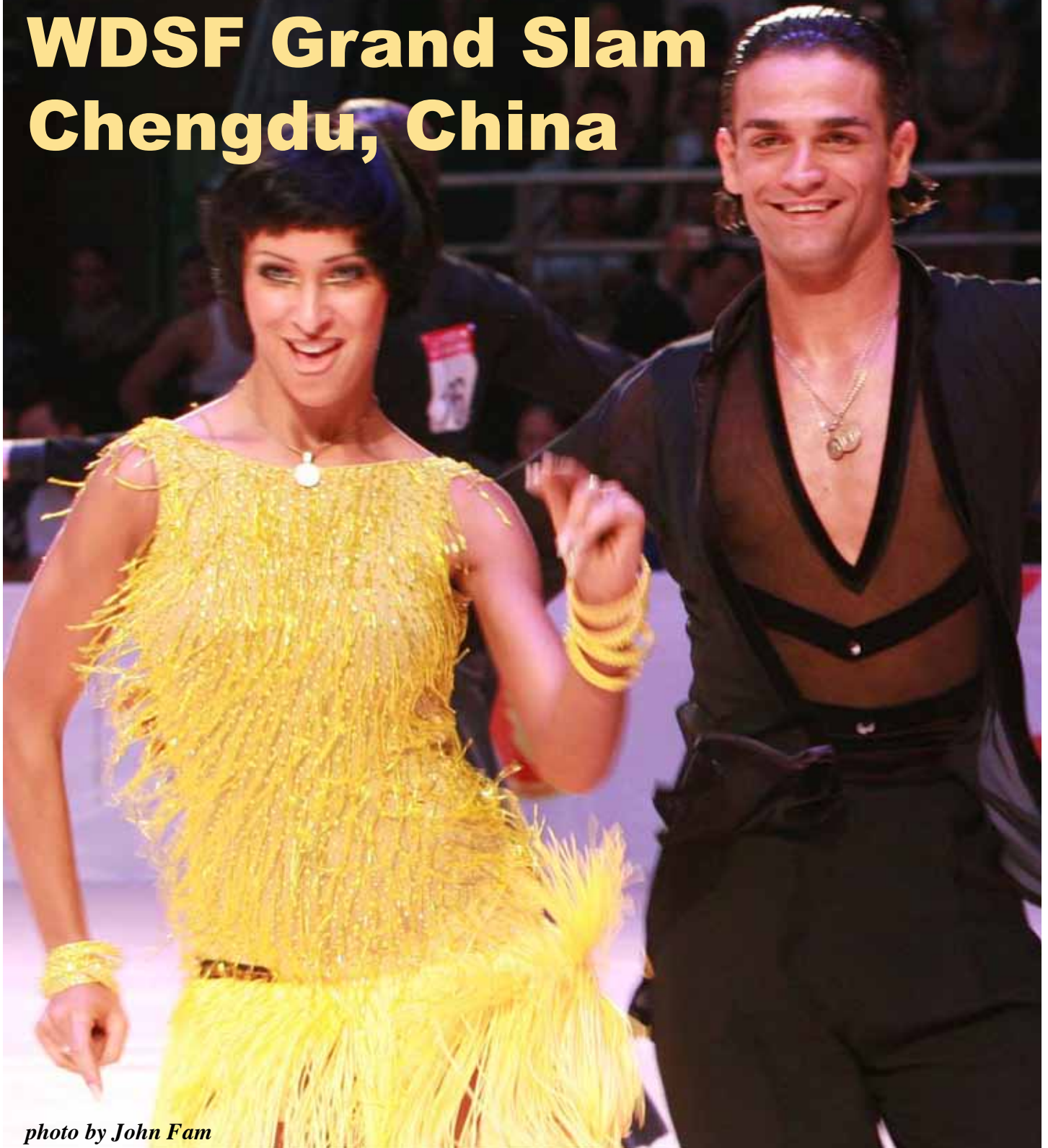


WDSF Grand Slam Chengdu, China



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CARLOS BORRAS NAMED COO OF ARTHUR MURRAY INTERNATIONAL

CORAL GABLES, FL – July 14 – Arthur Murray International, the iconic American-based dance organization, has announced that Carlos Borrás has been named to the position of Chief Operating Officer. Borrás, who began his career in the dance business in 1989, was appointed to the COO position by the Board of Directors (Phil Masters, Chairman, John Kimmins and Georgia H. Theiss).

“In the twenty-two years that Carlos has been with Arthur Murray International, he has played a pivotal role in our expansion from a predominately North American organization in the late 1980’s to today, when we are truly a global organization,” said John Kimmins, President. “This new position recognizes his contributions in the past and his expanded role with our organization in the years to come.”

Working closely with President John Kimmins, Mr. Borrás has been instrumental in the corporation’s expansion into new countries and new continents. Today there are more than 275 dance studios, located in every corner of the globe. He has taken a leadership position in developing the company’s online presence, including social media and web initiatives, working

also with Tom Murdock, Vice President of Marketing and Promotions. His collaboration in the redesign of the popular www.arthurmurray.com website to serve both franchisees, dance students and the general public, has received positive reviews from all three audience segments. As COO, Borrás is responsible for all operational aspects of the corporation, including all franchise operations, legal affairs and financial administration.

An alumnus of The University of Massachusetts and University of the Sacred Heart, Mr. Borrás came to Miami from Puerto Rico with his family in 1989, the same year he joined Arthur Murray International. Mr. Borrás had been the company’s Vice President of Finance and Operations and Assistant Corporate Secretary since 2001.

The iconic Arthur Murray Dance schools celebrate 100 years of teaching the world to dance in 2012. There are studios in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Cairo, Egypt, U.A.E., Germany,

Austria, England, Mexico, and more than 150 in the United States and Canada. Arthur Murray International now has ten studios in Italy, nine in Australia, eight in South Africa, and six in Japan. Arthur Murray Dance Studios have recently opened in Brazil and Latvia and new studios are soon to open in Istanbul, Turkey, Poland and the Ukraine. For more information about ballroom dance, visit the Arthur Murray International website at www.arthurmurray.com



***Millennium
Dancesport in
Tampa, Florida
has over 15,000
entries.***

*Story begins in this edition
on page 11*



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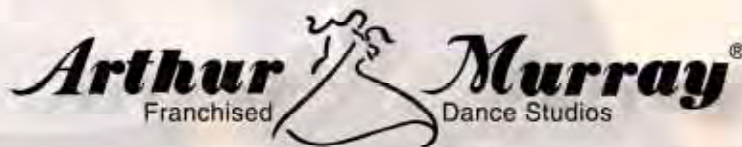
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WDSF Grand Slam

Chengdu China

3rd July 2011

The Home of the Giant Panda

*Report & Photos by:
John Fam*

*WDSF Communication
Commission For Asia and
Oceania*

Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan province; it is located in the South Western part of China. It has a population of approximately 10.4 million inhabitants. The China Daily voted Chengdu as the 4th most livable City in China. The Climate is sub tropical with temperatures averaging around 5.6 ° C (42 °F) in January and in July about 25° C (77° F).

Chengdu is a historical city and home to China 's living treasure, the Giant Pandas. Eighty per cent of the world's Giant Pandas are found in the Wolong Panda Sanctuary. In the suburbs of Chengdu is the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.

Two hours South of Chengdu City is the Le-shan Stone Buddha carved out from a stone hill overlooking the confluence of three treacherous rivers. The sitting Buddha measures 71 meters (233 feet) tall and the shoulder is 28 meters (92 feet) wide. It has been on the UNESCO Natural and Cultural Heritage list since 1996. Glancing through the several tourist brochures, the Giant Pandas are the iconic symbol of the Szechuan Basin and Chengdu.

The World Grand Slam Standard and Latin Chengdu is held at the sprawling Shuangliu Sports Centre. The Stadium manager informed me that all important indoor sporting events in Szechuan are held here.

Since the 2009 IDSF Grand Slam Finals in Shanghai where the new judging system was first introduced, there have been worried faces, fearing that the New Judging System may not live up to its expectations. This time Japan DanceSport Federation, Senior Executive Director Atsushi Yamada San was visibly more relaxed and I even had the pleasure of being introduced to Hitomi Yamada, the spouse of Atsushi at the Giant Panda Breeding Sanctuary.

Prior to the start of the Grand Slam Finals, the Sports Director Marco Sietas ran through the New Judging system with the adjudicators. He reminded them that the athlete's reputation and popularity are not to be considered at all. They are judged by their performance on the day. That is in line with the spirit of fair play and the values espoused in Olympism. By looking at the results you can immediately tell that being previous champions of the Grand Slam season this year does not guarantee you a win in the next Grand Slam competition.

The hugely popular couple that won the hearts of the crowd in the Standard event is Sergey and Olga Konovaltsev from Russia. When it came to the Quickstep, the crowd literally went wild when the couple takes flight, earning them the reputation "Air Konovaltsev".

Emanuel Valeri and Tania Kehlet took first place winning all the events with 237.50 points, followed by Simone Segatori and Annette Sudol with 232.78 points and in 3rd placing Sergye and Olga Konovaltsev with 229.06 points. In the Latin American segment Aniello Langella and Khrystyna Moshenska from Italy came out champions with 234.61 points followed by Zoran Plohl and Tatsiana Lahvinovich from Croatia with 229.11. Martino Zanibelato and Michele Abiltrup from Denmark 225.33 points.

The couple that caught the hearts of the audience is the lanky Vladimir Karpov and Maria Tzaptashvilli from Russia. Valdimir wowed the audience with the moonwalk in his Jive choreography. The other couple worthy of mention is Yury Simachev and Anatasia Klokotova from Russia. This couple competed at the preliminary rounds and worked their way to the finals at 6th



Result of Latin Final

No.	Competitor	Points	
107	Aniello Langella - Khrystyna	234.61	ITA
109	Zoran Plohl - Tatsiana Lahvinovich	229.11	CRO
108	Martino Zanibelato - Michele Abiltrup	225.33	DEN
10	Vladimir Karpov - Maria Tzaptashvilli	220.67	RUS
33	Andrey Gusev - Anatasia Klokotova	215.00	RUS
24	Simachev - Klokotova		

Result of Standard Final

No.	Competitor	Points	
1	Emanuel Valeri - Tania Kehlet	237.50	DEN
4	Simone Segatori - Annette Sudol	232.78	GER
3	Sergey Konovaltsev - Olga Konovaltsev	229.06	RUS
2	Zharkov Dmitry - Krikova Olga	223.39	RUS
6	Mochalov Evgeny - Jenny Gero	215.50	DEN
3	Alexey - Tzaptashvilli		



placing. Yury, true to his bubbly spirit did 5 flips on the dance floor before he went into the Jive routine for the farewell dance.

The traditional victory dance by the champion was done away with and the announcer invited the finalists to the floor to give their farewell dance for the evening in both the Standard and Latin American. Indeed this is the right move because all of them are indeed champions.

The General Secretary of the WDSF Mr. Shawn Tay, who was the English compere, appeared satisfied that all went well. Mr. Carlos Freitag made an announcement that Shanghai, Beijing and now Chengdu will be the major DanceSport centers in China.

Results

Results for Standard

1. Emanuel Valeri - Tania Kehlet
Denmark
2. Simone Segatori –Annette Sudol
Germany
3. Sergey Konovaltsev – Olga Konovaltsev
Russia
4. Zharkov Dimitri - Olga Kulikova
Russia
5. Moshenin Evgeny – Genny Favero
Italy
6. Alexy Glukhov –Anastasia Glazunova
Russia

Results for Latin American

1. Aniello Langella – Khrystyna Moshenska
Italy
2. Zoran Plohl – Tasiana Lahvinovich
Croatia
3. Martino Zanibelato – Michele Abiltrup
Denmark
4. Vladimir Karpov – Maria Tzaptashvilli
Russia
5. Andre Kiselev – Anastasia Selivanova
Russia
6. Yury Simachev Anastasia Klokotova
Russia

Langella/Moshenska



Valeri/Kehlet



*See more
photos
from Grand
Slam
Pg. 8*

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Scenes from WDSF Grand Slam in China



photos by John Fam



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Millennium Goes Burlesque!



***15,179! A record number of Entries in Tampa for
Millennium Dancesport***



Taking The Lead! Millennium 2011

Report by Keith Todd

Photos by Park West Photography

With 15,179 entries, Michael Chapman's Millennium Dancesport became the largest competition in the history of USA Dancing, when considering that all these entries came from pro-am, amateur and professional couples.

Having said that, however, in my opinion the entry count is not the most significant story at 2011's Millennium. The big story is the attention to detail or more truly to the "big picture" that Michael and his team devote to this event. The most obvious manifestation of this attention is the ballroom décor. For years now the Millennium Dancesport has been the "best dressed" competition on the circuit, but little could have prepared us for this year's magnificent vision upon first entering the ballroom at the Tampa Waterside Marriott. Michael always adopts a theme for his competition and this year it was "Burlesque." The whole ballroom was swathed in red, including a revolving red divan on center stage. Gilded frames encased video screens that eventually became an integral part of the "Show of Shows" sponsored by the Richard & Sharon Sanchez Family Foundation. The lighting and sound throughout the competitions and shows are theatre quality. No other event expends this much effort on ambience!

Year after year, Millennium brings the best in professional dancesport to the floor in multi-couple shows. This year was no exception – four world champions performed. Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko (Latin), Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova (Ballroom), Andre & Natalie Paramonov (Showdance) and Victor DaSilva & Hanna Karttunen (Cabaret). These couples danced both on Friday and Saturday nights and on both nights the dance numbers were artfully tied together by Brent Mills in full "Burlesque" makeup at the grand piano. The Saturday show had 2 additional highlights. Karina Smirnoff, past US Champion and World Finalist, Dancing With the Stars cast member, and most recently and totally in keeping with the Burlesque theme, Palyboy Magazine's cover model. Karina performed with Roman Kutsky and Vadim Lyubushkin. If Karina's performance was sublime, then we possibly descended to the ridiculous with the other guest performers this Saturday night. Tibor Kerekes and Peter Walker donned tutus and toe shoes for a hilarious ren-



dition of Swan Lake or as MC John DePalma announced "Les Cignes Es Mortes" (The Swans are Dead). I think few present will ever forget Mr. Walker's elevation to a bow-legged white swan, en pointe!

Rufus Dustin was in charge of the show's production on both nights.

If there is one problem for a reporter covering Millennium Dancesport it is that so much is happening, it is hard to include everything. Hall of Fame awards were presented to Allan Tornberg & Vibeke Toft and also to an inspiring pro-am competitor, Mathilda Klein who continues to compete although now in her 90's. A lifetime



All four of the open professional divisions attracted a high-class entry, but perhaps the best was the Smooth with four US finalists. US Champs Slawek Souchaki & Marzena Stachura had a comfortable time in first place, taking the vast majority of first places including fourteen out of fifteen in tango. Second place was decided on a Rule 11 with the result going to Mayo Alanen & Michelle Officer, 2,3,4,2. Losing the tie were Mazen Hamza & Izabella with 4,2,2,3. As you can see this was a very tight mix and fourth placed Peter & Alexandra Perzu were also very close with 3,4,3,4. This was a great event and the remaining four couples in the final had their own battle as well. Fifth: Kirill Gorjatsev & Olga Chekhova 6,6,5,5 (this was ahead of the RS winners from the day before and a reverse of placement); sixth: David & Natalie Shulz 5,5,7,7; sixth: Billy King & Selena Morano 7,7,6,6.



Kutskyy/Kovalova

The Pro Latin was a fabulous duel between two of the USA's leading lights – Roman Kutskyy & Ana Kovalova and Nikolai Varonovich & Maria Nikolishina. Roman & Ana won all dances although Nikolai & Maria had the voice of the crowd. The closest for the judges was the jive that Roman & Ana took by nine first places to six. The rest of the final was quite tight but the engaging Ivan Mulyavka & Loreta Kriksciukaityte managed to take third in all five dances and deservedly so I thought. Roman Italyankin & Olga Kordevich were fourth 4,4,5,4,6; fifth: Nikolai Pilipenchuk & Natalia Skorikova 5,5,4,5,4; sixth Oleg Astakhov & Asuka Kondoh 6,6,6,6,5, who were the RS winners.

achievement award went to Donnie Burns MBE. All these presentations were accompanied by video presentations depicting memorable moments in the recipients' dance lives.

This year Millennium Dancesport returned to the Tampa Marriott Waterside, a location it had used five years before. This is a much larger venue, both in terms of rooms and ballroom space, than the Vinoy in St. Petersburg where Millennium has been for the past five years.



These last two professional events were on Friday night. The remaining two were on Saturday. It was unfortunate that the two finals on Saturday were quite late as this always draws off the energy of the crowd. Nevertheless, both events were scorchers. The Rhythm was won by Decho Kraev & Bree Watson who were not challenged too strongly from the judges' perspective as

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Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet, World Pro-Am 'C' Standard, Latin & Smooth Champion, 2010

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they lost only fourteen from a possible seventy-five first place marks. Peter & Alexandra Perzu placed second in all dances picking up most of the remaining first places including all five from judge, John Kimmins. They were also the winners in the 9-Dance. The next three places seemed to give the judges the most headaches, judging by the mixture of scores. Marcus Johnson & Yuki Haraguchi were third (3,3,3,4,3); Ken Hansen & Christina Penatello were fourth (4,5,5,3,4) and Jason & Sveta Daly were fifth (5,4,4,5,5). This was a seven-couple final and Misha Vlasov & Danielle Wilson were sixth in all dances and Ferenc Nemeth & Olga Kinnard were seventh. Watch out for the full review by Forrest Vance.

Mikhail Avdeev & Olga Blinova took the Ballroom, winning all dances with the majority of first place marks. I thought this was a very strong performance from them but I also liked the runners-up, Anton & Lena Koukareko who were second in all dances and ran the winners quite close in all dances, especially waltz and Viennese Waltz where the first place scores were eight to six and eight to seven in Mikhail & Olga's favor. Third were Andrey Begunov & Anna Demidova. They were third in all five dances but had quite a mixture of scores from the judges, including three firsts from Peter Eggleton. The closest race was a tie for fourth and it went to Max & Lesya Sinitsa (5,4,4,4,6) over Andrey & Yuliya Klinchik (4,5,5,5,4). Craig Shaw &



Evgeniya Sutyaginskaya were sixth.

There was an impressive entry of ten couples in the Pro Cabaret and not surprisingly the Open British Champions, Craig Smith & Natalie Woolf from South Africa were first with their death defying routine. In complete contrast, second spot went to the lyrical Johnny & Alexan-



dria Francoviglia. Third fell to Jerry & Virginia LeNoir. With the exception of these three numbers, the other seven chose very similar music possibly an unfortunate coincidence. David Elkin will have a full report.

Two of the most interesting results came in the Open Amateur Divisions. The Latin was right



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at the beginning of Saturday night - a semifinal that was reduced to an eight-couple final that included four couples from Canada. USA took the day. Denys Drozdyuk & Antonina Skobina, who were so successful in Blackpool recently, won all dances from Canada's Anton Belyayev & Antoaneta Popova (2,2,4,3,4). Denys & Antonina did not have the majority of first place marks in any dance except cha cha where they had eight. Their worst judges were Ray Rivers who placed them 7,7,7,6,7 and Allan Tornsberg with 6,6,6,6,6. Shirley Ballas favored Anton & Antoaneta's the least with scores of 6,8,7,7,7. Tal Livshitz & Vlada Semenova were 3rd (3,3,3,4,2) and with the rather puzzling scores of 6,5,2,2,3, Alon Gillin & Anastasia Trutneva were fourth. It seems they improved as the event went on! Sasha Tchernossitov & Regina Maziarz were fifth (4,4,5,6,6); Jean Philippe Milot & Laurance Bulduc were sixth (5,6,6,5,5); Artur Adamski & Ariel Oziewicz were seventh in all dances and Austin Josen & Gabriella Sabler



were eighth.

The result of the Amateur Ballroom was particularly surprising. The winners were Alon Gillin & Anastasia Trutneva from Canada (1,1,1,1,1). This was not the surprise as they danced especially well tonight, although they had the majority of first places in only Viennese Waltz. The surprise was the fourth place finish of Igor Colac & Roxanne Milotti (5,4,4,5,4). This couple usually finishes in the top six in US competitions. Looking at the scores, this was not a close result for them. In fact only one judge actually marked them to win and that was Heidi Burns. I did not notice that they were especially off form, but then again I was not judging. Certainly dancing well were the runners-up Sasha Tchernossitov & Regina Maziarz (2,2,2,2,2). Third were Gianni Caliendo & Arianna Esposito (4,3,3,3,3) - a nice couple I had not seen before. Fifth went to Nicholas & Rochelle Kharlamov (3,5,5,4,5) and they won the Youth Ballroom also. Sixth were Oleksiy Buravenko & Maya Tydkov.

Phillip Kudryavtsev & Liza Lakovitsky won the Youth Latin and it was a good event for Nicholas Stevens & Alexandra Gutkovich who won both the J2 & J1 Latin.



Of course the pro-am events were huge and produced some excellent finals in the Open Scholarships. The pro-ams began with Rhythm (and this took almost two days to complete). The B was the most contested event with the ladies looking fabulous. The winners were Julie Korsog with teacher Misha Vlasov, second went to Joan Goddard partnered by Chris Johnston who the night before won the "C" division. Third was awarded to Lisa Lowery with Rick Elliott. In the "C" division Lynn Murrell with Peter Perzhu took second and here Liza Lowery placed third as well. I felt that Lisa creates great lines but is a little high in the legs. Another lady performing well in the C was Quin Bommeljie w/ Romney Reyes who placed fifth.

The A division was a six-couple final but three of the ladies really excelled above the rest, Pamela Bowlling who won dancing with Ben Ermis, Julie Korsog who took second and third

placed Belinda Liau with Eddie Rivera.

Next it was Smooth day for the pro-ams and the heats were full and hotly contested. The first of the Open Scholarships to be decided was the C, run at the end of the afternoon schedule. The unstoppable Beverly Moore racked up yet another win in this division with partner, Alain Doucet taking all dances. Also repeating recent form, Robin Kencel w/ Christian Lange took the runner-up position, 3,2,2,2. Robin has great lines but could be smoother in leg and foot action. The fast rising Lynn Murrell w/ Peter Perzu was third, 2,3,3,3. I felt Lynn was much improved today with a bigger more relaxed topline. I also noted improvement in Beverly Marsh w/ Tomas Mielnicki although there was still some tightness in the shoulders. Beverly placed sixth. In the evening it seemed that all the top players were there in the A division. Repeating her win from Emerald Ball, Lauren Klaus w/ Jim Maranto proved she is now the one to beat in this category winning all dances. Jessica Haims w/ Greg Fidurski took second, 2,2,2,3 and Pamela Bolling w/ Ben Ermis was third, 3,4,4,2. As testament to how good this final was, a former US Champion, Laurie Meer w/ Mazen Hamza placed fourth (4,3,3,4). Marika Kurer w/ Kostadin Bidjourov won all dances in the B showing a definite return to form. Lisa Lowery w/ Rick Elliot, in her fourth Open Scholarship final here at Millennium was second, 2,2,2,3 and Darla Davies w/ Jim Maranto, the winner of this division at Emerald was third, 3,2,4,2.

On the Ballroom day I thought the best Open Scholarships was the B and the result mirrored that at the Emerald Ball. Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet was the winner (1,1,1,1,1) followed by Jill Bradford w/ Gert Roslender (2,2,2,2,2). Yanina Kisler w/ Peter Walker was third (4,3,3T,3,3). The A division was a little



Dzasokhova/Statsenko

quiet. Alexis Ricci w/ Igor Litvinov was the winner 1,1,2,1,3. This lady shows promise although I do not remember seeing her before. Second went to Rebecca Kuhn w/ Andrea Feraci (2,2,4,3,1) and third, Laura Shooks w/ Timothy Mason (4,3,1,2,2). Igor Litvinov scored his sec-

ond win of the day in the C as Kay Ford took the event (3,2,1,1,1). Kay has really improved in the last few months. Rosy Tsai w/ Robert Nemiro was second (1,1,2,3,2) and Paige Riffle w/ Leonid Burlo was third (2,3,3,4,3).

There was a good contingent of Russian pro-ams at Millennium, but the only one to win an Open Scholarship came in the B Latin, Marina Dzasokhova-Glock w/ Ivan Statsenko (1,1,2,1,1). I have seen Marina competing a lot, both here and in Russia and this was the most confident she has ever looked. Lillian Li w/ Andrei Gavriline was second (2,3,3,2,2) and Loan Lam w/ Nikolai Varonovich was third (3,2,1,3,3). Anna Tomasini w/ Ricky Bentzen won the A in a strong field (1,1,3,1,1). Kristin Kaye w/ Alek Nashev was second (4,3,1,2,2) and Vera Xu w/ Vaidas Skimelas was third (2,2,2,3,3). In the afternoon Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet defeated long-time rival, Joan Goddard w/ Chris Johnston to win the C. Janet Colleran w/ Alex Nashev was third. I really liked Janet's dancing, it was slick and understated.

It is hard to imagine that the Millennium Team can up the ante for next year, but I am sure they will! Congratulations to everyone involved!

For a more detailed report on the Millennium Dancesport you can subscribe to Dance Beat Newspaper & Online Edition

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Report includes individual articles on the professional divisions by Michelle Montague, Jurga Pupelyte, Larinda McRaven and Forrest Vance

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PROFESSIONAL LATIN BLACKPOOL 2011

Report by Wendy Johnson

Photos by Andrew Miller www.dancefotoman.co.uk

What a fabulous competition just on the sheer volume of competitors from all over the world.

My first impression was that there seemed to be a lot of dancers from Asia.....some great and some less than enchanting....one couple was so different I was thinking perhaps we were being punked from a Reality TV show!!!! I guess that is the great thing about the Blackpool...anyone can enter!!!! It gave new meaning to the phrase "Freedom to Dance"

After the first couple of rounds the better dancers remained and it was possible to discern what was going on.. it is a difficult competition to judge because by the 48 everyone is good. The decisions about who makes the 24 and 12 etc mean so much to the dancers and yet there is sometimes very little difference between the couples. I must say there were some surprises to me when I saw who made which round, but where personal opinion is involved what can one say?

I enjoyed some couples on the way...

Australia had some wonderful dancers... Karina Schembri and Igor Boev...fabulous dress and some strong interesting dancing.... 168..made the 12 in a couple of dances...very beautiful and fun couple to watch.

Enjoyed Nancy Berti and Alessandro Camerotti. from Italy...tall elegant couple.

Loved seeing Motsi Mabuse and Euvengy Voznyuk from Germany...a new partnership but with lots of potential especially when Motsi relaxes and does her thing.

Natalie and Andre Paramanov..... fabulous costumes and always interesting to watch

Ming Lu and Ding Fang Zhang from China...loved this girl and especially her costumes...very feminine but also very strong...great combination.

I have to say that I loved the cos-

tuming of all the ladies.... there were so many different styles of dresses and all beautiful. We truly have some of the most amazing dress designers in the world and I often wonder how fashion week would look with some of our designers showing their creations.

American couples did quite well along the way....

..loved Cecillia Giovacchini's bright marigold dress great energetic dancing but they got a little disorganized along the way.

Sergei Korshunov and Michelle Hafle.. loved their look ...they had a lovely natural feel to their dancing in amongst a lot of forced over the top dancing.

Delyan Terziev and Boriana Deltchevaconsistent and classy..

Kamil Studenny and Katya Trutneva. .Canada... always exciting and full of life.

Violetta and Dimitry Kurakin....they had a great night combining their classy fluid style with lots of pizzazz.

Roman Italyankin and Olga Kordevich... beautiful bright red dress... need to work on dancing together.... sometimes seems they both have their own party.

The semifinal was exciting but I must say I could not believe some of the couples who made it.....at this level you need to look great, be in shape and have all your bases covered. There were a few dancers who made it a long way in this competition who looked like



they had eaten one to many puddings.....

I was very disappointed to not see Justin Duknauskas and Anna Melnikova in the final in at least a couple of dances. I loved their fluid style and especially their rumba. They are a fairly new couple but I think will be a force to be reckoned with in the future. Justin could dance to his fabulous girl more for me and that would create a better picture. We as the audience or judge are the voyeur looking in at what you create together...draw us in.

The final was fairly predictable with the same six making it in every dance.

6th place.. Maurizio Vescovo and Andra Vaidilaite...Canada.

Wonderful choreography and energy.... Maurizio is always full of life and he has a beautiful partner who is a great foil for him. She has a grace and charm that I en-



Camerotti/Berti



Voznyuk/Mabuse



Kurakin/Kurakin



Duknauskas/Melnikova



joyed watching.. not over the top and seemingly real.

5th place.. Stefano Di Filippo and Olga Uru-mova....Italy

I loved watching Stefano dance...he has a natural talent and sense of humor that makes his performance spontaneous. I thought he danced the most musical jive of any man on the floor. Olga is a little too hard for me. I think her costumes were not memorable and her style too strong. I prefer a more feminine approach to dancing combined with strength and when the balance is in line I think this couple will challenge everyone in the final.



4th place..Andrej Skufca and Melinda Torokgyourgy..Slovenia

I liked their dancing but did not love it. The costumes were OK although I found Melinda's final dress too much of everything. They are wonderful dancers but did not sparkle and looked just plain tired in the jive.



3rd..place.. Serge Sourkov and Melia...Russia.

They always look dynamic and beautifully groomed... although of the three dresses Melia wore the final black one was my least favorite. They have a joy to their dancing and work every minute of their time on the floor.



2nd place.. Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruchenko..

Beautifully dressed and rehearsed...everything working well ...would they win tonight was the question on everyone's mind. I love their dancing but always want them to move me more emotionally. Their jive was my favorite dance of their performance - very compact and tight, never losing energy in any round. I would like to see more real expression in their rumba, more drama in their Paso Doble...something that just makes me go wow!!!

1st.. Michael Malitowski and Joanna Leunis... Poland.

They were the winners tonight winning every dance by the judges' assessment. However, I



think the competition was closer based on their performance. They are such gifted dancers with complicated, fast, spectacular choreography. They never seem to miss any connection or trick and definitely in the final lifted the bar even higher. Again I find a lack of real emotion - fun in cha cha, samba and jive, sensuality in rumba and drama in Paso Doble.. All the dances are the same - faultless from technique and performance but not moving in expression.. However, who could argue with their win, they were spectacular in performance.

I guess I would give a thumbs up to all the finalists overall... they are all fabulous dancers and my comments are based on what moves me in dancing. I found on the whole that all the couples dance out to the audience which translates to me as "showing off." I would love to see someone dance a rumba as if no other person was in the room but their partner. I see projection as what a couple creates together and makes me not stop watching them. Perhaps Jive is the "showing off" dance but definitely not Rumba and Paso.

I find that all the couples are playing to the crowd and are not aware of their partners - a trend I am not enjoying either as a spectator or judge. What is with the elaborate bows from round one ...you can do this when you make the final otherwise it is over the top, stupid and just bad taste. OMG couples were getting separated from their partners, knocking others over, arms out fully spread as though they had an epiphany. You just did a cha cha folks not won the Olympics!

I enjoyed Blackpool just as much as ever. Loved seeing all my old friends (old being the definitive word) and of course seeing and enjoying the talent that makes up this fabulous business of ours - the world of ballroom dancing.



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