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photo by Helmut Roland

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FREEDOM TO DANCE?

A reader sent us a link to an Australian TV news report about dancers being ejected from the Australian Championships. We submit the link here without comment, but would be interested to hear from any who have an opinion on this matter.

Here is the link: [Click Here](#)

In this edition:

“Shock at the Top!”
Valeri/Kehlet defeat the reigning WDSF World Standard Champions to take the title. Read a full report by *Helmut Roland* and a critique by *Asis Khadjeh-Nouri*.

“Becoming “All Things to All People”
- the 34th Ohio Star Ball features top level competition in all grades - Professional, Amateur, Pro-Am.



photo by Helmut Roland



photo by Park West

Next Edition coverage from British National Championships, in Blackpool



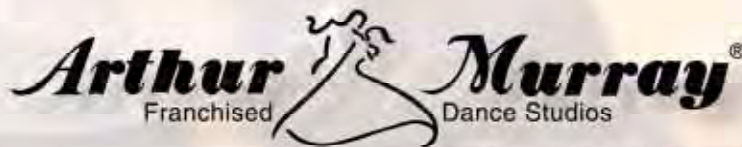
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WDSF World Championship Standard in Moscow

Shock at the Top: Emanuel Valeri & Tania Kehlet from Denmark Win the Title

Report and photos by Helmut Roland www.sportevent-photography.de

It happened at around 11 p. m. at International Expo & Conventional Center "Crocus-Expo" in Moscow on November 29th: the final round of the World Championship Standard 2011 was completed. The finalists had come back to the floor waiting for the results. The speaker called on the couples who had won 6th place, ... 5th place ... 4th place ... 3rd place ... (Same ranking as last year in Wetzlar. Then he called on the couple with the number 27 for 2nd place!

For a second or two it was completely quiet in the hall. Did we mishear? Number 27, that is Benedetto Ferrugia & Claudia Koehler's number from Germany. Then, after three seconds, the audience and the couples comprehended the situation: the former World Champions Standard from 2009 and 2010, Benedetto & Claudia, were set in the runners-up position this evening! Emanuel Valeri & Tania Kehlet had won the title.

What were the reasons for this selection? We asked Mr. Asis Khadjeh-Nouri, DTV Confederation Trainer and IDSF International Adjudicator for his comment on the performance of the finalists. But before reading his valuation, let me give you some facts from



An epic battle at the top gives victory to Valeri/Kehlet from Denmark!



the event.

The Dance Sport Federation of Russia had organized the WDSF World Championship Standard 2011. 72 couples from 36

countries had come to Moscow to find the world champion in the standard section. The world championship was embedded into the Russian Open Championships, which started on October 25th.

The final rounds started with the tango, which this year is the first of the two solo dances.

Emanuel Valeri & Tania Kehlet from Denmark immediately won the tango with a majority of five 1st places from the votes of nine adjudicators (2,1,2,2,1,1,1,2,1).

In waltz, Emanuel & Tania were set on 2nd place (2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1).

In slow foxtrot (2,1,2,2,1,1,1,2,1), quickstep (1,1,2,2,1,2,1,2,1) and Viennese Waltz (1,2,1,2,1,2,1,2,1) Emanuel & Tania convinced respectively five out of the nine adjudicators to vote them in 1st place. At the end the couple from Denmark had won four out of five dances with the ma-

jority of five 1st places out of nine adjudicators. Totally they won the championship by 6 points.

Benedetto Ferruggia & Claudia Koehler from Germany won the waltz with a definite majority of eight 1st places. In all other dances the couple attained four 1st places. So there was a lack of one 1st place in these dances to win the majority. Hence Benedetto & Claudia this evening had to take 2nd place with 9 points.

3rd place with 16 points was won by Simone Segatori & Annette Sudol from Germany. The couple attained a majority of five 3rd places in all dances except the tango. Everyone could feel the strong enhancement of the couple. Simone & Annette had won the WDSF World Freestyle Standard in September 2011, which surely was



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one source for this development.

Sergei Konovaltsev & Olga Konovaltseva from Russia hoped for more this time. Actually they achieved 3rd place in tango (5,3,3,4,3,3,5,3,6). In all other dances Sergei & Olga were set in 4th place with a clear majority of 7 or 8 votes out of nine adjudicators. At least they achieved 4th place again with 19 points.

Marek Kosaty & Paulina Glazik from Poland achieved 5th place in all dances except the quickstep (26 points).

Last but not least we saw Dmitry Zharkov / Olga Kulikova from Russia, who attained 6th place with 29 points.

We have to congratulate all finalists for the excellent performance. If you want to know more about the details that were important for the valuation, read the commentary of Asis Khadjeh-Nouri, who describes the performance of the finalists from his point of view.

See more pictures of the event at www.sportevent-photography.de

Final Rounds

1. Emanuel Valeri / Tania Kehlet (6)
Denmark
2. Benedetto Ferruggia / Claudia Koehler (9)
Germany
3. Simone Segatori / Annette Sudol (16)



- Germany
4. Sergei Konovaltsev / Olga Konovaltseva (19) Russian Federation
 5. Marek Kosaty / Paulina Glazik (26) Poland
 6. Dmitry Zharkov / Olga Kulikova (29) Russian Federation

Adjudicators



- | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| A | Alain Doucet | Canada |
| B | Marcel Gebert | Czech Republic |
| C | Karina Geerts | Belgium |
| D | Hermann Goetz | Austria |
| E | Rade Janjic | Croatia |
| F | Irina Solomatina | Russia |
| G | Ave Vardja | Estonia |
| H | Frank Venables | England |
| J | Charles Wu Man Sang | Hong Kong |

Commentary on the Performance of the Finalists by Asis Khadjeh-Nouri

DTV Confederation Trainer and IDSF International Adjudicator

1st Place: Emanuel Valeri – Tania Kehlet, Denmark

Winning the title was the big surprise of the evening !!!

However, you have to acknowledge that Emanuel & Tania constantly worked on their standard dancing and enhanced their performance. They demonstrated the big "heart of a dancer" and celebrated this on the floor. With their charisma and musical sense they didn't only persuade the judges but also the Russian audience.

Anyhow Tania sometimes heads her own way and doesn't dance out of the Emanuel's guidance. For this reason there is not always the balance within the couple that we would like to see. On the other hand, Tania sensitively reacts with softness and limberness to Emanuel's captaincy. This excuses these slight oversights.

Emanuel & Tania will improve their capability, I am sure. We saw an excellent performance at the World Championship Standard in Moscow without dispensable variations, which don't fit the dance. With this they give a banner example for aspiring young couples.



Congratulations for winning the World Championship !



2nd Place: Benedetto Ferruggia – Claudia Koehler, Germany

The consternation of the couple was evident to read in their faces. Nobody had expected this result.

Literally it is not necessary to allude to the fact that Benedetto & Claudia had dominated the amateur section for years. They virtually were unrivaled. Both actually danced very strongly, but they could not create the spiritedness this evening which had been their unique characteristic before.

Naturally, this is a very difficult situation for the couple and both have to review.

I personally was surprised to discover many tiny ticks this evening, which logically sometimes affect the top line. So it happened during the evening rounds. Benedetto in some phases stood too far back and Claudia prevalently lifted her feet while dancing heel steps. I repeat: this evening!

Actually there is no more dominance from one couple. Both couples meet at the same level. We are looking forward to fascinating duels, which both couples are able to win.

In my opinion the choreography of the Vienna Waltz basically is marginal and should be reviewed.

The attitude of Benedetto & Claudia in this situation is remarkable and exemplary. They behaved very fair and sportingly as runners-up.

3rd Place: Simone Segatori – Annette Sudol, Germany

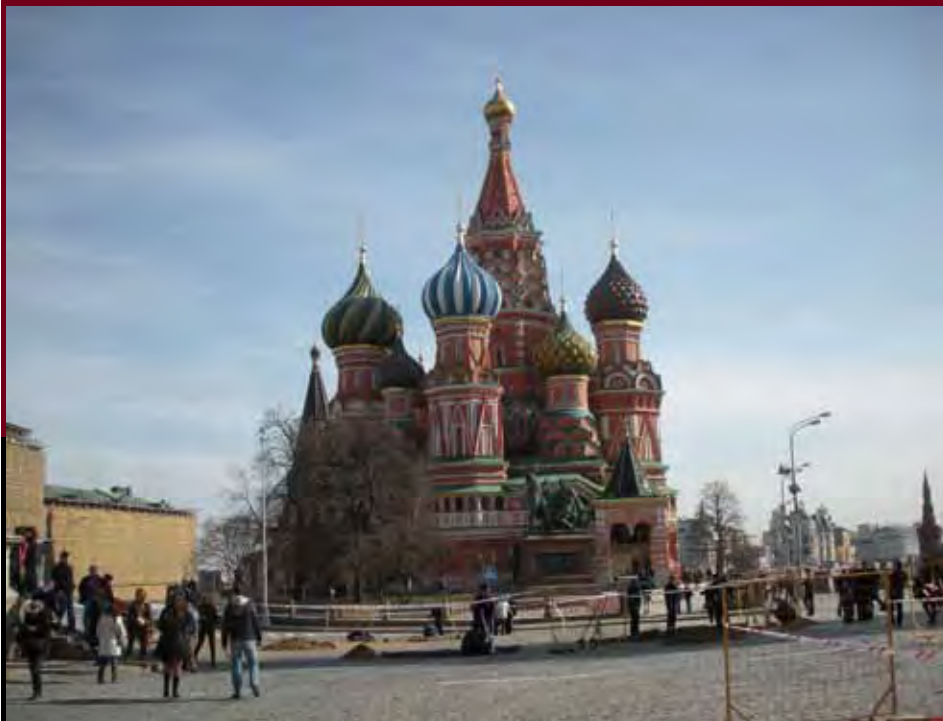
Considered unemotionally Simone & Annette could have won the championship too due to the quality of their dancing and especially this evening.

The couple is characterized by harmonious, soft and rounded movements. The greatest leap forward Simone & Annette have achieved is their ability to keep up their performance of dancing during the whole competition. Sometimes Simone's top line appears a little bit massive and creates the impression that he is working too much from his hands and arms.

This evening I liked very much the slow foxtrot, because in this dance the couple could pit all strengths against their competitors. If some adjudicators had chosen 1st place, it would not have been wrong.



I think Simone & Annette have still potential to come up. Congratulations for 3rd place, which is strongly deserved.



4th Place: Sergei Konovaltsev – Olga Konovaltseva, Russian Federation

Sergei & Olga had hoped for more this evening starting in their home country. But there is a healthy margin between them and the top three due to the quality of dancing.

Olga constantly holds her arms a little bit too far back and this is the reason why Sergei looks massive and keen with his shoulder girdle. There is still too much physicality that characterizes the couple and I have the strong impression that they are looking for some additional artifice due to the choreography instead of working for the constitution of the torso and for developing more harmony of dancing.

However, Sergei & Olga rank among the finalists, but to my evaluation could have been rated to 6th place this evening. The choreography of Viennese waltz takes from the couple the chance to show more musical sense and should be reviewed.



5th Place: Marek Kosaty – Paulina Glazik, Poland



Perhaps the most stylistic couple in the final rounds with open and classic movements. This meets the upmost requirements. I think this characteristic has to be respected, but finally to my opinion, it is too much limited.

Marek & Paulina don't take the chance at all for a three dimensional movement. For this reason they have to face up the fact that they look somewhat tedious and moldy. I am sure the couple has more potential.

The Viennese Waltz was executed in a classical and technical open mold. Turning left Marek closes his feet across the heel.

6th Place: Dmitry Zharkov – Olga Kulikova, Russian Federation

The second Russian couple should be the first one. The quality of dancing for this rating is visible on the floor. Especially in Viennese Waltz you can discover nearly a class distinction.

Dmitry enormously amended the position of his torso. Sometimes the final precision due to the silhouette is missing. Olga is a real lady on the floor. She follows each of Dmitry's actions and reacts excellently and softly. The couple appears extremely harmonic on the floor.

I think this couple in future will challenge more for the higher places, because they offer a good composition of technical dancing quality, musical sense and modern movement positions.

They also present choreography in Viennese Waltz that is exemplary and exempt from nonmusical figures.



OHIO STAR BALL THE 34TH EDITION

*Becoming “all things to all people.”
(Corinthians 9:19-23)*

Report by Keith Todd

Photos by Egor Shalvarov & Park West

Sam Sodano’s Ohio Star Ball turned 34 this year and as someone who has been attending for at least 30 of those 34 years, I was struck anew by how much this festival has evolved in that time. It now really has become “all things to all people.” Are you a high level professional competitor? OSB has some of the best pro divisions of any competition in the USA. Are you a world-class pro-am competitor? See above! Are you a keen or world-class amateur dancer? See above! Are you a college level dancer? OSB also hosts a USA Dance College network event. Are you a pro-am competitor not quite ready for prime time? OSB offers Rising Star divisions and new this year NDCA World Pro-Am Championships in the bronze and silver levels. Are you a team player? The World Dancesport Series Team Match continues to be a major feature.

The full OSB is not for the faint hearted! If you wanted to see all of those things you had to be in Columbus, Ohio for over a week – arriving Monday 14th November and leaving the following Monday. The addition of the World Pro-Am Bronze & Silver divisions added another ½ day to the already marathon event. For the pro-ams the division between American and International styles means that you can choose if you wish to attend only the beginning (American) or the end (International). All the sessions are long but the scheduling is so meticulous that the events mostly run within 15 minutes or less of their scheduled times. The OSB is truly an American Dance institution that has been 35 years in the making.

This year we have assembled a full team of reporters to cover many of the major divisions. Beth Knoll (Pro Ballroom), Nadia Eftedal (Pro Latin), Scott Anderson (Pro Smooth), Rozanna Sweeney (Pro Rhythm), Mark Weiss (Amateur Latin) and Rita Gekhman (Amateur Ballroom). Dance Beat’s Didio Barrera and Chantal Leclerc will also comment on the Open NDCA World Pro-Am Championships. With this in mind I will keep my comments simple, mentioning only the highlights as I saw them and leaving the bulk of the reporting in those capable hands. *(These reports will appear in Dance Beat USA)*

Most, if not quite all, of the country’s top pro-

Cocchi/Zagoruychenko



Bizokas/Demidova



professional competitors were in attendance so the caliber of the competitions was extremely high. Both of our current WDC World Champions were here, Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova and Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko and neither couple dropped a single first place mark – that's 95 first place marks each. We are all aware that to unseat a current world champion in their own country is highly unlikely in the ballroom world and this can mean that the competitions can become boring, especially if the world champions are on "automatic pilot." But I must congratulate the two current holders of those titles. I have seen both of them compete four times since July in the USA and on no occasion did either give anything but their best. Strangely neither of the US National runners-up were present here in Ohio. Neither Victor Fung & Anastasia in the ballroom or Roman Kuttskyy & Anna Kovalova in the Latin so the champions enjoyed a buffer of sorts. In the Latin I was particularly impressed with Maurizio Vescovo & Andra Vaidilaite (Can) who were easily second in all dances. They have always been an action packed couple, but this time I felt they had definitely added a level of sophistication not seen from them before. We had a rather different final in the Latin as in addition to Kuttskyy/Kovalova there were two other US Finalists missing – Kozhevnikov/Grigorieva and Kurakin/Kurakin. The two empty places went to Yegor Novikov & Yana Blinova who were 5th but placed 6,4,5,4,5 and Daniele Gozzi & Cecilia Giovacchini who missed the final at this year's USDC but were 6th here (4,5,6,6,6). This was the best result to date for Yegor & Yana but I have to say that they looked at home in the final. My major impression of them was that they know when to use energy and when to take it easy, a valuable asset I believe.

Moving up to the runners-up position in the Pro Ballroom were Marat Gimaev & Alina Basyuk



photo by Park West



photo by Park West



photo by Park West

(2,2,2,3,3). This is the best result for this partnership since they immigrated to the USA this past summer. I have always enjoyed their classic, understated style and so I was pleased for them. Having said that, the US Ballroom field is so filled with talent at the moment that



photo by Park West

I would not have been disappointed with any result tonight. Andrea Feraci & Iveta Pauryte were third (3,3,3,2,2) and were obviously not far behind the runners-up and I felt that Artem Plakhotnyi & Inna Berlizyeva, who were fourth in all dances, also had a very strong night.

In the professional international style divisions I do not believe there is another country in the world that can field such impressive couples in such depth! Many of our semi and quarter-finalists would most certainly be finalists in other countries.



photo by Park West

The OSB hosts the NDCA World Titles for the Professional Rhythm and Smooth and both US National Champions were here to add the 2011 titles to their resumes and both did so with little challenge. Decho Kraev & Bree Watson overwhelmingly took all dances as did Slawek Souchaki & Marzena Stachura. Of the two events, the Smooth was the fullest field as almost all the US finalists were in attendance. In the Rhythm, US Runners-up, Emanuele Pierre Antoine & Liene Churilova were not here and 2010 US Champions, Jose DeCamps & Joanna Zacharewicz, who have not announced their retirement, are still AWOL.

For the time being Mazen Hamza & Izabella Jundzill have cemented their hold on second place in the Smooth placing 3,2,2,2 here in Ohio but looking at the judges' scores it is still a 3-couple race for second between them and third placed Peter & Alexandra Perzhu (4,3,3,3) and Mayo Alanen & Michelle Officer (2,4,4,4). As in the Ballroom, I think the field is great in

In the professional international style divisions I do not believe there is another country in the world that can field such impressive couples in such depth!



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this division and although Mazen & Izabella are overall my favorites, all are great couples. New to the final here in Ohio were 6th placed Vladimir Popov & Eulia Baranovsky (6,6,6,6).

Seven couples were returned for the Rhythm final and when the result cards were dealt there was a bit of shuffle from the US Championships. The main beneficiaries of this shuffle were Ricky Bentzen & Albina Habrle who moved up to second place (2,2,2,3,2) placing ahead of Peter & Alexandra Perzhu (3,3,4,2,4). The two additions to the final were Jason & Sveta Daly in sixth (6,6,6,5,6) and Jeremy Gatlin & Anna Harwood in seventh (7,7,7,7,7).

In addition to the group competitions all the finalists are asked to perform a showdance and a separate prize as well as an overall prize is awarded. I wish I could report that the showdances were spectacular, but unfortunately this was not the case. With very few exceptions the routines ran the gambit from uninspired to incomprehensible. Luckily for us, all these finalists are great dancers, so there was some level of entertainment no matter if the routines were not exceptional. I realize that trying to produce a showdance with a fairly restricted time constraint is not easy. I am sure many couples do not have time to devote to a new dance fearing it will take away from their competition and training schedule. With this in mind many of the couples elected to present one of their current competition routines with perhaps a modest entrance and exit and a new dress. These were perhaps the more successful endeavors as those who went more fully for entertainment value fared worse in the final analysis. (See **Frank Regan's assessment of these performances later in this edition.**)

As a group I felt the Smooth competitors produced the best overall showdances. Although there was certainly some rearrangement of the positioning compared to the group events, all four champions did indeed win the corresponding showdance.

In a tip of the hat to classic Theatre Arts, Travis & Jaimee Tuft were the winners of this professional division in a six-couple final. Travis & Jaimee are consummate dancers and were in fact semifinalists in the Smooth. This means that their Theatre Arts combines strong dance elements with skillful liftwork. This has not necessarily been the case in recent years when cabaret and theatre arts couples have been highly specialized in adagio style material only. The runners-up were Vicente Martinez & Megan Murphy who offer a totally contrasting style to the winners, more adagio/jazz based. A difficult decision for the adjudicators perhaps. Genya Bartashevitch & Yana Maznikova were third and they offered the most dance based routine of the six with the least liftwork. I enjoyed the comedy of fourth placed Egor Shalvarov & Alla Profatilova and thought they could have placed higher, although in truth I have seen this routine



performed with better timing in the past.

The pro-am field is so vast that it is very difficult to know where to begin. We will have full reports on the Open World Championships, but I would like to congratulate a few competitors who I noticed in particular. I will begin with Beverly Moore, partnered by Alain Doucet (Canada). Once again this lady was a multiple winner, taking the C Smooth, C Latin and B Ballroom. This is phenomenal achievement! There were also several new champions this year and I would like to mention two of these who specifically impressed

me (there is a full list of the open winners later in this edition). Susan Sidman w/ Gleb Markarov took the B Smooth and although Susan is certainly no stranger to the winner's podium I believe this is the first time she has won this division. It was certainly a very strong performance. A real newcomer to me was the winner of the A Latin, Carly Booth w/ Radomir Pashev. This lady had a dynamite appearance on the floor and it was really a "come from nowhere" win. Of course congratulations are due to all the winners and finalists in every division. Some of these events began with more than 30 couples

and certainly this is some of the best pro-am dancing you'll see anywhere in the world. I would like to see more overseas pro-ams trying their luck, and there were a few but more would make some of these divisions more stimulating both for the audience and also for the competitors.



The amateur divisions are run in Battelle Hall concurrently with the pro-am divisions in the Regency Ballroom during the daytime of Friday and Saturday. There is definitely an emphasis on junior divisions and championships are run in J3, J4, J5, J6 and Under 21 divisions. All of these were great events particularly in the Latin. There were wonderful contestants on display from Canada and the USA. Again there is a full list of the winners later in this edition but for me there were certainly some outstanding performances.

Let me begin with the Open Amateur divisions. We will have full reviews of both divisions in the future, of course. The Latin produced a seven-couple final won by Denys Drozdyuk & Antonina Skobina (USA) 1,2,1,1,1.



were third (2,3,2,3,4) and Anton & Antoanetta were fourth (3,4,4,2,3). I was pleased to see the new partnership of Pasha Stepanchuk & Nastya Danilona included in the final. They were seventh (5,6,7,7,7).

It was a fabulous weekend for a fabulous couple – Oskar Wojciechowski & Karoline Holody (USA) won both the Under 21 Ballroom and the Open taking all dances in both events. In the open they had the majority of firsts in four of the dances. Leading the chasing group were Igor Colac & Roxane Milotti 3,4,2,2,2, (They were listed from Canada but I believe are still residing in California) and the new partnership of Vladislav Shahov & Inna Ognianova 2,3,3,3,3.

The Dancesport World Series concludes at the Ohio Star Ball each year with the racous Team Match. This year the winners were Region 7 (Canada). Top Teachers and Students are also announced on Saturday night. Forrest Vance was this year's Top Teacher. Allen Brown was the Top Male Student and Holly Squires was the Top Female Student.

Denys & Antonina have had a fabulous year and I'm sure they were delighted with their win here that confirms their earlier successes. No couple gained the majority of first places in any dance, but by winning four of the five Denys & Antonina were well clear. Second place also went to the USA with Pasha Pashkov & Daniella Karagach placing 4,1,3,4,2. This was very much a reaffirmation for this pair who have had rather mixed results this year. The Canadian contingent had their own drama as Jean Philippe Milot & Laurence Bulduc defeated the Canadian National Champions (and 3rd place winners in the WDSF World 10-Dance Championship), Anton Belyayev & Antoanetta Popova. Jean Phillippe & Laurence



Another series that concludes at the Ohio Star Ball is the "Best of the Best" that pitches winners from various events throughout the year against each other in solo presentations. Winners this year were: Shannon Rohne w/ Eric Hudson (Bronze), Pascal Memishian w/ Steven Dougherty (Silver) and Lois Englund w/ Kostadin Bidjourov (Gold).

By offering everything, Sam Sodano has kept the Ohio Star Ball at the forefront of dance competitions in the USA. It really is the benchmark by which all others are judged.



NDCA World Open Pro Am Winners

- A Rhythm – Salena Garbiras w/ Azamat Evgamukov
- B Rhythm – Gwen Bourque w/ Chris Johnston
- C Rhythm – Joan Goddard w/ Chris Johnston
- Senior Rhythm – Lynn Murrell w/ Peter Perzhu
- A Smooth – Jessica Haims w/ Greg Fidurski
- B Smooth – Susan Sidman w/ Gleb Makarov
- C Smooth – Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet
- Senior Smooth – Charlotte Carey w/ Kostadin Bidjourov
- A Latin – Carley Booth w/ Radomir Pashev
- B Latin – Rhonda Lee w/ Daniele Gozzi
- C Latin – Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet
- A Ballroom – Tatiana Zayts w/ Maxim Kotlov
- B Ballroom – Beverly Moore w/ Alain Doucet
- C Ballroom – Kathleen Hull w/ Thomas Papkala
- 9-Dance – Pamela Bolling w/ Ben Ermis
- 10-Dance – Kathleen Ilo w/ Rauno Ilo



Theatre Arts – Lois Englund w/ Kostadin Bidjourov

Junior Winners

- J3 Latin – D'Angelo Castro & Amanda Carvajales
- J4 Latin – Nicholas Stevens & Alexnadra Gutkovich
- J5 Latin – Richard Lifshitz & Morgana Lakatos-Howard
- J6 Latin – Kirill Kulish & Nino Dzeladze
- Under 21 Latin – Austin Josen & Gabrielle Sable
- J3 Ballroom – Denis Matueev & Valezie Dubinsky
- J5 Ballroom – Roman Redziuk & Anastasia Soboleva
- J6 Ballroom – Daniel Shapiro & Katya Kovalyova
- Under 21 Ballroom – Oskar Wojciechowski & Karoline Holody

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SHOWDANCE - THE MISSING PRINCIPLES OF THEATRE

By Frank Regan
 Photos by Egor Shalvarov & Park West

As Shakespeare once said, just before passing out at the annual Elizabethan Beer Festival, "All the world's a stage."

He was trying to tell people two very important things:

1 That despite an inordinate consumption of Newcastle Brown Ale, his powers of speech were still somewhat intact.

2 Principles of theatre are present in every area of both verbal and non-verbal communication, particularly during a performance routine, whether it be a RAIN DANCE where timing is everything or during a SHOWDANCE competition at the OHIO Star Ball where not only is timing important but also an understanding of thematic empowerment and a few old VAUDEVILLE tricks that always "get" the audience.

This year, for example, there were some very talented couples in the Showdance category at the Ohio Star Ball, who had good ideas but clearly had no concept of the "showbiz" principles essential to a truly successful outcome. The missing ingredients were conspicuous by their absence particularly in attempts at comedy. Non-verbal comedy, just as in its verbal



photo by Park West



photo by Park West

counterpart, demands a "set up" followed by the punch line. Without the appropriate "set up," the punch line is either non-existent or simply falls flat. Several of the pseudo-comedy routines were exceptionally well costumed and of course quite well danced but could easily have been improved through the simple inclusion of a "running gag" or a blatant



photo by Park West

message in the opening scenario that this was going to be FUNNY. The audience was, in several cases, quite unaware that the routine was of a comedic nature and despite the efforts of the dancers to evoke the expected response, the attempts at humorous expression simply went over everyone's head. The intention of comedic rendition had in fact turned to impaired melodrama.



photo by Park West

When this happens, the identification process is severely diluted and the observer now falls back on something they are comfortable with e.g. a nicely arranged, flawless version of standard ballroom dancing or a Latin routine of generically recognizable movements. While this approach may allow one to occasionally come out "on top" of a heat whose claim to fame has been mainly in the domain of the mediocre, it falls short of the entertainment factor expected in an event of this nature

One of the great advantages to the Showdance category is that it not only serves as a welcome break (for the public) in a long evening of en masse homogenized activity but provides the

opportunity for ART to show up on the horizon of an ecology that is frequently in conflict with such an intention.

Curiously enough, many judges appear to be in agreement with this philosophy but if the theatre of the dance is not up to scratch, they have no choice but to mark the couple who are taking the least amount of risk and simply presenting generic competition material with a couple of addendums such as a lift at the beginning and end of the piece.

This unfortunately sends a message that could lessen the impact and even contribute to the demise of something that has wonderful possibilities. It behooves all of us, judges and competitors alike to face up to our responsibilities in keeping this category alive and well as a medium for stage and television in addition to the ballroom floor thereby fulfilling its role as a spectacular form of 21st century activity.

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