

THE BDF NATIONAL CONGRESS 2023

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THE BALLROOM DANCERS' FEDERATION LTD
THE BDF NATIONAL CONGRESS 2023

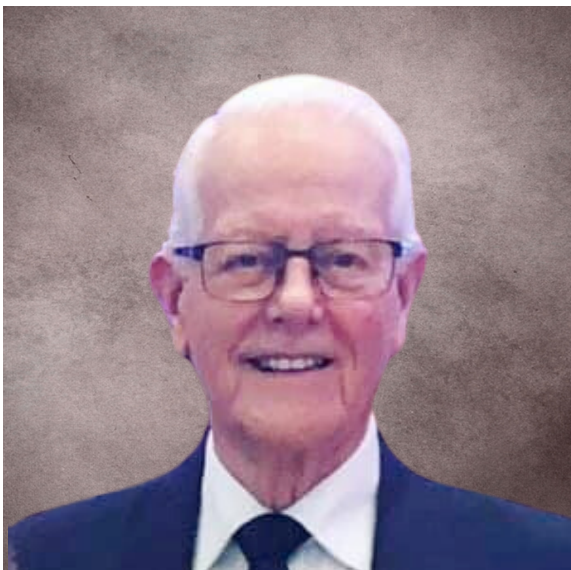
FRIDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2023 THE PAVILION WINTER GARDENS BLACKPOOL

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL

9:30 AM DOORS OPEN
10:00 - 10:20 DAVID COCKRAM & ROSIE WARD - *'LETS FACE THE MUSIC AND DANCE'*
10:20 - 10:40 ADELMO MANDIA & LEAH ROLFE - *'STRONG LEGS - STAND TALL'*
10:40 - 11:00 STEPHEN HILLIER MBE - *'THE HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT OF BALLROOM DANCING' PART 1*
11:00 - 11:30 COFFEE BREAK
11:30 - 11:40 ADDRESS BY CHRISTOPHER HAWKINS - *'PRESIDENT OF THE BDC*
11:40 - 12:00 STEPHEN HILLIER MBE - *'THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF BALLROOM DANCING' PART 2*
12:00 - 12:20 DALE BENNETT - *'SIMPLE DIRECTION'*
12:20 - 12:40 KYLE TAYLOR & ALISA MARGULIS - *'TANGO - THE MYTHS AND THE FACTS'*
12:40 - 13:00 ANTON SBOEV & PATRIZIA RANIS - *'IT TAKES TWO - PARTNERING'*

IF YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE, LET OTHERS LIGHT THEIR CANDLES IN IT." ~ MARGARET FULLER

FOLLOW ME AROUND THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS *by JACK REAVELY*



It is my privilege and a very happy one to be able to present to your eyes a mind serial on the British National Championships from the Empress Ball in Blackpool... the home of dance where, for many years now, dance has been massaged by the environmental perfection, not just within the ballroom, but also in all its environmental glory.

I wondered, prior to the festival, if I would see terrific use of correct functionality over the dances, or would there be a lack of so many being able to transmit literacy, and therefore the clarity of body mechanics may well not quite be in the abundance required, or would it prove to be a vintage year, where everyone was so perfect, I couldn't find any complaints?

We are so very lucky that our famed Pioneers laid down simply beautifully logical fundamentals, for us to not just follow, but to add to with embellishments, which escalated the dances into the artistic beauty which now is so prevalent, that it almost smiles gleefully from the floor to the eyes and ears of those in attendance.

Let's go....first of all, we have the BDF annual 'free admission" Congress, which was held in the Pavilion, a space which draws one into the proceedings with such conviviality as to whisper from the floor, how much it loves being caressed with the feet of the dance exponents of such merit. The atmosphere is simply thrilling and full of the fervor created by the atmospheric conditions. Yowee, bring it on. 20-minute mini-lectures and all of the lecturers are perspiring with the anticipatory relish, reserved for such an occasion, as BDF actually means "Ballroom Dance Fanatics' ...and they are in abundance.



DAVID COCKRAM AND ROSIE WARD and the title is "Let's Face The Music and Dance" and it all started bang on time...of course. They wouldn't dream of being behind the time scale.

This couple are tall and elegant but so able to Tango even to a Foxtrot tune...back from Foxtrot to Tango using the quarter beats action, and crashing it to eyes and ears. Are you all awake? Of course, everyone was... A beautifully cut suit worn by David, and with Rosie's style lighting up the atmosphere, when the Blackpool Orchestra recordings filled the hall with music to enhance the scene for sure.

Maturity brings rewards for sure, and this young couple have adopted the principles and are allowing soft beats to be heard within the music as well as the crescendo which, when wisely displayed in the dancers bodies, so enhances.

The beats tell you when to take a step, which you must make as clear as Church bells on a Sunday morning. Then we hear a change to heavier and more pronounced beats. Rosie is no wilting flower, and she uses the clarity of diction beautifully, and this was escalated by David's hairstyle and this Lecture demanded and received, from this couple, an escalation to transmit *saue* elegance and sophistication, which this pair sure succeeded in transmitting...

Al Jolson would have dedicated his song "Oh Rosie, You Are My Posey" to them.

Fastidious preparation has produced this by them today, and we saw tomorrow today from them as they completed with a lovely Quickstep.



ADELMO MANDIA AND LEAH ROLFE

Strong Legs, Stand Tall.

The mood changes as they walk to the floor and convey Latin influences instantly.

Using legs and feet on the floor is an essential.

Laughing he says that this lecture is only for short people, and giggles break the atmosphere into spasms of gleeful laughter. Adelmo says that mental blockages can be very difficult to clear until clarity of thought process can be transmitted to base action.

They successfully explained how to control the weight within the body blocks and the base, combined into Latin actions.

How to push into the feet on the floor and if your body is not in the correct placement of the foot, problems will be conveyed instantly. This young pair have so evidently studied and perspired in order to acquire the fundamental technical assets...It is utterly evident today already that young Ladies of Dance are never staying subservient to their men of dance ... no fear, they demand and receive, the surrender of 50 percent of the partnerships, so that they can convey exactly what they demand.

Their opinions are worth a golden find, which will make them billionaires in the acquisition of dance wealth...we call it fundamentals...Deep thinking from this young couple is utterly clear and concise.



STEPHEN HILLIER MBE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORY OF BALLROOM DANCE PART 1

Of course the title of these two sessions, within the congress, made me all agog as I knew that Stephen would have spent many hours ensuring as far as humanly possible, correctness would prevail and the hours spent in the development of his transmission was clear to see and more than welcome.

The tune "The Story of My Life", sung by Neil Diamond crowded into my mind, as I remember dancers who simply overcame mental reticence, and produced some of the most beautiful aesthetic dance I have ever seen, and that is the feeling which transfixed the audience, as they saw and heard the procedures which had been arranged so efficiently, with young David and Rosie as the exponents necessary, to illustrate so many aspects, which they did admirably as

Jennifer Hillier was suffering from a dreadful cold, which precluded her being able to be a large part, but she assisted in every way possible and few were aware of her problem. Music such as "The Story of My Life" is meant to induce nostalgia, coupled with the sounds which convey so many years of a person's short life.

Stephen led everyone in attendance through a film of exactitude, in respect of the many years in which dance had evolved from its roots, and he illuminated the past with a searchlight of contemplated searching, as if he was a Scotland Yard senior Detective, searching for clues to solve a massive crime, and he succeeded and coupled the historical facts with much humour too.

The 1922 committee was formed to stabilise and develop a technique, so that teachers worldwide would show the same step patterns as each other. etc etc etc



David and Rosie showed, throughout the two parts of this wondrous moment in time, and conveyed the styles and step patterns of so many dances, which simply thrilled and staggered the eyes and ears of those in attendance.

They showed how very comfortable it could be to dance with a Lady and also hinted at the innuendos of passion which could be transmitted, by the use of characterisational aspects of course.

Freddie Camp episode, when he simply devastated Blackpool, by dancing a tango full of staccato foot placements and daring use of head turns which, at that time, had not been used, and the crowd, of course, leapt to their feet and clapped and clapped. I may add that the famed coach Henry Jacques who was in attendance, analysed the actions and proceeded to teach them as a fundamental, shortly after that Blackpool Festival.

The famed Len Scrivener developed Tango superbly and characterised it in his own performances.

As Stephen continued through the two slots of time, which were so necessary and so enjoyed, it was simply as if a film had been shown encapsulating a lifetime of dance passion, and as I watched the dances being shown, I was green with jealousy and so beautifully presented, so the attendees were simply gasping for the historical knowledge transmitted.

It was shown that heel turns were eventually invented and that Josephine Bradley the famed dance exponent and coach, had used her marvelous intellect to enhance dance, by slotting in new ideas, which considerably affected the dances. Stephen is filled, as is also Jennifer, with a passion for dance which can never be disguised and why should it and IT IS SO NECESSARY THAT YESTERYEAR IS STUDIED AND IT IS REALISED JUST HOW VITAL THE PAST AFFECTS TODAY.

During part two of Stephen's lectures explained that when the first world war was over, the easiest way to dance reverse turns, is to incorporate the nine step turns which Jo Bradley and Phyllis Haylor had invented, and it meant that with having the extra steps within the rotations, it was easy to change from natural turns to reverse ones and it revolutionised the waltz from being round as a description into a different phase entirely... Then Alex Moore invented the whisk when his feet stuck on the floor, and he crossed instead of closing.



Developments escalated of course and it was a trifle like a cluster of pigeons, being fed by tourists, with the dancers absolutely full of inquisitive minds which produced changes which were good, and some which were not...time, as always, weeded out the bad and retained the desirable.

Victor Silvester the famous band leader had won the World Championship in 1922 and along came Maxwell Stewart, a near Magician of the use of spins, and it brought the house down when he danced a double reverse spin in waltz, although of course today it wouldn't receive the same reaction...but it was revolutionary then.

1925 brought the Charleston and it became an absolute craze. People were seen at bus stops, and in streets, practicing their Charleston flickers and inventing new variations, and dance halls even had to put up signs, which said 'Please Charleston Quietly (PCQ)'

Attendees saw Stephen and Jennifer dance a waltz together, with the addition of items which crashed from yesteryears, into the Pavilion: in Blackpool and within the historical home of dance...

Such a privilege to see these two lectures and to be able to wallow in the warmth and conviviality, not to mention the thrill as you saw and heard....

It was as if you had joined the big dipper at the Blackpool fairground and within the historical home of dance...



BDC CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER HAWKINS

Gave a welcoming speech, in which he mentioned a few of the many items the BDC have to contemplate and look after and he congratulated the BDC on their passion and the wonderful way of presenting the future of dance, worldwide... He made it clear that the BDC was looking after dance and would continue to do so. He outlined the multiplicity which the BDC has to deal with... Changes will happen inevitably and the unification is as desirable as is the Feather Step in the Slow Foxtrot. Thank you, Christopher.



MICHAEL STYLIANOS

Most unfortunately Dale Bennett had to cancel his appearance as a lecturer at this Congress, due to some unavoidable problems.

Michael was of course not just brave, but full of enthusiasm and knowledge, so had no fears at all when he stepped in as a replacement and instantly, with his superb sense of humour, the audience warmed to his personality and fervour and he did mention as an opener, that he has had so many bits of himself replaced he is unable to actually demonstrate on this occasion...

It didn't matter, although of course would have been marvelous if he had danced, but boy he sure made up for it with a time scale which he filled with much interest and he amazed everyone, by explaining he had used only one partner for over 60 years, and that of course was the famous Lorna, his wife, who always backs up Michael in all that he does...not just efficiently but superbly.

When Michael was young, he used to have to borrow shoes and even some clothes at times because of financial restraints, and he loved it all ferociously, and his mind from an early stage was brimmingly filled with new ideas on, choreography and he could give you a new and previously unseen dance, from the fervency and knowledge of his mental capacity, as if it was simply easy peasy. He told of his time training Torvill and Dean, the world famed ice skaters, and how he recommended the start of their Bolero Olympic Gold Routine through his contemplation and brilliance of mind.

He had lessons with the famed Walter Laird and before considering whether or not to give him lessons Wally asked Michael "Why do you want to dance" Michael replied that he wished to become a great dancer. Wally said that was a good answer as you have to become a great dancer first before becoming a Champion, so he took Michael and Lorna under his wing and they went on to become wondrous Champions.

Wally recommended that they go to John Delroy so they did and he was a Giant within dance and WAS HIMSELF a great exponent of show dancing as well as being a choreographer of mind-boggling talent. He also, with Lorna, went to Doris Lavelle, the ultra famed partner of Pierre who fathered and introduced Cuban timing into the Latin dances.

They revolutionised Latin dance by insisting that the rhythms they had seen when visiting Cuba, were more suitable for Latin dance than most could appreciate and after a considerable time, when events had a mix of Latin exponents dancing their preferred existing timings, or the new ones, caused chaos in the results, but all eventually was sorted out and the new rhythmic expressions were enhanced and are a feature indeed of the Latin dances today.

Wally Laird and his great partner Lorraine had studied dance for many years and, after Michael had gone to John Delroy, Wally was keenly interested in the choreography given to Michael by John. ..John Delroy was simply amazing, with a mind full of dance which he so cherished.

This was an off-the-cuff report from Michael, of his life within dance, and he used his great humour and recalled his life in dance with a not just to entertain aspect, but with fabulous underlying truths of dance, to not only entertain but to also educate those in attendance...

Just remember what Michael said so wisely when he mentioned that the men must learn to ensure that judges can see their number cards by using rotation.



KYLE TAYLOR AND ALISA MARGULIS TANGO THE MYTHS AND THE FACTS

Staccato Kyle says, is when the musical notes are separated, and when coupled with other musical items, it actually tells you when the feet should be placed to ensure correctness in their application. Foot articulation is very important in tango, as well as the other dances. There is no swing in tango and exercises assist the acquisition of so much that it is of great assistance.

Kyle and Alisa illustrated items as they danced a closed promenade.

Then it was illustration time as they showed step 4 of a fallaway, so that you understood how to turn on it, as a pivot, to ensure the following step was easy and secure for balance, to be without a problem.

A very deep thought process is being shown by this young pair, as they emphasised the placing of the feet, and the use of rotation, to ensure comfort as a couple by producing correct functionality. You must get "ON" to the placed foot and when you turn to the left ensuring the left foot is placed in CBMP is of the essence to the transmission of the characterisation of the dance. CBM deflects the energy and you can use it to dilute over attack actions.

You must ensure a correct vertical postural balance for tango and a central balance when stepping. The use of ball to flat, CBM, and CBMP are all vital in tango. No rise and fall doesn't mean it is all flat. You have open steps and closed steps, so you have to have some natural buoyancy in order to move efficiently, so it is not flat and you do see some knee and body rise but this is not induced by the feet but by the action and the legs and knees response to the structure of the dance... Once again it is clear that mental analysis has been used effectively in order to assimilate knowledge and use it to expand expertise.



ANTON SBOEV AND PATRIZIA RANIS

All too soon the final lecture at Congress approaches and the audience craves more and more, as each exponent strives to give their best and manages to do so admirably as this young vibrant couple of Latin dance.

Anton would like to talk about some of the Latin accents which, when used, can most certainly add to expertise.

They consider that accents are vital in order to escalate improvements into your dances. A Lady they say can dance on her own but will never be able to look as good as when they dance with a man.

You must try for example to dance Rumba walks with the conviction created through that wonderful aspect of Repetition. You can add enormously to your dance by ensuring you can dance the rumba walks with different actions, so that you use different actions and accents too.

They showed "How" to develop your weight into a foot and the action of body weight in relation to the placements over a moving foot..the essence is as if you are adding strawberry sauce to a bowl of succulent ice cream.

You can use a subtle action of body whip to add to the expertise and there must be a beautiful use of the standing foot as weight is transferred out of it until its heel is as high up as possible and this transmits such beautiful imagery to those who use their eyes and ears....Secrets are cascading from Anton's lips and Patrizia responds, with the oozes demanded of top-class exponents of Latin dance...You can visualise the hours of hard practice including the frustration being developed into pleasure and the finality when championships are won...Isn't it all so very fascinating?

The BDF's membership is full of those who have chosen dance to be their lifetime passion. They are never satisfied until they massage the intellect of those whose fervour matches their own and the great coaches often as lecturers are actually reminiscing about their very own climb up the ladders of success.

If not carefully considered, a couple's desire to show their virtuosity can make them victims of the very assets they overproduce.

Lectures such as this protect the fundamentals so necessary, so couples must remember the principles laid down by our Pioneers are a vital aspect to study, so as to enhance all that you produce on the floors of dance.

Thank you indeed every couple who danced or attended this marvellous sharing of such excellence...Each and every lecturer was desperate to ensure success, and they all succeeded....Just remember that judges tastes are very simple..they merely like the best.....



It of course is very nice to report that Kenny Welsh has retired now from BDF PRESIDENCY, but also rather sad.

Kenny has been President of the BDF now for no less than 22 years and has done a fabulous job without ever attempting to be less than absolutely fervent, as he carried out the enormous tasks involved with this high position. Thank you so much, Kenny, you have been simply awesome and a great credit to dance and to the BDF.

Nicola Nordin takes over the enormous task and brings with it femininity and logicity which abounds within her mental capacities. We look forward immensely to her time in this Presidential appointment and she can be sure that she will receive valuable assistance from all concerned, and we wish her the very best of luck.



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