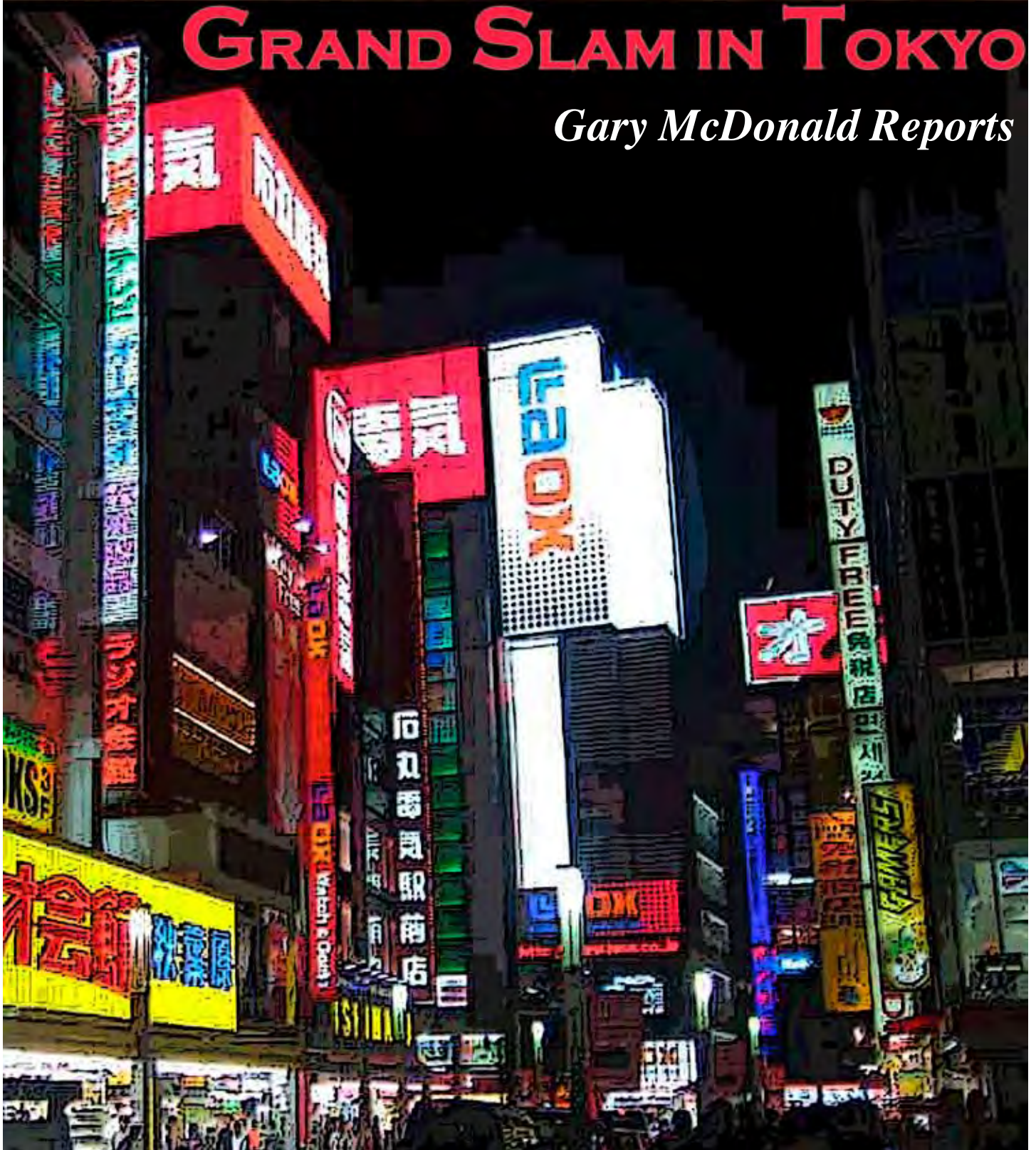


GRAND SLAM IN TOKYO

Gary McDonald Reports



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Our apologies to all for last week's error in presenting the report of the IDSF Latin from Bassano by Mr. Robert Ong. The second half of the report did not appear. We are running the report in its entirety in this edition beginning on page 10.

IDSF GRAND SLAM LATIN & STANDARD, TOKYO JAPAN MARCH 2009

Report by Gary McDonald

File photos by Andrew Miller www.dancefotoman.co.uk

VICTORIES TO SILDE/FIRSTOVA AND FERRUGIA/KOELHER



The IDSF Grand Slam Latin & Standard were both held in Tokyo on Sunday March 8th in conjunction with the Rogers Cup 11th Tokyo Open International DanceSport Championships. It was a very busy day for the judges as both Standard and Latin events were held on the same day which also made it very entertaining to the large audience in the Tokyo gymnasium and sports hall.

The Latin event started first at around 8am so it was a long day for the couples but each and every one of them showed how devoted to their sport they were as they came out with maximum energy in every round. Later in the morning the Standard couples graced the floor with their preliminary rounds so that the Semis and finals of both events could be held in the evening. Below is a brief report on both finals.

IDSF Grand Slam Latin (7 Couple Final)

7th Nino Langella & Natalia Maidiuk (Italy) I felt Nino and Nataliya had a very subdued performance and danced quiet the whole night. They should be happy with their inclusion in this final and concentrate on creating more impact in what they do so that they can achieve greater results.

6th Evgeny Imrekov & Elizaveta Divak (Russia) Wow, this is the first time I have judged this couple and I was mesmerized and entertained with their dancing for the entire day. They have a perfect mix of rhythm, technique, energy, partnering skills and a man-woman chemistry that is so enjoyable to watch. For me they should have easily finished in the top three but the other judges obviously were not ready

to place them there so quickly, watch out for this couple in the future.

5th Martino Zanibellato & Michelle Abildtrup (Denmark)
contd. pg. 5



Langella/Maidiuk - have now ended partnership

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Imrekov / Divak
photo by KVIK magazine



Zanibellato / Abildtrup



Batagelj / Strukelj

This couple always look very clean and polished in their performance and have a clear understanding of what they are trying to produce. Martino is always full of charisma and very entertaining to watch, I only wish Michelle would dance with more conviction at times and give a stronger sense of determination in what she is doing so that she can match Martino's passion.

4th Jurij Batagelj & Jagoda Strukelj (Slovenia). I enjoyed watching this couple who danced with lots of energy in a very well balanced partnership. Jurij can sometimes appear tight through his shoulders and back but that is the only negative in a very positive performance.

3rd Zoran Plohl & Tatsiana Lahvinovich (Croatia) Another couple who are very entertaining to watch. Zoran is very grounded and masculine in everything he does which gives him a very commanding look on the floor. Tatsiana is also a very strong dancer, I only wish that she could soften up her overall appearance so that I could see more of a masculine-feminine contrast in their approach.

2nd Andrey Zaitsev & Anna Kuzminskaya (Russia). Andrey & Anna were easy winners for me on this occasion, they dominated the competition from the moment they walked on the floor. Anna has the best leg action in the final and Andrey is always in the right place at

the right time connecting his body weight with her so that they can properly execute their performance. It will only be a matter of time until this talented duo are in the top spot.

1st Alexey Silde & Anna Firstova (Russia)

Congratulations to both Alexey and Anna on a fine victory in a very high level event. Alexey has such great floor presence especially in Paso Doble where there is no doubt he is in command of the entire floor. My only wish is that Anna could dance with more impact and determination to balance out this partnership so that she does not appear to be overshadowed by Alexey.

IDSF Grand Slam Standard

A noteworthy mention in this semi-final was the dancing of the Chinese couple Chao Yang and Yiling Tan who danced exceptionally well and was a surprise for me not to be included in this final.

6th Luca Bussoletti & Tjasa Vulic

(Slovenia) Luca and Tjasa were not one of the tallest couples in this event but they certainly danced with plenty of presentation. They are very similar in height which sometimes makes it more difficult when creating body lines but they did not seem daunted by this challenge at all in fact they turned their disadvantage into an advantage with a very nice performance.

5th Wiktor Kiszka & Malgorzata Garlicka (Poland). Danced with power and endless stamina all day with their best dance for me being their quickstep. Gosia sometimes appears a little tight through her neckline in the swing dances which makes it look like she has trouble releasing her upper body at the end of the swing.

contd. pg. 7



Silde / Firstova



Plohl / Lahvinovich



Zaitsev / Kuzminskaya



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attended this year**

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4th Sergei Konovaltsev & Olga Konovaltseva (Russia) Sergei and Olga cover the floor very well with good understanding of strong leg action and maximized body swing. A little unlucky to finish in fourth

place, if they can keep their performance consistent throughout the entire event their results will improve quickly.

3rd Simone Segatori & Annette Sudol (Germany) A very clean polished performance from their first round until the last. I would like to see Simone use his back a little more so as to create a softer presentation through their topline, sometimes the overall look appears a little rigid.

2nd Andrea Ghigiarelli & Sara Andracchio (Italy) Our runners up should be very happy with their performance on this day. Their high level of dancing was consistent through every round. I personally gave them two first places in Viennese Waltz and Foxtrot as I thought they challenged the winners very well indeed.



Ferrugia / Koehler

1st Benedetto Ferrugia & Claudia Koehler (Germany) Very worthy winners of a fantastic competition. Claudia started to lose her neckline during Viennese Waltz and Foxtrot but the break before their quickstep proved to be just what they needed as they came out and left no doubt in my mind as to who our champions would be on this occasion.



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More From Bassano.....

Bassano Open 2009

Report by Robert Ong
Photos by Andrew Miller
www.dancefotoman.co.uk

The IDSF Adult Latin Championships was held on the 2nd day of the Bassano Open Championships, a day after the IDSF Junior II World Championships. This was another full day with the sports hall packed to the brim with cheering spectators, coaches and supporters.



The IDSF Open Latin event was enthralling, packed with raw power and adrenalin every round. 127 couples participated in this event. The champion title was won by Gabriele Pasquale Goffredo and Antonia Goffredo of Italy. Not surprising at all, this couple were outstanding from the very start. They were very consistent in their power-punched performance, great foot speed and charismatic presence on the floor.



The 2nd place was also taken by the Italians, Pavel Pasechnik and Francesca Beradi. Another strong couple, at times their dancing seemed too hard but overall impactful. The 3rd place was clinched by Manuel Frighetto and Karin Rooba from Estonia. A very attractive couple, Karin was wearing a black 'bunny' suit and tights in the earlier rounds which I thought was quite slick. The change of costume into a dress in the Finals was good as now it showed more dancing. Overall, a nice couple to watch.

The rest of the line-up in the Finals were from Italy and Hungary:

4th place Stefano Vidoni and Giulia Settomini	Italy
5th place Saverio Loria and Zeudi Zanetti	Italy
6th place Umberto Gaudino and Louise Heise	Italy
7th place Csaba Laszlo and Anna Mikes	Hungary

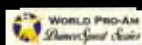
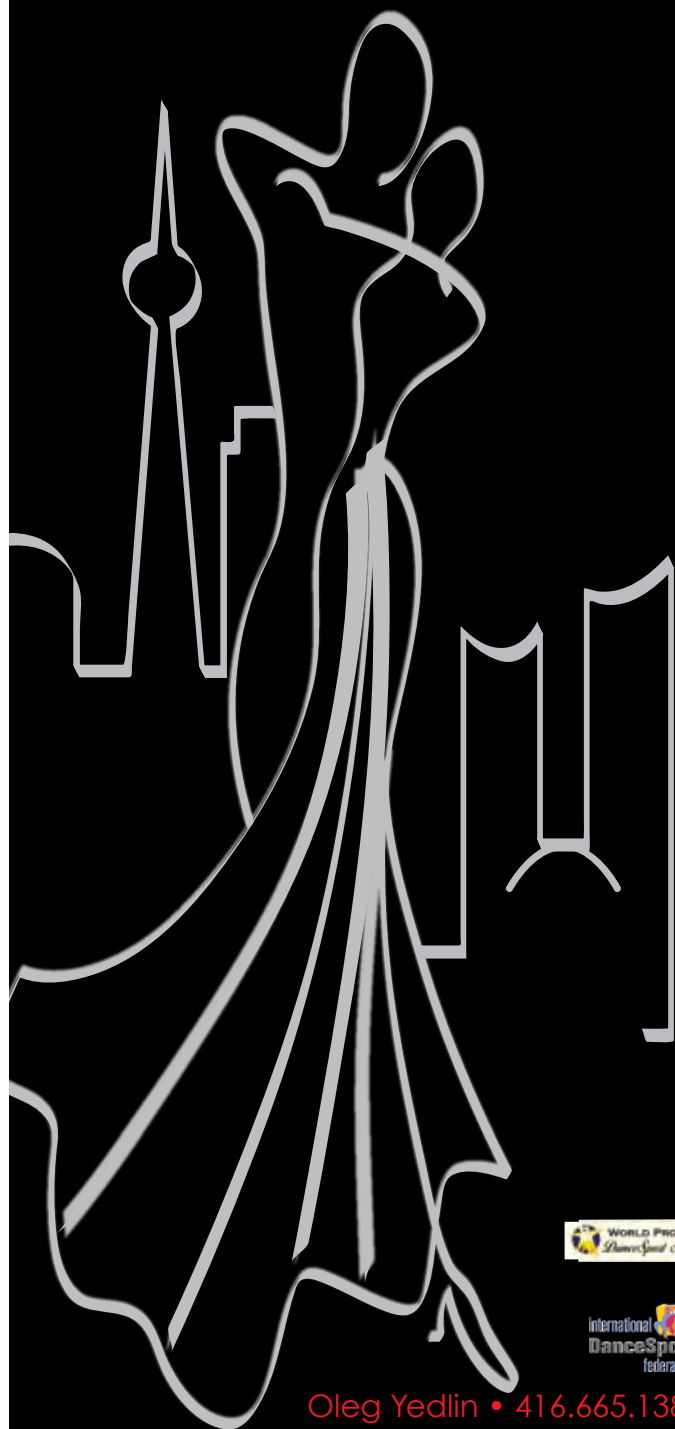
The results of this group were pretty close. Stefano Vidoni and Giulia Settomini were very fluid in their performances. I felt Saverio Loria and Zeudi Zanetti could do better in the final placing. Somehow, Zeudi's long skirt with tassles hanging was rather distracting and could have caused her some points in the Jive. Umberto Gaudino

contd. pg. 11



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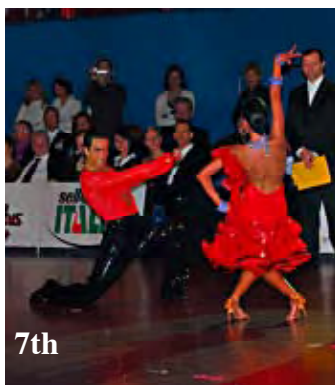
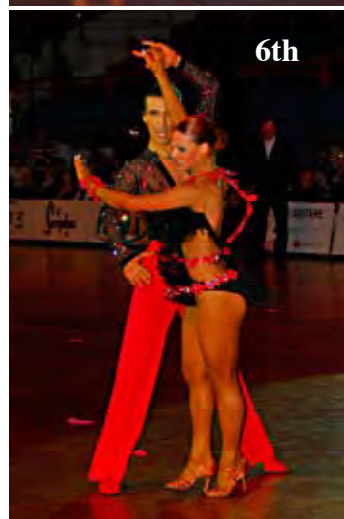
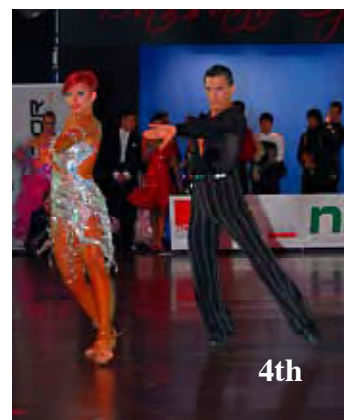


and Louise Heise were another neat couple on the floor, looked very good in the Jive round. Csaba Laszlo and Anna Mikes also put up a consistent performance, a couple to look out for in future.

The semi-finals were danced in 2 heats. It was intense, all the couples put in everything they've got. The line-up include 8th placed Balaz Nagymihaly and Szilvia Szogi (Hungary), 9th placed Sergey Gusev and Anatasia Usoltseva (Russia), 10th & 11th placed Daniele Sargenti and Eleonora Comparini (Italy); and Juan Michel Gomez Prieto and Iliyana Zhenna (Spain); 12th placed Salvatore Sinardi and Enza Gebbie (Italy) and 13th placed Salvatore Caruso and Concetta Cultrera (Italy).

The standard in semi-finals were rather close. I felt that both couples, Balaz Nagymihaly and Szilvia Szogi (Hungary), and Sergey Gusev and Anatasia Usoltseva (Russia), had a fighting chance to go into the finals. In fact, I quite like Sergey Gusev and Anatasia Usoltseva (Russia) in the earlier rounds. It is unfortunate they didn't sustain that level of energy and seemed slow in the semi-finals.

Another couple that caught my attention was Salvatore Caruso and Concetta Cultrera (Italy). This couple was very visible on the



floor. They have charisma and good visual presence but their actions seemed too busy, especially in the Cha Cha Cha.

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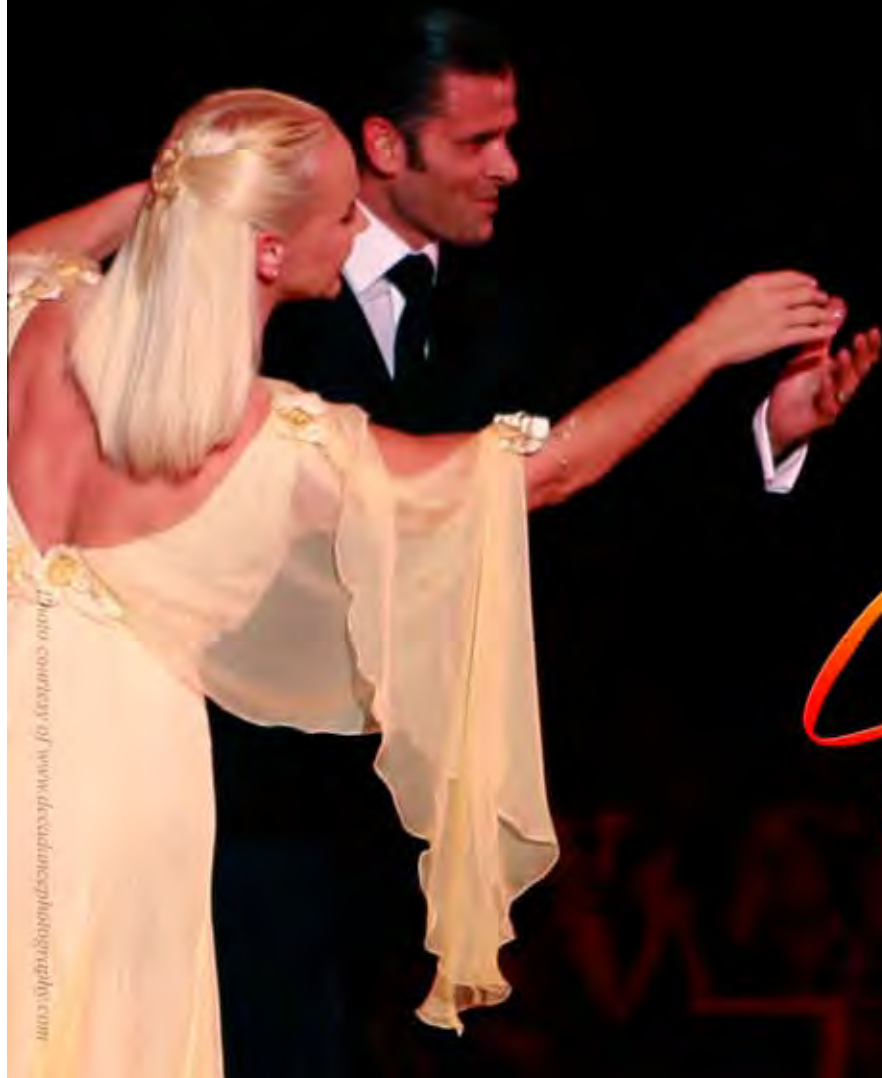
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The Trip of a Lifetime

ON THE FANTASY GRAND TOUR TO VIENNA & BUDAPEST

BY KIYOSHI YAMAMOTO

The word is out: the must-do event of the year is the Fantasy Grand Tour to Vienna and Budapest, organized by Maria McGill, Michael Chapman and Herb Vazquez. A select clientele donned their glam gowns and tuxedos and danced their way through a first-class, whirlwind tour of two of the most magical cities in Europe. Whether it was the imposing 900-year-old monastery hidden in the Vienna Woods, competing in the garden-themed ballroom of the Budapest InterContinental, feasting on traditional Hungarian dishes while costumed dancers balanced bottles of wine on their heads, or boarding the horse-drawn carriages to the Imperial Palace where the world's elite celebrate New Year's in style, everyone had their own special experiences to be treasured.

Was It A Fantasy?

It was amazing; it was definitely like a dream. The Imperial Ball was the most memorable. From the carriage ride, feeling like you're going back a couple centuries, going into this wonderful palace, meeting the royal family, dancing...I've never done so many Viennese waltzes in my life. This will be my most special memory. I wore a strapless gold, copper and black Nicole Miller gown that was gorgeous. I felt like Angelina Jolie on the red carpet.

And the bus tour in Budapest was amazing because I got to know more about the city. I've been to different places in Europe and I don't normally go on tours, but this was actually a good experience, especially in a country where you don't speak the language, you can learn so much, especially when there's so much history. I'm just in awe. If you have the opportunity to participate in an event like this, you shouldn't pass it up.

—Lisa Murrell,
Pro Am Student, Sarasota, FL



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The Fantasy Begins in Vienna

The Fantasy Grand Tour was off to a roaring start in Vienna, Austria where a steady flow of aperitifs at the welcome banquet brought the Fantasy Tour revelers to their feet dancing, mixing and mingling, as they sampled some delicious Bavarian cuisine. After dinner, we retired to the elegant Hilton Vienna, located



What Did I Like Best?

I can't say what my favorite was because they were all so different. Even though Vienna and Budapest are close to each other, they have a different feel so it feels like two completely separate trips. The New Year's Eve Ball at the Imperial Palace was great, but I actually enjoyed the New Year's Day Concert even more, that was my highlight. And the traditional Hungarian dinner when we arrived in Budapest was quite fun, we had a great time going out in Budapest.

—Phillip Gott,
Pro Am Teacher, San Diego, CA

in the heart of the city and ten minutes to everything.

We boarded a coach the next morning and headed to the enchanting Vienna Woods, which have been immortalized on canvas by famed painters throughout the ages. There, an enormous monastery looms, originally built in the 12th century and still in use today by a hundred devoted monks. As the surrounding towns grew, the structure was added to and expanded to accommodate the population. The architectural styles of each century have left their distinctive signatures on the holy building. We found, inside, an ancient moss-covered fountain where worshippers purify themselves on their way to pray. And tapping into the thermal energy of the underground springs, ghostlike wisps of steam drifted along the walls to greet us.

Our next stop was the Spanish Riding School, home of the dancing Lippizan horses: the oldest and most revered breed in Europe. We watched the trainers put the novice horses through their paces and next winter, we will see them perform.

TRAVEL TIP

PARTYING INTO THE EARLY NEW YEAR'S HOURS CAN MAKE YOU HUNGRY. SAMPLE SOME VIENNESE WIENERS FROM ONE OF THE STREET VENDORS AROUND THE PALACE. THIS TRADITIONAL TREAT IS ABSOLUTELY DELECTABLE ON A CHILL WINTER NIGHT.

People also had free time to be on their own and some went shopping, others explored the museums and palaces and still others searched out the most fabulous dining establishments they could find.

New Year's at the Imperial Palace

As the clock ticked the year to a close, we put on our best and were whisked away by horse-drawn carriages to the New Year's Gala at the Imperial Palace. Soldiers stood guard as we climbed the grand, red-carpeted staircase to greet the Imperial family in all their regalia.

Guests sat down to dine in sixteen different rooms, all luxuriously and uniquely decorated. Our group was in the most spectacular, with glittering chandeliers on top of glittering chandeliers, gold statues by the dozen and marble columns lining the walls. The food arrived artfully prepared in



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delicious bite-sized morsels and wine and champagne flowed all night. In each room, live music played, jitterbug in one room, jazz in another, waltz in yet another, plus a marching band and opera singers drifted from salon to salon adding a special flavor to the evening. "Our group had the most beautiful women with the most beautiful dresses," added Maria McGill, one of the event organizers, "they were the envy of the palace!" Not everyone stayed till the end, but for a few die-hard merrymakers, the party lasted till 4AM.

New Year's Day, we returned to the palace for a rousing orchestral performance and no less than seven opera singers belting out the 19th century's greatest hits. Still floating on a sea of music, we boarded the coach for a relaxing two-hour drive to Hungary for the next leg of the adventure and the inauguration of the Budapest Open Dancesport Championships.



How Was the Trip?

It's going to take me a little while to recover, I had such a good time! I used to represent Austria when I competed, but oddly enough I never had the opportunity to go to Vienna so it was special to come and see the place where my dance partner, Manfred, had grown up.

I don't think you can actually describe what New Year's was like unless you experience it. I don't think I've been anywhere on earth that was quite like that. You're having dinner in the royal palace, which for many years was not open to the public, so to be able to go there, picked up by carriage and the grandeur and the decorations, I mean you don't really have to do too much to a palace, but they did. It was extremely elegant and sophisticated to the highest end. If you want that once-in-a-lifetime experience that would be the pinnacle of it all, I don't think you can match this anywhere.

—Mary Murphy,
"So You Think You Can Dance?" Judge,
San Diego, CA

Our Hungarian Adventure Begins

We checked into the InterContinental Budapest located on the banks of the Danube with the best views in town overlooking the castle district and the massive royal palace. Every night, the spotlights blinked on, bathing the palace in a breathtaking, magical glow.



The Launch of the Budapest Open

After a day of relaxation, the doors to the ballroom opened to welcome competitors and spectators to the Budapest Open Dancesport Championships. The ballroom was stunning with Swarovski crystal chandeliers, lush plants and flowers, and statuesque stone maidens shipped in specifically for the event's garden theme. The competition was opened by the Hungarian Sports Minister and attended by competitors from twelve countries, with over 2,000 entries.

We watched special performances by the World Tango Champions, Hungarian hip-hop dancers and the Elektrik Boogie World Champion doing an edgy Terminator-themed routine. The champions in the Open Amateur Latin and Open Amateur Standard (who are both reigning Hungarian Champions in their styles) performed honor dances Saturday night. And next year, the Budapest Open becomes an IDSF event.

What Will I Remember Most?

My favorite experience was the actual competition, because of the dancing itself and being able to dance in Budapest. I've been on a dance-related trip before but I liked this better because it had the competition built into it. And the view is incredible at the hotel; we're right on the Danube looking up at the palace. I had plans to go to Europe this past summer and I cancelled that and I'm so glad I did because this was so much better!

—Chris Roberson,
Pro Am Student, Sarasota, FL

The Sports Minister was so impressed with the event and how it was run that he asked Maria, Michael and Herb to also organize the Hungarian Dancesport Championships at the next Budapest Open.

The Fantasy Tour Concludes

On our final day in Budapest, we toured the city by coach, climbing the city's highest point, Freedom Hill for a panoramic view of the city. After lunch, we attended a performance of Johann Strauss' comic operetta, Die Fledermaus at the Budapest Opera House, a sensational example of



My Favorite Experience?

It's been spectacular and I know I'm gushing, but I can't find any fault with the experience at all. I thought nothing could top Vienna until we came to Budapest. This was my first trip out of the country and I came primarily for the trip, but the competition was the icing on the cake. Last night, I didn't think I would last until the end, but then we started doing the YMCA and dancing around and we were having so much fun I didn't want it to end. I meet such wonderful people on trips like this that I want to keep in touch with. And when I go to competitions and I see their names in the programs and I know who they are, it means so much!

—Diane Owens,
Pro Am Student, Atlanta, GA



Renaissance architecture and lavish decor. "I think people were a bit distracted. We were so dazzled by the opera house, I don't think anyone was paying much attention to the performance," laughed Summer Gray, designer for Designs to Shine.

As evening fell, we boarded a riverboat for a dinner cruise along the river Danube: another delicious dining experience, this time with sweeping, unobstructed views of the city from the ship's all-glass top floor. A final toast with tokaj (pronounced toke-eye), Hungary's sweet dessert wine, brought our grand adventure to a close. It was a wonderful way to commemorate a new year of dancing.

Put This Trip On Your Must-Do List

We hope you join us next year. If there is a Must-Do List for dancers, this trip must surely hold the top position. For more information on this event, please contact Emma Oswald at 863-668-9668 or emmaoswald@aol.com



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