

WORLD DANCE MASTERS 2005

Out rightly the number one World line dance competition and social dance event on the calendar. This years World Dance Masters was the biggest and best yet!

Beginning on Thursday when the Masters and their tireless team of irreplaceable volunteers invaded the Blackpool winter gardens to set up. Having picked up Brian Barakauskas and John Robinson from the airport, Paul swiftly dropped them off at the hotel where John got hyper on Red bull and they talked about buying meals in relationships and the unwritten rule, don't ask!

Meanwhile Rachael was doing a mini-tour of York, calling at fancy dress shops, office world and food warehouses, the usual Thursday things. Carol Baker was running around like a headless chicken picking Tom Mickers up on the way and carrying her dodgy trailer full of Masters Merchandise, although these days she has found the accelerator in her car. While Mr Fowler had the unenviable task of running his day class and running back and forth from Wigan and Merseyside, to collect the iconic Masters In Line logo boxes. These things are lethal, just ask Paul about them last year, his big toe will testify gladly. Everything was coming together nicely as trade stands ambushed the foyer area, while eager line dancers were ambushing nearby Albert Rd and Adelaide St. Everything ran like clockwork, as eventually the room was set-up as you all saw it on Friday.

Friday morning the eager queue of line dancers were waiting outside as they prepared for the 100m sprint in record time to the reception. The Masters were on hand at the door to welcome everybody to the event. As the numbers kept pouring through the door, our tireless trio wondered if they had a big enough room.

The trade stands were all set up ready to sell the latest gadgets gizmos, outfits and accessories. Stands including: Linedancer Magazine dance shoes, Gem -n-I, Tynedancer, Sounds Incorporated, and Freddy Sportswear. The dancers flooded down to the Empress ballroom, the ballroom of champions where dreams are made and stars are born.

Meanwhile social dancers made their way up to the ever beautiful Spanish Ballroom, always a sight to behold and a perfect social ballroom. Both of our Djs were hard at work early on, with Gary Lafferty expertly Dj'ing the Empress ballroom and Big Dave Spinning those decks in the Spanish Ballroom. Soon the Masters started the first workshop of the weekend, starting with "All night boogie" and then wrapping it up with "Girls gone wild."

In the Empress ballroom competition had got underway and the divisions with the most competitors had heats to get through to make their way to semi and quarter finals respectively. Richard Williams was in cool control of things as emcee and made sure everything was running on time.

The day ran like clockwork and the judges were duly impressed, mainly because of the level of the dancing on show, but also because once again this huge competition event was running on time. Upstairs in the Spanish ballroom the dancers were treated to workshops from Barry & Dari- Ann Amato, Lizzie Clarke, Ed Lawton, Charlotte Macari and Rachael McEnaney. At 5.30 the doors closed for an evening break to give everyone time to shower and get some dinner.

At 7.30 doors opened again and everyone, competitors and social dancers all convened in the Empress ballroom for a night of partying and social dancing. There was a competitors countries parade with dancers from places including: America, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Latvia, N Ireland, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Wales. Soon enough it was show time and everyone was eagerly anticipating what the masters had in store this year.

This years theme was Superheroes and it soon became clear that The Riddler (John Robinson) had kidnapped some of the Masters staff and instructors and it was up to our beloved superheroes to help them out. Therefore after each instructor came out dancing to a rescue me song, a superhero came out and saved them, though some superheroes better dressed than others, or shall we say had more clothes on?

Regardless the show went down a storm and the audience couldn't wait for Saturday night. Gary and Dave took it in turns to churn out the hottest tunes keeping the enormous crowd very happy indeed.

Saturday started bright and early for judges, competitors and social dancers as doors opened at 9.30. In the Empress ballroom, there were quarter and semi finals to get through. The judges had a difficult task of picking their final 7 to go through to the final on Sunday. The judges included: Lisa Rees, Ed Lawton, Paula Graves, Leyonnee Forbes, Nicola Lafferty, Lizzie Clarke, Helen O Malley, Charlotte Macari, Peter Metelnick, Brian Barakauskas, Tom Mickers, John Robinson, Barry Amato, Dari-Ann Amato and Danny Last.

Meanwhile upstairs in the Spanish ballroom dancers had these instructors to look forward to: John Robinson, Paul McAdam, Peter Metelnick, Chrissie Hodgson, Neville Fitzgerald Daniel Whittaker and Rob Fowler.

The crowds seemed to swell immensely as the day passes seemed to have increased in popularity. It really is a great idea if you don't want to stay the weekend to popup for the Saturday and get a day pass, you have the choice of watching the best line dance competitors in the World battle it out for a place in the prestigious finals, or take workshops from some of the best instructors in the business, there's really no way you can really lose. Also with the added bonus of Salsa and Swing workshops with Rachael McEnaney, Paul Warden and Sally Tomlin in the Arena Ballroom, you were literally spoilt for choice.

Once again the day ran smoothly and at times they were running ahead and had to play social songs to get back on time, unheard of at a competition event! The doors closed at 5.30 again to give everyone the chance to freshen up and change for the themed HOLLYWOOD evening.

The room was decorated extremely well with fantastic balloon displays and brilliant decorations, with thanks to Tracey. Along with a special mention to Shaz Walton for the fantastic Hollywood backdrop that she created in her back garden. (Nobody noticed the dodgy bits Shaz!) We had all sorts of characters turn up in the empress ballroom as people were struggling for seats, as the room was so busy with both social dancers and competitors packed into the most famous ballroom in the world.

Soon enough it was Showtime and everyone got ready in their place for a night at the Oscars as your host Ian McEnaney awarded Oscars to some of Hollywood's finest including: The Wizard Of Oz, Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin, Elvis, Laurel and Hardy, Antonio Banderas, James Dean, Judy Garland and Fred Astaire, Robin Hoods Men In Tights, and three fat ladies doing ballet? You had to be there!

It was an awesome show, and with comments like "it was the best Masters In Line show ever", they knew they'd done a good job. Hollywood Greats mixed with more Hollywood greats as the stars mingled with the dancers and a massive party was in full swing. Once again special mention to both Djs as they played fantastic sets.

Sunday arrived too soon for most as the partying from the day before was showing. Yet social dancers aside, the competitors were very sprightly and full of energy. It was finals day in the empress ballroom, the day World Champions are made and judges nightmares are confirmed when they judge the Primary division, at all under 9, always wonderful to see.

Social dancer's had a selection of workshops from: Brian Barakauskas, Paul McAdam, Tina Argyle, Kate Sala, Pat Stott, Alison Biggs and Rachael McEnaney. Downstairs Mr Fowler was holding it together as emcee, making sure the divisions were running smoothly and the judges were ready. Sunday is always by far the busiest day in regards to everything running on time and everyone being in the right place, yet this time everything ran like clockwork. The competitors really turned it on and the level of dancing was unbelievable. Once again the option of Salsa and Swing dancing was available in the Arena ballroom with Rachael McEnaney and Paul Warden.

The day ran completely jam packed right through til awards when all the competitors eagerly awaited the most important part of their weekend. Meanwhile there was the option of social dancing upstairs in the Spanish Ballroom as Big Dave played requests and workshops dances from the weekend.

The audience was anticipating every word that rolled out of Rachael's mouth as she expertly announced the awards in an incredibly professional fashion. Every time a dancer received an award the audience erupted as the atmosphere built and built.

By the end of it all the new World Dance Masters were crowned and the competitors mingled and asked advice from the judges.

They were still going strong in the social room however, as Paul found out as his services were requested to go over a couple of dances. Talk about party animals, these people didn't want to go home, especially the Swedish group. Big Dave almost ended up in a boxing match with a security guard as they were trying everything to get us out of the room early, yet they hadn't planned on messing with the fellow Geordie duo of Paul and Big Dave.

All in all, an absolutely unmissable weekend, guaranteed fun, an amazing experience meeting and making friends from all over the globe, and promises to be even bigger next year, so be ready to book your place for Worlds 2006.

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