**MINNESOTA** 

## DANCER

January 2017



Professional Russell Alliev and Nancy Hoyos at the DanceLife Showcase Photo by Scot Gore





#### BALLROOM DANCE EVENTS

#### 109th Ballroom Dance Weekend

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Dedicated to Fostering and Supporting Argentine Tango in Minnesota **Argentine tango** is usually danced in sets of three or four songs (called *tandas*) with the same partner – one song to get acquainted, one song for a very nice dance, and one song for a fantastic dance. Tandas are separated by *cortinas* to select new partners.

#### MORE INFORMATION AT THE TSOM WEB SITE

Teachers, Practice Workshops, Dances (called *Milongas*), the Tango Calendar, Special Events, and Much More

## **DANCER**

An Official Publication of USA Dance-Minnesota Chapter #2011



#### **USA Dance: Who Are We?**

We are a nonprofit organization that promotes ballroom dancing. The USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 was formed in 1991. Membership in USA Dance is open to dancers of all levels. USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 sponsors monthly dances and other special dance events. Members receive discounts on admission to monthly dances, as well as other benefits.

The Minnesota Dancer is published monthly by the USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011, to provide information and news about ballroom dancing.

Executive Editor/Layout: Tom Crable Assistant Editor: Leland Whitney Advertising: Paul Stachour

Contributions: Articles submitted may be edited for length, clarity, content. Photos should be high-resolution jpg, png, or pdf files. Email submissions to tcrable3s@gmail.com.

Send advertising materials to Paul Stachour at MNDancer.Ads@gmail.com.

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#### **USA CHAPTER MONTHLY DANCES**

#### January Saturday, January 21

Costa Rica Ballroom 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins MN

7-8 pm lesson - Foxtrot Instructor: Eliecer Ramirez 8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

> February Saturday, February 18

DanceLife Ballroom 6015 Lyndale Ave S., Mpls

7-8 pm lesson - Samba Instructor: Shinya McHenry 8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

#### March Saturday, March 18

Dancers Studio - Sterling Hall 415 Pascal Street N, St. Paul

7-8 lesson - West Coast Swing Instructor: Troy Lerum 8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

\$5 Students under 25 with ID \$10 USA Dance Members \$15 Non-Members



## Beginner Samba

Sunday, January 8th—2:00 pm

Sunday, January 15th — 2:00 pm

Sunday, January 22nd — 2:00 pm

Sunday, January 29th — 2:00 pm



Classes with Shinya McHenry at

#### DanceLife Ballroom

6015 Lyndale Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55419 612.345.4219

www.usadance-minnesota.org



**USA Dance offers dance instruction to members for \$3. Non-members pay \$8.** Become a member of USA Dance at membership.usadance.org or fill out a membership form available at a class. A different professional instructor teaches a new dance at a different location every month.

#### USA Dance-MN Chapter #2011 Board Minutes

Tuesday, November 1, 2016 Submitted by Leslie Whitney

In attendance: Lee Whitney (President), Ed Soltis (Vice President), Leslie Whitney (Secretary), Jane Phipps (Treasurer), Joyce Thompson, Carol Post, Tom Crable, Dan Fitzgerald and Karen Maldenado.

Guests: Gary Stroick, Bonnie Burton and Steve Vespested.

Location: Washburn Public Library, 5244 Lyndale Avenue South, Mpls., 55419.

#### Call Session to order:

- 1. Agenda A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the November agenda.
- 2. Confidentiality Meeting discussions are confidential. Chapter minutes are posted in the Minnesota Dancer.
- 3. Minutes A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the October minutes.
- 4. Treasurer's Report Jane distributed a treasurer's report current as of October 31, 2016. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the October report.
  - a. Budget updates The budget was discussed.
- 5. Chapter Nominations and Election Committee An article will be included in the December Minnesota Dancer.
- 6. Annual Meeting The date is November 19th, 6:30 7:00, Cinema Ballroom.
- 7. Social Dance, Special Projects and Volunteer Coordinator Reports.
  - a. Monthly Dances.
    - i. November Cinema, Hustle.
    - ii. December 'nMotion Dance Center, Bolero.
    - iii. January Costa Rica Ballroom, Foxtrot.
    - iv. On December 4th, the chapter will partner with Tapestry for their Sunday evening lesson and dance. Our chapter will provide the music and DJ.
    - v. We discussed the attendance at the monthly dances.
  - b. Project Dance.
    - i. November 'nMotion, Salsa.

- ii. We discussed the attendance at Project Dance.
- c. Special Events The demonstration at The Mall of America consisted of 22 different performances.
- d. Dancing Classrooms There is a continued need for classroom assistants.
- e. Collegiate Ballroom Dance Support In a preliminary meeting Carol, Lee and Gary visited with the Carlton Ballroom Dance Club to identify their needs and to explore ways the chapter could work with them to support the college teams in Minnesota.
- 8. Communications Coordinator Report.
  - a. Minnesota Dancer Committee The November issue has been emailed.
  - b. Website, Facebook, Constant Contact Website calendar is up to date.
  - c. Lee will email an editable version of the document informing dancers of Chapter #2011's website, mission, and activities. This will be displayed at the dance studios. We will finalize this document at the next board meeting.
- 9. Membership Coordinator Report.
  - a. October 31, 2015 369 members.
  - b. October 31, 2016 306 members.
- 10. USA Dance National Policies Voting for the USA Dance National Election will be held November 4th November 14th.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 6, 2016

6:00 p.m.

Washburn Public Library

5244 Lyndale Avenue S

Minneapolis 55419

#### DANCER'S NIGHT OUT

#### **USA DANCE**

**USA Dance** – **Monthly**, 3rd Saturday Variety Dance, January 21, at Costa Rica Ballroom, 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN. Lesson 7-8 pm and dance 8-11 pm. Lesson - Foxtrot. Instructor: Eliecer Ramirez.

**Project Dance** - January 8, 15, 22 and 29 at 2 pm, DanceLife Ballroom. Lesson - Beginner Samba. Instructor: Shinya McHenry.

#### **WEEKLY DANCES**

**Awakened Dance (at 'nMotion Dance Center)** - Fridays, lesson 7 - 8 pm and dance 8 - 9 pm.

**Cinema Ballroom** – Wednesdays, Practice Party, 8 – 9 pm.

Dancers Studio – Thursday, Variety Dance, 8-9:30 pm.

**Costa Rica Ballroom** – Fridays, lesson 7:30 - 8:15 pm and dance 8:15 - 10:00 pm.

**DanceLife Ballroom** – Fridays, Variety Dance, lesson 7 - 8 pm and dance 8 - 9:30 pm.

**Ballroom & Latin Dance Club** - Fridays, lesson 7-8 pm and dance 8-10 pm.

#### **OTHER WEEKLY DANCES**

**Argentine Tango Milonga** - second Saturday of each month, January 14, class at 8:30 pm and dance 9:30 pm - 1 am. See mntango.org for more information.

**Café Bailar Dance Club** – Saturday Variety Party, January 14 and 28, at Costa Rica Ballroom, lesson 7:30 – 8:30 pm and dance 8:30 - 11 pm.

*Cinema Ballroom* – Variety Dance, January 6 and 20, lesson 7 – 8 pm and dance 8 – 11 pm.

**Tapestry** – Variety Dances, 1st and 3rd Sundays, January 1 and 15, dance 6 – 9:30 pm.

Twin Cities Rebels – WCS and Variety Dance, January 1, 15 and 29, at DanceLife Ballroom, 7 – 10:30 pm.

#### **OTHER DANCES**

**Snow Ball Dancesport Competition** - January 13 - 15, at the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America.

#### DANCE CONTACTS

If you would like to be listed on this page, send your contact information to tcrable3s@gmail.com

#### **STUDIOS**

AMERICAN CLASSIC BALLROOM 550 Market Street, Chanhassen 952.934.0900 www.acballroom.com

ARTHUR MURRAY DANCE STUDIO 534 Selby Avenue, St. Paul 651.227.3200

AWAKENED DANCE (at 'nMotion Dance Center) 7988 University Ave NE Fridley, MN 55432 www.awakeneddance.com

BALLROOM & LATIN DANCE CLUB 1103 W. Burnsville Pkwy, Burnsville 952.292.0524 www.ballroom-club.com

BLUE MOON BALLROOM 2030 Hwy 14 E, Rochester 507.288.0556 www.BlueMoonBallroom.com

CINEMA BALLROOM 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul 651.699.5910 www.cinemaballroom.com

COSTA RICA BALLROOM DANCE STUDIOS 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins 952.303.3339 www.costaricaballroom.com

DAHL DANCE CENTER 4204 North Hwy 52, Rochester 507.252.1848 www.dahldance.com

DANCE AND ENTERTAINMENT 651.605.5784 tricia@danceandentertainment.com www.danceandentertainment.com

DANCE WITH US AMERICA 10 Southdale Center, Edina 612-564-5483 www.dancewithusamerica.com

DANCELIFE BALLROOM 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis 612.345.4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

DANCERS STUDIO 415 Pascal Street N, Saint Paul 651.641.0777 www.dancersstudio.com

DE Studios 3701 W Old Shakopee Rd, Bloomington 952-392-9631 www.de-studios.com FOUR SEASONS DANCE STUDIO 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Minneapolis 612.342.0902 www.fourseasonsdance.com

FRED ASTAIRE DANCE STUDIO 1975 Seneca Road, Eagan, MN 651.451.6300 www.FredAstaireMN.com

MILL CITY BALLROOM www.millcityballroom.com

NORTH STAR DANCE STUDIO Bloomington, MN 612.799.4147 Facebook.com/northstar.dancestudio

RENDEZVOUS DANCE STUDIO Minneapolis 612.872.1562 www.theplacetodance.com

STUDIOJEFF 701 St. Germain St W, Suite 201, St. Cloud 320.266.4137 www.studiojeff.com

#### **CLUBS**

CAFÉ BAILAR www.cafebailar.com

LADANZA DANCE CLUB Stillwater, MN 651.439.3152 Facebook.com/LaDanzaDanceClub Contacts: Mark and Wanda Bierbrauer

LAKESIDE DANCE CLUB 320.763.6432 danceclub@lakesideballroom.org www.lakesideballroom.org

LATIN DANCE CLUB OF UMN Email: latindc@umn.edu sua.umn.edu/groups/directory/group/3713/

LINDEN HILLS DANCING CLUB www.lindenhillsdancingclub.org

MN WEST COAST SWING DANCE CLUB 763.442.1618 www.mnwestcoastswingdanceclub.com

REBELS SWING DANCE CLUB 952.941.0906 www.tcrebels.com

SOCIAL DANCE CLUB 952-475-0586, billcarlson@usinternet.com

STARDUST DANCE CLUB stardustdanceclub@gmail.com SUBURBAN-WINTERSET DANCE CLUB Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis 952.894.1412 www.suburbanwinterset.com

TANGO SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA 612.224.2905 www.mntango.org

TAPESTRY FOLKDANCE CENTER 3748 Minnehaha Ave, Minneapolis 612.722.2914 www.tapestryfolkdance.org

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BALLROOM DANCE CLUB bdc@umn.edu Is.gd/umnbdc

USA DANCE, MINNESOTA CHAPTER 2011 info@usadance-minnesota.org www.usadance-minnesota.org

#### **DANCE INSTRUCTORS**

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Mariusz Olszewski	612.242.5159
Mary Rosenstiel	612.720.2584
Char Torkelson	612.709.6399
Lisa Vogel	651.208.0818
James Wood	651.242.2421

#### **COMPETITION CALENDAR**

January 13 - 15, 2017

#### **Snow Ball DanceSport Competition**

Hosted by Donna Edelstein, Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Mall of America

January 14 - 16, 2017

#### Manhattan Amateur Classic (The MAC) - 2017 NQE

Hosted by Greater New York Chapter #3004, Hyatt Regency, Jersey City, NJ

February 3 - 5, 2017

#### 2017 Southeastern DanceSport Championships - 2017 NQE

Hosted by Wayne & Marie Crowder, Sheraton Birmingham, Birmingham, AL

Feb 17 - 19, 2017

#### Mid-Atlantic Championships - 2017 NQE and

Senior IV National DanceSport Championships (Feb 17 - 18, 2017)

Hosted by Mid-Eastern Chapter #6001, North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Bethesda, MD

March 31 - April 2, 2017

#### **USA Dance 2017 National DanceSport Championships**

Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, Baltimore, MD

June 10 - 11, 2017

#### NJ DanceSport Classic - Summer Sizzler - 2018 NQE

Organized by Mario Battista and Wendi Davies Rogers DanceSport Center - Hackensack NJ

July 5 - 9, 2017

#### **Twin Cities Open Ballroom Championships**

Organized by Scott and Amy Anderson Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis MN

#### LYNNE'S DANCE NEWS

Dance events for every day of the week. Updated daily.

www.lynnesdancenews.com



# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Leland and Leslie Whitney are preparing for National Qualifying Events for the 2017 National Championships.

By Leland Whitney, President, USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011

Every two years, USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 elects Chapter Board Members. 2016 was an election year. The new Board convenes for the first time on 3 January 2017. Transition from the 2016 Board to the 2017 Board takes time:

- Additional Board members will be appointed to bring the total number of members to 9.
- The new Board will select the Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- Committee appointments will be completed.

During this Chapter transition there will be no disruption in member's services:

- Social dances on the third Saturday of each month.
- An hour of instruction at each monthly dance.
- Weekly dance instruction on Sunday afternoons throughout the year except for July and December.
- Dance demonstrations for benefits, community and commercial events, as well as other community organizations.
- Support of ballroom dance programs in schools and colleges.
- The local Minnesota Dancer online magazine containing, information on local dance venues, instruction and chapter activities.
- Our website: www.usadance-minnesota.org.

Our mission is to increase the quality and quantity of dance in Minnesota.



I have created over thirty solos. Before my addiction to ballroom, I was a software developer and physicist.

#### Early in my dance life, while sitting through some overloaded studio showcases and competitions. I came to realize that the dance solos were the most interesting parts of the shows. I best like solos that are entertaining and creative; syllabus dancing to the same kind of bland music used for the freestyle rounds is not much more entertaining than the rounds. When I create solos, I therefore pick music that is NOT used in the rounds or in social dances; music that has a story to tell in the vocals, and has firm danceable movements. I especially like music that is somewhat multi-rhythmic having, for example, elements that suggest foxtrot, others suggesting samba, etc., so one need not be constrained to any one dance form. I always listen to music while driving and exercising; often imagining dancing to it, so I have no shortage of ideas about the dances and tunes I want to do.

# Creating Choreography for Dance Solos

by Bob Anholt

Although with all of the chit chat and advertising, I find *Dancing with the Stars* to be unwatchable on live TV, I do learn from "Best of DWTS" videos on youtube. I have noticed that the most entertaining solos are comprised of about 60% silver syllabus, 20% side-by-side dancing facing the audience, and about 20% acrobatics (lifts, jumps, etc.). Although I myself don't do much acrobatics, I always include a bit of side-by-side dancing.

Having picked a song, I first analyze its structure. Music has sections like paragraphs in writing; they may be called chorus and verse or in most pop songs we label them simply A, B, C, bridge, etc. I try to organize figures to maintain a theme in each section. For example, one section might be waltz/foxtrot dancing in shadow, so the section needs to get into shadow, do a few things, and get out by the end. Another section might have all of the side-by side dancing etc. The ends of the

major sections or the ends of each repetition of the tune are good places for developés, cortés, or hesitates. For the beginnings, I often start with basic movements of the dance form. Each section is designed to have a very good flow so that once begun, subsequent figures roll along automatically. This is a good memory device. Instead of having to remember the sequence figure 1, figure 2, ... etc, one has to remember theme 1, theme 2... theme 4.

I usually tie the structure to the song lyrics which can be found these days by googling "lyrics name of the song." I print the lyrics, then play the song and count it, placing a mark every 8 or 6 counts. I then create a spread sheet of 2 or 4 bars per line with the lyrics in column 1 and dance figures in the second. Here is the "airplane" (natural outside turns with left arms extended) section of a sheet for a viennese waltz I'm currently working on.

It's a grand night for singing	4 bars (12 counts) viennese waltz
It's a grand night for singing,	Reverse Turn, 1/2 rev, back change
The stars are bright above.	Change step going outside to airplane; airplane
Earth is a glow add to the show	Airplane free spinning her while I turn. Repeat.
I think I am falling in love!	Walk Around with left arms joined up, twirl her out
Falling, falling	Wrap and unwrap twice
in Love!	Bring her to arabesque run around

The names of the figures in the second line are idiosyncratic, especially if the teacher I learned them from didn't or couldn't say. I have never had a partner who could use these, but they provide a good framework, and as a lead, if I lose where I am in the choreography the lyrics tell me, for example, I need to be doing a wrap unwrap when I'm falling, falling.

From learning in group classes and private lessons, I have always tried to retain figures instead of sequences. For example, my first introduction to Turkish Towel was in a long silver cha cha sequence which I soon forgot, but in the next private lesson with Kristina Lee, we figured out the simplest way into turkish towel from basic and the simplest way out. And while at it, we did the same for rumba, night club, bolero, salsa and swing. I keep a notebook describing figures indexed with lists of figure names I know, so on the spread sheet I need only insert the figure names into column 2 making sure the figures flow together for both lead and follow.

The art comes in picking figures that fit nuances in the mu-

sic. For example, particular bars of waltz music might be more staccato where you can use step points instead of spirals. An even run of quarter notes in foxtrots might suggest doing a grapevine or something resembling samba voltas. Bouncy or swingy bars suggest some east coast swing moves, sultry sections west coast or tango figures. I insert hesitates, dips, cortés, developés at rests in the music. In the airplane section above, the wrap-unwrap works really well for "falling falling" in the music, so that is one of the first things I write down and work the choreography to get there by that time. This approach works forward and back a lot instead of just beginning at the start of the tune and plowing through.

When I run out of ideas, I sometimes youtube search, for example, "DWTS top foxtrot" or "championship rumba" and try to understand and estimate whether I could actually do the figures I see there. I own several Dance Vision "silver variations" DVDs and sometimes use those sequences, but by the time I adapt them to my musicality and the rest of my choreography, they are barely recognizable as such.

No paper plan survives first dancing with a partner. I usually make numerous revisions in the choreography either because figures do not work or because I, my partner, or coaches suggested better ideas. My December solo with Nelly Dorovskikh was launched in five sessions and I was still tweaking it in session four.

While learning to dance it with your partner, one must fit the choreography into the dance space available at the intended venue. For the smooth and standard dance forms that move around the floor, I find methods to turn the corners. For the sideby-side dancing and the stationary dance forms (Latin, social) one must present to the audience or at least to the person who is videoing your solo. As ballroom shows have audience members on 1, 2, 3 or 4 sides of the room, an arbitrary choice about which side to face has to be made. Pro coaches are useful helping to edit the choreography as well as guiding shaping, theatricality and footwork.

The benefits of creating many solos combined with a lot of social dance practice is that you can begin to exploit nuances in all of the music you hear instead of just applying standard sequences to the rhythm of the music. Also you can choose figures you want more practice with. In social dancing, it makes a more interesting lead and more fun.

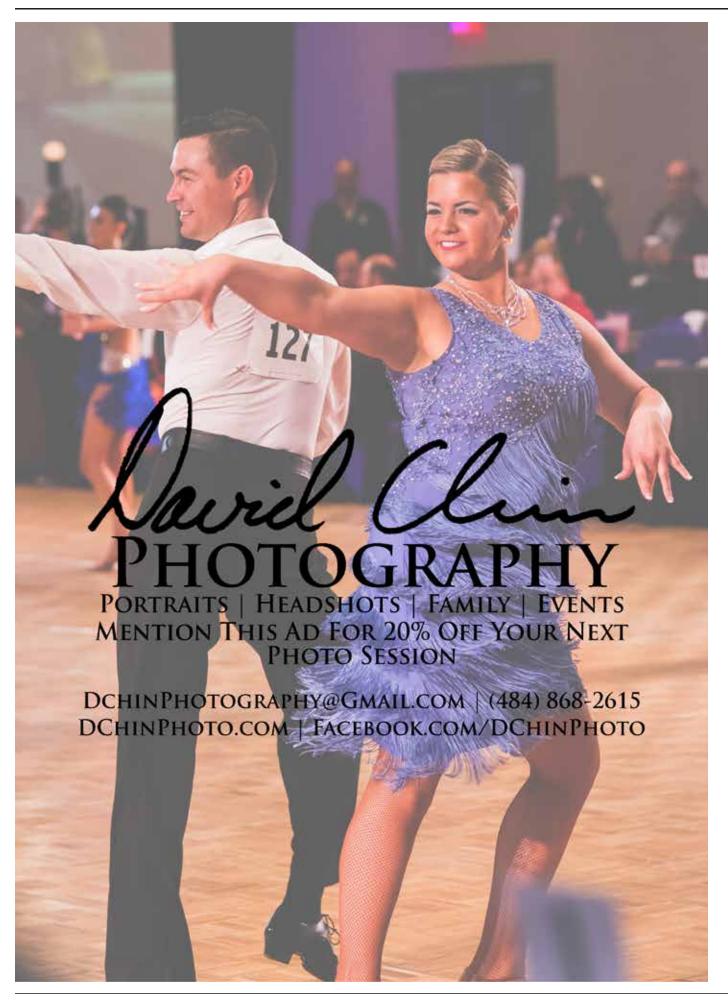




Argentine tango lends itself to many musical tempos and moods — sultry, romantic, melancoly, nostalgic, amorous, cheerful or exuberant — depending upon the music that the band or DJ has chosen.

Dedicated to Fostering and Supporting Argentine Tango in Minnesota

MORE INFORMATION AT THE TSOM WEB SITE Teachers, Practice Workshops, Dances (called *Milongas*), the Tango Calendar, Special Events, and Much More



#### Christmas Demos at Various Malls

#### by Yvonne Viehman

We warmed the hearts of many shoppers at Rosedale Mall on November 20 and 27, and at Maplewood Mall on December 4 and 18, 2016! Thank you to the following dancers for providing lots of holiday cheer and sharing their joy of dance this holiday season: Yu Ping Zheng & Bob Anholt, Jackie Dalton & Peter Radford, Rebecca Steinkruger & Greg Story, Suzanne Anglo & Gary Narducci, Lisa Wu & Daniel Lai, Jeralynn Mohr & Ha Tu-

ong, Mary & Ted Ringberg, Sharon & Ron Meyer, Doris & Ron Lazarski, Delia & Louie Aguilar, Sally & Dale Eppenberger, Kathy Palsfuss & Jimmy Parker, and Vicki & Les Milverstedt. Thanks also to Lori Goldstein and the Sleigh Belle Dancers for their incredible energy in dancing three fantastic routines. Also, many thanks to Gretchen Novak for bringing her talented Starlettes from Dance Unlimited Studio. I could not have done these dem-

os without the help of my wonderful husband, Dan Viehman, for helping me emcee and being my dance partner, and to our boys, Ben & Jon, who were helpful "elves" passing out flyers and candy canes and helping run the music. Joyce Thompson provided some fantastic holiday dance tunes for us all to enjoy! We are so very grateful for all of the dancers for their amazing efforts!



Dan and Yvonne Viehman



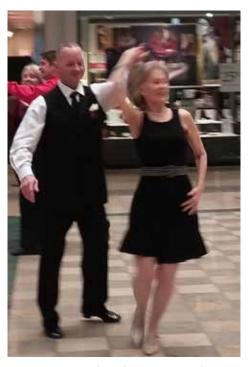
Sleigh Belle Dancers



Ron and Sharon Meyer, Ron and Doris Lazarski and Ted and Mary Ringberg



Daniel Lai and Lisa Wu



Greg Story and Rebecca Steinkruger



Ha Tuong and Jeralynn Mohr



Gary Narducci and Suzanne Anglo



## DanceLife Ballroom

Dance is life · health · happiness (612) 345-4219





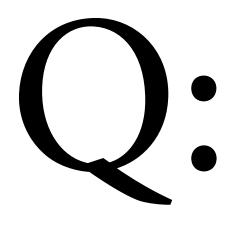
Wednesday, February 22 to Wednesday, March 1 2017

## Playa Mazatlan Beach Hotel

- Oceanview Room
- \* All Inclusive
- Roundtrip Airfare
- 6000 Square Foot Ballroom
- Over 25 Hours of Group Classes
- Nightly Dance Parties with DanceLife Ballroom Staff
- Evening Group Dinners with DanceLife Ballroom Staff
- Games wttith Shinya and Spontaneous Entertainment
- \*\$2200 Double Occupancy/\$2600 Single Occupancy



## ASK DR. DANCE



I have been told that partner dynamics are more complex than the typical lead and follow labels. I would like some clarification on what the actual roles are for "leads" and "follows", particularly so I can share this information with men who treat me like an object on the dance floor.

#### Donna Said:

Hmm. You sound pretty upset, but I would need more information to know what you need. I am guessing that you are a frustrated social dancer since you refer to men in the plural form.

In the ideal world, leads and follows would all have great technique and the ability to clearly request (lead) and respond (follow). But this is the real world, and most dancers are just doing the best they can.

In a social setting, it's generally wise to keep your opinion of the leader's role to yourself. Probably the best course of action is to simply dance with those you enjoy and decline to dance with those that make you feel like an object.

Wishing you the best of luck in finding fun partners.



Donna Edelstein is a coach, judge and organizer of the Snow Ball DanceSport Competition. donnawrites@msn.com

#### Paul Said:

If you see a couple walking arm in arm, do you think that he is leading her? He certainly sets the pace and determines the direction of the movement, and the lady willingly accompanies him. In a nutshell, this is what should happen on the dance floor as well.

A strong lead (read: pushing or shoving) is not necessarily a good lead, and a good lead is not necessarily a strong lead. A man's role is to guide the lady across or along her feet in such a way that the message is understood without her having to think too much.

Please understand that I am referring to a social setting. A lady should try to follow what she senses from the man, even if she suspects that it is wrong. If both people are doing the same thing, right or wrong, the message was delivered and understood. Remember that it is not a contest of wills, but rather two people trying to achieve harmonious movement across the floor while enjoying the tune they are dancing to.



Paul Botes is a dance instructor, coach, choreographer and judge. He is an owner of American Classic Ballroom, located in Chanhassen, MN.

www.acballroom.com

#### Others Said:

Optimal execution of ballroom or Latin dancing requires a great deal of coordination, strength and flexibility for each individual in a partnership. Most tasks are the full responsibility of both partners. A few are divided between them.

Both partners are responsible for the following:

- 1. Finding and maintaining their own balance and position throughout each dance.
- 2. Generating the power used to move across the floor. However, both partners will not generate power on every step.
- 3. Holding up their own weight.
- 4. Respecting the shared center of partnership. Movement that encroaches on the other partner's space or balance fails to respect the shared center of partnership. This responsibility is especially important because, when violated, it oftens results in pain for the follower.
- 5. Resisting the urge to do their partner's job.

The leader is responsible for the following:

1. Directing the partnership with clear, unambiguous (usually tactile) indications of what movement the partnership is commencing to execute. These

indications are generally referred to as "leads". A lead is achieved in the moment before a movement begins. The leader must, in an instant, express how much power is about to be applied, in which direction the partnership is about to move, how quickly the partnership is about to rotate, and any other qualities of the impending movement that make it unique.

- 2. Following through whatever indication has been led. Changing the qualities of a movement after it has been led creates confusion for the follower and interrupts the fluidity of the movement.
- 3. Navigating the partnership through traffic on the dance floor with a sequence of leads.

The follower is responsible for the following:

- 1. Responding instantaneously to every lead and executing the indicated movement as precisely as possible (with one caveat below). Aggressive implementation of a given lead provides feedback to the leader about what was led, so he has the opportunity to follow through with the movement he initiated.
- 2. Polishing the look and covering the seams of the partnership no matter what leads or traffic are presented. The follower fills in the gaps that might otherwise prevent the partnership from maintaining a look of power and

grace. This is an incredibly taxing job, as a poorly timed or ambiguous lead can encourage painful contortions or jerky, faltering pauses. Perfectly timed, unambiguous leads make this task less arduous.

3. Protecting herself from damage to her body. This is more of an issue in closed ballroom dance position than other positions. Of the two partners, the follower is far more frequently the one put into compromising positions. If led to flail her neck in a way that inflicts pain (or may cause permanent damage), she should follow the lead as closely as she can while stopping short of strain, pain and injury. A leader that consistently leads a follow to execute a painful movement is a hazard to the longevity of her dance career and should be avoided until the pain level of his leads falls to an acceptable degree.

It is a tremendous task to faithfully enact each of these elements in every dance. Few get close. Still, we should aim for perfection and be tolerant of an honest attempt to reach it. Also, as you intend to share this information, I would encourage you to be as respectful as possible in your delivery.



Deborah J. Nelson is the founder, President, and head designer of Satin Stitches Ltd.

I've done articles that deal with inappropriate costumes for children in the past. I will be discussing the other end of the spectrum this time:

The other end of the 'age appropriate' debate, is costuming for mature adult women. Men: generally you luck out with your costuming as you age, as many of your ballroom costumes include looser-fitting trousers, tuxedos and such. Pouring yourself into a tight one-piece catsuit might be problematic, so then you can refer to my upcoming comments about supportive undergarments.

Unless the dancer has the skin of a twenty-year-old, backless and sleeveless costumes are not the best option. Over the years, Satin Stitches has created countless ballroom gowns and costumes for all age ranges, including those of us (I now include myself) whose skin's elasticity has seen better days. When we look in the mirror, we are wearing our

# What is an 'Age Appropriate Costume'?

### By Deborah J. Nelson/ Satin Stitches Ltd.

rose-colored glasses and don't see those wrinkles or the sagging and bagging. We try to think of ourselves as 'forever young'.

But keep in mind how others see us, and use some tricks to maintain that youthful appearance. Stretch spandex fabrics can control the looseness or jiggling of older skin. Sheer mesh fabrics can hold everything in place and not be really noticeable from a distance. If you match your skin tone, it will barely be perceived, and it can add the finishing touch to a dance costume. A bright color or black sheer mesh can coordinate with the other features of your dance costume and can be very visually appealing. Of course if you LOVE rhinestones, you now have a perfect area to stone to your heart's content!

In addition to stretch fabrics holding your skin in place, you can also use looser fabrics to simply cover the area that you're hoping to camouflage. For a smooth gown, a looser sheer chiffon sleeve or upper arm drape can eliminate that naked arm.

Besides the dreaded upper arm, on our older bodies, necks and neckline-area skin can lose its tautness, as well as the skin on our back. The open-back look from your youth may now be more attractive, covered with sheer nude mesh, for that youthful look. If you have a wonderfully toned body with minimal wrinkling or looseness, you can take advantage of your good genes or your good workout regiment to still show some skin. Just take off those rose-toned glasses and really see what others are seeing. If you are happy with the look – go for it! If not, use a little camouflage.

But don't simply cover up. Go with beautifully designed, classical lines and you will continue to look beautiful, all through your senior years. I think it's more

of a challenge to create stunning Latin-style dance costumes for the older dancer, simply because scanty costumes continue to be the norm, leaving little room for older bodies, so to speak. Concentrate on interesting diagonal lines with emphasis on great skirt movement. Make sure that any sleeves or higher necklines blend with the design - so they don't look like they were an afterthought to make the costume more covered or modest. beautiful things with your rhinestone embellishment to create a stunning costume. And if a faux cut-out or two strikes your fancy, just make sure they are tasteful and classy.

Supportive undergarments also become very important, when And remember that we age. the most flattering of costumes, are those that fit well. Don't try and squeeze yourself into a toosmall costume, just because you can. And on the other hand, don't clothe yourself in a baggy, boxy garment so you don't show your lumps and bumps. Try out the many brands of 'shapewear' that are currently available, and let these garments do the work, to smooth out any lumps and bumps.

Just make sure that these garments fit nicely under your dance apparel. Keep in mind that all undergarments can be altered and sections cut away, in order to work under any gown or costume that you might have. But watch for lumps and bumps that

are created above or below these garments. When clients ask for 'cups' to be sewn into a costume, I always present an alternative. I suggest bringing their own comfortable, correctly fitting bra. The straps can be cut off, along with the back. The actual 'neckline' of a bra can also be somewhat cut away, to better fit under a dress or costume, as well.

Older dancers should act our age and look our age (at least within a decade or so!). Dance choreography along with dance costuming should reflect our body sizes, shapes and ages for the most flattering and attractive result. Nothing is more distracting or uncomfortable to watch, than seventy-something dancers dressing like twenty-somethings.

In my forty years of designing for clients, I have regrettably created a few costumes and gowns that made me wince. I have always tried to be honest in working with individuals and offered my opinion on if something 'worked' or didn't. My advice was not always taken. Those instances that stand out include creating 'fairy tale princess dresses' for a very elderly client (she loved them!), and noticing that dance costumes created by others for my client included lots of wrinkled, exposed skin (mine didn't). As a custom designer, we are at the mercy of our client's whims, but I have always done my best to influence against bad taste. But do realize that the rule in costuming is that you CAN break the rules, if done tastefully!









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