

**Allan  
Tornsberg**  
Reviews Pro Latin

**Doreen Freeman**  
Thoughts on Ballroom

IPDSC  
European  
Standard

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## The British Open Professional Latin, 2008

Report by

Allan Tornsberg

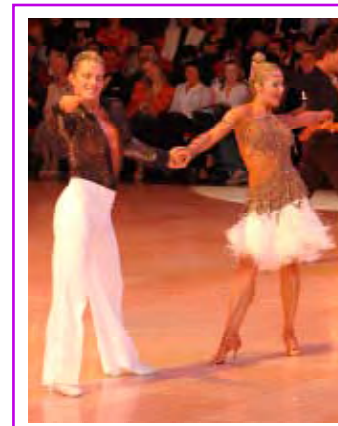
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After having finished my lecture with Jukka Haapalainen at the BDF Congress, I can now relax and enjoy the British open Professional Latin. Having already watched the rising star Professional Latin on the Friday I witnessed the overall poor standard and quality that was present this year. Not that there isn't any talent out there, but merely the choice of priorities that the couples seem to have today. Everything is focused on speed and power and how the pictures look. I am baffled to why dancers do not listen to their heart and do some more research with regards to music and partnering. If we are not careful we will end up being so sportive that the competitions will lose their entertainment value and artistry. If this happens I believe that we will be losing out big time. Could this be a part of why we don't have the same atmosphere in the Ballroom today as we use to have in years past... especially on this Wednesday night?

### Couples who drew my attention in earlier rounds:

**Cha Cha:**  
Sergey Korshunov & Michelle Haffle, USA. This couple has a definite quality to their dancing and has chosen to build upon healthy fundamentals. This has proven to be a good solid way for them and I see them improve every time they compete. Tonight they delivered a more complete package than ever and it is a delight to see how they now manage to combine quality and competitiveness.

Peter Majzelj & Maja Gersak, Slovenia. I am actually impressed with this couple. Very masculine and



Korshunov / Haffle

femine couple although dancing a lot in side-by-side position. Normally this tends to give a very sexless image but somehow they can get away with it. Nice quality of movement and what I would call good solid performance.

Delyan Terziev & Boriana Delcheva, USA. This couple can seem very impressive at first, but if you look closer there is a lack of quality in their dancing. They don't have the necessary depth of understanding the music and therefore look empty from foot to foot. The lockstep in Cha Cha needs attention and they

could benefit from researching the authenticity of each dance.

Alexander Berezin & Viktoria Rudkovskaya, Russia. This couple seems to me to be overrated by far. They always do much better than I would expect them to and I am puzzled as to why!!! What was she thinking when she got dressed? Is this "Cat Woman" out there, or is she on the way to a yoga class? How come it is ok for some people to wear something completely inappropriate and ugly and yet for other couples, what seems to be very fashionable and tasteful but perhaps slightly extrovert, totally unacceptable. I just don't get it!

**Samba:**

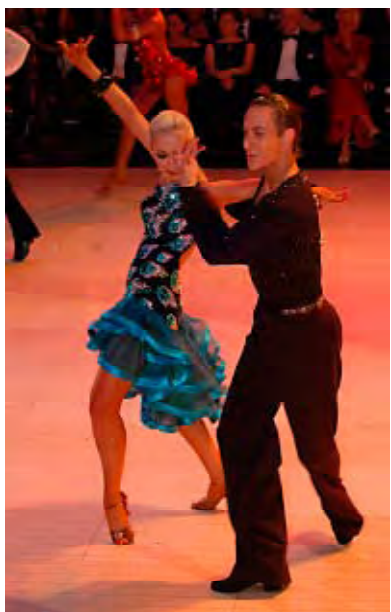
Giovanni Scandiffio & Adriana Przybyl, Italy. I really love this young girl. She oozes love for dance and has a beautiful personality on the floor. I sense however that she is not at her very best tonight and I am not convinced that she has found herself with this new partner. Is he the one???

Pavlo Barsuk & Anna Trebunskaya, USA. I truly enjoy watching this very instinctive male dancer. Not quite convinced that Anna can



identify with the Latin music. She is to me what I call a typical competitor. Meaning, that it looks as if she only dances to win. I wonder, will she ever be able to find the joy of the authenticity of Latin music and dancing?

Bas Van Der Zanden & Oksana Zolotarevskaya, Netherlands. Another very talented boy with great looks. The girl is improving and I am looking forward to see how she will develop a more mature and deep understanding of her basic skills. I think this will help her to shine and dominate more in this partnership.



Van Der Zanden / Zolotarevskaya

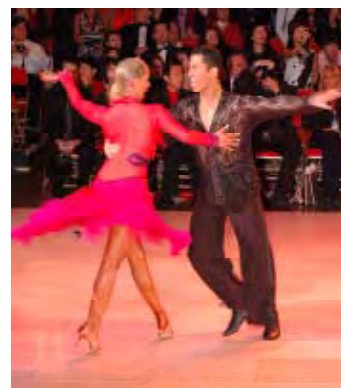
a higher position they need to develop a more individual and superior character. Where is the "stardust"?

Evgenji Voznyuk & Oksana Nikiforova, Germany. I fell in love with this couple last year here in Blackpool. This man is an absolute joy to watch. He has so much talent and instinct. I just have to watch them as I feel I never know what is coming next. He just loves to dance to the music with his partner and does it with such sincerity and to me, this is what it is all about! Great dancer. Can't believe that they ONLY made it in Jive!!!

Marcus Homm & Ksenia Kasper, Germany. Brand new couple. Amazingly enough they don't look like

they just teamed up but showing a very confident and safe performance. This girl, for me, is one of the best girls today. In past competitions she has shown enormous musical talent by being able to freestyle and improvise within her choreography. Tonight however I see a

more controlled and withheld lady dancer. I am wondering if the spontaneity in the past was due to her previous partners ability to partner her so well. They have obviously worked to achieve a very competitive and strong look but this could be at the cost that they are losing out on exactly what she is so good at.... Being Latin. Coincidentally Sergey Surkov & Melia, Poland, are dancing right next to Marcus & Ksenia in this dance and they are making me aware exactly why they are "superstars"



Malki / Suprun

#### Rumba:

Uggghhh!!!! What is that? Is that the future champions accenting "1" in Rumba??? Again and again!!! Of course it is wonderful to listen and interpret the gliding effect that the melody suggest. But is this Rumba? I don't think so. We must maintain the character of each dance by knowingly accenting the correct beat in each bar. I hope this does not create a trend. Also a poorly danced forward check from Michael. I thought this was supposed to be their best dance???

German Mustuc & Iveta Lukosiute, USA. This couple has a fantastic look on the floor. I like Iveta's the new hairstyle, it adds a more feminine touch to her already cool appearance. As I watch this couple I see that they need more substance in their dancing. Perhaps it can seem a little shallow from time to time in movement. If they focused more on partnering they would gain the necessary weight use of each other's bodies and through this achieve a more deep understanding of their dancing. They recently won the 10-dance World championship and I understand how demanding this must be when it comes to the study of each dance. But to challenge for a higher position in this category they must produce a better product.

Alexander Ilinykh & Anna Afonenkova, Russia. What a beautiful couple. The man understands what it means to dance, and only dance! His focus is on music and being real. It is a joy to see how he truly feels that music. The girl is unique and quite extrovert. She has her own personality and she enjoys the benefit of her partners lead and could remind me of Carmen when I use to dance with her some years back.

#### Semi Final:

Rachid Malki & Anna Suprun, Norway. I always liked this couple. They have such a nice air around them on the floor and are very pleasant to watch. Always looking as if they enjoy the journey of developing the basic fundamentals and not get carried away with tricks and junk. At the same time I have to admit that in order to challenge for

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Cocchi / Zagoruychenko

and Marcus & Ksenia still have that little extra something missing.

Andrey Bouchtchik & Valeria Bushueva. Russia. Great sense of atmosphere within this partnership. Valeria has recently developed a much more feminine approach to her dancing perhaps through a greater understanding of lead from her partner Andrey. Would like to see more Cuban action in the Rumba.

Igor Volkov & Ella Ivanova, Ukraine. Too much worried if the crowd is going to applaud them or not. Don't try so hard, just dance and we will decide whether to applaud or not.

**The Grand Final;**

The first couple to draw my attention was perhaps not surprisingly the Winners of The British Open 2008 Michael Malitowski & Joanna Leunis, Poland. Proving themselves to be having the most superior floor craft. Obviously they have a quality around them that creates a tremendous charisma and by winning this year first major competition they have gained so much confidence to help them in this exact matter. Dancing the lockstep in Cha Cha too square, lacking a diagonal direction or a stronger shoul-



Stokkebro



Formica / Lebedev

der lead. Nice to see Michael & Joanna exploring the different rhythm groups in Samba. Showing very well too. Please don't forget to have a majority of 3/4 1/1 rhythm so that you maintain the typical samba feel. Tends to get a little too synthetic for my likings and would love to see Joanna obtain more sexuality in her dancing. Where is the real Joanna?

2nd. Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko, USA. Probably the best dancers out there but at the same time not able to either impress or move me with their dancing. It is as if, all the juice has been squeezed out of the fruit. It looks incredibly

empty...Lots of arms, lots of action, lots of speed, lots of glitz and glitter. But yet I am left empty watching them. To me they are not getting the most out of their talent. Why this man has given up on dancing his lady I do not understand. Perhaps they are misguided in the direction they are taking. Yulia dances her rumba walk on one track, turning her feet out so much, that it looks more like a 'ronde' action rather than an actual rumba walk. What is attractive about that?

3rd. Peter & Kristina Stokkebro. Denmark. I think this couple enjoys researching the roots of dance. Through this study they really get a wonderful characterization of each dance. In the Cha Cha I notice how Kristina has a very clear foot timing that leads me to believe that she is about to find out what cha cha is really about. In recent years this dance has

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Gavriline / Kryuchkova



Vescovo / Torokgyorgy

talent to the fullest. In this rumba they are so late in the music that they almost are out of time...Oops!! Their best dance is Paso Doble. I love the way Maurizio chooses to relax before the music starts and not freeze into a position like the other couples do. This gives him a great chance to feel the right atmosphere and get truly into the dance.

7th.Andrey Gavriline & Elena Kryuchkova, USA. Ohhh No!!! Not again. This couple is perhaps one of



Katsevman / Manusova

for me been treated too much like a soft, stretchy and flexible dance. Much like rumba, where it should be much more about feet. Only then you will be able to feel the staccato rhythm. At the same time I would like to see more true interpretation of the music. It is as if Peter & Kristina only are listening to their own counts. They are always beautifully groomed and looking their best. Peter & Kristina are showing a beautiful Paso Doble by choosing a lot of closed framework. Great to see somebody dare to do that. I find it very characteristic of Paso Doble to be danced in a closed hold, but it is risky, as it can look introverted. This is not the case with these two. They very much suit this dance with their staccato action and line-orientated approach to their dancing. Perhaps this is why I like to watch these two particular in Cha Cha & Pasodoble.

4th.Sergey Surkov & Melia, Poland. Two dancers who both have a hunger for being true Latinos. They both feel the music and are very instinctive dancers. I love their approach to dance and feel they are improving every time I see them. Having said that I think they have just gone through a period of feeling the music so much that it gets withheld inside their bodies and they look introverted. Their choreography, which has too many stops, doesn't compliment this new found appreciation for the music. I am sure this is part of their journey to become better dancers and I am very excited to watch them, as they are becoming the best dancers in the world. For me they have the total package necessary to become world champions. Great ½ ½ timing in Melia's lockstep action.

5th.Franco Formica & Oxana Lebedew, Germany. I have been a little disappointed in the past about this couple. As they teamed up last year I really expected a lot from them but somehow they never seem to come out quite as good as I would have expected. Tonight however I feel a little more confidence in both of them and they seem to be more committed to each other. Unfortunately, they seem to be dancing too much through their frame causing the connection to suffer. Franco is also leading from his arms instead of from his body. Also lacking body action in Rumba.

6th.Maurizio Vescovo & Melinda Torokgyorgy, Hungary. Some girls need to be lead more than others. Here we have a typical example how partnering could benefit a couple tremendously. If they were taught about partnering they could look fabulous and Melinda would get use her

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## British Latin Championship

8th. Eugene Katsevman & Maria Manusova, USA. Being their first major competition as professionals I see an excitement in their performance. I have to admit that I was a little skeptical on their behalf as to how they would come across in this field. I think they made a good choice to choose Blackpool as their first competition since this venue seems to always bring the best out in most couples and tonight proves to be no exception. They are dancing with confidence and inspired hearts. Perhaps they are missing the characteristic of each dance and could benefit to reverse back to the time where they were developing their partnering skills. They look as if they find the rhythm of each dance through their arm movements instead of letting the bodies absorb the music over the standing foot by resisting in the free foot.

This was how I saw it at this year British open 2008 Professional Latin. I can't, and will not, say that I didn't enjoy it, but I truly wasn't



Surkov / Melia

moved. Impressed but NOT touched!!!! My wish for the future is that all the teachers and coaches will not only preach and teach more music but also will have the guts to mark it when it is shown, and not be blown away with dynamics and picture only.

ization - in particular the Tango and Quickstep. Excellent use of feet and ankles. At times their loss of connection builds tension in their top-line.



Placing 3rd also from Italy, Angelo Bianco & Monica Ferrero. A very promising young couple with an attractive floor presence and powerful movement. At times Angelo seems too high in his shoulders so Monica cannot produce poise which I am sure she is capable of. Great speed in Fleckerals and amazing floorcraft – so nice to see a couple address these issues which are so important. Well done.

4th place from Austria, Florian Gschaider & Manuela Stoeckl. Another young and attractive 10 dance couple with great potential but their performance is not strong enough to break into the top placements. A stronger left side will give Manuela more support and a better lead. Characterization and expression along with experience will help to challenge the above placed couples.

5th place from Ukraine Vadym Lytvynenko & Kateryna Kordonets – the local heroes. Making this final was a great achievement for the both of them. They have a harmony in all dances and Kateryna responds

without questions to Yady'm's leads and directional requirements. Showing good foot control and wonderful slow leg actions in Foxtrot.

6th place from Italy – Maurizio Circelli & Carolina Tassi. A very powerful Quickstep with some exciting choreography and beautiful syncopations. Excellent use of their feet and ankles displaying wonderful foot pressure and control. One of the best Viennese Waltz of the evening with a deep swinging action. Maintaining a better frame would give them a more consistent overall look.

Some couples noticed in the Semi-final:

Stanislav Zelyanin & Iryna Cherepanova – Beautiful lines and good extension from Iryna. Foxtrot at times not soft enough. Allow more body-flight in Quickstep to appear lighter.

Valeriy Tsyhanovskyy & Matyna Litke, Ukraine – best dance Quickstep – great choreography with super lightness. Very good feel for Tango but at times a bit wild.

Dmytro Troitskyy & Mariya Nogovitsyna – Ukraine – Mariyas shoulders appeared to active – need to be aligned over feet for better balance. Work on transitions of body positions.

This was a wonderful event and many thanks to the presidium of the IPDSC for allowing the Ukrainian Dance Board to organize this Championship event.

Once again my sincere thanks to my new friends in Kiev...

## 2008 IPDSC European Professional Standard Championships

Report by Stephan Krauel

Congratulations to Irene Bous & Dmytro Bazela and their team in organizing the 2008 IPDSC European Professional Standard Championships in conjunction with the IDSF Amateur Latin and Standard Championships.

This was my first visit to Kiev and I was impressed with the city and all the modern architecture. The downtown area includes many boutiques, fine restaurants and luxurious hotels. With a population of about 3 million citizens, Kiev has a large and vibrant dance community with tremendous potential for the future.

The adjudicators for this prestigious Championship were as follows:

Mr. Alan Winter, Denmark, Mr. Peep Vardja from Estonia, Mr. Giancarlo Barbieri from Italy, Mr. Juris Baumans from Latvia, Ms. Petru Gozun from Moldova, Mr. Waldemar Ziomek from Poland, Mr. Vladimir Shchepletsov from Russia, Mr. Dmytro Bazela from the Ukraine and myself.

Congratulations to the 2008 IPDSC

European Champions Alexey Galkhun and Tatiana Demina from Russia – placing 1st in all dances. A very tall and elegant couple dominating the competition from the first round.

Excellent floor craft and showing good expression in all dances, they have a tremendous knowledge and awareness of technique and musical character which is so necessary to become a Champion! Always 100% commitment to each other and to the audience! They also hold the 2008 IPDSC World Professional Standard Championships title.

2nd place went to Italy – Isaia Berardi & Cinzia Birarelli. The same placing as in the IPDSC World Championships. A strong and challenging performance with great character-



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## Doreen Freeman .....

is a doyen of the Ballroom World and a frequent judge at most major championships, including the Open British. This year in Blackpool we interviewed Ms. Freeman and you certainly won't want to miss this. We'll publish it right here in Dance Beat World soon.

To whet your appetite, here are some of Doreen's thoughts on ballroom dancing and its evolution and some of her favorite sayings.

Blackpool 2008



### **The Progression**

by Doreen Freeman

British Ballroom Dancing was based on elegance, quality, technique, good taste, musicality, togetherness and respect for each other. For many, many years this was unbeatable.

**Then!!**

**Germany - Big tops, big horrible dresses. Development of the Latin freedom.**

**Then!!**

**Italy - Power, flamboyancy, much choreography, wider tops.**

**Then!!**

**USA, Russia and the world!**

The British dancing concept was smothered, the couples could not cope with the onslaught of these elements.

To a great extent there was disregard for leading, so reaction suffers, music becomes background. Every element suffers. Technique is diluted.

These are some important and famous sayings:

*"Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution."*

*Charlie Chaplin*

*"When I walk I get short of breath. When I talk I get tired. I even cough and choke when I lie down. But when I dance I feel wonderful!"*

Bill Robinson, tap dancer, at age 70 when advised to give up dancing by a doctor.

**"The duet was not only difficult, it looked difficult!**

**"True artistry disguises the mechanism of technique."**

**"The appearance of ease is achieved only by the chosen few."**

**"The art of dancing is not to make a difficult step look easy, but to make an easy step look interesting."**

**George Ballanchine**

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