlety over strength by crowning Michael & Joanne Open British Champions. This was a fantastic year, one that I will never forget. It was almost a good as the time I saw Shirley Ballas revolutionize the world of Latin Dance quite few years back.

For a full and possibly controversial report of the Pro Latin, keep it right here on Dance Beat World – **Allan Tornsberg** has the report!

Speaking of change and

evolution there was a huge change also in the Standard divisions especially in the professional field. Mirko Gozzoli & Alessia Betti from Italy accumulated their third consecutive title winning this competition, but



Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko



Matej Kracjer & Iwona Golczak

Michael Malitowski & Joanna Leunis

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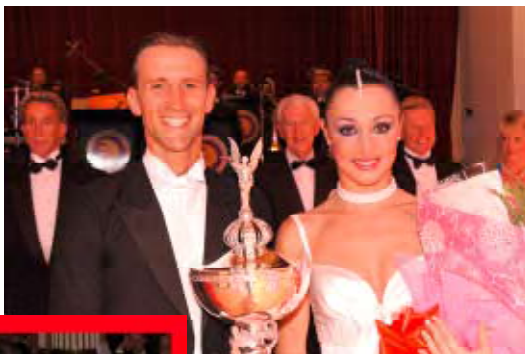
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.....she felt that Arunas & Katusha were a little too cautious in the final and had they danced as they did a few rounds earlier, totally carefree, just dancing from the heart not trying to please the judges or be correct, they would have taken the night.



Keep tuned to Dance Beat World for **Luca & Loren Barrichi's** full report on this division.

Last year's Amateur Standard champions were Arunas Bizokas who was dancing with a five month pregnant Edita Daminute. They had a very controversial year, being stripped of their world title by the IDSF for doping. (Edita not Arunas tested positive for doping). Of course they have since split and were not competing leaving the throne quite open for Paulo Bosco & Sylvia Pitton from Italy to occupy and they definitely did by winning all dances. I was a little disappointed with Paulo & Sylvia's performance they seem to have lost a little of their individuality but continued to provide more excitement than the others in this final. The major change in this amateur event came for the runner-up spot and that went to Andrea Ghigiarelli & Sara Andracchio, also from Italy who placed fifth last year. This I felt was another very correct couple but definitely with a lack of individuality.

As we mention in our blog "For every move up there's a move down and this year the unlucky ones were Germany's Benedetto Ferruggia & Claudia Koehler (4,3,3,4). Many in the audience, including us, felt they danced well. Better luck next time!" This year there was a seven couple final called and placing in a Blackpool final for the first time were China's Chao Yang & Tan Yi Ling who were 7th. This is the first "major" final for a Chinese couple at Blackpool. Look to next week for full report on this division by former World Professional Standard Champion, **Lindsey Hillier Tate**.

Thursday night is also traditionally "Exhibition Night" and this year's event was high-flying and deathdefying. South Africa is the new leader in the world of exhibition dancing having superseded the USA. South Africa placed first and second. The winners were Craig Smith & Natalie Woolf and runners-up, Nic Dawson & Chereese Black. I felt that Nic &

Chereese had the most incredible lift work I have ever seen but were left behind in the quality department. Craig & Natalie on the other hand brought a bit of both to the table and I'm sure this is why the judges placed them first.

USA took third – Eric Luna & Georgia Ambarian were great and challenged hard but unfortunately they did not have enough of the high-flying and death-defying lifts to make it any higher. For the first time we saw the inclusion of "Showdance." Garry & Rita Gekhman (USA) performed their "silver" routine, the same one they danced in the World Classic Showdance Championship. Keep watching Dance Beat World for a report by former Blackpool Exhibition Champion, David Elkin.



**Left: Mirko & Alessia. Right: Arunas & Katusha**  
*"I'm not sure what I would have done had I been adjudicating this evening"*

they were pushed hard by runners up Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova from the USA who took all seconds. I think by far Mirko & Alessia won the tango but the other three dances were definitely up for grabs particularly the waltz and foxtrot. I'm not sure what I would have done had I been adjudicating this evening because we have seen more of Mirko & Alessia and so it is easier to judge them against themselves than against the other couples, a common problem when you have seen someone for so long.

I spoke to a prominent adjudicator the next morning and she told me that she felt that Arunas & Katusha were a little too cautious in the final and had they danced as they did a few rounds earlier, totally carefree, just dancing from the heart not trying to please the judges or be correct, they would have taken the night. I have to agree with this

statement. In the earlier rounds Arunas & Katusha were more musical and carefree than in the final. They pulled back to being correct while Mirko & Alessia continued with full consistency and in the words of another judge: "in order for a couple to beat the champion you have to be much better not just good enough." This I'm sure is to allow a little room in case you are judging the champions against themselves.

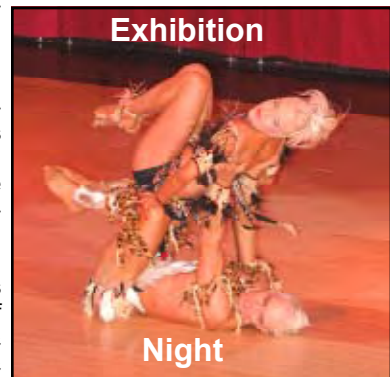


**Paulo Bosco & Sylvia Pitton**



**Andrea Ghigiarelli & Sara Andracchio**

**Coming Soon - reviews by:**  
**Lindsey Hillier Tate,**  
**Allan Tornsberg, Philip Nicholas, Luca & Lore Baricchi.....**  
**And More!**



**Exhibition**

**Night**

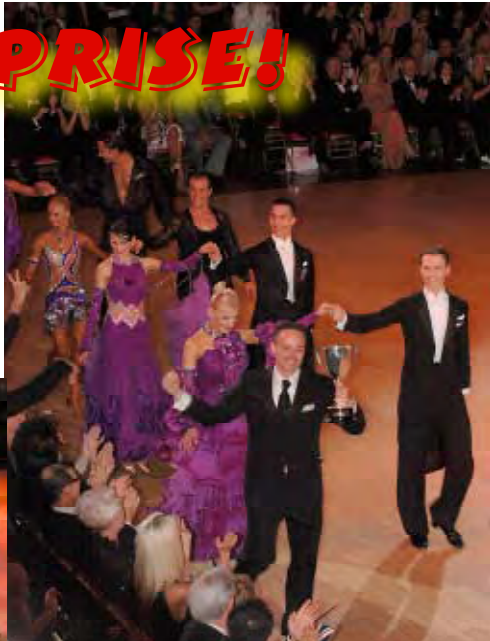
# SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

## USA Celebrates First Ever Triumph in Open British Teams Match

Team USA won convincingly on Saturday night in the historic Teams Match. The team won all the Latin dances and the quickstep, tied for first in foxtrot & Viennese to win by 3 full points, a large margin in these type of events. At the start, we were all a little worried as Team Britain won the waltz and it looked as if the US were maybe heading for the typical result (Britain has only lost the Teams Match once in its history). In the final standing, England was second, Italy third and Japan fourth.

**“Behind every successful man is a great woman,”** was the introduction for a spectacular moment in the English team introduction.

14 ladies who have danced for England on past teams took to the floor one more time amid wild applause. Shirley Ballas, Gaynor Fairweather MBE, Barbara McColl, Lindsey Hillier, Lynn Harman, Lorna Lee, Hazel Fletcher, Loren Barrichi, Vikki Barr, Janet Gleave, Lorraine, Karen Hilton MBE, Anne Gleave and receiving a standing ovation, Doreen Freeman. It's moments such as this that make the Blackpool Festival so special.

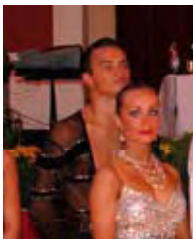


\*In the Professional Standard **Victor Fung & Anna Mikhed** from the USA made an unprecedented

trip to the top of the ladder and placed a solid 4th overall. As you all know by now the professional competition turns to single dances in the quarter-final and all couples are called back dance by dance so we must also report that none of the remaining three couples in this final made all 4 finals. Here are the remaining three couples and their placements:

- 5 DOMENICO SOALE and GIOIA CERASOLI (Italy)
- 6 JONATHAN CROSSLEY and LYN MARRINER (England)
- 7 ROBERTO VILLA and MORENA COLAGRECO (Italy)

\*In the Amateur Latin We were surprised by the 4th place awarded to **Alexie Silde & Anna Firstova** (Russia), who had a great night and we thought were a “sure thing” for third!



\*We were happy to see and announce that Slovenia had two couples in the Amateur Latin final but we were quite surprised when Slovenia's Jurij Batagulj & Jagoda Strukelj moved up to third – they were happy, we were perplexed! It was also surprising for us to hear Zoran Plohl & Tatsiana Lahvinovich announced from Croatia instead of Slovenia but we are very happy for them being the first time in the Blackpool final.

\*The Youth Latin is usually one of our favorite events at the Blackpool Festival but this year we

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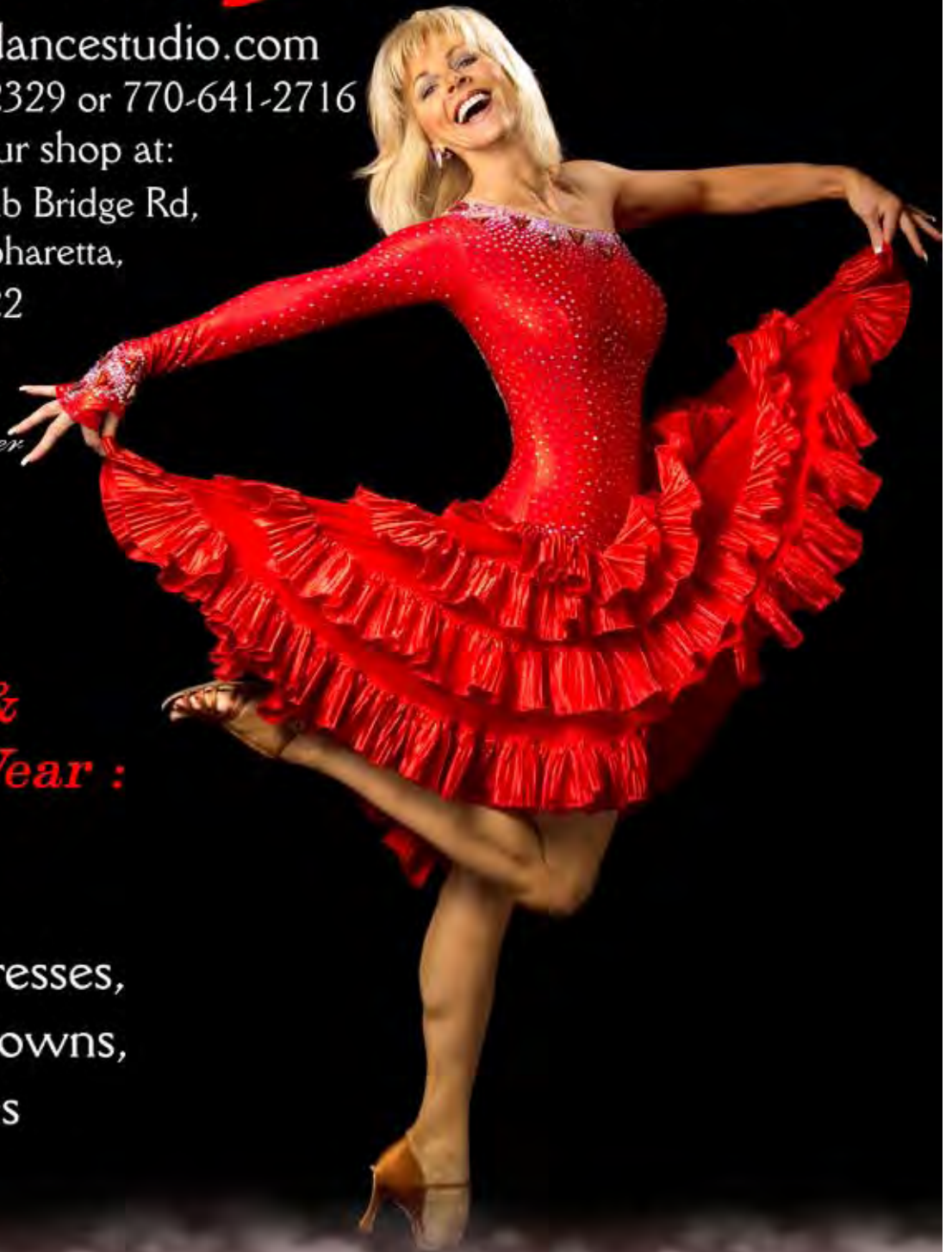
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were very surprised to find this event one of the most uninspiring youth events we've ever seen and it seemed the audience felt the same way as most had left by the time of the final. This event was only bearable because of one incredible lady and that was Nadiya Bychkova from Slovenia who placed 4th with partner Miha Vodichar. This lady is phenomenal to watch with a fantastic back and natural talent. The other couple that I liked was Oleg Negrov & Darya Chesnokova from the Ukraine who had great rhythm and charisma but lacked in other areas, they placed sixth. Don't miss a full report on this division coming up soon from **Paul Killick**.

\* We were very pleased and surprised with the quality of the Rising Star Latin division this year. It was filled with, as the name suggests, "Rising Stars." Lately we've seen a much older group of professionals who are more "falling" than "rising!" Last year we even mentioned that it was the "worst ever rising star we witnessed." So this was a refreshing change!

\*Is it all about the Lessons? We noticed that in the open professional rounds some of the winners of the Rising Stars competitions did not place as well in the open events. Take for instance the winners of the Rising Star Latin, Dmitry & Violetta Kurakin from the USA (We followed this couple's trail for our US Dance Beat). In the Open they only managed to make one quarter-final and that was in the rumba. Meantime there were other couples that in our opinion did not look as good but made all quarters and even a semifinal. Before I continue I must say that this happened both in the Latin and in the Standard but due to time we only researched Dmitry & Violetta since they are new to the scene both abroad and in their home country, the USA.

Continuing Dmitry & Violetta's trail the couple that placed second in the Rising Star Latin Julian Manderson & Melainie Hooper from Australia made all the quarter-finals but not a single dance in the semifinal. We felt that Julian & Melanie were great and could have won the rising star so this is good for them. Now we come to the third place in the rising star, Ryan McShane & Rachel Heron from England. Before I go on, this is a couple that we felt were a little lucky to place third in the RS, yet they made all quarter finals in the Open and one SEMIfinal in the rumba.


I spoke to a few people and most agreed that this couple should not have been in this quarter or in the semifinal. However, we must allow for "Queen & Country" and it is understandably that being

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**The results in the Pro RS and Open Divisions did not match! 1, 2, 3 became 3, 2, 1.**

**Is this a trend?**



"British judges only" at Blackpool a little preference could occur (I'm certainly not the first to point this out) this applies equally to us since "Dance Beat" is a US based company and the Kurakins dance for USA. Are we also guilty of "tunnel vision?" But this happened in both the Latin and the Standard and so after a few enquires we have come up with a possible hypothesis that we can all ponder and discuss. We think that perhaps the couples that travel to England every year for lessons from the Judges adjudicating before the British open might have a slight advantage over the ones that do not.

Here is why. It's only natural that with the huge amount of entries the judges have to watch and the limited time available, they would remember a couple that took lessons prior a lot faster than one that did not, especially if they have come to them year after year. After all they are doing the work that they worked on in the lessons.

This hypothesis is for entertainment purposes only because the fact is, we

still don't know. There are too many different factors that come into play in a competition of this magnitude.

So does taking lessons prior to the event make a big difference as to how you place in the open divisions? Or were the individual couples' performances that different from night to night? The answer is we don't know but it sure makes for a good topic of debate.

## What Happened to our Wish List?

This year if you remember we did an article on [www.dancebeat.com](http://www.dancebeat.com) entitled "Blackpool and why we care?" This column presaged an exciting Blackpool with some incredible competitions. Well here is the report of what actually happened to that wish list of ours:

In the Professional Standard we mentioned that "Timothy Howson & Joanne Bolton, an English couple who have been knocking on the door of this championship for many years. Although their form has not been so great recently,



they did defeat Jonathan & Hazel at the UK Championships"

At Blackpool this year they did not dance. We heard that Timothy has a very bad back problem and the doctors recommended he not dance. The rumor circulating prior to the Friday night that Timothy & Joanne were retiring at this year's Blackpool was wrong. We saw Joanne alone looking quite glamorous Friday night in attendance and at the bar.

What happened to the other English Couple? The other English couple Christopher & Justyna Hawkins who placed fourth in the UK Championships were scheduled to dance but withdrew in the last hours! We saw them once going into the ballroom during the afternoon rounds of the



**Howson/Bolton & Hawkins/Hawkins danced in the Teams Match but neither competed in the Pro Standard**

Pro Standard and once rushing out of the ballroom when the competition was over. He was walking quite fast with Justyna following. Here are two different takes on their absence you be the judge:

**A. Justyna has a bad chip (spur) on the heel of one foot and is not able to dance properly 100%.**

**B. Justyna just has a chip on her shoulder, whatever her reasons might be and did not want to compete.**

Both of this reports are unconfirmed and are fully for entertainment purposes only!

On our wish list we also mentioned that "Slavik Kryklyvyy who has been so close to drinking from this cup, for example, will be competing with new partner Hanna Kartunnen, who has almost taken a sip from this cup herself! We have heard no reports of how this couple look but all we know is that Slavik's last attempt was short-lived and left lots to be desired. On the other hand, Hanna's career in acrobatics and the cabaret field was very successful until last year when she and Victor DaSilva decided to split their partnership personally and on the dance floor. Could Hanna be the weapon that Slavik needs to take a gulp from that cup or will the cup elude him once more?"

Well? Neither danced nor drank from the cup! Slavik was in attendance seated properly looking suave in a second row with the Japanese contingent and we did get to speak to him and he told us that they (Slavik & Hanna) were never planning on competing at Balckpool and that they might be dancing at Millennium USA! So that is that!

Paul Killick on the other hand who was also in attendance did more than that he gave us an exclusive interview where he explains why he is coming back and why he did not compete this year at Blackpool!

Michael Wentink with new partner Hidemi who were competing for Japan not to long ago and were expected to dance at this year's Blackpool have called it quits! What a shame, we really liked them.

**Maurizio Vescovo & Melinda Totokgyorgy** from Hungary who won the amateur title last year but were then defeated at the UK this year by Slovenia's Matej Kratjcer & Iwona Golczak from Slovenia did compete, but in the professional field and did quite well, they placed 6th.

**Eugene Katsevman and Manria Manusova** from the US, finalists in the Amateur Latin British Open for many years, also competed and placed 8th.

In our wish column we also talked about our new MC and Chairman of Judges, **Marcus Hilton MBE** here is what we said then: "And what about our new MC and Chairman of Judges, Marcus Hilton MBE? Will he be able to pronounce all the names and countries so that they are recognizable or will he stumble over his own tongue? It's a shame that you have

to be an undefeated world champion to be able to MC Blackpool, but who cares as long as he keeps the judges in line. And lets not forget making sure that no video is being made in the ballroom! He might have to stop the comp until the person is removed!"

What do we have to say about him now? Well here it is what we said in our blog:

*"Marcus Hilton MBE is growing into his job at MC and Chairman of Judges. His natural humor is sneaking out even though the position is traditionally somber. Some think he doesn't have the expected gravitas - but we say "Go Marcus!"*"

We have to give Marcus a "thumbs up." He started a little slowly but soon caught up and as we told one attendee that complained, "he cannot be Bill Irvine MBE or Peter Maxwell, he has to be himself. We



are just totally pleased that he can pronounce the names of the couples and the countries. Also we were totally happy that he did not have to act as a bouncer for the Winter Gardens when it came to the video cameras in the ballroom. This is a job best left to security and not the Chairman of adjudicators/MC.

**We do have a few points of constructive criticism if we could be so bold:**

A. The Empress ballroom is not a teaching facility and as we mention in or blog it should be left to the teachers outside the ballroom.

**"Over The Line"**

– Youth Standard!  
 In the tradition of past Chairmen of Judges, Marcus Hilton used his bully pulpit to lecture the couples in the Youth Standard semifinal. "Don't cross the white line!" That's the invisible line down the middle of the floor! Right after those instructions we counted seven couples that "drove the wrong way down a one way street." If you want to give them a ticket the couples were: 4, 48, 72, 73, 84, 90, 151!"



**Careful!! Paulo Bosco accepts the sometimes dropped trophy**

Although we agreed with his admonition to the youth couples not to cross the centerline, perhaps they should learn this on their lessons before the comp. Besides we think it's

totally un-British for our illustrious Chairman to be preoccupied in such petty matters!

B. **The Tumbling Trophies!** One thing we totally admire is the historical British Open Trophies. Unfortunately many of them have a loose base. Nowadays couples are not familiar with this small matter and so in the past a few mishaps have caused these precious trophies bodily harm. The year that Domenico Soale & Gioya Cerasoli won, Domenico dropped the thing and from what I hear one of the "candelabra" sticks got a little loose. This year Mr. Hilton took it as one of his jobs to explain to the couples about the loose bases. This is all good, but we think that this job should be left for the stewards who should tell the couples that the base is not attached to the cup when they are assisting the presenters. Whatever! It's not the MC's job!

*Turn to Page 12 for the Blackpool Buzz*

**Homogenization: the Catalyst for Artistic Stagnation**

**By Frank Regan**

Homogenization essentially boils down to making everything and everyone the same. It is a manifestation of society being a victim of the "group survival mechanism." This is one of the negative aspects of human nature that "quelle surprise" has invaded the dance community. Needless to say, it is all too obvious in the competitive dance world where all the dancers start to look the same and the fundamental character is lost as a result of an immature intention to get noticed. This fallacy of pseudo accomplishment shows up blatantly in all the Latin dances, particularly in the Paso Doble.



The Standard ballroom dances, however, are no exception to this, and in a recent conversation that I had with the esteemed Peter Eggleton, regarded by many as the greatest and certainly the most musical world champion of all time, I was fascinated by his observations validating this unfortunate deviation even in the standard ballroom dances.

I must, however, state that in all fairness to many of the wonderful young people who are outstanding exponents of Latin dance that they are sometimes victims of a less than appropriate choice of music on the part of a DJ who is no doubt trying to please everyone (always an impossible task) but who has somehow neglected the fundamental intention, which is to play music that is both appropriate to that musical character and is correlated to the structure of the dance, i.e. accents in the correct areas, etc.

E.g. the Rumba can be conceptualized but not experienced when danced to Foxtrot music. The Cha Cha can be conceptualized but not experienced when danced to disco music.

There is an unfortunate tendency to occasionally play music that is counter-intuitive to the ultimate

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**International Latin**

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 Beata Onefater, Aleksandra Gisher,  
 Lyubo Assenov, Loreta Krikserikaityte  
 Irina Bournovskaia, Ekaterina Fedosova

Shirley Ballas  
 Paul Holmes  
 Paul Richardson  
 Olga Rodionova  
 Beata Onefater  
 Anastasia Muravyeva  
 Paul Green  
 Maxim Kozhevnikov  
 Yulia Zagoruychenko  
 Ieva Pauksena  
 Craig Shaw  
 Malin Johansson  
 Andrew Winett  
 Mirela Prohaska  
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 Irena Kaklamanova  
 Irina Bournovskaia  
 Cameron Johnson  
 Ekaterina Fedosova  
 Olga Tsykaliuk  
 Aleksandra Gisher

Every year we not only bring you the facts, the fiction but the juicy bits as well in our blog labled, "The Buzz!" Here are a few of the things that happened of no importance to all but with some importance to some and to us at Dance Beat:

### \* Win & Run!

Immediately after the Amateur Latin we were told that Matej & Iwona will no longer be dancing, after we talk to Matej this is what we had to say on our blog "We heard from Matej Krajcer who won the Amateur Latin on Tuesday that he is quitting the competition scene to concentrate on other areas of his life. We don't know what Iwona is up to, but we did see her romantically involved last night! We wish them all the best and we're sorry to lose them"

A disgruntled reader, Mr. Barry Peinke, seemed very upset by this news and so here is what he had to say in an email addressed to Dance Beat:

To: [info@dancebeat.com](mailto:info@dancebeat.com)

*Yet more nonsense rumour mongering and uninformed gossip at Dancebeat go to Dancebeat-*

*Want to know more about Krajcer go read [dancesportinfo.net](http://dancesportinfo.net)*

*Anyone who cannot appreciate the beautiful inspirational atmospheric music of the Orchestra in the Ballroom (\*see below) - which is what dance is all about must be brain dead. You want the true atmospheric music of Latin America? Then you better go for the dancing of the area - and forget 99% of what you see in competitive dancing. Your point of view is total nonsense or hypocritical.*

*The costume of Rudovskaya. Same as she wore for the Latin in the World 10 Dance. The judges approve? Who says so? Do you not understand the judges are there to mark the dancing.*

Mr. Barry Peinke

\*



*This is what we had written about Viktoria;* "Viktoria Rud

*kovskaya from Russia who chose to wear a one-piece black unitard with a sequined bra. (But no tail!). She made it to the quarterfinals – so the judges must have approved. We did hear that she misplaced her costume!"*

And we totally agree with Mr. Peinke, the judges should be there to judge the dancing. Unfortunately, judging is done by humans and is a very complex task and we know they take more than dancing into consideration when making a decision. By the way we did hear that she had misplaced her costume, so apologize to Viktoria if this is not true fact.

### \* Cheers to the Band!

Although we are not huge fans of the dated Blackpool music, we applaud their attempts to update and we noted several new numbers in the two styles. However, living in Miami, one of the world's capitals of Latin music, it is always a stretch for us to recognize the "Strict Tempo" pap as "Latin" music. We congratulate the couples who manage to create the passion of Latin to the soulless



music being played. There's only one word for the music being played – in the words of Marcus Hilton, "Unbelievable!"

### \* WDC Meeting

The WDC held its AGM Thursday. Of course we'll have a full report soon. (Check back here shortly) - but for now here is a bite. The headline of the Thursday meeting was that the five sitting vice presidents were re-elected and a sixth, Mr. Jack Rothweiler, President of Fred Astaire USA and a delegate from Hong Kong, was added. There was no individual vote on each vice president, the delegates just voted to increase the number of VP's from five to six.



In other news the WDC said "NO" to opening the World Professional DanceSport Championships! In what we think was a majority decision the WDC member organizations rejected the proposal to open this elite club and allow any competitor to attend the competition. So for now it will continue to be only a country's 2 top representatives. There will be full reports from the WDC meetings soon.

There are also speed changes in the pipeline for quickstep and rumba - both slower. Regarding the quickstep, the request for the slower tempo came from the

coaches. The competitors appeared to be against the change.

### \* Once a Diva?

Remember the British Diva's entrance in the Teams Match? How did they get on in the rehearsal? We hear there was a little tension! Some of the husbands were there coaching their wives (just as they did in their career????).

We also heard from one judge involved in the matter that there was no tension at all, it was all friendly and in good fun. Not sure we believe it was all a rosy trail

without any thorns, but we are sure it was fun for must!

**\* Uninvited guest!** We thought you had to enter on time to dance at Blackpool! Not so it seems! One gentleman, somewhat under the influence, apparently wandered into the ballroom the first day of competition and joined the couples on the floor for the Amateur Rising Star. Security removed him. No word so far if any of the judges marked him!

### **\*Overseas judges!**

There are no "foreigners" on the hallowed evening panel this year unless Mr. Donnie Burns MBE is considered a foreign judge as he is listed from "Scotland" the whole country, rather than from a particularly town. But Mr. Hans Laxholm from Denmark judged in the afternoons. Also added to the panel for Sunday morning only were 2 former Blackpool Champions, Caterina Arzenton from Italy and Jukka Haapaleinen from Finland -who only judged the Standard???

Perhaps with a little more judging practice, these judges can join their homegrown colleagues on the permanent panels. After all, during all mayor events the MC Mr. Marcus Hilton MBE reminded us all that most of the events were all judged by past British Open Champions and you cannot be any more of an Open British Champion than the previously mentioned.

## Paul Killick

*"Why I'm returning to the floor!"*

We waved goodbye to Paul Killick at Blackpool in 2004 after an extensive career that spanned many years and included The World and Open British Amateur Latin Titles and a place in the Top Three of the professional ranks over several years and with several partners.

Paul remained quiet after this, then burst back on to the scene at the 2007 Closed British Championship where he was the runner-up. Following another partner change later that year, Paul, now dancing with the current Closed British Champion, Olga Rodionova, was listed to dance at this year's Blackpool.

Yet Paul & Olga failed to dance! Dance Beat World found out why in a quiet chat with Mr. Killick and found out just what drives a former champion to return to the floor.

Paul & Hanna Kartunnen wave farewell, Blackpool 2004



**DB:** *Since you accomplished almost everything winning everything except the British and World titles as a professional, I think everyone is asking why you want to come back?*

**Paul:** When you have dance in your soul you can never give it up. When I stopped I felt burnt out and I did not want to dance again, but I soon started to get itchy feet again. I realized that I hadn't finished, I wanted to learn more and there were other things I wanted to do. I didn't realize how much I loved it until I wasn't doing it anymore.

**DB:** *What specifically do you want to experience?*

**Paul:** Within my own dancing there are some qualities that I would like to add that I never worked on before. When you're out of it you get to see the whole picture differently, so I would like to come back with different eyes. I consider myself lucky. I've still got time and yet I've had the chance to see it from a distance. When you're in it you're so wrapped up in the system and can't

step away from it.

**DB:** *When you were at the top, many felt that you were not rewarded sufficiently. Do you think the judges will reward you now? Is it your goal now to win Blackpool or the Worlds?*

**Paul:** Of course when you enter, you want to win, but it's about the dance, we all love the dance. We get very caught up in the results. Stepping back and looking at the competitions today I feel they are very much lacking in personality because everyone is so caught up in the results. Of course I want to win, but I also want to allow myself the freedom to be creative. The dancing is ultimately what's important and I hope now as I always did, that I would be rewarded for that. I can't help what the judges do, but I want to think about the artistic elements because I felt that was so missing even in my own dancing in the last couple of years. The sensitivity and artistry get taken away because of everything else that's going on.

**DB:** *What about partners? You*

*had an exquisite partner when you quit before. You've already had one partner since you came back and are now on a second. When it comes to dancesport, it's not just about you.*

**Paul:** I think with each partner you have it's about chemistry. If you can get that right a lot of things just flow. I've been quite lucky, I've had some great partners. At this point in my life I want some different things. With Olga (Rodionova) it's happened very fast and fallen into place.

**DB:** *We were all expecting you to dance this year at Blackpool. Why didn't you dance?*

**Paul:** Olga's visa was refused. She's in New York now.

**DB:** *But Olga is the British Champion, how can her visa be refused?*

**Paul:** There are changes in the immigration rules and unfortunately Olga is the highest profile person they've chosen to hit on, but there are a lot of other dancers in the same

situation. Sandra (Wilson) the Blackpool organizer, told me that even for the Junior festival the visas for the Russian competitors have been a nightmare. Olga was not singled out. We were ready to dance.

**DB:** *When will she get her visa?*

**Paul:** I going from here to New York and then we have some competitions in Japan in June. Olga is working on acquiring her American passport, then things will be a lot easier.

**DB:** *What should we expect from Paul when you get out there next time?*

**Paul:** That's always a question that's baffled me. I think people expect me to be on the edge, they are not expecting me to conform or be normal. I will just do what I do, rather than thinking that I have to do something specific. I want the spontaneity that I had years ago.

**DB:** *I think we all remember you for that.*

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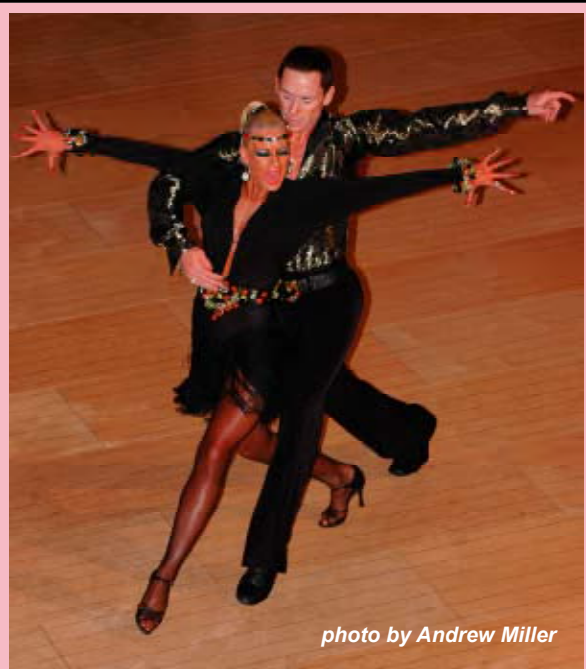


photo by Andrew Miller

Paul with Ekaterina Lapaeva at the 2007 Closed British Championship

**Paul:** When you put yourself in that situation you are vulnerable to mistakes, but as an artist you need the freedom to express yourself absolutely. You need to be able to say "It didn't work this time, but next time it will be absolutely amazing!" I would like to achieve this and that is what people expect from me. Years ago

I went out and risked everything. When you are at a really high level you lose that because you feel you can't do anything wrong.

**DB:** *We're looking forward to seeing you dance.*

## Homogenization, contd.

intention. Some may rationalize this discrepancy by suggesting that we should play music of a contemporary nature and avoid anything that is "old fashioned"! That is like saying we need to update La Traviata, Swan Lake, Shakespeare and the Brandenburg concertos! They are classic forms that give meaning to our presence as legitimate purveyors of art and culture. Nietzsche once said, "Without music, life would be a mistake!" I think good old Friedrich Nietzsche was onto something there and it follows that in dance, without the appropriate music we have made a mistake.

I remember the content of a backstage conversation I had in 1973 with two of the great dance orchestra leaders of the 20th century, Tito Puente and Jack Hansen. They both quite spontaneously agreed that there was no such thing as "old fashioned music," only good music and bad music. Good and bad, of course, are invariably interpretations but they arise out of the distinctions provided by the great masters and not by those barely out of kindergar-

ten. Disco music is not Cuban, it is out of place in providing a context for dancers to portray the feeling that comes out of some of the magnificent Latin Jazz available to us.

The whole aspect of accenting the "one" beat through internalization and breaking on the "two" is governed by the influence of the clave and or clave-oriented factors such as the piano character of the montuno and percussive elements of the conga, timbales, and bell. It goes without saying, however, that you really don't need to be a musician to be aware of musical nuance at an intellectual level. As Igor Stravinsky once said, "I have not understood a bar of music in my life, but I have felt it!" Re-inventing the wheel is not always a good idea.

I remember in 1973 at the Madison Square Garden. The legendary Walter Laird said to me, after having heard Tito Puente play live for the world championship, "You Americans don't know how lucky you are to have musicians that can play this incredibly authentic music." Laird,

## The Latin Formation Competition - Blackpool Dance Festival

The *Beijing Ballroom Dancing Academy* competed for the first time in a formation competition at the Blackpool Dance Festival. They went up against the German team who are the current two time World Champions.

It was very close—there was just one mark separating the two teams—Germany placed first and Beijing placed second.



Michael Chapman was invited to coach the Beijing team by Madame Jiu, head of the academy. His previous team from the Guangdong Dance Academy of Guangzhou, won the last three years, but did not compete this year.

as an aficionado of great Latin music, was emotionally moved by what he had heard. A particularly young European dancer, on the other hand, was heard to say, "I couldn't dance to it. It was just a lot of noise."

It is, of course, the educated ear and eye that recognizes the distinctions of excellence in music and dance. Obviously, the opinion of the legendary Walter Laird carried a lot more weight than someone with a barely superficial awareness of the subject.

In conclusion, may I leave the reader with the thought that homogenization should not be equated with eclecticism. A dance style improves through an eclectic awareness of many styles and when aesthetically implemented is never a threat to the purist. It is interesting to note that the currently younger generations feel that the Hip Hop styles, which they claim to have invented, should somehow surface in competitive dance.

Allow me to quote one of my favorite aphorisms, "Dance is not invented. It is discovered!" I remember thirty-eight years ago taking Jazz classes in New York with the legendary Phil Black, who was teaching all the moves that are now in the public consciousness as a result of intense TV exposure. None of it is new.

Things just come full circle. There is a place for Hip Hop and related styles. Let's make room for it but avoid squeezing it into the wrong box.

Transcending our current levels and still staying in character demands a constant inquiry not only into where we are going but also where we have come from. I always remember listening to the radio sixty-eight years ago and hearing the words of Winston Churchill, "True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous and conflicting information."

I accordingly salute the leaders in our profession who have brought us to this enlightened state over the past fifty years. Let us honor them by preserving their original intention to share the world of ballroom dancing and promote its growth in the domain of both diversity and tradition.

*Frank Regan is a former champion and recipient of many awards for his work in both ballroom and the performing arts. He is a published author and has received national acclaim for his work as Period and Stylistic Choreographer for the world-famous Miami City Ballet.*