

WORLD DANCE TROPHY CHAMPIONSHIPS – MONTREAL, CANADA SEPTEMBER 28-29, 2007

Montreal has been the site of a number of World Championships in the past and next year will host the WDC World Amateur Medallist Championship and in 2009 the World Professional Ten Dance Championship followed in 2010 by the prestigious World Professional Standard Championship. This year the venue was the Centre Pierre Charbonneau in Montreal where the Canadian Dance and Dancesport Council (CDDSC) held one of the newer World Championships sanctioned by the WDC - the World Dance Trophy.

The competition was held over two days and an indication of what was in store for us was evident when we approached the arena Friday morning to be greeted with a large parking lot full of cars and loads of competitors heading for the doors.

Quebec has always been the cornerstone of Canadian ballroom dance competitions. Why this is so became apparent when the competitions started. Besides the traditional ten dance international competitions there were also competitions in Rap and social dances. These other dances were very popular with the younger generation. One of the Rap competitions had 82 entries and a social waltz competition had 58 couples. The numbers may not seem large compared to some other countries, but for Canada it was unusual and showed the widespread support the competition received. It was wonderful to see so many young couples entered. Quebec is certainly on the right track and the future of dancing in Quebec shows great promise for the years ahead.

The panel of adjudicators was superb as befitting a world championship. There were a total of 36 adjudicators from seven countries including France, Hong Kong, Denmark, Ukraine, Holland, Italy, Scotland and Canada.

The World Dance Trophy gives an opportunity for amateur competitors who are not at the highest level to compete in a "world" event. The largest entries were in the Bronze and Silver Latin categories with 44 and 45 couples. The results for all events are on the web sites www.cddsc.com and www.dancesportinfo.net .

The Quebec audiences have always been noted for their enthusiasm and exuberant behaviour. This was shown in full on Saturday night. The evening began with an opening ceremony featuring Rap formation teams following each other with quick short programs. This got the evening off to a high energy blast that had the audience on their feet demanding more. The lighting, music and dancing were all outstanding. It could not fail to receive a standing ovation, since the audience were already on their feet shouting and clapping.

Following this, the competitors with their countries flags, the adjudicators and the dignitaries were introduced and remained on the floor filling it to capacity.

The organizers must have felt justifiably proud to have presented such a magnificent spectacle for a World Competition in Canada.

In addition to the amateur competitions there were three Canadian Closed Professional Championships and two Canadian Open Championships.

The winners of the Canadian Closed Professional Rhythm Championships were Michael and Susan Mitsui from Vancouver, who announced this would be their last competition and retired from competitive dancing.

Vancouver was also the home of the winners of the Canadian Closed Professional Smooth Championships Dale Neale and Ekaterina Michtchenko

CANADIAN OPEN PROFESSIONAL MODERN BALLROOM CHAMPIONSHIP.

This competition had representatives from three different nations from the USA, Italy and Canada. There were some great performances on the evening that were a delight to see. Especially great to see the Italians present here in Montreal. I prefer to call this style its original and I believe correct name, you may note {Modern Ballroom}.

1st Place, Fabrizio Cravero and Lorena Cravero {Italy}

It was a delight to this Italian couple and all the couples from Italy in this competition. They brought their Italian fire and passion to the dance floor in this Modern Ballroom style. Great movement across the floor with tremendous body speed apparent also. However at times, there was some loss of line and picture. And some definite timing problems in the Slow Foxtrot and Quickstep that seemed to go apparently unnoticed by the adjudicators.

2nd Place, Igor Litvinov and Julia Iveleva {U.S.A.}

I was most impressed with this couple this evening, and thought that they were the clear winners. But it was not to be. They produced clear, correct dynamic dancing with no apparent loss of sound technique. Also showing great feeling for each dance. Perhaps not as out rightly performance-orientated as the Italians. But is that what it is all about anyway?

3rd Place, Francis Lafreniere and Claudia Primeau. {Canada}

This relatively new couple to the Professional ranks have made great strides in the last year or so since teaming up together. Some significant improvements in their understanding of the technique is evident. Particularly the 1-3 of a Natural Turn, always a source of major concern to me, now showing vast improvement. Continued work from this tall dominant couple will see high placings continue I am sure.

4th Place, Jean Francois Messier and Marie Bolduc {Canada}

This long time and experienced couple have managed to improve steadily over the years with a more dynamic presentation and great clarity of line and picture in their dancing. Perhaps a more musical approach and a greater sense of fire will make the adjudicators take more notice of the many good things that they now able to produce.

5th Place, Mathieu Caron and Mariyne Prevost {Canada}

This couple are also relatively new to the Professional ranks. Marilyne is always beautifully presented to her credit. A Professional approach. However, Mathieu has some work on his presentation to be taken seriously in this style. Namely the fitting of the tail suit and haircut a priority. The dancing is difficult to assess when the image requires such attention. But frame and body position needs work also.

6th Place, Sylvain Castonguay and Helene Gagne {Canada}

This couple appear relatively inexperienced compared to the rest of this final. Good to see that they are in there having a go at it. Continued work on all the fundamental principals is required for better placings. Also attention to their presentation I feel would help greatly create a stronger silhouette.

CANADIAN OPEN PROFESSIONAL LATIN CHAMPIONSHIP.

This competition had a first round Semi Final of 10 couples, all of a high standard. The audience were very vocal in their support of these Professionals and it was a delight to witness. It really lifted the couples performances I am sure, to have such a vocal and enthusiastic crowd giving such great support.

1st Place, Andre and Natalie Paramonov. {Canada}

This experienced couple put in a great and enthusiastic performance, much to the delight of the crowd this evening. To their credit, there appeared to be less gimmicks and more solid dancing from this talented pair. The almost overly theatrical performance of yesterday seems to be reduced significantly. And a greater awareness of the man woman relationship now having a greater role. I am also pleased to see Andre in a simpler and dare I say more masculine image. Well done and congratulations, clear winners tonight.

2nd Place, Christian and Lucia Bertini {Italy}

Great to see the Italians here for this new event, once again. A dynamic couple with great characterization and presentation of all the Latin rhythms. A more flexible and rhythmical center would enhance their performance. As at times it does appear to be too still in the center. Nevertheless, great dancers and thoroughly deserving their position this evening

3rd Place, Francis Lafreniere and Claudia Primeau {Canada} this couple are always ready to give their all, in all they do. And they deliver, particularly Francis. A significant improvement in their technique is also evident in- this style. Never a bad thing. A greater

sense of musicality would enhance, as their power and presence is perhaps starting to take over the great strides that they have made in their understanding of the Latin principals. A more rounded approach may be in order.

4th Fabrizio and Lorena Cravero {Italy}

This couple I found disappointing in this style. The fire and passion that is so evident even taking over the Ballroom style is almost non-existent in the Latin. Maybe new work or some reason that is not apparent is to blame, but there seemed to be many places where they looked unrehearsed and out of sorts.

5th Place, Alessandro Di Napoli and Alessandro Panico

This couple produced clear readable dancing without ever offending the viewer. Sound leg and foot actions from the lady were nice to see also. But a greater sense of performance needed as it can all be lost in the crowd, which is a shame as they are on the right track for sure.

6th Place, Jean Francois Messier and Marie Bolduc {Canada}

This couple while to many may not have been the obvious choice for this final, were to me clearly in. Solid clear readable dancing with a professional polish was evident. Whilst nota firecracker of a couple, their experience was enough to see them through. I for one was glad to see them included. A greater understanding of the mechanics will have a tremendous result I am sure.

The same organizers will hold the 2008 WDC World Amateur Medallist Championship. If you enjoy the Quebec ambiance of fine food, happy outgoing people and a well run dance competition, then you must come to Quebec next year. You will not be disappointed.

Submitted by Glen Brennan