

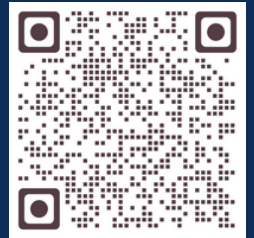
THE BDF REVIEW

THE BDF STAR BALL 2024

WEDNESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2024 EPSOM DOWNS RACECOURSE



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THE BDF PROFESSIONAL BALLROOM
BY WARREN BOYCE

THE BDF PROFESSIONAL LATIN
BY ALEX IVANETS COMING SOON

THE BDF AMATEUR BALLROOM
BY WARREN BOYCE

THE BDF AMATEUR LATIN
BY EMANUELE SOLDI

THE BDF REVIEW

THE BDF STAR BALL 2024

PROFESIONAL BALLROOM

By Warren Boyce



THE BDF STAR PROFESSIONAL BALLROOM

- 1st - ILYA GOLOVCHENKO & EKATERINA ESTRELKOVA
- 2nd - DIMA DAKHNOVSKYI & ANNA DAKHONOVSKA (UKRAINE)
- 3rd - ANDRIY MYKHAILOV & EKATERINA POPOVA (USA)
- 4th - DAN MALOV & ANNA BOHACHOVA (USA)
- 5th - VALERIU URSACHE & LIANA BAKHTIAROVA (USA)
- 6th - JOHNNY LIU & FIONA GUI (CHINA)

Against the breath-taking backdrop of Epsom Downs Racecourse, the 2024 BDF STAR BALL unfolded in a captivating dance of lights and rhythm, setting a new standard for the splendour of ballroom dancing competitions. The event's venue, perched with grandeur overlooking the racecourse, provided an unparalleled setting that combined the thrill of competition with the picturesque allure of Epsom's landscape.

The BDF STAR Professional Ballroom

The 2024 BDF STAR BALL Professional Ballroom competition unfolded with a mesmerizing display of talent, grace, and competitive spirit.

The event, highlighted by a diverse array of approaches from the participating couples, undoubtedly presented the judges with a challenging task in evaluating and ranking the performances.

The observation that dancing in a very dynamic three-dimensional system doesn't automatically guarantee quality is an insightful recognition of the intricacies within different dance styles. The notion that, in more reflexive or naturalistic systems, the alignment of the body, coupled with the influence of gravity, can expedite the development of foot and leg action offers a contrasting perspective. The belief here is that the organic connection between weight, gravity, and joint movement enhances the agility and progress of the dancer.

1st Place: Ilya Golovchenko and Ekaterina Strelkova

Ilya and Katusha's performance was nothing short of a tour de force, characterised by a three-dimensional style that set them apart.

However, it's worth noting that Ilya, despite embracing a dynamic three-dimensional style, stands out as an exception. His extensive training over an extended period has allowed him to master the intricate art of stacking and aligning his posture, ensuring that the shift in dancing style in this new partnership doesn't compromise the fundamental quality of his performance. This adaptation showcases not only his technical proficiency but also his ability to seamlessly integrate a stylistic change while maintaining the excellence of previous development.

Katusha was stunning in every department of today's performance, and this underscored her contributions to the winning performance. Katusha possesses a multifaceted skill set that encompasses beauty, expression, flexibility, range, and a remarkable ability to intensify her performance when the moment demands. The success of Ilya and Katusha, culminating in their victory of the Star Professional and their previous achievement of reaching the final in the World Professional Championship, marks them as a formidable pairing for the future.

The "Goldilocks equation" could be now implemented to add a layer of nuance to their development, emphasizing the importance of tasteful and precise choices in elements such as rise and fall, rotation, and drive. This metaphorical equation suggests a delicate balance that, when achieved "just right", elevates a performance to an unparalleled level of artistry and technical finesse. It points to the ongoing refinement and mastery that dancers of this level should continually seek.

2nd Place: Dima Dakhnovski and Anna Dakhnovska

Dima and Anna's performance brought a captivating contrast to the winners, Ilya and Katusha, with their ultra-classical approach. Anna, adorned in a striking orange dress, stood out as a visible presence on the dance floor, ensuring that their dancing, while occasionally quieter, consistently commanded attention. Their ability to draw the audience into their performance was evident throughout the dances.

A particularly notable moment in their routine was the beautiful tilting run in slow foxtrot, a demonstration of their commitment to the elegance and finesse of classical ballroom dance. The execution of a very musical oversway action further showcased their dedication to the artistry and precision associated with this style.

However, the performance was not without its challenges. Unusually, the couple experienced some major collisions during the event, detracting from their typically professional approach. Fine-tuning their stamina for major events could elevate their already impeccable performances.

3rd Place: Andriy Mykhailov and Ekaterina Popova

Andriy and Ekaterina emerged as a couple exuding a smouldering quality and undeniable class on the dance floor at the 2024 BDF STAR BALL. Their performance was marked by a level of sophistication that captured the audience's attention, with Andriy's charismatic presence drawing comparisons to James Bond.

While their Waltz showcased the highest quality, a call for greater acceleration and stopping ability in their Tango hinted at untapped potential. In summary, Andriy and Ekaterina's performance at the 2024 BDF STAR BALL not only showcased their undeniable class but also invited a thoughtful reflection on refining elements to reach new levels of impact and competitiveness. The journey of unlocking deeper potential encapsulates the very essence of art and the relentless pursuit of excellence in ballroom dancing.

4th Place: Dan Malov and Anna Bohachova

Dan and Anna, exemplifying brilliant technical purists, showcase a quality that is effortlessly recognizable. While excelling at the intricacies of natural and reverse figures is undoubtedly a skill, they elevate their performance by seamlessly incorporating reversing techniques. They create interesting effects while almost rewinding from a traditional action. This is a great addition to the interest they can create and is undoubtedly a very high skill.

Their standout moment was evident in the final round, where they demonstrated exceptional prowess. Beginning with the Waltz, accompanied by the enchanting vocals of Julia Sullivan and the melodies of the Len Phillips Swing Orchestra, the atmosphere was set for a captivating performance. Notably, Anna's uncontrollable emotional response to the beautiful sounds added an extra layer of joy to the spectacle.

This emotional connection and technical excellence reached a pinnacle during the final, where the duo appeared unrestricted by technical or postural constraints, fully immersed in the moment. The result could have been significantly higher for them had they consistently delivered dancing of this calibre across all rounds and this underscores the immense potential and artistry they possess.

In essence, Dan and Anna's ability to seamlessly weave technical precision with emotional resonance, especially in the final round, marks them as a standout pair in the competitive ballroom dancing arena.

5th Place: Valeriu Ursache and Liana Bakhtiarova

Valeriu Ursache and Liana Bakhtiarova, last year's defending champions, might have felt a tinge of disappointment with their 5th-place finish in the 2024 BDF STAR BALL. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that the event has experienced significant growth over the past year, presenting a heightened level of competition. The final featured couples with diverse approaches, ranging from classical finesse to dynamic power.

Amid this challenging environment, Valeriu faced a potential hurdle in relation to coordination observed in the upper body and neck area. This factor likely left a lingering question mark for the judges when evaluating their performance. Although they danced very well, the weight of their previous year's success may have cast a shadow over their performance, knowing that replicating such success would be a formidable task.

Looking ahead, the anticipation is that Valeriu and Liana will find their rhythm and relaxation at the upcoming United Kingdom Championships. The expectation is that, unburdened by the pressure of past victories, they will have the opportunity to showcase their skills fearlessly and make a resilient comeback in the event. This acknowledgment of the evolving competitive landscape and the resilience of this seasoned pair sets the stage for an exciting and potentially triumphant return in their next performance.

6th Place: Johnny Liu and Fiona Guo

Fiona graced the dance floor in a delightful purple gown during her performance with Johnny today, adding a touch of elegance to the occasion. Their journey to the grand final of this prestigious championship must have been particularly gratifying, especially considering the exceptional quality of the semi-final competition.

While executing the Viennese Waltz, it was noted that there was a loss of leg action, consequently affecting the overall feeling of swing. However, despite this technical aspect, the couple maintained a very good connection throughout the performance, showcasing considerable potential. Their enthusiasm and dedication as competitors were evident, adding a dynamic energy to the competition.

WARREN BOYCE
BDF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

THE BDF REVIEW

THE BDF STAR BALL 2024

AMATEUR BALLROOM

By Warren Boyce



THE BDF STAR AMATEUR BALLROOM

- 1st - MARCO SIROCCHI & DORA KILIN (ITALY)
- 2nd - CONGYIAN XIE & YUTING LUO (CHINA)
- 3rd - KUN WANE & WAN XU (CHINA)
- 4th - SALVATORE VITACCA & ZHAI MENGFE (ITALY)
- 5th - TINGHUI LI & LUWEI LIU (CHINA)
- 6th - MARCO BARBERA & FEDERICA DORAZI (ITALY)

1st Place: Marco Sirocchi and Dora Kilin

In today's field, Marco and Dora showcased an outstanding performance, demonstrating not only their skill but also a touch of serendipity in Marco's dance journey. Hailing from the Italian town of Aprilia, Marco fortuitously began his dance career at a local school owned by the legendary champions, William Pino and Alessandra Bucciarelli. Such early exposure to exceptional mentors has been a consistent thread in Marco's successful career. Dora, his partner, is a captivating dancer, displaying excellence from her impeccable footwork to her expressive upper body and head styling. Their five dances, including the Viennese Waltz with its decelerating reverse turns into rapid reverse fleckerl, showcased not only technical prowess but also musicality. As they continue their journey, there's potential for them to add the next dimension of power and weight release, aiming for success at the highest levels of Amateur and Professional competitions. Congratulations on securing victory in this historic and prestigious event.

2nd Place: Congyian Xie and Yuting Luo

Peter and Amelia, one of the top-ranked Chinese couples in the Amateur category, demonstrated not only their enduring excellence but also a visually striking physique for ballroom dancing. Their experience has translated into an improved quality that shone through in tonight's final. Amelia's choice of dress further enhanced their aesthetic appeal, positioning them as strong contenders for the runners-up spot, which they duly secured. While Peter's serious demeanour reflects his ambition to become the best and number 1 dancer in China, it's essential for him to balance this with an enjoyment of their performance to allow spectators and judges to fully appreciate their artistry.

3rd Place: Kun Wane and Wan Xu

William and Ivy celebrated a well-deserved bronze medal at the BDF Star Ball. They left a lasting impression with a Tango opening characterized by precision and detail. The execution of this dance was mesmerizing, holding the audience's attention even amidst a field of excellent couples. Their execution of polyrhythms added a layer of character and musical nuance, demonstrating their commitment to improvement. As they move forward, a focus on preparing their minds and bodies for the entirety of each dance will contribute to sustained success. Congratulations on achieving a new level of dancing and significant improvement.

4th Place: Salvatore Vitacca and Zhai Mengfei

Salvatore and his partner, despite showcasing mature and expansive movement, lacked the supreme confidence and self-belief demonstrated by other finalists. A reminder to reconnect with the initial passion for dancing and convey that story during performances could rekindle the spark and elevate their future finals.

5th Place: Tinghui Li and Luwei Liu

David and Vivian displayed a remarkable improvement from their previous performance in China, maintaining harmony and clarity in body lines. Restricting their participation to a single Amateur event allowed them to demonstrate more power and shift of weight, outshining some more experienced couples. This progress suggests a promising trajectory for their future competitions.

6th Place: Marco Barbera and Federica d'Orazi

Marco and Federica, a beautiful couple, performed at their peak throughout the three rounds, showcasing consistent excellence. In a closely contested final, their top form positions them well for a highly enjoyable United Kingdom Championship next week. If they maintain this momentum, they are poised to challenge and surpass other couples in the upcoming competitions.

WARREN BOYCE
BDF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

COMING SOON

THE BDF REVIEW
THE BDF STAR BALL 2024
PROFESSIONAL LATIN
By Alex Ivanets



THE BDF STAR PROFESSIONAL LATIN

- 11st - SERGEY MAKSYUTA & VALERIA VESTOVA (HONG KONG)**
- 2nd - ANTON SBOEV & PATRIZIA RANIS (ENGLAND)**
- 3rd - GIYONG NAM & NARA SHIN (SOUTH KOREA)**
- 4th - ROBERT VIRENIUS & VEERA HEDMAN (FINLAND)**
- 5th - DENYS KAZAKOV & ANNA LISOVA (USA)**
- 6th - CHUANGCHUN LO & YANYAN DENG (CHINA)**

1ST - 126 SERGEY MAKSYUTA & VALERIA VESTOVA

Very experienced competitors in this field showing clear intention behind every step. They truly move like one. Couple that oozes musicality. I see a lot of lyrical aspect in their dance try to explore rhythmical side, this will enhance your performance even more. Congratulations on your win today!

2ND - 136 ANTON SBOEV & PATRIZIA RANIS

Patricia doesn't fail to surprise us with her unique diva look she's wearing a lovely fringe dress, which emphasises her hip movement and beautiful leg and foot articulation. They always produce solid and consistent performance. You can see they spent a lot of time working on quality of movement- true sign of a professional. I am also drawn to a clear storyline in their Rumba.

3RD - 128 GIYONG NAM & NARA SHIN

This couple stood out from the first round you can always see them on the dancefloor, positive and bright showing joy of dance they connect very well with each other and the audience. Girl has an animalistic look on the floor, small base allows her to show variety of rhythms in her body. The feel and look very comfortable in space. I feel Jive is one of their stronger dances, great understanding of foot and leg timings makes it light and easy to watch.

4TH - 121 ROBERT VIRENIUS & VEERA HEDMAN

Relatively new to the professional field. What a great way to start the professional career by making this and grand final .They have lovely understanding of movement within the frame, making things look fluid, easy and harmonised with each other. I feel their emotions are authentic within the dance.

Sometimes in the effort to be compact, you need to consider the overall proportions of the couple.

They showed great energy right from the first round and kept it going till the very end of the final jive.

5TH - 103 DENYS KAZAKOV & ANNA LISOVA

A couple with a very charismatic look on the floor, girl has super grounded feeling in her action, she portrays a rounded and oily feeling to the action in samba. in samba, I sometimes would like Denis to recover from his knee up a little bit faster to give him a slightly lighter look in his action in Samba.

Denis has a combination between Laidback look and pumping action in the jive, but maybe sometimes a little bit too often on the cool side. Congratulations on making this final.

6TH - 146 CHUANGCHUN LO & YANYAN DENG

Really happy for this couple to reach this incredible final. Very expressive lady with a partner whom looks strong on the floor and allows her to shine. I love seeing usage of samba Roll variations in samba (Natural and Reverse) and this couple executes them really really well.. I feel now they need to work on consistency of performance from the first dance right till the end of the Jive.

THE BDF REVIEW

THE BDF STAR BALL 2024

AMATEUR LATIN

By Emanuele Soldi



THE BDF STAR AMATEUR LATIN

- 1st - JOEL LOPEZ & KRISTINA BESPECHNOVA (SPAIN)**
- 2nd - VADYM PIDHORETSKYI & RUBY CASTRO (USA)**
- 3rd - LORENZO MAGNANTE & BEATRICE FABI (ITALY)**
- 4th - VALERIU LEONTIEV & LINE SMED (DENAMRK)**
- 5th - YEGOR YOUNG & ZOE WOODHALL (ENGLAND)**
- 6th - AVTANDILI SHONIA-GUTOVSKYI & LELE KHUTSISHVILI (GEORGIA)**

1ST - JOEL LOPEZ AND KRISTINA BESPECHNOVA

Congratulations to the undisputed winners, well deserved.

With their experience they demonstrated a clear victory from the first round, I really appreciate their rhythm, musicality and confidence. Considering their stylistic choice sometimes the Joel's neck line is a bit lost and the upper part sometimes appears a little undefined.

2ND - VADYM PIDHORETSKYI AND RUBY CASTRO

Congratulations to this young couple who come from America.

Definitely a talented couple, they show a lot of fluidity in their bodies and also control, I would recommend evaluating that this approach tends to make the Paso Doble a little weak and not very dominant.

3RD - LORENZO MAGNANTE AND BEATRICE FABI

Congratulations to the bronze medal, a completely Italian and experienced couple. Certainly their best quality is their movement which is sometimes very impressive on the track. Just focusing on the movement tends to infect the aesthetics of Lorenzo's upper part and Beatrice's lower part a little.

4TH - VALERIO LEONTIEV AND LINE SMED DENMARK

Couple definitely ready to do one positions more for me this evening.

Perhaps one of the couple most aware to rhythm , which was very important in relation to the presence of the orchestra on the night.

Valerio demonstrates excellent skills as a dancer, classic and elegant, but sometimes I would prefer him to direct this to his partner because sometimes it comes off as a little selfish.

5TH - YEGOR YOUNG AND ZOE WOODHALL

These guys caught my attention already from the first round, I really like their rhythmic activity especially of the central part of the body.

This type of work needs to be presented carefully to make their work best seen on the floor.

6TH - AVTANDILI SHONIA-GUTOVSKYI AND LELE KHUTSISHVILI

A couple certainly with a good impact.

I really appreciated their frame and their volume. However, focus only on this approach risks creating high tension in the lower part of the body and consequently heaviness, especially in rhythmic dances.

THE BDF STAR BALL 2025

WEDNESDAY

15TH JANUARY 2025

EPSOM DOWNS RACECOURSE



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